

Diary Dates

- Fri 19 Mar** **Block the Base - ma Hill spy base in Nor**
For possible lift shari
- Sat 20 Mar** **National Demonstration in London - No More War, No more lies**
Join the demonstration to tell the government what you think about its shameful record on the war, the lies and the inadequacy of the Hutton and Butler Inquiry. Assemble 12 noon Hyde Park. March to Trafalgar Square for Rally. on Maid Marian to get tickets cor
- Sun 21 Mar** **Mothers against War vigil opposite Downing Street, LONDON, 4**
3.30pm (a year and a day after the war began).
- Mon 12 Apr** **CND returns to Aldermaston**
See details below
- Sat 24 April** **Planned mass leaflet and action at Rolls Royce**
More details later.
- Sat 1 May** **May Day Trade Justice march and rally.** Theme - "Global Pirates"
March from Nottingham Castle to Market Square at 12 noon followed by rally with live music, piratical entertainment and stalls. Speakers include Alan Simpson MP, Trade Union members and representatives of Oxfam and Christian Aid.
- Sat 5 June** **East Midlands CND AGM**
At Queens Walk Community Centre - details to follow

Aldermaston 2004

Stop the next generation of nuclear weapons

London to Aldermaston march, Easter 2004.

March leaves London on Friday April 9th, arriving Aldermaston on Monday 12th.

Easter Monday 12th April - Surround the Base

Surround the base - "treasure hunt" for WMD - music - workshops - speakers

Coach going to Aldermaston from Nottingham on Easter Monday

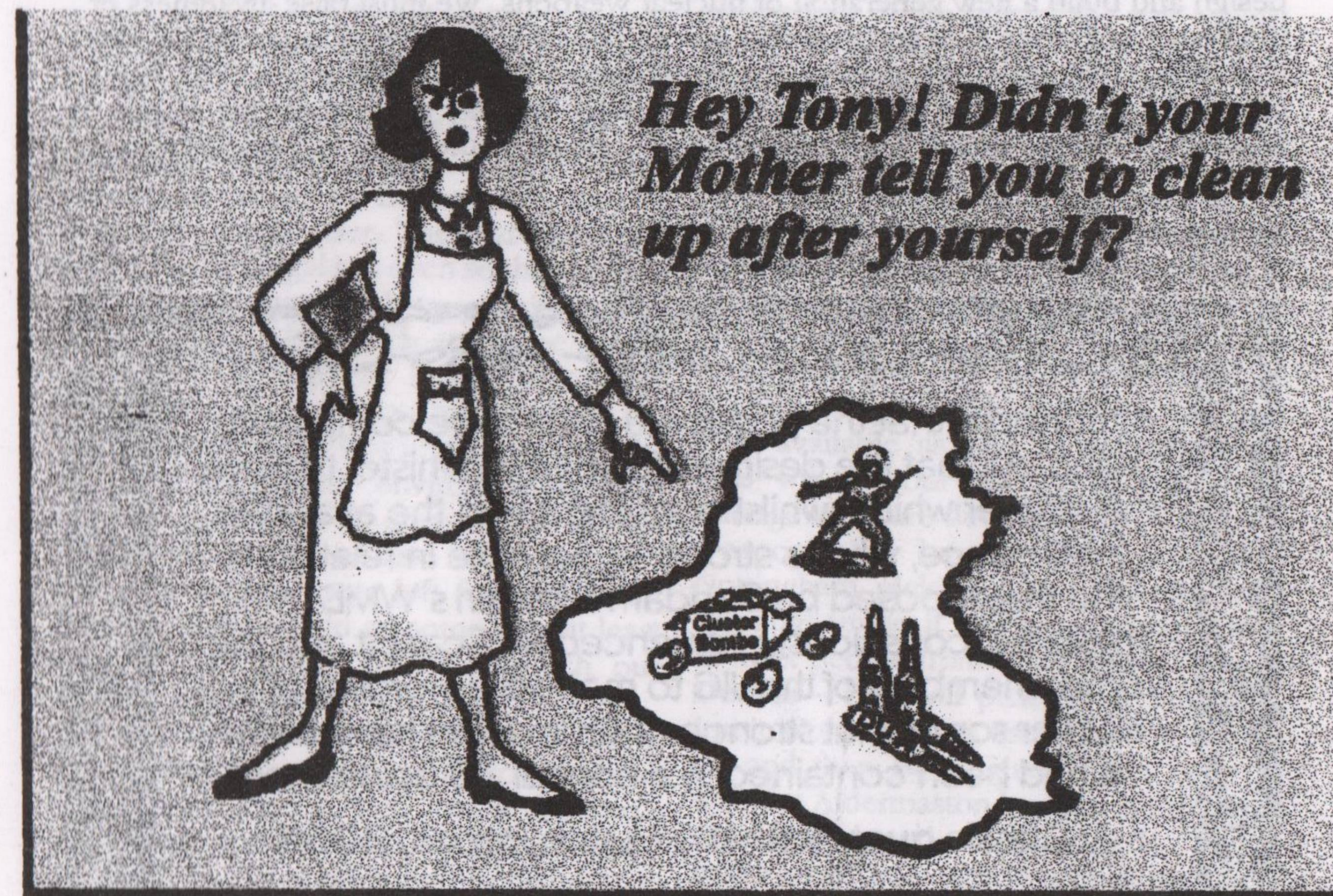
Cost £10, waged £6 unwaged. Leaves from the Salutation Inn 8am, with pickups in Leicester and Birmingham, arriving at Aldermaston by 1pm, in time to welcome the march from London and join in the activities.

