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## Will Fairford Become Blair's Greenham?

In 1981 Ann Pettitt organised a march from Cardiff to Greenham Common. From small beginnings it snowballed into the Greenham Common Peace Camp.

On Sunday January 26<sup>th</sup> 2003 Ann and many of the Greenham women will be joining Gloucestershire Weapons Inspectors (GWI) for a mass citizens weapons inspection at USAF Fairford in the Cotswolds. Everyone is invited to attend, full details can be found on the GWI website [www.gwi.org.uk](http://www.gwi.org.uk)

"There are remarkable parallels between then and now and that's what caught my imagination," says Ann Pettitt. "In 1981 we were told that theatre nuclear weapons, cruise missiles, at Greenham would make the world safer but we felt they edged us nearer to crossing the nuclear threshold. It took years to pull back from the threshold back then and yet we now find ourselves, once more, on the brink."

"Last week Sir Joseph Rotblat said 'We are on a slippery slope, heading for disaster'. I'd go even further and say that Fairford stands at the edge of a precipice. My fear is that once over the edge there's no turning back. Contemplating the use of weapons of mass destruction in a war that supposed to be about eliminating such weapons is absurd, it's just plain wrong," she added.

Self styled Chief Weapons Inspector of Gloucestershire, Dave Cockcroft explains, "The United States makes it quite clear that the new generation of 'more usable' nuclear weapons, designed to target deep bunkers, were developed for use in situations like those in Iraq today. These are not deterrents, they are first use weapons and this makes it possible the next nuclear bomb to be used will be carried on a bomber from Fairford. After all Fairford is the biggest bomber base in Europe and one of only three forward bases for the B-2 Stealth Bomber in the whole world. It's time we all paid some attention to what goes on here."

"At our first inspection attempt at Fairford there were just 20 citizen inspectors, that was on October 31<sup>st</sup>. We were refused entry but said we'd be back. On December 14<sup>th</sup> we were back with over 500 citizen inspectors and staged a very inspiring demonstration. Once again refused entry we pledged to return and this time we're expecting thousands of inspectors. January 26<sup>th</sup> is the last day for inspections before Hans Blix reports to the UN Security Council and we felt we should mark the day with our third attempt to inspect Fairford," said Dave.

**Background** – for more information see [www.gwi.org.uk](http://www.gwi.org.uk)

Fairford is the biggest bomber base in Europe and has recently been upgraded to a forward base for the B-2 Stealth bombers as well as the smaller B-1 and older B-52 bombers. There are only three forward bases for the Stealth Bombers, two on British territory, at Fairford and Diego Garcia, the third is in Guam. These bombers are nuclear capable and the B-2 has test dropped B61-11 nuclear bunker busters. The B61-11 is the only US nuclear weapon still deployed outside US borders and there is already a stockpile in this country.

Gloucestershire Weapons Inspectors are an open group of concerned citizens with no affiliation to any political party or pressure group. They employ a refreshingly humorous approach to the serious business of weapons inspection. Dressed in white decontamination suits they carry inspection equipment made from household appliances. Their sophisticated equipment includes smart bomb intelligence testers, hypocrisy detectors and collateral damage anticipation indicators.

### Contacts

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