

IS MILITARY SPENDING GOOD FOR JOBS?

As the UK once again hosts DSEI, its 'flagship defence event' - one of the largest global arms fairs - Dr Sam Perlo-Freeman refutes the argument that arms production is good for the economy.

The government has announced a large increase in military spending, from 2.3% to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 (from a level already a lot higher than 10 years ago), at the expense of overseas aid. Most of this spending will go on new military equipment. They have also signed up to a new NATO target to raise it further to 3.5% of GDP by 2035, though with no specific plans to reach it.



The government's main justification for this extra spending is that it is needed to face the threat of Russia. But it also promises that the spending will drive an economic and technological boom, led by the arms industry. But is there any basis for this claim?

First off - yes, military spending creates jobs. So does all government spending - health, education, infrastructure, green energy and technologies, etc. So the real question is, does it create *more* jobs than other types of government spending? While there is no specific study for the UK, evidence from the US and Europe has consistently found that the same amount of

spending on these other areas of public spending creates significantly more jobs than spending on the military. Arms production in particular is highly capital intensive, and a higher share is spent overseas (especially on arms imports from the US). Most recently, a Greenpeace Europe study for Germany, Italy and Spain found that €1 billion spent on environmental industries produced 85% more jobs than spending on arms in Germany, 81% more in Spain, and over three times as many in Italy! Spending on environmental industries also led to much higher gains in economic output than arms spending.

Moreover, spending on health, education, environmental technologies or infrastructure produces tangible benefits to both people and to the economy, directly increasing economic capacity (not to mention helping save the planet in some cases). Military spending claims to produce greater security, but whether one believes that more fighter aircraft and nuclear submarines really do reduce the risk of Russian invasion, they create no tangible economic, social, or human benefits here and now.

As for innovation, rather than driving civilian technology, arms production increasingly *depends* on advances in civil technology, such as information and communications technology and AI. Much military specific innovation - such as stealth technology for aircraft - has little civilian application.

In short, far from supercharging economic growth as the government claims, higher military spending is largely an economic dead-end.

Dr Sam Perlo-Freeman, Research Coordinator at CAAT, the Campaign Against Arms Trade

FOR YOUR DIARY *Our website and social media will carry further details of events.*

SEPTEMBER 20-26 - World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel. Annual World Council of Churches event. Ideas for action, and resources can be found here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine/>

SEPTEMBER 21–OCTOBER 2 - Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/nonviolence-in-action/>

OCTOBER 2 (Thurs) - Celebrating the 800th anniversary of St Francis' Canticum of Creatures. 6pm Mass for the Care of Creation, 6.30pm presentation, reflection. Church of the Immaculate Conception, 114 Mount Street, London W1K 3AH. Pax Christi is one of the co-sponsors.

OCTOBER 12 (Sun) - 3.30pm online annual gathering of the Week of Prayer for World Peace. For details and to register: www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk/

OCTOBER 18 (Sat) - Stroud Peace Fair, Gloucestershire. Please contact Fausta Valentine if you could help run the Pax Christi stall: info@paxchristi.org.uk

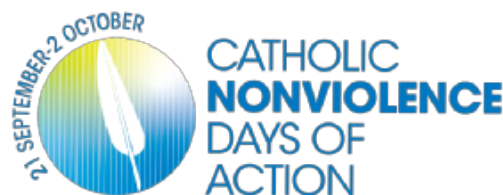
NOVEMBER 1 (Sat) - 'An alternative vision of security for France and the UK'. Franco British Conference 10am-12.30. With Pax Christi Scotland, Justice & Peace France, and others.

The Community Hall, St Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF. Followed by a walk and vigil - French Embassy to Downing St. See Pax Christi website to register.

NOVEMBER 21 (Fri) - As part of Leeds Palestinian Film Festival, showing of 'There is another way' about Combatants for Peace (Israelis and Palestinians). St Chad's Parish Centre, Otley Road, LS16 5JT. Doors open 6pm. Panel of speakers after the film. [There Is Another Way | Official Trailer \(2025\) - Documentary Film](#)

DECEMBER 5 (Fri) - Pax Christi Advent Service 6pm, St Aloysius Church, Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA, followed by Christmas Market: Fairtrade and Palestinian gifts, cards, refreshments.

2026 JANUARY 18 - PEACE SUNDAY - Pope Leo's theme: 'Peace be with you all. Towards an "unarmed and disarming" peace'.



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PAX CHRISTI

International Catholic Movement for Peace

Justpeace No 350 September-October 2025

ISSN0287-7647

TO REMEMBER HIROSHIMA IS TO COMMIT ONESELF TO PEACE

During a summer of protests about wars in which civilian lives are daily violated, many have also been remembering the massacres in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 80 years ago.

Invited to sum up Catholic teaching on nuclear weapons and war, Bishop Nicholas Hudson writes: 'The Church speaks into the present moment with a message of nonviolence...'

On the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II, Pope St John Paul II stated that '[to] remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace'. His words served not only as a condemnation of nuclear weapons but as a call to learn from the past and recommit to peace with renewed determination; a prophetic plea to build a future free from the threat of atomic destruction.

The same plea remains acutely urgent today. Although nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945, states continue to expand their nuclear arsenals; political rhetoric grows ever more volatile. Recent tensions in Kashmir between two nuclear-armed states - India and Pakistan - veiled threats from Russia's ruling elite since the invasion of Ukraine, and the United States' bombing of Iran's nuclear sites have reignited fears that nuclear conflict is no longer unthinkable.

Yet, the Church's position on nuclear weapons is unequivocal. Pope Francis repeatedly denounced both the possession and use of nuclear weapons as immoral, clearly outlining that such weapons are incompatible with the demands of peace and justice. Pope Leo XIV, too, at a recent General Audience in St Peter's Square, said: 'No one should ever threaten the existence of another. It is the duty of all nations to support the cause of peace, taking paths of reconciliation and promoting solutions that ensure security and dignity for all'.

Catholic Social Teaching urges us to uphold human dignity, protect the poor and promote the Common Good. Nuclear weapons, by their nature, violate all three. They target civilians, divert resources from essential needs and foster fear rather than security. In the 2024 publication *Called to Be Peacemakers* from the International Affairs department of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Church's stance was made clear: the possession of military



The Rev Gyoro Nagase of the Nipponzan-Myohoji Buddhist order, with paper cranes in Tavistock Square, London, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August.

weapons is not an adequate strategy for long-term peace, for peace must be rooted in mutual trust and dialogue.

Catholic Social Teaching, is more than a set of ideals: it sets out to shape how we see the world and how we act within it. Parishes, schools and dioceses are places where the necessary formation should be nurtured. For, as Catholics, we are called to speak out against the renewal and expansion of nuclear programmes and to advocate for policies that uphold peace, global solidarity and the elimination of nuclear weapons in all countries. The Church provides practical tools to support this mission. Resources such as *Called to be Peacemakers* offer clear guidance on how to engage with elected representatives, join advocacy networks and promote a culture of peace. It also highlights emerging threats from new military technologies, some of which may pose an even more imminent threat than nuclear weapons.

Essential in all of this is a renewed commitment to prayer. Prayer is not a retreat from action but a means of hope and resistance. Through prayer, we keep hope alive.

As we mark 80 years since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Church does more than mourn the past. The Church speaks into the present moment with a message of nonviolence and the urgency to build peace. That message needs now to find a home in every Catholic heart - and through us, a louder voice in the world.

Bishop Nicholas Hudson, Chair of the International Affairs Department and Episcopal Secretary at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

NJPN CONFERENCE: 'TOWARDS A JUST PEACE: CHALLENGING THE INEVITABILITY OF VIOLENCE'

Andrew Jackson writes:

We had a great time at the National Justice and Peace Network's annual conference at the end of July. Pax Christi had been a part of the planning team and the theme explored nonviolence as the route to a Just Peace following on from the theme in 2024 which had been 'Just Politics'.

There were full reports in *Independent Catholic News* (ICN) and *The Tablet* and you can find recordings of some of the sessions on the NJPN YouTube channel.



Above: Sr MaryAnne FCJ (on the left) interviewed Sr Katrina Alton CSJP about the experiences which had led to her commitment to gospel nonviolence.

A roleplaying activity allowed us to step into the shoes of people experiencing an escalating conflict, before we explored the stages of how conflict can worsen if left unaddressed. This really highlighted the importance of early intervention.

We were then introduced to two practical concepts: conflict maps (drawing out the different people involved in a conflict and showing how they connect with one another) and Johari's Window (a model that helps us understand how much of ourselves we reveal to others, how much we keep hidden, and how much we may not even realise about ourselves). Taken together the tools help illuminate who holds influence, where relationships are strong or weak, where there might be opportunities to build bridges, and how misunderstandings and blind spots can escalate tensions.

