

Britain: Activists Disrupt Construction of New Nuclear Weapons Factory

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, May 19, 2014

Region: [Europe](#)

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by Action AWE (Atomic Weapons Eradication)

£2 billion project going ahead, but Parliament has not yet voted on further nuke development.

That's what you call "democracy". But it is all for a good cause. Nuclear weapons are an "instrument of peace".

Daring dawn blockade of Berkshire's nuclear weapons factory

This morning at 7.20, a group of people began blockading the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) site at Burghfield, near Reading. The protesters, acting as part of ActionAWE [1], a campaign of nonviolent direct action, are trying to disrupt construction of a new nuclear warhead factory on the site.

The new development at AWE Burghfield is being built at a cost to the tax payer of almost £2 billion, despite the fact that parliament has yet to vote on replacing the current generation of nuclear warheads that the site would build.

The eight protesters, aged between 19 and 40, are locked together using handcuffs inside 'lock-on' devices – made from drainpipes, and vegetable oil drums filled with concrete in order to block the gate to the construction site to prevent further work on the site. Traffic is now queued up, unable to enter the facility. The Christians amongst the protesters are singing hymns.

Catherine Bann, 40, mother of two from Todmorden, said:

"The money we would spend renewing Trident could pay for all A & E hospital departments in the country for the next 40 years! It's a huge waste of public money to be investing in nuclear weapons, and people like us must make a stand now, so that future generations do not have to bear the cost."

Joanna Frew, 35, a member of the United Reformed Church living in London but originally from Scotland, said

"Trident is illegal, immoral and a waste of money. It is the opposite of everything that Jesus teaches us about being co-creators of life and loving your enemies. Political and religious leaders in Scotland are opposed to retaining

Trident at Faslane. We have a real opportunity over the next year to say that it is no longer acceptable , and that we don't want an illegal renewal."

Phil Wood, 20, a student at Bradford University added

"To be spending millions of pounds and planning to spend billions more on nuclear weapons while cutting back on essential public services that people rely on is unforgivable".

Matt Fawcett, 39, from Yorkshire CND said

"This 'do as we say, not as we do' policy of telling other countries they can't develop nuclear weapons while we spend billions developing new weapons of our own, not only undermines attempts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons but also discredits Britain on the world stage. Polls show 87% of the British public are against spending on new nukes at a time of such drastic cuts, yet the construction goes on at Burghfield without any parliamentary debate".

The UK government has an armed nuclear submarine on patrol and ready to fire at all times, with the ability to wipe out cities almost anywhere on earth within 15 minutes[2]. The UK government has a stockpile of around 225 nuclear warheads[3], each with eight times the explosive power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 [4] that killed an estimated 140,000 to 200,000 people. Running the Trident nuclear weapons system currently costs £2 billion a year[5], and has not seen any of the cutbacks facing other government spending and public services. The government will vote in 2016 to decide whether to invest in the UK's Trident nuclear weapon system for another 30 years.

Operated by a consortium of Jacobs Engineering Group, Lockheed Martin and Serco, AWE Burghfield plays an integral part in the final assembly and maintenance of nuclear warheads for use in the Trident system[6]. In 2011 Peter Luff, the then Minister for Defence Equipment, announced £2 billion of spending for redevelopment of the Burghfield and Aldermaston weapons factories[7]. The total spending on Weapons of Mass Destruction in the UK will soar to over £100 Billion should the government take the decision to renew Trident in 2016 [8].

Action AWE (Atomic Weapons Eradication) is a grassroots campaign of nonviolent action dedicated to halting nuclear weapons production at the Atomic Weapons Establishment factories at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Notes

[1] <http://www.actionawe.org/>

[2]<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/peace/trident-the-uks-nuclear-weapons-system>

[3]Stockholm International Peace Research Institute:www.sipri.org/research/armaments/nuclear-forces

[4]<http://www.cnduk.org/information/briefings> UK warheads are thought to have a yield of 80-100kt.

[5] http://fullfact.org/factchecks/cost_trident_nuclear_deterrent-28864

[6] www.awe.co.uk/aboutus/the_company_eb1b2.html

[7] <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111122/text/111122w0002.htm#111122114002933>

[8] <http://www.cnduk.org/information/briefings/trident-briefings>

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