

From:-

**Lakenheath Alliance for Peace,**

lap@gn.apc.org

To:-

Colonel Shonry Webb and Brig. Gen. Joseph Campo,

USAF(RAF) Lakenheath,

Chester St, Lakenheath, Brandon IP27 9PS

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Lakenheath Base Commanders,

We are writing to you as we have major concerns that you are preparing to break international and national law and threaten global peace and security by preparing to host US nuclear weapons at Lakenheath. These are weapons that could never be used in accordance with international humanitarian law and where their deployment is seen as an unlawful threat to world peace.

We are already concerned that this largest of all US Air-force operated bases in the UK is being used in wars that have nothing to do with the self-defence of the UK but are aiding and abetting terrible war crimes in other countries. The move is also a further dangerous escalation of the threats and counter threats from nuclear-armed states, a trend we recognise from history as bringing us ever closer to utter disaster. You will be aware that in the meantime a clear majority of UN states back the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), in recognition that only complete elimination can remove the ongoing existential threat they pose.

We are also concerned about the possibility of nuclear accidents taking place and their likely cover-up as the accidents in 1956 and again in 1961 were only admitted to in 1979 and 2003 respectively.

Despite being called an RAF station, in fact Lakenheath is run by the USAF and currently only hosts USAF units and personnel. We are extremely concerned that the upgraded and more advanced warhead - the B61-12 - when delivered more accurately by satellite-guided missiles, have been designed as a first-strike weapon system. This will be a major increase in NATO's capacity to wage nuclear war in Europe and is dangerously destabilising, increasing global tensions and putting the UK on the front line in any NATO/Russia war.

In pursuing nuclear weapons, nuclear-armed states - including Britain and the USA - have caused long-lasting human and environmental damage and destruction. It has now been 70 years since the first detonation of a thermonuclear bomb by the US. The Castle Bravo test was the largest nuclear explosion ever detonated by the US and it has had a devastating impact on the people of the Marshall Islands, who now mark this terrible anniversary as Nuclear Victims Remembrance Day. The production of nuclear weapons has already had catastrophic consequences for many indigenous people across the globe.

We are also extremely concerned about the environmental impact of all the squadron flights that take place from 8.00 to 16.00 every weekday and often much more. As an example, it has been calculated that each F-35 at Laken-

heath burns 22 gallons of fuel per minute, it has been spoken of as a climate killer.

The F-35s at Lakenheath are fitted with Lockheed Martin 'wind-corrected munitions dispensers', specifically for use with cluster munitions. These cluster bombs are outlawed under the Cluster Munitions Convention which has been signed and ratified by Britain and so should not be on British soil.

As you are aware there are many people here in the UK and globally who are in despair at the dangerous waste of resources going into weapons and wars at this time when we should be dealing with the climate and biodiversity crises. There have been and will continue to be demonstrations and peaceful civil resistance actions taking place at Lakenheath with the aim of preventing nuclear weapons from returning.

You will be aware that in November 1989 there was a 6-week fast outside the main gate at Lakenheath. Angie Zelter wrote to Commander Col. Westover at that time requesting an opportunity to speak with base personnel about all our concerns. P B Hughes replied on behalf of Squadron Leader P M Cowper saying there was no objection to this. I hope that this time too we will be enabled to carry on discussions with base personnel. We would also like to arrange a meeting with you as base commanders. Please let us know when would be convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Ginnie Herbert (Greenham Women Are Everywhere), Alison Lochhead (Movement for the Abolition of War), Sue Wright (Norwich and District CND), and Angie Zelter (XR Peace).