

"War preparation"

Once again preparations for nuclear armament

Construction work at Büchel airbase in Germany

Press release IPPNW

The medical organisation "International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War" (IPPNW) criticises the decision of the German government to prepare the re-stationing of nuclear weapons in Büchel despite the pandemic and before the elections on 26 September.

In an answer to the parliamentary group DIE LINKE dated 1 March 2021, the federal government confirms that construction work at the Bundeswehr airbase in Büchel on the runway will begin in 2022 and continue until 2026. The planned costs of the conversion and expansion measures amount to almost 260 million euros.

"While doctors and physicians are wrestling with new mutants of Covid-19 and working to carry out the largest vaccination and testing programme in Germany's history, the German government wastes funds for the use of nuclear weapons. This is not only irresponsible, it is a scandal", says Dr med *Lars Pohlmeier*, a physician from Bremen and board member of IPPNW Germany.

The new model of the US nuclear bomb for "nuclear sharing" within NATO – the B61-12 – is to come to Europe from 2022. These new nuclear weapons are guidable and are supposed to be able to hit more precisely. These bombs are thus easier to deploy and, from the military's point of view, have an advantage over the previous version, which could only be dropped from an aircraft. In addition, the Ministry of Defence is planning to buy new fighter planes from the USA for this purpose. Currently, there is talk of 30 F-18s for the mission itself and another 15 as escort aircraft. The purchase of these 45 F-18 fighter jets alone would cost an estimated 7.5 billion euros.

"This means the biggest nuclear build-up in Germany since the NATO dual decision", says *Xanthe Hall*, IPPNW disarmament officer. "Instead of talking about the meaning and purpose of nuclear sharing in NATO, and before a debate in the Bundestag about this rearmament, the German government is already taking the first measures and is having the runway at Büchel air base expanded. While Foreign Minister *Heiko Maas* affirms that he wants a "step-by-step" disarma-



Demonstration against stationing of nuclear weapons in Büchel (archive image wikipedia)

ment, *Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer* is pushing through a gradual rearmament", Hall continues.

The IPPNW demands more transparency from the German government and a public debate on nuclear sharing. In the answer to the minor inquiry by MPs *Vogler* and *Hunko* (Die LINKE), it says, as in past answers on this topic: "For security reasons, the information policy regarding NATO's nuclear forces is subject to the alliance's mandatory rules of secrecy. Consequently, no information can be provided on the number, storage locations, handling and specifics of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, as well as on training, exercises and security measures. Moreover, statements and speculations in this regard can neither be confirmed nor denied."

While the flight operations of Tactical Air Wing 33 are being moved from Büchel to Nörvenich, it is still unclear whether the US nuclear bombs will remain in Büchel, be moved to Nörvenich or are already flown to the USA for their refitting. The questioners of the minor small inquiry note that, according to "Spiegel" (August 2019), a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III has already flown nuclear weapons from Büchel to the USA for a short period of time for an initial software update.

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(Translation «Swiss Standpoint»)

The answer of the German government can be found at:
<https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/241/1924193.pdf>

Contact:
Angelika Wilmen, tel. +49 30 69 80 74 13, willmen@ippnw.de
Xanthe Hall, tel. +49 30 69 80 74 12, santhe@ippnw.de