



**Campaign for
Nuclear Disarmament**
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Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KC MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

17 November 2025

Prime Minister,

Rethink disastrous nuclear expansion and drive to war

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding your decision to purchase 12 US F-35A nuclear-capable fighter jets for stationing at RAF Marham. This marks a significant expansion in the country's nuclear capability, meaning that Britain will be able to launch nuclear weapons from both the sea and air. Legal opinion on the purchase finds that the British government is in breach of its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

At a time of increasing global tensions and the rising threat of nuclear weapons being used in war, the British government should be doing everything possible to abide by and strengthen international arms control frameworks, not undermine them.

These F-35A fighter jets can launch US nuclear bombs now deployed to NATO bases across Europe, and here at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. These B61-12 bombs have been designed to be used on the battlefield, alongside conventional weapons. Yet the full destructive power of each bomb is more than three times that of the Hiroshima bomb, which killed around 200,000 people. Recent simulations by Princeton University show that use of these so-called 'tactical' nuclear weapons in an exchange with Russia could lead to casualties of 2.6 million people within a few hours - and many more afterwards, including through radiation and climate-related impacts.

With the ongoing devastating war in Ukraine and the horrific escalating conflict in the Middle East, Britain's nuclear expansion will make the world even more dangerous. Far from protecting the British population, your decision to buy US nuclear capable fighter jets, that can launch US B61-12 nuclear bombs, ties Britain even closer to the dangerous leadership of US President Donald Trump. It puts Britain on the nuclear frontline and increases the risk of such weapons being used in war.

Millions of people across the world are losing their lives, homes and livelihoods to climate breakdown. Globally, militarism accounts for 5.5% of carbon emissions. These F-35A nuclear-capable jets burn over 80 litres of jet fuel per minute when flying in their least fuel-intensive mode, and far more when carrying out high-powered manoeuvres.

Campaigning for peace, justice and a nuclear-free future

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Far from making the world more secure, expanding Britain's nuclear capability will be contributing to climate breakdown and to greater insecurity.

Given the grave consequences of this expansion, including Britain's breach of international law, it is also deeply concerning that no opportunity was given for parliament to debate or vote on this decision before it was announced at the NATO summit in June.

We see this nuclear expansion as part of the war drive which is draining public funds away from essential public services and making the population poorer. Estimates put the purchase and sustainment costs of the F-35As at over £2.5bn for the life-time of the jets. These are on top of at least £205 billion that is being spent on the replacement of Britain's nuclear submarines.

We are also deeply concerned that the war-mongering rhetoric to justify these spending levels is also strengthening the racist, divisive politics of the far right which is further destabilising our communities and threatening our democratic rights.

We believe that your drive to 'war readiness', undermines national security and economic stability. Research shows that military spending is among the least effective ways to create jobs or stimulate long-term economic growth. Furthermore, your plans to more closely integrate the Ministry of Defence with the Department for Education risk damaging the educational and life choices of our young people.

We urge you to reverse this disastrous war drive, recommit to disarm Britain's nuclear weapons, as obligated under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and work to pursue a foreign policy based on de-escalation, diplomacy, and international cooperation. Instead of pouring hundreds of billions into lethal weapons, action needs to be focused on tackling the underlying causes threatening our human security. This means reversing the devastating poverty, deprivation and crumbling public services that mark our communities, investing in sustainable homes, rebuilding our health and education systems, and funding a just transition through green jobs, skills and infrastructure.

This is the real path to security and prosperity.

Signed,

Maxine Peake

Katharine Hamnett

Victoria Brittain

Ken Loach

Zack Polanski, Leader Green Party of England and Wales

Jeremy Corbyn MP

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP

Ellie Chowns MP

Ben Lake MP

Apsana Begum MP

Richard Burgon MP

Zarah Sultana MP

Brian Leishman MP
Iqbal Mohamed MP
Ayoub Khan MP
Shokat Adam MP
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Baroness Jennie Jones
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Jo Grady, UCU General Secretary
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Eddie Dempsey, RMT General Secretary
Mick Whelan, ASLEF General Secretary
Dave Ward, CWU General Secretary
Steve Wright, FBU General Secretary
Sara Kilpatrick, NEU President
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Raghad Altikriti, Chair, Muslim Association of Britain
Kathryn Lydon, Chair, Pax Christi England and Wales
Paul Parker, Quakers in Britain
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Sophie Bolt, General Secretary, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Lindsey German, Convenor, Stop the War Coalition
Kirsten Bayes, Campaign Against the Arms Trade
Campaign Against Climate Change
Rebecca Johnson, Acronym Institute for Disarmament
Dr Stuart Parkinson, Executive Director, Scientists for Global Responsibility
Okopi Ajonye, Nuclear Information Service
Richard Reeve, Coordinator, Rethinking Security
Dr Tim Street, Secretary, British Pugwash
Sarah Lasoye, MEDACT
Cllr Lawrence O'Neill, Nuclear Free Local Authority
Lakenheath Alliance for Peace
Lynn Jamieson, Chair, Scottish CND
Mabon Ap Gwynfor MS, Chair, CND Cymru
Tim Devereux, Movement for the Abolition of War
Lauren Muir, Policy & Outreach Officer, United Nations Association
Richard Outram, Secretary, Nuclear Free Local Authority (pers caps)
Fiona McOwan, Secretary, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom