



UK overtakes Russia to become third largest nuclear weapons spender

Description

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UK Trident submarine Nuclear weapons spending

CND is calling on the government to stop wasting public money on its [nuclear weapons](#) black hole.

This comes after the [latest spending report](#) from the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#) revealed the UK is now spending more on its nuclear weapons than Russia.

Collectively, the nine nuclear weapons states spent a record \$119bn in 2025 on maintaining, modernising and expanding their nuclear arsenals. This was an increase of 19% (\$16.8 billion) on the 2024 bill.

UK moves into nuclear weapons top three

The UK overtook Russia as the world's third biggest spender, spending \$12.6bn (£9.6bn), an increase of 17%.

This spending includes:

- Operating costs of Britain's current four Vanguard nuclear-armed submarines.
- Building the replacement to Vanguard – the Dreadnought submarine.
- Maintenance of Britain's nuclear weapons stockpile.
- Development of a new nuclear warhead, Project Astraea.

It doesn't include the costs of the 12 F-35A nuclear-capable fighter jets the government announced it was purchasing in June 2025.

This shocking surge in nuclear spending comes as the government's own Public Accounts Committee criticised the MoD for a lack of transparency over its – ever-increasing nuclear

expenditureâ??.

Nuclear weapons spending is expected to rise to 20% of the total MoD budget for 2025â??26, and increase to up to 25% in coming years.

According to ICAN, the top nuclear spender globally was again the US which spent \$69.2bn. This was an increase of 22% from 2024 and totalled more than all the other nuclear weapons states combined.

China was second, spending \$13.5bn, an increase of 7%. Behind the UK was Russia with an increase of 6% to \$9.5bn. Of the others, France spent \$7.7bn, India \$2.8bn, Pakistan \$1.5bn, Israel Â£1.2bn, and North Korea \$656m.

The report also found that arms companies involved in the manufacture of UK weapons had sought to influence government policy. According to open access data cited in the report, senior government figures met with representatives of the following arms companies:

- Airbus.
- Amentum.
- Babcock International.
- BAE Systems.
- Bechtel.
- Boeing.
- General Dynamics.
- Honeywell International.
- Leidos.
- Leonardo.
- Lockheed Martin.
- Peraton.
- Rolls Royce.
- RTX (Raytheon).
- Safran.
- Thales.

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The report noted that Airbus and BAE Systems, who had 44 and 35 meetings respectively, also included meetings with the prime ministerâ??s office.

[CND](#) general secretary Sophie Bolt said:

This is a timely report that comes when the British government is planning to make savage cuts to public spending in order to fund more hikes to military spending. Britainâ??s nuclear weapons are a black hole, swallowing up even greater proportions of the Ministry of Defenceâ??s already ballooning budget.

It is Britainâ??s replacement of its nuclear weapons system which is driving these huge nuclear weapons spending increases. This is contributing to a much more dangerous world where the threat of these world-ending weapons being used in war is the highest it has been

since the Cold War.

Far from keeping us safe, Britain's nuclear-armed submarines are totally dependent on the US administration, which ties us even more closely to Trump's reckless leadership that is dragging the world into more and more reckless wars that could go nuclear.

With the government's upcoming Defence Investment Plan expected to give at least £15bn more to the military, it's time to end the wasteful spending on war and nuclear weapons and redirect it into tackling the real security issues we face - from climate breakdown and the looming cost of living crisis.

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By [The Canary](#)

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3. news
4. nuclear
5. overtakes
6. russia
7. spender
8. third
9. weapons

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