



NFLA media release, 25 July 2024, For immediate use

NFLAs congratulate marchers on Lakenheath protest.

The UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities wish to congratulate the participants in the march to and camp at RAF / USAF Lakenheath.

The march began in Norwich on 13 July with marchers arriving at Lakenheath on the 15 July. A camp was then established outside the airbase from 15 to 15 July. A letter was presented to the Main Gate on the 16 July, but two activists were arrested in a high-handed action by police after the refusal of their request to meet with base commanders.

The march and camp were organised by Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) to protest the anticipated arrival of air-launched B61 nuclear weapons for deployment on the two F35 squadrons now based at Lakenheath, Suffolk, which is the biggest US airbase in the UK. LAP is a coalition of UK and international peace groups with the NFLAs being a member organisation. Participants were also able to join a series of cultural and instructional workshops, and on 20 July there was a rally outside the base which was addressed by Dr Kate Hudson, General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

The march and camp attracted significant regional and national media coverage, including on national television.

Prior to the march the NFLAs sent a message of solidarity and support to the marchers and we also co-signed the letter to the base commander. These appear below, along with a pre-march press release from CND and a speech made by one of the organisers, Angie Zelter, at the commencement of the march.

Ends://...For more information, please contact Richard Outram, NFLA Secretary by email to richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk or by mobile phone on 07583 097793

This media release can also be found on the NFLA website at:

<https://www.nuclearpolicy.info/news/nflas-congratulate-marchers-on-lakenheath-protest/>

Notes to Editors

Message of solidarity and support sent by the NFLAs to the participants of the march, 5 July:

Dear Friends,

I write to you as Chair of the UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities to send you solidarity greetings and a message of support for your march to and camp at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk in opposition to the future redeployment of US nuclear weapons.

The whole of humankind is now faced by a frightening geo-political situation in which NATO and its allies now face off against Russia, China, and Iran to a point where a Third World War is possible. In a Third World War involving nuclear-armed power blocs the use of nuclear weapons is a distinct and frightening possibility. No one can win a nuclear war, and it must never be fought. The losers will be the entire human race and indeed all life on this planet.

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The United States in carrying out this redeployment, and the United Kingdom in its acquiescence, will be displaying the rankest hypocrisy. The two NATO allies co-signed a statement at a recent NATO Summit condemning Russia and Belarus for their collaboration in deploying nuclear weapons in the territory of Belarus under Russian control; yet how is this different to locating nuclear weapons in the territory of Great Britain under American control?

In both instances, the actions of the respective parties are contrary to the commitment they each made under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to seek in 'good faith' to secure nuclear disarmament for the world. In the current febrile international climate, with NATO and Russia daggers drawn over the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, this action will represent one further step down the road to Armageddon.

As local authorities with the primary responsibility for the welfare of the lives of the citizens of our municipalities, the Nuclear Free Local Authorities say 'Cities are not targets!'. We are honoured to be members of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and we were proud to be accepted as a member organisation of the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace.

We stand with you in being opposed to the deployment of US nuclear weapons to Lakenheath (or elsewhere in the UK) and in supporting the removal of US and Russian weapons from European NATO nations and from Belarus. Ultimately, we share your vision for total nuclear disarmament attained through adherence by the nuclear signatory states to Article VI of the NPT and the universal application of the terms of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Yours in peace,
Councillor Lawrence O'Neill,
Chair, UK/Ireland NFLA Steering Committee

Pre-march Media release issued by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 9 July:

On Saturday 13 July, activists from the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace will begin a three-day walk/cycle from Norwich and establish an international peace camp at the US-controlled RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, from Monday 15 July until Thursday 25 July.

Marchers will gather at the steps of Norwich City Hall at 10am on Saturday before setting off at 10:30am. On the morning of Monday 13 July, the group will arrive in the town of Brandon and set off towards RAF Lakenheath at 1pm. The peace camp will be set up later that afternoon and the base will be informed of LAP's intention to hand-deliver a letter to the base commander the following day.

LAP will maintain a continuous presence outside the base for the duration of the camp, with a series of vigils, protests, and workshops scheduled.

Since April 2022, there has been growing evidence that the US intends to use RAF Lakenheath as a major part of NATO's nuclear weapons infrastructure in Europe. US budget documents show that the base's weapons storage silos are being upgraded to store the new B61-12 guided nuclear bomb, and new dormitory buildings are being built to house additional military personnel needed for any potential nuclear weapons mission.

