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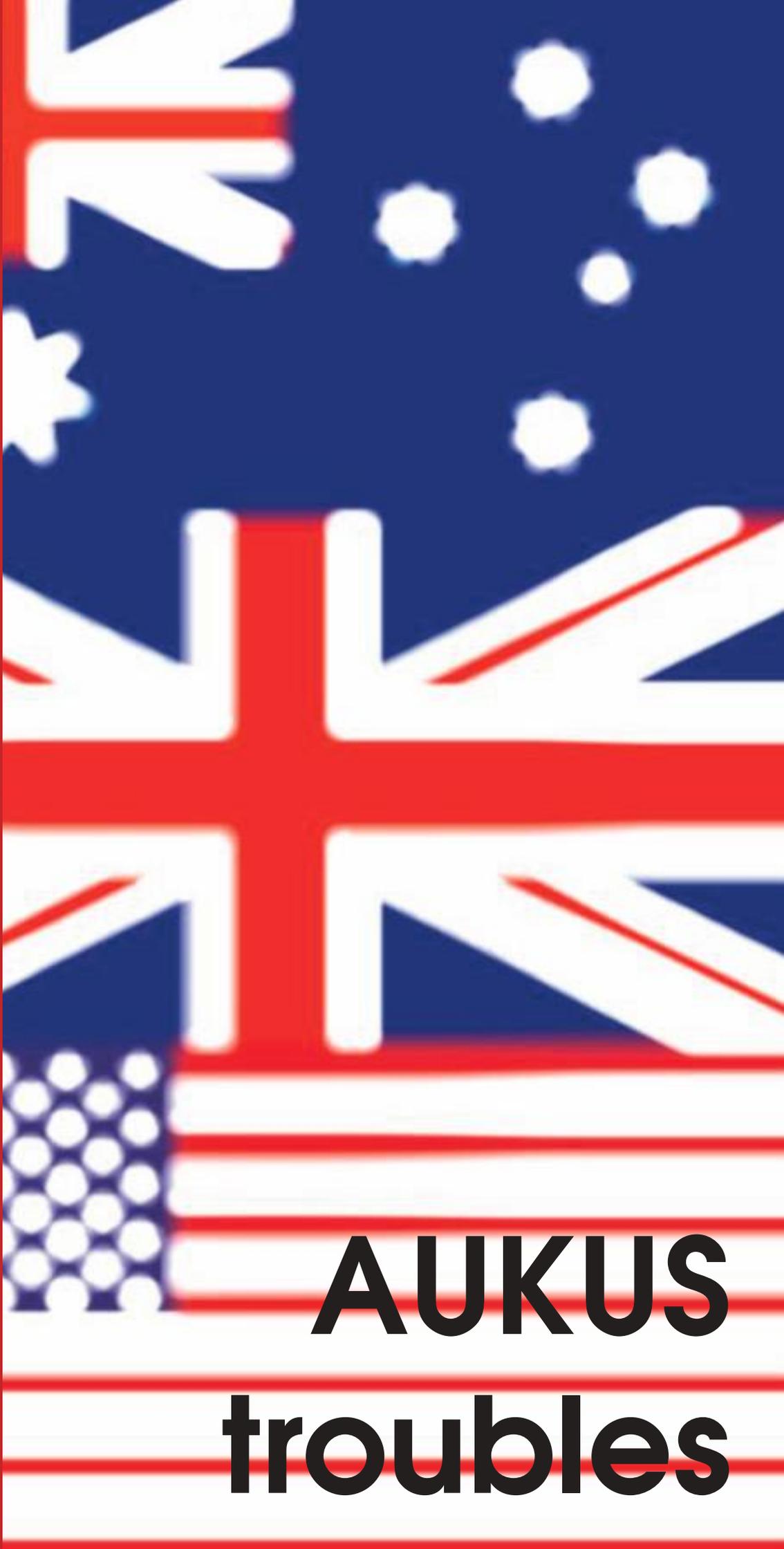
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AUKUS troubles

Protests against US nuclear weapons in Germany

Nuclear Sharing Must End!