Please make an effort



Nottingham CND Bulletin

March 2004



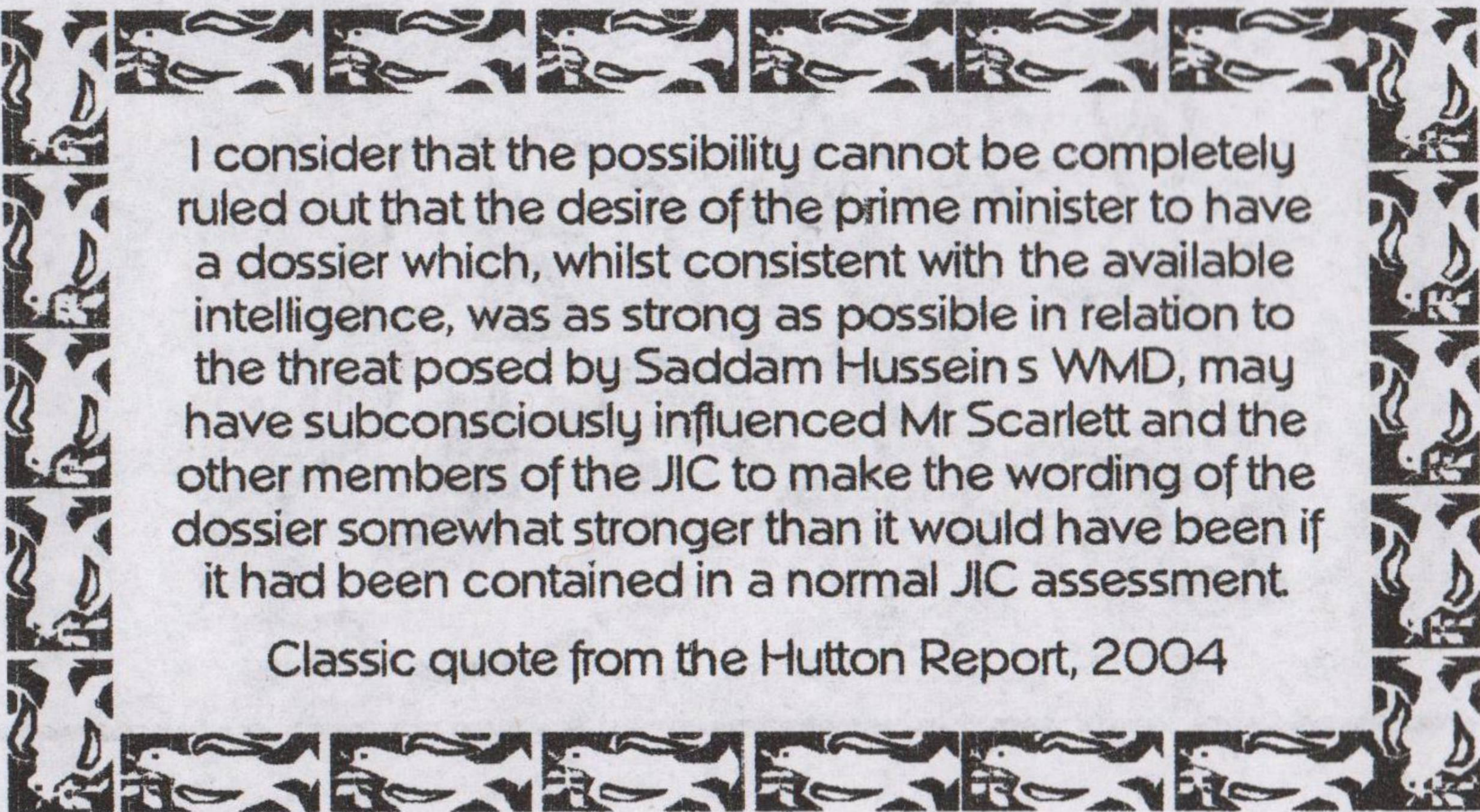
Nottingham CND Bulletin 2004
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 of more interest will be included in the next issue of the Bulletin should be sent
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Welcome to the new Nottingham CND Bulletin.

It has been an interesting few months. Despite seemingly being exonerated by the Hutton Report, the government continues to be plagued by the 'fallout' from its decision to attack Iraq. The war appears to have permanently damaged Tony Blair's standing both in the Labour party and with the public, as the issues around going to war, and the issues of trust and confidence in the government, are not ones which will simply go away. People are still dying in Iraq, as you read in your newspapers. In Afghanistan too (the previous recipient of 'liberation') the news is far from good and, as in Iraq, US forces are using excessive force which injures or kills innocent civilians and alienates the local population (see report on page 8).

