



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

May / June 2025



At the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) blockade of USAF Lakenheath an Oxfordshire peace activist challenges the return of US nuclear weapons



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A world in multi-crisis

HOW CAN WE ARGUE for peace when the talk is all of war? There is a widespread feeling among peace activists today of despair mixed with perplexity. Despair because the world is moving away from what was already a fragile state of imperfect and partial peace into an even more hazardous state of uncertainty and disaster. Perplexity because the arguments that we have been using which always struggled to cut through conventional wisdom now have even less power against a tide running strongly in the opposite direction. We are also caught up in compelling but pointless efforts to figure out what is going to happen next, whom we might regard as temporary allies and which alternatives to advocate with any chance of convincing anyone. And every day brings a new horror, shock, absurdity or all three together so that we feel compelled to try to form a judgment or make a prediction.

My response to this has been one which is probably shared by many others: we must not allow ourselves to be trolled by Trump, so after reading the headlines, just pick out one or two to keep well informed on the essential narrative, but otherwise don't keep reading any further. Trump's tactics are designed to stop us thinking at all, by piling on one grotesquerie after another so fast that we cannot keep up (Boris Johnson had much the same idea). And don't waste time listening to talking-heads. Switching off from their chatter not only helps preserve our sanity, but it makes space for creative thinking, because that is what is desperately needed.

We have to stand back and view the world from a distance – a distance of time. Imagine that we are a historian viewing the 21st century from the 22nd – if a living world still exists by then: how would they describe the current state of affairs? They would see the present time as a period of maximum danger when international values, already shaky, are being trashed, just when a multitude of existential risks (nuclear, climate, pandemic, AI) requires more, not less international cooperation. They would label this as the era of “global multi-crisis” that led to a “global turning-point” -- though in which direction the world would turn we today cannot yet know. Gordon Brown (much more sensitive to the issues that really matter out of office than in it, a not infrequent phenomenon) explored this territory perceptively

THIS IS OUR CHANCE
TO REIMAGINE A
WORLD BEYOND WAR



in his Guardian article of 12 April: “The old order is gone. Now we must build a new one”. The world, he wrote, needs a new “global charter” for its common future, building on the UN Charter but in a different century, a new multilateral cooperation to confront concerns that nation states cannot tackle on their own: “global security, climate, health and humanitarian needs as well as the flow of trade”.

This, I suggest, is the framework in which we should frame the argument for peace. It is not sufficient to argue by itself that nuclear weapons are immoral, are costly, or may lead to war by accident or design without situating these valid cases within the wider context of the multiple threats to our existence. If we are arguing solely against the proposition that more “defence” is needed for Europe, including more nuclear “defence”, we shall never win. When there is routine discussion in the media of our “pre-war” situation, of the chances of a “new world war”, of the phenomenon of “forever wars”, peace advocates will not even get two minutes on the Today programme.

Our case has to be that in a new era of global multi-crisis, all the old strategic assumptions are out of date, and so are the arguments over them. We need to define this crisis – and here we must do some hard homework ourselves to establish its contours – and the international effort that will be required to turn it round. Confronting the nuclear threat, which now includes the danger of new proliferation, is only one part of the “global charter” that is required. Let us pool our resources, moral but also practical, to write the text of that charter. ■

John Gittings

Oxford CND at USAF Lakenheath

DO WE NEED MORE nuclear weapons? Do we need US nuclear weapons in the UK? Should any introduction of such weapons into the UK be discussed by our parliament?

Unfortunately, our government will not even comment let alone discuss whether we should have these nuclear weapon systems on bases out of our control.

It was left to researchers to notice that a budget had been set by the US for such particular silos to be built to house new nuclear bombs.

Along with Peter Burt, former head of the Nuclear Information Services, I went to a viewpoint on Lakenheath Common to see the silos which are there in preparation for the bombs or may even already contain them.

USAF (RAF) Lakenheath, with its F35s, is known to have already supported the genocide in Gaza. These jets, using 1 gallon of fuel every 10 seconds, are having a massive impact on our climate, but are not included in any Carbon calculations either by the UK or the US.

With all this in mind, on April 26th, a group of 15 Oxfordshire peace and climate activists boarded a minibus to drive more than a hundred miles across country to join the blockade organised by LAP, the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (an alliance of 40 peace groups).

Other Oxfordshire Activist choirs had already been to the first day of the peace camp, the 14th April, which was an amazing day of music and

workshops ending with a concert with some great performers such as Rob Johnson and Seize the Day.

There had also been other themed days devoted to workshops on Climate and Genocide, with international speakers.

Some of the minibus group, several musicians and singers, had already been to the camp. Some Oxfordshire people like Ginnie Herbert stayed the whole fortnight but some of us who could only manage a day were glad of a lift to the day of the blockade, the 26th.