Marion Küpker



Despite the challenges presented by the Coronavirus, the nationwide campaign *Büchel is everywhere! nuclear weapons free now* and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), succeeded in leading a broad political discussion about NATO's dangerous nuclear deterrence policy regarding US nuclear weapons stationed in Büchel. We received prominent support from SPD parliamentary group leader Rolf Mützenich, who publicly raised the issue of ending Germany's nuclear sharing arrangement. Our campaign group, *Abolish nuclear weapons - start with us!*, consisting of more than 70 peace movement organizations/groups, has increased pressure on the German government to withdraw the estimated 20 US nuclear bombs from Büchel. Germany must finally sign the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and become nuclear weapons-free, instead of implementing a planned nuclear "modernization"! Against this background, a "human chain" took place alongside the Büchel air base on September 5, 2021, exactly three weeks before the Bundestag elections (see further down in the text). Currently, the German parties of the so-called "traffic light coalition" (Social Democratic Party, Alliance90/the Greens, and Free Democratic Party) are holding coalition talks about their joint approach to nuclear weapons policy.

Political, Military & Industrial Background

Even though the Cold War ended 30 years ago, about 20 US nuclear bombs are still deployed at the German air force base Büchel in West Central Germany. German pilots are trained to take off with these bombs in their Tornado fighter jets when the order comes from the US president, through NATO, to drop them on their targets. This horrifying vision is part of the "nuclear sharing agreement" in NATO, with its nuclear deterrence policy, which includes a nuclear first-strike option.

These weapons of mass destruction – illegal and criminal under German, US, and international law – are scheduled to be replaced in the near future by expensive new, precision-guided nuclear weapons – the B61-12 – in a \$10-\$12 billion program of the US National Nuclear Security Administration's nuclear weapons complex.

At least three US national laboratories (the Sandia and Los Alamos Labs in New Mexico, the Y-12 Complex in Tennessee) along with the Kansas City Plant in Missouri, are part of B61-12 construction, mainly through giant weapons contractors including Boeing (tailfin kit: \$1.8 billion), Lockheed-Martin, Honeywell, and Bechtel. Around 400 B61-12 bombs are to be refurbished, at a cost of around \$25 million per bomb (according to Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists) making them more costly than if they were made of solid gold.

New developments in Büchel

Currently, Germany's Büchel nuclear weapons base is to be expanded between June 2022 and January 2026 at a cost of \$299 million (259 million). This will be done at all six US nuclear weapons sites in Europe that are part of so-called "nuclear sharing" (Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, and Turkey). These construction measures serve to prepare for the deployment of the new B61-12 nuclear bombs, the production of which will begin in the United States at the end of this year. For these four years, Luftwaffe Squadron 33 with its Tornado fighter jets will move from Büchel to the Nörvenich military base near the city of Cologne. In the coming years, the old nuclear bombs (B61-3s and B61-4s) are to be replaced with the new B61-12s. At Büchel, the construction plans include expanding the runway, as well as modernizing the nuclear weapons infrastructure. For example, special containers in the aircraft

hangars, where the approximately 20 bombs are stored, are to be renewed.

New nuclear weapon carrier fighter jets

For Germany's new government, the decision on the acquisition of new nuclear weapons carrier aircraft from the US is pending, and is estimated to cost up to \$9.248 billion, or 8 billion. Instead of buying the expensive and faulty US F-35 nuclear weapons carrier – as Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy plan to do – another US fighter jet is up for debate. Until 2040, when the EU's Future Combat Air System (FCAS) nuclear weapons fighter is to be developed, Boeing's F/A18, which can also land on US aircraft carriers, is currently favored as an interim solution. The German government wants to join forces with France and Spain to launch the new FCAS nuclear-capable multi-fighter aircraft. This new EU fighter would then perpetuate the controversial nuclear deterrent for decades between Germany and France. As a semi-autonomous weapons system networked with Eurodrones, the FCAS is expected to be operational from 2040 and would cost Germany alone about \$578 billion or 500 billion euros. Buying new jets could be put off if the service life of the 40-year-old Tornado fighter jets are extended further.

Climate and nuclear carrier aircraft

Mildly put, the 45 new US F/A 18 fighter jets alone, which German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer wants to buy for \$10 billion for the nuclear bombs in Büchel, show her climate blindness. The current Tornado fighter jet has been deployed in the Eifel region since 1985. The CO₂ pollution per flight hour of the Tornado fighter jet is 12,000 kg (12 t). The Büchel-based nuclear bomber pilots from Luftwaffe Squadron 33 reached their 200,000th Tornado flight hour in April 2019, after 34 years. They celebrated this in Büchel with media attention, which means that over 34 years, the old nuclear fighter jets alone have blown about 2.5 million tons of CO₂ into our environment.

