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## GREENPEACE INSPECTS ALDERMASTON

Members of Chester Greenpeace were among 400 people from all over the country who converged on the Atomic Weapons Establishment facility at Aldermaston in November to conduct the world's largest ever inspection of a nuclear weapons factory, following reports that Tony Blair is building a new nuclear weapon.

The team of inspectors organised by Greenpeace and the Block the Builders campaign wanted to challenge the legality of work being carried out at AWE. Strong evidence suggests that some £1 billion worth of new weapons facilities are being built. This includes a giant new laser, for use in simulating nuclear tests. Hundreds of new nuclear weapons scientists are also being recruited. All this is happening prior to any parliamentary or public debate on whether the UK should build a new nuclear weapons system. Fundamental questions such as: How are Cold War nuclear weapons relevant to 21st century foreign policy?; What real threats does the UK face?; and What effect would building a new bomb have on international disarmament negotiations? all remain unanswered.

Greenpeace disarmament campaigner Louise Edge said: *While Tony Blair rattles his sabre and waves international treaties at foreigners, he's agitating for Britain to break those same treaties. That's why hundreds of people from across Britain have come here to inspect our country's bomb making factory and highlight Tony Blair's hypocrisy... The real threat to Britain isn't nuclear attack, it's climate change. Blair's successor could make Britain a low carbon country with the tens of billions it would cost to build a new atomic weapons system... dropping Trident renewal should be the first thing a new leader does.*

Inspectors circled the perimeter fence taking photos to capture images of work already underway to build the Orion Laser - a vital component in building a new British bomb - despite ministers' claims that no decision on Trident's future has yet been taken. The event culminated in all 400 inspectors placing a legal notice on the perimeter fence stating that replacing or upgrading Trident contravenes international law and building work must stop immediately.

I believe it is crucial that we act now to make it clear to the government that massive opposition exists to the UK building new nuclear bombs and fuelling a new arms race, before the political decision is taken this winter. If we don't, a decision to build new bombs is likely to be nodded through by political parties who, though they may in reality see no point for nuclear weapons, are scared of being accused of being 'soft on defence'.

If the government breaks its international commitments to disarm, the repercussions will be massive. The already shaky international disarmament regime will be fatally undermined, and it will become impossible for the UK to pressurise other countries not to develop their own nuclear weapons. In short, it's a move that will fuel a new nuclear arms race. That's why we need to keep on campaigning against Trident, and keep campaigning against the construction work at AWE.

For details of Chester Greenpeace, contact: Cheryl Buxton-Sait on [cherylbuxton@hotmail.com](mailto:cherylbuxton@hotmail.com) or phone: **0776 388 1036**. More details on Block the Builders can be found at: [www.blockthebuilders.org.uk](http://www.blockthebuilders.org.uk).

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## EXTENDING THE TERROR OF TRIDENT

There is of course some real urgency to be active if we hope to ensure a negative vote in Parliament on the government's White Paper expressing the plan to 'renew' or 'improve' the Trident submarine missile system. It is encouraging to note the extent of the public opposition. CND's alternative White Paper is a brilliant, straightforward and clear denunciation of the proposed policy. It ends: *A bold initiative by our government not to replace Trident, together with strong promotion of multilateral initiatives, can help reshape the global security context and ensure a future free from the threat of nuclear annihilation.* (Copies free from Wrexham Peace & Justice Centre, 35 Kingsmills Rd, Hightown. Tel: 01978 312375).

The unaltered ethical issues about any weapons which are essentially indiscriminate and disproportionate (as in 'Just War theory' and international law) are completely ignored by government. It has been helpful to see the principles re-iterated by the Scottish churches jointly, and following the Pax Christi ecumenical seminar in London, there was no difficulty in gathering support for a strong Statement to the Prime Minister from the main Church Leaders in Wales - all the Anglican and Catholic bishops, and senior Moderators and others from Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Independents and Quakers. The Conference of Catholic bishops of England and Wales issued their own disaffection with replacing Trident, no

doubt influenced by the crystal clear statements from the Vatican.

The senior research organisations in UK working together have often produced significant documents (most of which can be seen at W. P. & J. Centre). A neat four page 'Briefing' is available from 'Beyond Trident' which is a joint initiative of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Policy, the British & American Security Information Council, the Oxford Research Group and the WMD Awareness Programme.

So far we cannot discover more than a few dozen MPs who see that our possession encourages proliferation in non-nuclear states and contributes nothing to military security. Increasingly it is being realised that our government, warmly supported by the Bush administration, does not believe in multilateral moves towards nuclear disarmament as pledged in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They have given the merest glance at the superb report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (2006) under the chairmanship of Hans Blix, and still totally ignore the model Convention on the Prohibition of every aspect of nuclear deterrence, put together in 1999 by the International Lawyers, Engineers and Scientists and Physicians.

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# LET'S HAVE A NUCLEAR FREE WREXHAM!



Rally celebrating 'Nuclear Free Wales' in 1982

It was back in February 1982 that the old Clwyd County Council became the last local authority in Wales to sign up to the Nuclear Free Local Authority (NFLA) network, and completed the jigsaw of a Nuclear Free Wales. Since the creation of the Unitary Authorities ten years ago, not all have rejoined the NFLA, and this includes Wrexham.

Of course, in many ways, Wales was not and is not nuclear free. It has the radioactive legacy of its nuclear power stations: Trawsfynydd, currently being decommissioned, and Wylfa, still in operation. Spent nuclear fuel is carried by rail from Wylfa across North Wales into England. Contamination from Sellafield pollutes the North Wales coastline. Carwyn Jones AM, the landfill champion, has recently said that he wants local authorities in Wales to volunteer to have nuclear waste dumped in their areas and hasn't ruled out forcing them to accept nuclear waste if they don't sign up of their own accord.

Joining the NFLA network gives local authorities a powerful, communal voice against the nuclear expansionism of New Labour, with its plans to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons and to build a new generation of nuclear power stations and dumps.

NFLA's terms of reference include the following:  
*To consider and recommend action which local authorities can take:*

- *to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict affecting their areas;*
- *to support the safe phase out of nuclear power in the UK in the shortest practicable time;*
- *to support the removal of hazards posed by the transportation and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste;*
- *to support the promotion of positive alternatives to nuclear power and employment in an expanded non-nuclear sector.*

Please contact your local councillor and ask for him/her to support the anti-nuclear movement in a practical way by pressing for Wrexham to rejoin the NFLA network as soon as possible.

If you don't have contact details for your councillor, you can call the electoral office on **01978 292020** or email **electoral@wrexham.gov.uk**.

More information about NFLA can be found at **www.nuclearpolicy.info**; alternatively you can write to: NFLA Secretariat, Town Hall, Manchester M60 2LA, or call: 0161 234 3244.

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So why ? There is no simple answer to this. However we know there is a powerful military-industrial-scientific complex for the continuation of nuclear deterrence, as well as for the scandalous arms trade more generally. More likely is the need felt by several former CND members, like Tony Blair, to distance themselves from any kind of radical thinking, in the hope of appealing to 'middle England' to help them return to power at the next election. Maybe they will discover that even 'middle England' has decided against weapons of terror, whoever has them. We must help to ensure this, so we must deluge our parliamentary representatives with the solid facts.