By the time we arrived there was already a crowd of people standing or seated in front of the main gate. We put up our banners to a really brilliantly fence, decorated Greenham style with bright children's clothing etc.

We held the gate for 2 hours and then the police decided that they should show that they were in control and started to very politely, threaten arrest. We stayed on for another hour, letting the police know why we were there. One policeman said to me "Well we all 'ave our opinions, madam" to which I replied "It's not just opinion, It's fact!"

Eventually most of us moved gradually back leaving 6 people who had decided that they were not moving and were arrested and charged with obstruction of the highway.

The rest of us visited the peace camp and were driven back safely and speedily by Liz Taylor, arriving home just after 7pm. ■

Nuala Young



USAF Lakenheath

TODAY, USAF (RAF) LAKENHEATH is the largest USAF-operated base in the United Kingdom and maintains a significant role in the U.S. military posture in Europe.

As reported in a March 3, 2025 article in the U.S. military newspaper Stars and Stripes titled “RAF Lakenheath lays groundwork for possible return of US nuclear bomb storage” report says the U.S. Air Force has been constructing facilities in Royal Air Force (RAF) airbase Lakenheath for its “surety” program, a program that refers nuclear weapons.

The American Federation of Scientists (AFS) report determined that the United States Air Force is re-establishing its nuclear mission on United Kingdom soil for the first time in nearly two decades.

Approximately 100 U.S. B61-12 gravity bombs currently are stored in six air bases in five NATO countries – Aviano and Ghedi in Italy, Incirlik in Türkiye, Kleine Brogel in Belgium, Volkel in Netherlands, and Büchel in Germany

The AFS report states that “the change appears to be a direct reaction to the worsening political and military relations with Russia, resulting from its invasions in 2014 and 2022 of Ukraine, frequent nuclear warnings, and Russian deployment of increasingly capable long-range conventional weapons.”

The American Federation of Scientists assessment is that as of February 2025, there are no indications yet that nuclear weapons have been deployed to Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath, and that the return of the nuclear mission to Lakenheath is intended primarily as a backup, rather than to deploy weapons for now.

Visible upgrades at bases across Europe are also designed to facilitate the rapid movement of weapons between bases to increase operational flexibility and reduce vulnerability to Russia’s increasingly capable

long-range conventional missiles.

The number of vaults being reactivated at Lakenheath appears to be similar to the number of active vaults at Incirlik in Turkey. Satellite images from 2017 and 2019 did show what appeared to be nuclear weapons shipments at Incirlik, but these could have been regular transports or exercises, and there is no public indication that U.S. nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from Incirlik.

The AFS report states that once construction at RAF Lakenheath is completed and the base becomes an active nuclear site, it could potentially receive nuclear weapons from other locations in Europe in a crisis. George W. Bush administration further downsized the U.S. nuclear posture in Europe by reducing the number of nuclear deployment bases and cutting the number of nuclear bombs in half. This included withdrawing all nuclear weapons from USAF (RAF) Lakenheath marking the first time since 1954 that there were no U.S. nuclear weapons on U.K. soil.

The F-15Es of the 48th Fighter Wing at Lakenheath continued to participate in nuclear exercises, but the WS3 nuclear storage vaults at the base were placed in caretaker status.

In addition to two squadrons of F-15Es, the 48th Fighter Wing at Lakenheath in 2021 became the first wing outside of the United States to operate the F-35A Lightning II and is currently the only USAF wing to operate both F-15E and F-35A nuclear-capable fighters.

In anticipation of U.S. nuclear weapons returning to U.K after their removal 18 years ago, activists from around the world gathered at the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) Camp from April 14-26 2025. 250 people from across the country – as well as international delegates – participated in the demonstration and blockade. ■



Left: F35 dropping practice nuclear B61-12 bomb.

B52 bombers leave USAF Fairford

FOUR B-52S ARRIVED at USAF Fairford on the Oxfordshire / Gloucestershire border on February 11, and finally left by March 24th.

The nuclear capable bombers were deployed for exercise Bomber Task Force (BTF) 2025-2 Europe, which saw thirteen individual missions carried out with U.S. allies and partners in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. This was to practice

interoperability with many various allied aircraft.

USAF (RAF) Fairford is specifically designed to handle US bomber operations, and the unique location and capabilities are a great asset to NATO and allies. That will mean that while the B-52s went home, the base will likely see another BTF deployment (or even two) this year. ■

Increase in European defence spending

THE WAR IN GAZA and the wider instability in the region as well as the war in Ukraine and the tensions building up with China has driven global military spending to a new record. Over the last year, European defence spending jumped by 11.7% in real terms to reach \$457 billion with 2024 marking the 10th consecutive year of growth. It looks like it will increase further in 2025. Here in the

UK, the government has cruelly pledged to slash welfare benefits for disabled people to fund the increase in defence spending.