The cooperation with Fridays for Future is very important here, because military training flights, and air force "shows of force," and nuclear attack rehearsals like Steadfast Noon, must also be included in the climate balance. These carbon blasts bear a considerable share of the responsibility for climate change and should be abolished.

Inside nuclear detonations, the nuclear chain reaction creates temperatures of 108 to 180 million degrees Fahrenheit (60 to 100 million degrees Celsius). This is about 10,000 to 20,000 times the surface temperature of our sun. The 500

above-ground nuclear tests, as well as the 1500 below-ground nuclear tests were detonated by states around the world. They share responsibility for global warming. The military belongs, especially with regard to nuclear weapons, within climate change negotiations and outlawed weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

The entry into force of the international treaty banning nuclear weapons was celebrated around the world on January 22, 2021, and in Germany alone there were over 100 actions. The entry into force means that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is binding international law for any country ratifying or acceding to it. As ICAN Executive Director Beatrice Fihn said, "Nuclear weapons have always been immoral, now they are illegal."

However, the provisions are binding only on signatory states, but this includes the signatory states that have not yet ratified the treaty: it applies to 86 states! The nuclear weapons states' room for maneuver is thus becoming ever narrower. Some financial institutions have ethics rules against which they must now be measured if they finance corporations that produce nuclear weapons (parts, delivery and communications systems, etc.). Also, under the treaty, these weapons may no longer be produced in the 86 states that are party to the treaty.

The pressure on Germany's government is constantly being increased by the Cities and Deputies Appeal and the organization of 'Mayors for Peace', so that Germany's accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons can finally take place. Together with ICAN, our member organizations are working hard for this: 646 parliamentarians, 171 of them members of the Bundestag, have already signed the appeal, which says in part: "As Members of Parliament, we vow to work towards the signing and ratification of this landmark treaty by our respective states, as we see the abolition of nuclear weapons as a high global public good and an essential step towards promoting the security and well-being of all peoples." In total, 137 cities and four German states have joined the Cities Appeal to support the Treaty or call on the federal government to join it. Also, over 700 Mayors for Peace in Germany have joined the Mayors for Peace alliance calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, the third biggest number of mayors in the world behind only Japan and Iran. Because of public interest – a poll shows that about 90% of public opinion is against these

nukes – our united campaign includes well-established organizations like IPPNW, IALANA, German Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi, and DFG-VK.

Büchel could be the key for nuclear disarmament

Our campaign shows that we are much stronger together when we focus on our united agreed goals: the fourth campaign started in 2016 with the name “20 weeks for 20 bombs.” Dozens of groups have traveled year after year to Büchel to protest directly at the base, which we call the “scene of crime.” Every year, religious leaders and bishops from different churches preach to as many as 1000 people at anti-nuclear gatherings near the base. Many group vigils and/or blockades take place at the base. Over the last several years Büchel has become a symbol of our civil disobedience/resistance to nuclear weapons. During the “20 weeks,” each group gets an introduction about our campaign *Büchel is everywhere! nuclear weapons-free now*. Many groups believe that besides lobbying and educational work, we also have to create pressure through nonviolent direct actions which uphold international laws prohibiting the planning and preparation of mass destruction (Nuremberg Principles).

Among the action groups is Nonviolent Action Abolish Nuclear Weapons (GAAA), which started the protests in Büchel 25 years ago. And since 2017, GAAA has coordinated an “international week” in July during the 20-week action presence. Among the internationals, we have had annual US delegations partly made up of peace activists working against US production of the new B61 nuclear bombs for Europe. Several “go-in” actions have resulted in court cases. On April 1, 2021, a formal appeal (of a conviction for a July 2018 “go-in” action) was filed by Stefanie Augustine and me with the Federal Constitutional Court (BGH) in Karlsruhe.

This was the 14th constitutional complaint filed this year, with almost 50 court cases of “go-in” actions in the last two years. So far, the Constitutional Court has refused to hear even one of the appeals complaints, ruling, among other things, that taking the cases would not be in the interest of the public. Again and again, all the lower courts have failed to recognize or apply international law, and they have refused to hear the testimony of the legal experts, e.g. Anabel Dwyer (US Adjunct Professor of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at T. M. Cooley Law School). And this despite the fact that international law is superior to our German law. In May 2021, the BGH wrote in reply to our complaint that it did not want to accept it, and

the letter did not even give reasons for the rejection. This means that we have exhausted all possible legal remedies in Germany, so we are now at the beginning of November filing a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), also known as the Strasbourg Court. With our many well-coordinated proceedings; with individual partial successes and our public relations work, we are making it increasingly difficult for the courts to continue to justify their rejection of our defense of “crime prevention” under intentional law.

Human chain in Büchel sends a signal

In the run-up to the nation-wide Bundestag elections, a “human chain” last September 5, along the highway adjacent to the “Fliegerhorst Büchel” nuclear weapons base, brought together about 800 people of the peace movement. Thus, a clear message was sent to the parties from the civilian population that the new UN nuclear weapons ban treaty must be ratified by Germany, the US nuclear weapons must be withdrawn, and the deployment of the new B61-12 bombs must be halted.

Despite major restrictions due to Corona and the rail strike, more than 40 carrier circle groups of the nationwide campaign *Büchel is everywhere! nuclear weapons free now* arrived in city buses or cars. In bright sunshine, many peace activists met for the first time after a month-long Corona break, the reunion creating a great mood along the “human chain.” The musical resisters, Lebenslaute, sang songs, dozens carried banners, and from cars there was benevolent honking and waving. Afterwards, an exciting program of speeches – which above all opened up the European perspective – energized the participants at the rally square at the air base’s main gate.

In my remarks, I drew attention to the current development of nuclear armaments in Büchel on behalf of our campaign, and pointed out the real threat of nuclear war posed by NATO’s “nuclear doctrine.” Prof. Karl Hans Bläsius devoted himself to the topic of artificial intelligence and the risk of accidental nuclear war, which is possible at any time. Angelika Claußen, who is European President of the International Section of IPPNW/ Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, presented the need for a European campaign – here is an excerpt from her speech:

“Yes, the peace movement is writing successes, we, the global civil society have pushed through the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty (TPNW) in alliance with the countries of the Global South and courageous outstanding

women politicians from countries in Europe, from Austria, and from Ireland. We expected the resistance of the nuclear weapon states, because the TPNW is diametrically opposed to their interests! Now it is Europe's turn! Nuclear sharing must be ended in Europe: in Germany, in Belgium, in the Netherlands and in Italy... The first step is to reject the nuclear dogma of NATO, the dogma of nuclear deterrence.

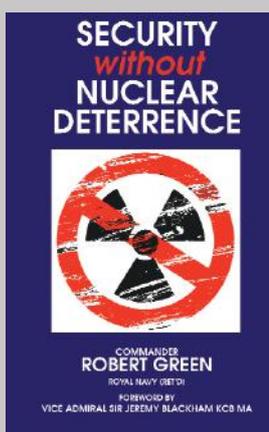
"And this is where a major current event comes into play: the defeat of the world power USA in Afghanistan. It is now crystal clear that military-based security policy is extremely destructive. The military and arms race, whether nuclear or non-nuclear, are totally inappropriate means to meet the challenges of humanity in times of climate crisis. The military itself is a climate killer. Instead, we need a civilian security and peace policy that implements important steps toward a social-ecological transformation with cooperative relations between our countries. Détente today, cooperative security policy, means drastic disarmament steps for climate justice. Nuclear-free Europe: that's what we called our joint campaign to bring the peace movement into dialogue with politicians on how a roadmap to end nuclear sharing in Europe will look.... A world free of nuclear weapons, the containment of the climate crisis including climate justice, and our right to life and health — all these goals belong together! This is what we are working for together here in Büchel!"

