



**Statement of the Pugwash Council
Press Release**

For Immediate Release

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Pugwash Urges Removal of All NATO Nuclear Weapons

The Pugwash Conferences, which has long advocated the complete removal of all US tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, very much welcomes recent news reports that 110 nuclear bombs based at Lakenheath Air Base in the UK have been withdrawn. Although no official confirmation of this move has been made by the US government, the report by Hans M. Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists appears credible (see www.fas.org/blog/ssp), and has been confirmed by other sources.

If true, the removal of the 110 B61 tactical nuclear bombs from Lakenheath, following on earlier removals of similar weapons from Ramstein Air Base in Germany in 2005 and from Greece in 2001, means that ‘only’ some 150-240 US nuclear weapons remain deployed in Europe. This is a substantial achievement given that, at the height of the Cold War in the late 1960s and 1970s, there were some 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons deployed by the US and NATO.

Common sense dictates that, if US tactical nuclear weapons can be withdrawn from the UK, Germany, and Greece, why not the 150-240 remaining tactical nuclear weapons from Belgium, Holland, Italy, Turkey and Germany? Such weapons serve no useful purpose, for either deterrence or defense, given the current political and security realities in Europe. In addition, their removal would reduce the risk of theft by terrorists or their inadvertent use in a crisis.

Accordingly, Pugwash calls on the US government to publicly acknowledge the withdrawal of the nuclear weapons from Lakenheath (and Germany and Greece), and its willingness to engage the Russian government in working towards the elimination of all tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, in accordance with the principle of the nuclear weapons states not stationing nuclear weapons on the territory of other countries. Pugwash also calls upon NATO, as we call upon all nuclear weapons states, to reduce and eliminate their reliance on nuclear weapons as a instrument of security policy.

Such actions would represent positive contributions towards nuclear disarmament, as called for by Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, and would contribute toward a helpful atmosphere in the period leading up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.