The fundamental problem underlying the corrosion of the NPT and international law and norms in general, which is that states that have invested so much money in their nuclear arsenals and militaries tell themselves this is necessary for security.

More weapons make them more secure, they claim. But heaps of other countries don't act this way, don't think this way—they can't afford to and they don't want to, because it doesn't make sense and has borne out, time after time, to be demonstratively false. ■



Expansion of US Nukes into NATO

ALTHOUGH THE NEW US administration is looking to refocus on the Asia-Pacific, the policy of expanded nuclear sharing makes sense, as it could ameliorate NATO's growing conventional inferiority against the battle-hardened Russian military.

The ability of these weapons to be used for nuclear war is rather limited, as they can only be delivered by aircraft, which is much less expedient than various types of missiles. However, that doesn't mean the US and its vassals and satellite states in NATO won't expand the scope of their delivery systems in the foreseeable future, including in the vicinity of Russian borders.

It seems not even the new administration is immune to such aggressive moves, as Trump's

Pentagon chief nominee is openly talking about the possibility of expanding the US/NATO nuclear sharing policy. Namely, according to General Dan Caine, this refers to the increase in the number of countries hosting US nuclear weapons. Caine's statement is all the more disturbing given the fact that he's slated to be the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"From a military perspective, expanding NATO allies' participation in the nuclear deterrence mission in some capacity would enhance flexibility, survivability, and military capability. If confirmed, I will work <...> to evaluate the cost/benefit of such a decision," Caine said. ■

Salisbury Ceasefire Vigils

PEACE GROUPS IN SALISBURY have gathered together (below) to organize half hour silent vigils every Saturday in the center of the city. Groups involved include the Salisbury branches of Christian Aid, Amnesty International, Quakers, Sarum Concern for Israel Palestine and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. We have been joined also by many members of the public who have shared our aims of calling for a permanent ceasefire in the Middle East. We have been appalled by the genocide taking place in Gaza and the West Bank. We call on our government to stop supplying arms and military intelligence to the Israelis and to join with other governments working for a permanent solution that ensures peaceful co-existence for both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Our vigils began back in November 2023 and we are now joining together for the 73rd time at the end of April 2025. During that period, we have

all felt the strength of being together in silence, to make sure that the terrible violence taking place in the Middle East is never forgotten. We are encouraged by the joining together of younger and older people in this joint cause, sharing our various perspectives and reflecting on our own personal thoughts in the silence.

The vigils have attracted local press coverage and each week we contact our local MP to emphasise the need for him to take a strong stand on these matters.

We have made videos inspired by our vigils and these can be found via this link:

<https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/events/1142-73rd-salisbury-ceasefire-vigil>

Do have an explore of this archive and please circulate any that you like to your friends and contacts to help spread the message. ■

Peter & Carry Gloyns

Shut Down Leonardo (SDL) Southampton

LEONARDO UK IS THE UK wing of the international arms manufacturer Leonardo S.p.A, a large Italian corporation well known for supplying weapons to the Israeli Army, Air Force and Navy. The Leonardo UK site in Edinburgh produces the Electro-Optical Targeting Systems (EOTS) fitted to the F35 Lightning II fighter jets being used by Israel in the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The Southampton site manufactures thermal imaging sensors and infrared detectors (EO/IR) used for missile guidance and target identification. As well as being part of one of the world's largest corporations supplying weapons to Israel, the factory is also directly complicit in the horrifying crimes of western and western-backed militaries across the world, and specifically in Palestine.

As a result, SDL (Shut Down Leonardo) have held regular vigils outside the factory gates since

February 2024 (see photo below) to highlight the role played by the site in the escalating Palestinian genocide and directly appealing to the workers to cease their complicity in the ongoing attacks on civilians. The factory was also previously subject to intermittent protest due to Leonardo's role in supporting the Saudi military's war on Yemen, which has also fed into the current campaign.

Vigils are held weekly, alternating between the factory site and the more-accessible Southampton city centre to drum up support. There are also "surprise morning actions" in which activists block the gates of the factory early in the morning.

We know that this is a long-term struggle which may take a long time to show results, but we take heart from the success of other campaigns across the country which proves that resilience and determination can, and do, lead to arms companies' closures. ■



Join Oxford's Conscientious Objectors' Day ceremony

Thursday May 15th, 2025 1:00 pm.

