

# **CND Report to Abolition 2000 AGM**

## **January 2024**

Nuclear dangers around the world are escalating and are now perhaps greater than ever before. In response, CND has campaigned against Britain's own nuclear weapons system, Trident, as well as calling on the government to join international efforts for a world without nuclear weapons.

A particularly worrying development in the past couple of years is the likely return of US nuclear weapons to Britain. Evidence is mounting that the US is preparing to store B61-12 nuclear bombs specifically at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. This originated when the US Department of Defense added the UK to a list of NATO nuclear weapons storage locations in Europe being upgraded under a multimillion-dollar infrastructure programme. Furthermore, fresh budget documents dated March 2023 express the need for a 'surety dormitory' at the base. Surety is a term used by US government departments to refer to the capability to keep nuclear weapons secure. The 144-bunk dormitory, the documents say, is needed, as with "the influx of airmen due to the arrival of the potential Surety mission".

CND arranged a national demonstration at RAF Lakenheath in May. Hundreds of supporters from across the country attended, and we welcomed peace activists from Germany and the Netherlands, who work to get rid of the same US nuclear weapons from bases in their own countries.

This was followed by a Citizens' Weapons Inspection later in the year, which received widespread media coverage. We are legally challenging development works at the base, encouraging our supporters to contact their MPs on the matter, and liaising with Parliamentary CND colleagues to question the government on the latest developments.

As well as the US bombs coming to the UK, CND continued to campaign against our own nuclear weapons system – Trident. We have protested the extra funding granted to Trident over the past year, taking our Wages not Weapons message to demonstrations, party conferences and trade unions. Our work with our affiliated trade unions is more important than ever, at a time when the TUC has narrowly backed increased military spending and abandoned its defence diversification policy.

CND is also working with trade unionists in Australia to oppose the AUKUS pact; the trilateral agreement between Australia, the UK and US aiming to provide nuclear-powered submarines for Australia.

CND has been a key partner in organising the national demonstrations calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets of London, and other cities and towns across the country, to support our call for peace. War also continues in Ukraine following Russia's invasion in 2022. CND co-organised a demonstration in 2023

to again call for a ceasefire, and will soon host an international webinar to discuss the conflict with other peace activists. An element of the conflict that we have strongly condemned is Britain sending depleted uranium munitions to Ukraine. DU shells have been implicated in thousands of unnecessary deaths from cancer and other serious illnesses.

Another destabilising step in the context of this war was Finland becoming the 31st member of NATO. We condemned the enlargement of the nuclear-armed alliance and called for a new common security architecture to be discussed – which moves away from militarisation and nuclear weapons. During the NATO Heads of State summit in Vilnius, CND helped organise a hybrid counter-summit.

CND continues to call on the government to engage with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Steady work has continued with CND's Nuclear Ban Communities initiative which aims for local authorities to adopt motions in support of the TPNW. CND's Chair Tom Unterrainer was present at the second meeting of TPNW states at the end of the year in New York. We were also present at the NPT Preparatory Committee in Vienna in August, holding an expert online fringe meeting with the UK's Disarmament Ambassador.

And as the climate emergency intensifies, we have increased our Peace and Planet work, including joining XR's major event in April, to highlight the link between nuclear weapons and climate change. One focus of our work in the climate movement has been to debunk the myth that nuclear power is a clean energy, necessary to achieve global zero.