CND, together with Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp and Slough4Peace is organising a new march to Aldermaston. We fear that our government is planning to design and build a new generation of nuclear weapons. We must raise awareness of the issues and make it clear that British nuclear proliferation is unacceptable (as well as a clear violation of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty). Nottingham CND has organised a coach down to Aldermaston on Easter Monday to welcome the march and join in the protests at AWE Aldermaston - please make every effort to join us there.

Mark Ramsey - Editor



I consider that the possibility cannot be completely ruled out that the desire of the prime minister to have a dossier which, whilst consistent with the available intelligence, was as strong as possible in relation to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's WMD, may have subconsciously influenced Mr Scarlett and the other members of the JIC to make the wording of the dossier somewhat stronger than it would have been if it had been contained in a normal JIC assessment.

Classic quote from the Hutton Report, 2004

Nottingham CND Bulletin #2004/1

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Articles or other material to be considered for inclusion next issue of the Bulletin should be sent to Nottingham CND at the address below (preferably on PC computer disk) or e-mailed to bulletin@nottinghamcnd.org.uk

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Nottingham CND Update

A Year on and what have we learnt?

On February 15th 2003 Nottingham CND participated in the demonstration against going to war with Iraq, one of the largest demonstrations ever held in London. What was being said at that time was not listened to, and to this date all that was predicted has been confirmed. No nuclear weapons have been found and the country is in turmoil. Iraqi civilians are being put under enormous pressure and hardship whilst trying to pick up the pieces. We are constantly hearing of Iraqi people being killed even though we have so-called made their lives much safer. The war has been proved to be illegal but even so the government is not prepared to admit it. On Mother's Day, 21st March, it will be a year since the US and UK launched its war against Iraq. A campaign has been set up by Mothers Against War urging the government to set up an environmental programme to identify all areas where cluster bombs were dropped and to clean up all the radio active waste left from depleted uranium. This would go some way at least towards easing the suffering which our country has caused.

In Nottingham the Friends of the Iraqi People are still sending money to help fund different projects in Iraq like a children's orphanage and last year we had a chance to see how that money had benefited the people if only in a very small way. They are still asking for more funds and we sent £100 on behalf of Nottingham from the white poppy sales. Any money you send to us for the cause we will make sure will be passed on and thank-you for any donations you have already made.

Future Events

March 19th - Mass blockade and demonstra-

tion at Menwith Hill spy base in North Yorkshire

Anybody who is keen to participate in the action at Menwith Hill should contact the Sumac Centre on 9608254 as there are cars going from there and sharing lifts might be possible.

March 20th - National Demonstration in London - No More Lies

Part of a global day of action on the anniversary of the start of the war against

April 12th - CND return to Aldermaston

There is a march to Aldermaston leaving London on Friday April 9th and arriving at Aldermaston on Monday 12th. On Monday we are hoping to surround the base to oppose the possible development of Nuclear Weapons. There will be stalls and food available as well as entertainment. This will be our chance to show our outrage to future development of nuclear weapons. We have a bus going from Nottingham picking up at Leicester and Birmingham so it will be a good chance to meet people from other areas.

Details - Bus will pick up at Salutation Inn in Nottingham at 8am go on to Leicester and then Birmingham. We hope to arrive at Aldermaston by 1pm at the latest. Cost £10 waged, £6 unwaged. Please make an effort to attend and let me know as soon as possible as I have to liaise with the other groups.

April 24th - Planned mass leaflet and action at Rolls Royce

This follows on from a recent citizen's inspection at Rolls Royce in Derby when Tom Cuthbert went on our behalf (see report on page 6). Please contact us for more details later.

May 1st - Mayday Trade Justice march and rally. Theme - "Global Pirates"

continued on page 4

Nottingham CND Coming Events

continued from page 3

This year it is being organised by the Trades Justice Group and the Trades Council. The theme is "Global Pirates" – come and expose the global pirates. March starts from Nottingham Castle at 12 noon followed by a rally in Market Square. Live music and piratical entertainment. Speakers include Alan Simpson, Trade Union Members and representatives of Oxfam and Christian Aid. There will be stalls, including a CND stall (volunteers welcome). "We want a sustainable and peaceful world where trade continues on the basis of people before profit."

June 5th – East Midlands CND AGM

At Queens Walk Community Centre – details will follow in next mailing.

Nottingham CND Stall - dates for 2004

March 27th	April 17th	May 22nd
June 19th	July 24th	August 21st
Sept 25th	Oct 23rd	Nov 6th
December 11th.		

Please put these date in your diaries and if you can volunteer to help please let me know. We usually go out between 11.30 to 2.30 depending on the weather etc. This is the main public face that Nottingham CND shows on a regular basis and it is important to keep the public aware of our position as regards nuclear weapons as well as to show them we are still active. Any help is always greatly appreciated and it is always good to see you. Thanks. My phone no is 9812034.

Diane Lunzer – Secretary

Countdown to 2005

Its four years now since the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty was renewed in 2000, with the next renewal conference due in 2005. This year the preparatory committee (PrepCom) is meeting in New

York April 26 - May 7. CND UK will be joining many other NGOs lobbying for the Nuclear Weapons States to abide by their agreements to abandon their nuclear weapons.