Bonn Square, Oxford OX1 1LQ

(If wet – in New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square)

Readings, poems, singers

**Honouring conscientious objectors from WW1 and WW2
And from current conflicts around the world**

Songs from **Didcot Red Kites** and **Oxford Seagreen Singers**

We can all play a part in supporting Conscientious Objectors (COs), raising awareness and taking a stand against militarism in our communities.

Around the world – in Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Norway, Colombia, Turkey, South Korea and many other places – conscientious objectors (COs) are refusing to participate in the military, whether by refusing to be conscripted or deciding to leave after joining. They are often persecuted for their beliefs, imprisoned or forced to flee.

They follow in the footsteps of COs across world history.

In the UK, for example, eighty thousand people refused conscription in the First and Second World Wars.

Visit **CO-Day.org** for articles, videos, educational materials and in-depth resources on the history and contemporary struggles of COs worldwide.

oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop

'Invest in Peace not Weapons' – CND demonstration at Devonport dockyard

JOIN CND FOR A PROTEST on Saturday 7th June, in Plymouth, focused on the Devonport Dockyard, where Britain's nuclear-armed submarines are serviced!

12 noon assemble on Guildhall Square, Armada Way in Plymouth city centre (an accessible pedestrian walk from the Rail and coach stations) for a march and rally; and then 2pm assembly at the gates of the Trident nuclear dockyard, Camel's Head, Devonport.

The Devonport Dockyard is at the centre of Britain's deadly nuclear weapons system. It services the current generation of nuclear-armed

Vanguard submarines, and is a decommissioning centre for nuclear-powered submarines.

Devonport is one of the most socially deprived areas of England. The nuclear dockyard holds back other potential business investment in Plymouth. Green energy is a critical, rapidly expanding industry. The Devonport dockyard could be a major centre for wind and wave turbine construction. The billions being wasted on nuclear weapons could be spent on social welfare, and redirected into creating highly skilled, well-paid jobs that don't threaten people and planet. ■

Contact: **Tony.staunton@blueyonder.co.uk**

Diary



**Every Saturday 2 to 3pm
Women in Black at the Martyrs'
Memorial**

May

9th-11th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp poetry – Nuala 01865 749459.

15th Saturday 12.00noon update on TPNW at UN Rebecca Johnson.

Mondays – Abingdon Peace Group

Vigil every Monday – War Memorial 8.15 – 8.45 Peacemakers.

Tuesday 13th – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign Zoom 4.30pm.

Thursday 15th – Conscientious Objector Day – Bonn Square, Oxford 1.00pm.
Speakers, poems, singers – church if wet.

June

Wednesday 4th – Faringdon Peace Group meeting.

Mondays – Abingdon Peace Group.

Vigil every Monday War Memorial 8.15-8.45 Peacemakers.

6th-8th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Nuala 01865 749459

7th – CND demo, Devonport.

Best list of news items, webinars etc:

https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items

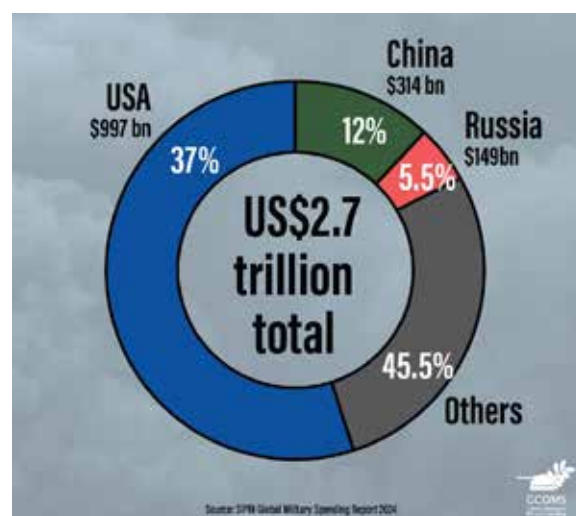
<https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/events>

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Latest News

GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING (2024)



Membership subscriptions

For details of Bankers Orders

e-mail: liztaylor@virgin.net

If you pay your subscription by cheque please can you pay us as soon as possible. Oxford CND needs that money to campaign and send you information and newsletters. **WE ARE ALSO VERY GRATEFUL FOR EXTRA DONATIONS.**

Subs are very reasonable – £10 or £5 low wage, but are essential for us to continue to campaign. Standing orders can continue as before.

Make cheques for 2025 payable to Oxford CND and send to: **Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP**

Oxford CND Newsletter by email

Some members already receive the Oxford CND newsletter only by email. If you would like to receive the newsletter online please let Liz Taylor, the membership secretary know on:

liz.taylor5@virgin.net

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Please contact: Nuala Young
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Oxford



Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:

Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP

No later than: **Sunday 22nd June 2025**