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Washington also intends to double the amount of nuclear-capable F-35 aircraft it has stationed at Lakenheath to 54, as part of efforts to increase its military presence in Europe. Last November, US Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks visited the base to inspect these "infrastructure improvements."

LAP is a coalition of local, national, and international anti-nuclear campaigners dedicated to preventing US nuclear weapons from returning to RAF Lakenheath, after a successful grassroots campaign forced their initial removal in 2008. We call on the newly elected Labour government to publicly state that US nuclear weapons will not be welcomed in Britain and that it will work towards de-escalating nuclear tensions in Europe and beyond.

CND General Secretary Kate Hudson said: *"CND is a proud part of the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace and calls on everyone across Britain to get involved with this campaign. The return of US nuclear weapons to Lakenheath greatly increases the nuclear risk already faced by this country as it puts the whole of Britain on the nuclear front line! We call on the Labour government to explicitly refuse any US request to station their weapons of mass destruction here."*

Norwich and District CND Chair Sue Wright said: *"In 2008 nuclear weapons were removed from British soil after tireless campaigning. Plans are now in place to bring B61-12 nuclear bombs to RAF Lakenheath, with the nuclear-capable F-35s already established at the base and already polluting our skies using 22 gallons of fuel per minute. We need to act to make the public aware of the dangers of nuclear weapons, not only to East Anglia, but to the whole world."*

Alison Lochhead from CND Cymru said: *"43 years after the march to Greenham Common to stop US from bringing nuclear weapons to Britain, peace activists are yet again having to walk to a USAF base, this time to RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. A peace camp will set up outside the base with a 24/7 peace vigil to demand that no US nuclear weapons will be brought to Britain. CND Cymru joins Lakenheath Alliance for Peace to collectively raise awareness about what is happening and demand that all nuclear weapons are abolished."*

Yolanda Juarros-Barcenill, who will be travelling from Spain to attend the camp said: *"As part of the Women in Black Against the War-Madrid, I very much oppose any kind of war. Nuclear weapons are specifically directed against civilians and this makes them the first to be banned all over the world. Only dialogue brings peace and security."*

Colin Archer from the Movement for the Abolition of War said: *"We support the nationwide protests called by CND and others against US plans to site deadly B61-12 nuclear bombs in Britain. Not allowing the public to have a say on this fundamental issue goes against the grain of democratic discourse, transparency, and accountability. This deployment is likely to provoke further armament by Russia, and other states; thus we risk finding ourselves in the same nuclear-escalation spiral last seen during the first Cold War."*

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Rally talk given by Angie Zelter in Norwich at start of Walk to USAF Lakenheath, 13 July:

Our Lakenheath Alliance for Peace is a coalition of around 40 groups that are all dedicated to preventing the return of US nuclear weapons to RAF Lakenheath. Despite being called an RAF base, Lakenheath is run by the US Air Force and only hosts US personnel, around 6,000 of them. It is the largest deployment of USAF personnel in the UK. This is why we talk about USAF not RAF Lakenheath.

In 2008, after a tenacious direct-action campaign led by local groups, the 110 US nuclear bombs stored at Lakenheath were removed. But now we have found out that they are coming back, unless we can stop them. The US Department of Defense added the UK to the list of their nuclear weapons storage locations in Europe. Their procurement database reveal plans for a "nuclear mission" at Lakenheath, with new equipment and massive building works, which we can already see have started. These include building a 'surety' dormitory – to house the anticipated influx of nuclear-related personnel. All of this without any parliamentary debate, scrutiny, or accountability. Our 'special' relationship with the USA seems to mean the government just do what they are told without question and without informing the British public, putting us all in danger and especially local people.

The Lakenheath nuclear mission is part of a worrying upgrade of US nuclear infrastructure across Europe. We are now probably nearer to a nuclear exchange, by design or accident, than at any time in the past. US nuclear weapons based at Lakenheath would make the UK once again a forward nuclear base for the US, thereby making us a prime target in the event of a nuclear war.

It is insane to be bringing US nuclear weapons back into the UK and wasting scarce resources on nuclear infrastructure. We should be dismantling all weapons of mass destruction and cooperating with every single nation on this fragile planet to stop runaway climate change and more biodiversity loss. 2023 was the hottest year on record, global greenhouse gases have increased, arctic ice is disappearing and the droughts, floods and other catastrophic 'extreme' climate events are impacting the environment, health and food production all over the world.