Doris Whardle

Doris was a child during the First World War and an adolescent in the 'Land fit for Heroes'. In her adulthood the Second World War began and concluded with the dropping of nuclear bombs on civilian populations.

These experiences developed in Doris a strong social conscience and an abhorrence of war. She was not a founder member of Nottingham CND but a very early member and always generous.

During Nottingham CND's time at the office Castle Gate, when Doris's family had flown the nest and she was later widowed, she was a frequent visitor. Doris would pop in like a Christmas Robin, and like one leave behind a generous donation and a

spirit of cheerfulness.

Later when we left Castle Gate and popping in was rather difficult we made her a Life Member, but as we often met at other events I was always given a donation for Nottingham CND and this continued until the last time I saw Doris.

Many of the stunts carried out by younger members were funded by donations such as Doris and other members gave.

Doris died on January 6th 2002, aged 91 years, leaving her body for medical research. Her remains were released in 2003 and there was a Memorial Service in her memory on January 24th 2004.

Doreen Gower

Citizen's inspection of Rolls Royce

The British Trident submarine fleet is powered by pressurized water nuclear reactors. As it designs and manufactures the reactors, Rolls Royce Marine Power Operations site at Raynes Way in Derby is an integral part of Britain's nuclear deterrent capability. On 28 January 2004 a group of peace activists visited Rolls Royce site in Derby to make a citizens' inspection and met two company representatives.

Health and safety

The manufacturing process involved at Rolls Royce in Derby subjects the workforce to risk from several materials including enriched uranium, burnable poisons to assist reactivity control and highly chemically active materials used in the metallic cladding of fuel elements. There are a number of different regulators involved in their safety plan allowing the site to be licensed. Liquid and gaseous discharges from the plant are authorized by the Environment Agency. The Neptune reactor is subject to separate control by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NNI). Transport of fuel components is regulated by the Department of Transport. Audits of fissile material are under taken by the Ministry of Defence.

The NNI held an inspection of Rolls Royce Derby's on site emergency exercise on 30 March 1999, "at which the site response to a challenging scenario was exercised. The licensee (Rolls Royce) demonstrated prompt mustering and accountability of missing persons. However the licensee was unable to demonstrate adequate contamination control arrangements when managing the emergency response. Also the licensee did not integrate the senior officers of the participating emergency services to sufficient degree. Consequently the Inspectorate have requested that the licensee resolve these issues and undertake a repeat demonstration exercise ..." At the time of the exercise Rolls Royce had no off site emergency plan. This would

involve all those living in the highly populous area which surrounds Rolls Royce Derby, the extensive traffic systems, the shops, pubs schools playing fields and housing schemes all within a stones throw of the reactor and it's facilities. This is the responsibility of Derby City Council.

International Law

The Trident nuclear submarines powered by Rolls Royce are the vehicles for the delivery of 100 kiloton nuclear warhead armed missiles. Since Trident was planned back in 1977 and its first active patrol in 1994, the international legal and political context in which these weapons exist has changed. In brief, the policy, deployment and use of any nuclear weapon are considered illegal. The UK government's refusal to take any steps towards nuclear disarmament flouts Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996 on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons stated that "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law".

The Rolls Royce representatives claimed there is a team to consider legal requirements such as the NPT and relevant international law. They claimed the workforce was aware of all the facts regarding both what Rolls Royce does and international law and the Nuremberg principles, but there are no training programmes or procedures to ensure this.

The operation of Rolls Royce in Derby raised a number of issues for CND and local community in Derby. There is clearly a danger to the local community in having the site in its midst. For CND, it is important to tackle the part that Rolls Royce plays in the maintenance of Britain's (illegal) nuclear deterrent.

Menwith Hill Blockade

What is Menwith Hill?

The Menwith Hill spy base, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire, is run by the National Security Agency (NSA) of the United States. Although overnight in February 1996 it became officially known as RAF Menwith Hill, most of the 1800 personnel on the base are American. The NSA was set up in 1952 without any debate in the US Congress. The American people know very little about the NSA and even less about Menwith Hill.

Menwith Hill listens to international telecommunications, including private telephone calls, faxes and e-mails from the UK, Europe, Middle-East, North Africa and the former Soviet Union. These are monitored looking for 'key words', searching for military, diplomatic and commercial information useful to the United States. In 1997 a European Parliament report made it clear that civil liberties are threatened by the work of the NSA at Menwith Hill. Information collected at Menwith Hill goes directly to Fort Meade, Maryland in the US. The British government is given selected information on a 'need-to-know' basis via GCHQ, Cheltenham, who also have some employees working at Menwith Hill.

Menwith Hill is an integral part of US star wars plans. Menwith Hill's ongoing expansion means it is now able to transmit and receive communications and photographic images from space. This will help US Space Command in its mission to see and hear everything on the planet and enable laser weapons to be able to reach anywhere on the earth within a target of about six feet. It will also play a crucial part in US plans for a missile defence system by relaying the information gathered by the Space-Based Infra-Red satellite systems back to the US.