Speakers from other European "nuclear sharing" countries included Guido van Leemput, a staff member on Foreign Policy and National Defense of the Fraction of the Socialist Party in the Netherlands, and is involved with Bike for Peace Holland. Ludo De Brabander is spokesman for the Belgian peace organization Vrede ("peace" in Flemish), which is organizing protests at the Belgian air base Kleine Brogel. Alfonso Navarra spoke as the Italian representative of the "Demanding Disarmists" and transmitted a joint proposal of Italian peace groups to the next COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow demanding that the military's carbon pollution be included in negotiations. Rudolf Gottfried spoke of the October 9th actions to be held against the NATO nuclear attack maneuver "Steadfast Noon" in Nörvenich.

The entire rally was recorded in a livestream (in German) and can be viewed on Youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxFABSdzBO0.

European Bike Tour (September 24-26): Month of Action

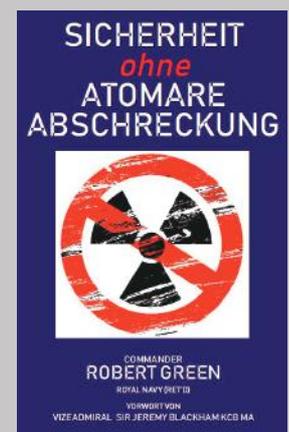
Nuke Free Europe is a young European network that proclaimed September 2021 as a "Month of Action" for the abolition of nuclear sharing in NATO states. The human chain in Büchel was the first of many, and afterwards protests at nuclear weapons bases in the Netherlands (Volkel) and Belgium (Kleine Brogel) were connected with a bicycle tour that began in Aachen. On September 24, a delegation of ten set out on



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their bikes from Aachen's "Fridays for Future" climate strike, where we distributed leaflets on climate, our network, nuclear weapons, and military CO₂ emissions.

Arriving at Volkel (Netherlands) we were welcomed by about 70 people. A rally took place near the air base with members of the Dutch Left and Green parties and local anti-nuclear organizations. Afterwards, we cycled together around the base, where – like in Büchel – about 20 nuclear bombs are maintained and where Dutch pilots practice for their use. Afterward, we set off with our bicycles in the direction of Belgium.

The Belgian peace organization Vrede welcomed us at a campsite where we held networking discussions around a campfire until the early hours of the morning. On Sunday, September 26, we started early and joined 130 cyclists on the last stretch towards the Belgian air base Kleine Brogel, which like in Büchel, has about 20 US B61 nuclear bombs. With an international rally and a small human chain, we protested together and made many acquaintances.

Among the international participants was the American Susan Crane of Redwood City, California, who came via Amsterdam especially for her Büchel trial (September 29th in the Cochem district court). Before her trial, Susan participated in the protests in Volkel and Kleine Brogel!

Europe in danger

Our resistance is already generating a lot of pressure, because otherwise it is hard to explain that currently during the coalition negotiations on October 29, 2021, the head of the Munich Security Conference Wolfgang Ischinger is quoted in about 80 German newspapers warning that "Europe would be in danger without US nuclear weapons in Germany". I quote from the press release of our campaign:

"A withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Germany would '... pull the rug out from under Poland's feet in terms of security policy'. Ischinger then raises the possibility that Poland might then ask that nuclear bombs be placed on its territory. The fact that Ischinger is considering this is playing with fire. As the longtime head of the so-called Security Conference in Munich, he must know that security requires trust. One basis for trust is that treaties are honored: 'pacta sunt servanda'. NATO has made a contractual commitment not to station nuclear weapons in the new accession states, including Poland. This commitment was explicitly emphasized by the Scientific Services of the Bundestag (WD 2-3000-041/20 of April 29, 2020): 'The NATO-Russia Founding Act (Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Russian Federation) of May 27, 1997, rules out the stationing of nuclear weapons on the territory of new NATO members'."

Ischinger knows, when Germany steps out, this will affect future decisions of the other European nuclear sharing countries: A possible domino effect!

In 2018, our campaign received the Oberhausener Church Prize, and in 2019 was awarded the Aachener Peace Prize for our anti-nuclear work in Büchel.

More information is at www.atomwaffenfrei.de; and at www.buechel-atombombenfrei.de

Marion Küpker, spokeswoman for the 'Büchel is everywhere! nuclear weapons-free now' campaign, peace officer on nuclear weapons at the Fellowship of Reconciliation Germany, and international coordinator in the DFG-VK against nuclear weapons — October 31, 2021

 **Gegen Atomwaffen**

in Büchel und überall!

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