The jet fighters at Lakenheath are F35-As, and burn 22 gallons of jet fuel per minute,¹ when flying in their least fuel-intensive mode. When doing high-powered manoeuvres, they use far more. When in flight, the F35s need to fill their fuel tanks. But, before landing on an aircraft carrier, they have to jettison most of the remaining fuel in the tanks by dumping it in the sea. The F-35s are specifically designed to deliver satellite-guided B61-12 nuclear bombs, or Lockheed Martin 'wind-corrected' cluster bombs.² Both weapon systems are illegal under international humanitarian law.

Militarism is one of the central pillars of the carbon intensive, exploitative, industrial system that is driving the climate crisis. Climate change causes war and war causes climate change. About 6% of global carbon emissions are from military activity. Climate change is already a significant cause of conflicts and is a key factor driving the refugee crisis, both from food shortages and climate induced conflicts. Getting to net zero will require a radical social transformation including ending militarism.

The Pentagon admits that global warming is a national security threat. Yet, the US military is the single largest user of fossil fuels on the planet. The developments at Lakenheath are actively promoting the

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expansion of the fossil fuel industry, accelerating the nuclear arms race and turning the UK and Europe into a nuclear front line, even more dangerous than the Cold War was.

There has been a massive increase in global nuclear weapons expenditure which has surged by 34% in the past five years, and is now \$91.4 billion annually. Five years of nuclear weapons spending could have fed 45 million people for life, who are currently facing famine. These billions of pounds for weapons of mass destruction are a gross abuse of resources that could be used to address the health of our people and planet. Our Lakenheath Alliance for Peace demands that military resources are instead directed towards global peace and justice and the prevention of human caused climate change and biodiversity loss.

We are committed to nonviolent direct action for a peaceful and non-threatening world. Despite all the legislation that the government have put in place to try and stop us protesting in any effective and direct manner, we must remember that it does not alter our rights of freedom of expression and assembly, nor does it prevent us from acting non-violently to stop preparations for mass destruction. As compassionate and caring world citizens we must act in self-defence to protect ourselves and our planet. Thus I urge all of you to find your strength, love and determination and get involved in actions to disrupt all preparations for mass murder and war crimes.

We also need to be aware of what USAF Lakenheath has been involved in with its so called 'conventional' weapons. Planes from Lakenheath have been involved in Libya, Iraq, Serbia, Afghanistan, Syria and Iran. Lakenheath planes regularly do joint exercises with the Israeli and Saudi air forces. It prides itself as being able to "get out the door" and deploy rapidly³. After the Hamas attacks on the 7 October 2023, F-15Es from Lakenheath landed in Jordan on the 13 October to bolster US presence in the region⁴.

In April, just 3 months ago, Lakenheath was involved in countering the Iranian strike on Israel⁵. Did you know that the USA and UK are heavily involved in supporting the Israelis military, in its genocidal attacks on Palestinian civilians in Gaza?

We need to be concerned and knowledgeable about the UK backing the USA in their warmongering. Are you aware that the USA has around 800 military bases in 80 countries and has deployed its forces to surround both Russia and China? To put this in context, the UK has 145 military bases in 42 countries, while Russia has only 21 in 9 countries and China 2 in 2 countries.

This may all feel daunting, how can ordinary people like ourselves change anything this big and entrenched? But let us recognise that the peace movement managed to rid us of cruise missiles, turfed the military out of Greenham Common, and managed to keep nuclear weapons out of Lakenheath for almost 20 years. We can do this again! And we can get rid of our own UK weapons of mass destruction. We can join with climate activists and environmentalists and demand the changes we need for a humane and peaceful world. This walk and the following peace camp at Lakenheath is part of a civilian call to sanity and peace.

Please join us.