Menwith Hill is unaccountable to the British people. The American authorities largely refuse to answer questions, give out information or allow reporters, MPs or

MEPs on to the base. Answers are refused to many questions that MPs ask about Menwith Hill in the House of Commons.

There has been a long protest against Menwith Hill's lack of accountability; its promotion of the arms trade and war; its violation of local, national and international law; its abuse of democracy and civil liberties; and its crucial role in US plans to dominate earth and space with nuclear and military technology. There have been vigils, demonstrations, peace camps, non-violent blockades and actions inside the base, letters to the press and radio and TV coverage. The Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB) evolved from the original campaign, there is a women-only camp outside the base, and a regular Quaker meeting for worship on the first Saturday of every month.

Block the Base - 19 March 2003

Menwith Hill is unaccountable and illegal. Non-violent direct action can both highlight the base's role and disrupt its illegal activities. Block the Base plans to do just that. The aim is to shut down or disrupt the running of Menwith Hill US Military Base for as long as possible, with as many people as possible, using non-violent direct action, and to register opposition to the base through protest.

The event is designed for those that do and don't want to take part in direct action. Food, music, speeches, stalls, workshops and more will keep you entertained as you demonstrate at the base. The peaceful, non-violent nature of the event means that everyone is welcome to attend and support the demonstration, including families. We hope for large scale non-violent direct action and if you want to take part in direct action, accommodation, legal briefings and observers, NVDA training and support will be available.

Block the base is organised by Yorkshire CND and supported by CAAB. CND and Trident Ploughshares..

Aldermaston 2004

What is AWE Aldermaston?

Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston is at the very heart of Britain's nuclear weapons programme, responsible for the research, production, and maintenance of Britain's nuclear warheads, and their eventual decommissioning. AWE currently supports the Trident system, which consists of 190-200 nuclear warheads and four submarines - one of which is on constant operational duty.

It appears that the UK is now planning to research, develop, build and test the next generation of nuclear weapons at AWE Aldermaston. For the first time since the 1960s, both Britain and the US are involved in research and development programmes which will result in the creation of a new generation of nuclear weapons. It is imperative that we seize the opportunity to stop this new piece of nuclear insanity before it starts.

In the US, the Pentagon has secured funding from Congress for the development of a new type of nuclear "bunker buster" weapon, part of the Bush administration's pre-emption strategy.

The British government is expected to make a decision about the future of British nuclear weapons in the next parliament, but Aldermaston is already planning an upgrade of its weapons design and production facilities and many new scientists are being recruited to work there.

Both the UK and the US are signatories to the nuclear Non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and at the 2000 NPT review conference they committed themselves to an "unequivocal undertaking ... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals". The development of nuclear weapons in either country is a direct violation of the NPT.

March to Aldermaston

At Easter, CND will be returning to Aldermaston on the first Aldermaston march for 15 years. Following a mass rally

in Trafalgar Square, supporters will march to the AWE Aldermaston to oppose the development of new nuclear weapons.

In 1958 thousands of people marched to Aldermaston because of the fear of a nuclear war. That fear is still here. In 2004 we march to stop the next generation of nuclear weapons from being built at the AWE Aldermaston and to put pressure on the government to withdraw support from unlawful policies of pre-emptive wars and comply fully with the spirit of the NPT by disarming Trident, Britain's submarine-based nuclear weapons system.

The very first Aldermaston march was called by the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War and took place in 1958, over the Easter weekend. Thousands of people took to the road to demonstrate their objection to the continued support and development of nuclear weapons. The symbol for Nuclear Disarmament, now the universal symbol of peace, was designed specifically for the March. The symbol represents the semaphore symbols for 'N' and 'D' and was displayed proudly on the original lollipop-style placards carried by marchers along the way.

Since the late 1950's there have been further marches. Now as the threat of a new generation of nuclear weapons approaches, it's time for the next generation of campaigners and concerned-citizens, activists and pacifists to take a stand

Surround Aldermaston

The march will leave London on Friday 9th April and arrive at Aldermaston on Easter Monday, 12th April. There is a coach going to Aldermaston from Nottingham on 12th April to welcome the march, surround the base, and join the 'treasure hunt' for WMD. See the back page for more details about the coach. If you wish to join the march then please contact the organisers at www.aldermaston2004.net or by

News roundup

Libya

CND UK warmly welcomes Libya's decision to give up its weapons of mass destruction and is glad that the decision was reached without violence. CND now urges the UK government to follow suit, cease the nuclear hypocrisy and abide by their international obligations by removing from the world the threat posed by the UK's arsenal of nuclear weapons

Source: www.cnduk.org.

Problems in Afghanistan

A new report by Human Rights Watch says that US troops in Afghanistan are operating outside the rule of law, using excessive force to make arrests, mistreating detainees and holding them indefinitely in a "legal black hole" without any legal safeguards.

Its military forces have repeatedly used deadly force from helicopter gunships and small and heavy arms fire during "what are essentially law-enforcement operations" to arrest suspected criminals in residential areas where there is no military conflict, the report says. "The use of these tactics has resulted in avoidable civilian deaths and injuries, and in individual cases may amount to violations of international humanitarian law."