The afternoon workshop by Operation Noah, led by Bokani Tshidzu, gave me plenty of creative ideas for how churches can connect faith with climate action. In my group we roleplayed different church stakeholders and, in true post-lunch spirit, kept things light: our parish priest was 'Bob' and the bishop became 'Big Bob'. We even pitched rainwater harvesting to brew parish beer - possibly inspired by the green-hop ale initiative at St Augustine's Abbey. Other groups took a more strategic angle, weighing the pros and cons of churches holding shares in fossil fuel companies to pressure them into greener investments.

A highlight was the opening session on Friday evening when Sr Katrina and Sr MaryAnne Francalanza stepped in at the very last minute to replace former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who was unfortunately unwell and unable to give the keynote address. On Saturday morning, Sr Katrina and I took part in a panel discussion on nonviolence. Later in the day current Exec Member Fr Joe Ryan presided over Mass and our former Chair, Ann Farr, gave a powerful reflection and plea for a Just Peace in Gaza. The Pax Christi International Icon was available in the prayer room for anyone to sit with over the weekend.

Bernard Shaw reports on the workshops he attended...

Andrew Jackson used John Dear's book *The Nonviolent Life - Becoming Nonviolent People* to highlight three dimensions towards becoming people of nonviolence, namely: being nonviolent toward ourselves; being nonviolent to all others (including creation and creatures); and joining the global grassroots movement of nonviolence - the first providing a foundation for the workshop.

We are called to live as sons and daughters of God, rather than follow the prevailing culture, yet still experience human emotions - fear, anger, grief, joy. Violence often stems from fear of others and can be driven by anger. Finding time to sit in silent meditation provides a way to create a spirit of calm to better cope with provocation.

In another workshop, Joanna Frew of Rethinking Security provided an historical perspective on violence as a feature of Empire over 400 years, questioning Niall Ferguson's view that Empire was on balance positive by spreading the English language, parliamentary democracy, international capitalism and Protestant Christianity across the globe.

and Dennis Valentine describes two more:

The morning workshop, led by Alex Cameron of CHIPS, (Christian International Peace Service) drew on lessons from inner-city London and tribal conflict in Ghana.



Top: Pax Christi members on Hiroshima Day at Westminster Cathedral.

Above and right: Nagasaki Day conversations at the Pax Christi stall in Liverpool.



Above and right: 'May the choirs of angels... speed you to paradise' was sung outside the Foreign Office in London on 28 July during prayers for the dead of Palestine and Israel.

Pax Christi's summer of protest, pilgrimage, prayer and persuasion



Mass at the Grotto in Lourdes. Pax Christi International 80th anniversary pilgrimage. Matt Jeziorski represented us there.



Right: Franz Jägerstätter commemorations in London and at the grave of Franz and Franziska in St Radegund, Austria

3431 MILE CHALLENGE FOR GAZA



I got the idea at a Leeds Palestine Film Festival event last year - why not do a virtual ride to Gaza? Leeds to Gaza is 3431 miles, so I thought, well, 10 miles a day, if I start in January, I'll finish in December, just riding around locally.

I wanted to raise money for Medical Aid for Palestinians -

the need is so acute. Throughout the year so far, the Gaza ceasefire has come and gone, and the parlous situation of the Palestinians there has only worsened, but MAP has been able to keep on working. Public awareness has increased, and I still hope for the senseless slaughter to stop soon.

How has it been? Well, to date, I have only missed 2 days - attending A&E (not me!) and travelling. I have to say, I'm not always super motivated to ride, but once I'm on the bike, it's ok; if my legs aren't happy, I just go slowly! Sometime in April, I realised that if I increased my daily mileage a little, I could finish on my 77th birthday, 5th October; I am on track for this and passed 3000 miles at the end of August. As you would expect from a retired maths teacher, I have a spread sheet to record everything, and it is programmed to tell me the expected finish date.

I frequently ride on the Leeds-Liverpool canal towpath - it's pleasant and safer than the roads - and give passers-by my card. Along the way I have met many well wishers, and they have been a great encouragement.

Saskia: So nice to meet you on the canal today, such an important cause - good luck with the rest!

Eirinn and Michael: Sorry our dog licked your ankles! But at least it made us see your sign.

Javeria Bibi: Keep up the great work and your voice for those suffering.

The fundraising is going well. I was confident that I would reach my target of £1,000 - and with Gift Aid the total is now on the way to £5,000. All support is welcome. If you'd like to contribute, thank you, and here is the link to the JustGiving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/tim-devereux-map-2025>

Tim Devereux



Photo: © Martin Pilgram