[1 https://cancelf35.substack.com/p/each-f-35-burns-22-gallons-a-minute](https://cancelf35.substack.com/p/each-f-35-burns-22-gallons-a-minute)

[2 https://www.designation-systems.net/dusrm/app5/wcmd.html](https://www.designation-systems.net/dusrm/app5/wcmd.html)

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[3](https://www.airandspaceforces.com/lakenheaths-on-call-f-15s-respond-to-rapid-demands-for-deployments/) Lakenheath's On-Call F-15s Respond to Rapid Demands for Deployments; Air & Space Forces Magazine; 16 September 2019 (<https://www.airandspaceforces.com/lakenheaths-on-call-f-15s-respond-to-rapid-demands-for-deployments/>)

[4](https://www.airandspaceforces.com/f-15s-middle-east-usaf-hamas-israel-war/) F-15s Land in Middle East as Austin Visits Israel and Touts 'Augmented' USAF Presence; Air And Space Forces; 13 October 2023 (<https://www.airandspaceforces.com/f-15s-middle-east-usaf-hamas-israel-war/>) and Twitter. (Roughly 24 F-15E Strike Eagles with the 494th Fighter Squadron of the U.S. Air Force stationed at RAF Lakenheath in the U.K. have arrived at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan to Bolster the U.S. Posture and Enhance Air Operations throughout the Middle East); OSINTdefender; 14 October 2023 (<https://x.com/sentdefender/status/171301592221330505?s=20>)

[5](https://www.stripes.com/theaters/middle-east/2024-04-14/israel-iran-centcom-13550736.html) White House says US troops helped repel Iranian attack on Israel from air, sea and land; Stars and Strike; 14 April 2024 (<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/middle-east/2024-04-14/israel-iran-centcom-13550736.html>)

The letter delivered by marchers to the main gate at RAF Lakenheath by LAP, 16 July:

Dear Lakenheath Base Commanders and all USAF personnel,

We are all organisations allied to the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace. We are concerned that you are subjecting all of us, and especially local people, to a major existential calamity by preparing to receive US nuclear missiles. Just one warhead could kill hundreds of thousands of people and cause devastation to our environment. This is a breach of major international humanitarian and war laws as well as the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons. It will also make East Anglia a primary nuclear target. We are asking you, will you please prevent the return of US nuclear weapons to the UK?

The use of our land and airspace to conduct US and NATO wars is not acceptable to the vast majority of our population who have to suffer the ongoing noise and chemical pollution of your conventional planes and the knowledge of the untold suffering of the millions of victims killed, maimed or uprooted from their homelands as refugees. Storing and deploying nuclear weapons will add the extra risk of radioactive contamination and the unacceptable risk of a catastrophic nuclear accident that could trigger a world wide nuclear exchange leading to the devastation of our planet.

We have written to you three times (and include copies of these at the end of this communication), and even had a promise by the UK commander Stewart Geary in March, where he met us at the gates of USAF Lakenheath, that he would get a reply to us. This has not materialised. We have received no replies from any of you at all.

We have now set up a peace vigil and peace camp at USAF Lakenheath to show our opposition to your preparations to engage in nuclear threats by hosting US nuclear weapons in our country. We will be here until 25th July and will keep returning until you assure us that no US nuclear weapons will arrive, be stored or deployed from Lakenheath.

Any of your personnel are invited to our 24/7 vigil that is being held at the main gate to USAF Lakenheath to exchange views on nuclear weapons, war and peace.

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Our nonviolent guidelines ensure safety, and respect for everyone and can be found on our website at <https://lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk/front-page/about-us/nonviolence-guidelines/>

We ask that you show us the minimal respect of responding to this letter and our demand that you do not return US nuclear weapons to the UK.

With peace and love,

- Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp
- Alianza por el Desarme Nuclear – Spain
- Alternativa Antimilitarista-Moc
- Cambridge Stop The War Coalition
- Cambridge Women in Black
- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- CND Cymru
- Communist Party of Britain – Eastern Region
- Greenham Women Everywhere
- Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action
- Heddwch ar Waith
- ICAN Cymru
- Kingston Peace Council
- Labour CND
- Lewisham and Greenwich CND
- Medact
- Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda
- Movement for the Abolition of War
- No To NATO
- Norwich & District Trades Union Council
- Norwich and District CND
- Norwich Friends of the Earth
- Norwich Stop The War Coalition
- Peace People Belfast
- Platform Women and Sustainable Peace (Platform Vrouwen en Duurzame Vrede)
- Scottish CND
- Stop The War Coalition
- Stop the War Cymru
- Trident Ploughshares
- UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities
- Waveney Trades Union Council
- West Suffolk People's Assembly
- Woking Action for Peace
- Women in Black against the War – Madrid
- Women in Black against the War – Madrid (Mujeres De Negro Contra Las Guerras)
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Italian Section)
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (UK Section)
- XR Peace
- Young Communist League – East of England

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