Meanwhile, Amnesty International and Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan report that the situation of women in Afghanistan remains appalling. The US and UK claimed that the war would liberate women, but Amnesty reports that "two years after the ending of the Taliban regime, the international community and the Afghan transitional administration, led by President Hamid Karzai, have proved unable to protect women. The risk of rape and sexual violence by members of armed factions and former combatants is still high. Forced marriage, particularly of girl children, and violence against women in the family are widespread in many areas of the country." Girls

and women in Kabul, and some other cities, are free to go to school and have jobs, but this is not the case in most parts of the country. Even in Kabul, Afghan women do not feel safe, and many continue to wear the burka for protection.

Source: *The Guardian*

Protester delays UK weapons research

A lone protester has derailed the UK's nuclear weapons research programme. Faced with the threat of legal action, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has withdrawn an application to construct one of the world's most powerful lasers.

The MoD wants to build the laser, at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, UK, by 2007. It is designed to reproduce the great temperatures and pressures at the heart of nuclear explosions and will be a thousand times as powerful as its existing laser. According to the MoD, it is needed to ensure the safety of the warheads carried by the UK's Trident submarines.

But protesters claim that it could also be used to help develop new nuclear weapons, including ones similar to the mini-nukes being pursued in the US. Local peace campaigner Judith Wicks threatened to go to court alleging that the environmental impact had not been properly assessed. As a result the plans will now be resubmitted with more environmental information, to avoid "a lengthy legal dispute".

Source: *New Scientist* 28 Feb 2004

GCHQ whistleblower cleared

GCHQ whistleblower Katharine Gun was cleared of disclosing information and breaking the Official Secrets Act after the prosecution offered no evidence. Ms Gun had leaked a memo to a newspaper on an alleged American "dirty tricks" campaign to spy on UN delegates ahead of the Iraq war. She argued the disclosures exposed serious wrongdoing by the US and could have helped to prevent the deaths of Iraqis and British forces in an "illegal war".

Source: *The Guardian* 25 Feb 2004

We were all wrong about Iraq's WMD, says ex-weapons inspector

The former head of the US weapons inspection teams in Iraq has said "we were almost all wrong" in believing before the war that Saddam Hussein had chemical or biological arms.

David Kay, who last week resigned from the Iraq Survey Group, told a Senate hearing yesterday that failures had become too apparent in the US's intelligence-gathering capabilities.

"Let me begin by saying, we were almost all wrong, and I certainly include myself here," he said. "I believe that the effort that has been directed to this point has been sufficiently intense that it is highly unlikely that there were large stockpiles of deployed militarised chemical and biological weapons there."

But his evidence did not support accusations that the Bush administration purposefully exaggerated the intelligence on Iraq. Asked if there had been a "greater failure than a failure of intelligence ... a manipulation of intelligence" he said that intelligence analysts in the US, France, Germany and elsewhere had all believed Saddam had WMD stockpiles.

Mr Kay blamed a lack of human agents inside Iraq and inadequate intelligence that Iraq had chemical or biological weapons stockpiles. He said he believed analysts were asked to read too much into limited data, much of it from UN inspectors, but did not believe there was pressure to shape evidence to make the case for war.

Source: *The Guardian* 29 Jan 2004

Lawyers submit war crimes petition

Leading international law experts brought together by Peacerights, a UK based NGO, have submitted a report which recommends that the UK government should be investigated for war crimes in Iraq. The group was partly financed by the White Ribbon Campaign which many CND activists contributed to.

The group have submitted a petition to the international criminal court in the Hague on March 2nd, asking them to investigate alleged offences by Mr Blair, Jack Straw, Geoff Hoon, and the attorney general, Lord Goldsmith.

The group said "a principal charge" was "intentionally launching an attack knowing that it will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians", and that the reasons given for the war - from weapons of mass destruction to the violation of UN resolutions and regime change - were not justified under the UN charter.

Michael Mansfield QC, said "The consensus of international legal opinion suggests the basis for the war was illegal." He

said the war would only have been legal with UN backing. Even then the coalition could not have used more force than was necessary, meaning that it was illegal to use cluster bombs.

Mr Mansfield insisted he was not prejudging the allegations, but it was vital for the ICC to investigate them.

"We are saying there are matters here that prima facie need to be investigated. What is the point of having an international court if one of the gravest things this country has ever done the ICC is to turn its back on, and say it will only look at banana republics or African states or countries that have greater vulnerability than the leaders of the west - which can operate above and beyond the rule of law?"

Mr Mansfield conceded that there would be "extraordinary reluctance" to indict ministers but he said there was "a real case" that they should be investigated.

Sources: *The Guardian* 2 Mar 2004 and www.cnduk.org

A half-truth is still dishonest

David Clarke

Having been so emphatically acquitted of any wrongdoing by Lord Hutton, Tony Blair must be dismayed by the barrage of headlines and opinion polls suggesting that the country at large is far from impressed. A good cover-up requires at least a veneer of plausibility. In failing to provide one, Hutton has not only tarnished his own reputation, he has provoked a backlash far stronger than the one that would have greeted a more qualified government victory.

Blair may have cowed the BBC into a grovelling apology, but at what cost? Many now feel that he has used up a lifetime's supply of benefit of the doubt and that's a dangerous position for a prime minister to be in.

The chain of reasoning that produced this skewed outcome requires some explanation. It arose because Hutton, in assessing the charge that the government "sexed-up" the September dossier, relied on a definition of the term so extreme that he couldn't fail to acquit the government of it - namely, that it inserted information it knew to be false. I have never met anyone who actually believed that to be true. Andrew Gilligan didn't believe it even as the accusation stumbled from his lips at 6.07am on May 29. That's why it was omitted from later reports. To set that as the sole test of the government's integrity was quite illogical, not least since it formed no part of Downing Street's original complaint.

Hutton considered and dismissed one other definition of the phrase "sexed-up": that the wording of the dossier had been changed to make it as strong as the available intelligence would permit. That would have been entirely legitimate and, as Hutton pointed out, was not in any case what Gilligan had alleged. However, there was

a third possible interpretation that Hutton chose not to consider: that the dossier contained real intelligence, but was presented in such a way as to be deceitful and misleading.

A half-truth may not be the same as a lie, but it is dishonest nevertheless. That is why witnesses in court cases are under obligation to tell the "whole truth" and not just the truth. I had assumed that a judge of Lord Hutton's experience would appreciate the distinction. And what of the rest of us? Remember how we hooted with derision when Alan Clark denied that he had lied during the last Iraq scandal and had simply been "economical with the actualité". Remember how we shook our heads at the depravity of such a view. Can anyone fail to be struck by the parallel?

It may be impossible to pin the prime minister down to a straight lie, but it isn't necessary either. We know from Hutton (the inquiry, not the report) the numerous ways in which Downing Street officials subtly altered the dossier to make Iraq seem a bigger threat than they knew it to be. A sentence revealing that Saddam could not attack Britain was simply deleted. The key judgment that Saddam would be prepared to use chemical and biological weapons "if he believes his regime is under threat" was altered by the removal of those words after Blair's chief of staff spotted the obvious difficulty they posed. A defensive intention thus assumed the appearance of an offensive threat. Even the original title of the document, Iraq's Programmes for Weapons of Mass Destruction, was made to sound more menacing with the removal of "programmes for".

The notorious 45-minute claim was indeed "the classic example" of this process of distortion. Blair was entitled to

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A half-truth is still dishonest

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include it in his dossier since even Dr David Kelly believed that it was a valid piece of intelligence. But in doing so he also had an obligation to share with us the knowledge that it referred to battlefield weapons only, and had come from a single source. His decision to withhold that information was an unforgivable act of dishonesty for which he ought now to apologise.

All of this matters, not least because it has a direct bearing on a debate that is about to happen. The mounting pressure created by the admission of David Kay, the outgoing head of the Iraq Survey Group, and Condoleezza Rice, the US national security adviser, that weapons of mass destruction may never be found means that the government will soon have to abandon the pretence that it was right all along. Some expect Blair to do this as early as tomorrow, when he appears before the Commons liaison committee. He will admit that some of the intelligence was faulty, but insist that it was presented in the sincere belief that it was accurate.

The sell-by date for this argument expired with the government's gloating reaction to the Hutton report last week. I fully accept that the government believed that Iraq possessed WMD. I believed it myself, although I also knew that the threat was insufficiently strong to justify a pre-emptive war. If I feel strongly about this it's because I spent four years reading intelligence assessments on Iraq. The picture fed into Downing Street by the intelligence services was one with which I was familiar: Iraq was thought to have a residual capability in the form of a few short-range chemical and biological weapons and an ongoing research and procurement network.

Iraq, on this basis, might have become a real threat in the long term. But

that wasn't good enough. Blair needed a reason why the world couldn't afford to give Hans Blix the time he needed to complete his work, because President Bush simply wouldn't wait. So Downing Street transformed the dossier to confect a threat that was "serious and current". The fact that the chairman of the joint intelligence committee, Sir John Scarlett, acquiesced in this process is of no consequence, except in making him complicit in a shameful fraud. Real responsibility lies with Blair.

It has become something of a cliché to observe that for the prime minister the line between deception and self-deception is blurred to the point of non-existence. In this charitable view the process of distortion arose subconsciously (to borrow a phrase from Hutton) from an evangelical conviction that Saddam must be a threat. It is not difficult to see the attraction of this explanation: it is so much more reassuring than the alternative. But it is impossible to understand how any serious person could regard it as mitigation for a man charged with the decision to go to war. The fact remains that Blair's conduct fell woefully short of the standards we are entitled to expect of someone in his position.

The most dispiriting experience of last week was watching ministers and MPs demean themselves and the reputation of a great party with the most extravagant displays of self-satisfaction. We know only too well what they would have said if the Hutton inquiry had been set up to investigate that actions of a Conservative government that had taken Britain to war on such a dishonest basis. I am not prepared to feel differently about it because it happened to be a Labour government instead.

David Clark was special adviser to Robin Cook in the foreign office from 1997 to 2001. Source: The Guardian 2 Feb 2004

The Weapon They Daren't Discard

Uranium's name is forever associated with atomic energy and nuclear warfare. But its less spectacular properties have given it other uses, less well known. At one time its oxide was made into a vibrant glaze for pottery, fashionable in the thirties, called 'satsuma orange'. Cheap cowboy films were once made in 'Cinecolor' - Roy Rogers' four-legged friend Trigger owed her colour on screen to this uranium-toned movie film.

But a very down-to-earth quality of uranium accounts for its most topical use today. This use is military, yet unconnected with nuclear weapons. Nearly two-thirds heavier than lead, and considerably harder, depleted uranium metal is used to make shells - and also, ironically, the armour plating to obstruct them. Uranium projectiles even sharpen themselves during their passage through solid metal. The military claim there is no substitute, and they are probably right. But many, including some of the military's own staff, fear its use threatens an environmental and health catastrophe.

Depleted uranium is a by-product of the nuclear power industry. Natural uranium, as mined and smelted, is over 99% of a form called 238. A radioactive form, 235, makes up less than 1%. Atomic power stations need uranium with about 2 or 3% 235, and this is supplied to them after a process of concentration. What is left over is depleted uranium or DU - a lower cost waste product, nearly all made of 238, and still about half as radioactive as natural uranium. Many countries make it. Pakistan, for example, sells it on the open market. It is a fact that in any combat zone, soldiers and civilians potentially face the hazards of its use.

An early use of DU weapons was the 1991 Gulf War, in which about a quarter of a million kilograms are understood to have been fired. No estimate has been released for the second Gulf action.

As Dr Dan Bishop observed in his lecture 'The Invisible War' recently, the large scale use of DU could be identified even from TV pictures of shell impacts, showing fireballs and smoke of colours unique to burning uranium. The aftermath is fine dust, implicated as a cause of cancers and reproductive defects in civilians and combatants. DU is not very radioactive - but even a weak source poses real danger in dust form, which can be inhaled or swallowed. In any case it is very likely that part of uranium's hazard to people lies in its high chemical toxicity - which is a factor applying to all uranium, not just to the radioactive forms.

Analysts of the sites of warfare point out that the smaller projectiles, such as 30 mm air rounds, have a high rate of misses - about one in ten hitting its intended target, a result typical over many years. They are rarely recovered, though it's reasonable to assume most will be embedded deep in the ground without disintegration. The picture is very different with the larger projectiles such as 120mm - a high proportion of these hit the tanks at which they are aimed, and those that do not go straight through create volumes of uranium oxide and metal dust. No long-term understanding of the environmental position is possible. Military DU has an anti-corrosion additive, but real concerns exist amongst experts about possible contamination of groundwater and food crops.

In December 2003, the International Criminal Tribunal for Afghanistan took place in Tokyo. Testimony to this citizens' tribunal included scientific witness as to DU's human effects.

In separate disclosures, a US 3rd Army's Uranium Health Physicist, Dr Doug Rokke, PhD, discovered profound contamination in Iraq after Operation Desert Storm. He asserts deliberate denial and delay of medical care of US friendly-fire

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Peace Suppers

Nottingham Quaker Peace Group decided in December 2001 that one way of contributing to peace building could be by arranging Peace Suppers. These would be held every two to three months. People of any denomination or faith or none who are concerned with strengthening a culture of peace would be invited. We would share food, ideas, concerns and plan activities.

The first supper was held in April 2002. At a supper held in September 2002 we felt that public witness for peace was needed, so it was agreed to hold weekly vigils on Sundays in the Market Square. Placards with the words 'Standing for Peace' were to be held. These vigils continued on a weekly basis and were attended by between 6 and 35 people. They attracted some interest from passers-by. After the war in Iraq was declared ended it was decided to discontinue the Sunday vigil and replace it by a monthly Saturday silent vigil with an information stall offering material relating to peace building. The focus for the first two stalls concerned Nottingham Friends of the Iraqi People and

Amnesty International.

At the Peace Supper held in January 2004 it was decided to discontinue the vigils at present and to explore what other opportunities for peace witness we could develop. Several ideas were mentioned and included approaching Radio Nottingham and the City Council to give publicity to peace building activities in Nottingham, arranging art exhibitions and musical events, public debates and displays in public libraries and churches and vigils in different venues. Involving less organisation is meeting in small groups (about six people) to share ideas about the meaning of peace - How does peace building differ from avoiding conflict? Does peace have to begin within the individual?

We are planning to hold the next Bring and Share Peace Supper on Thursday April 29th at the Quaker Meeting House in Nottingham.

Audrey Fessler

Depleted Uranium

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casualties continued as of December 2003. His experiences have given him a directness in his call to all citizens to force leaders of countries using DU to care for victims and clean the environment. The situation Dr Rokke identifies really amounts to "solution by denial". He sums up the current policy of DU-user countries thus:

"If you do not provide medical assessment for those with verified exposures and health problems then you can say DU did not cause any health problems - because you never saw any health effect."

Jeremy Jago

More on DU

Claims by the Ministry of Defence that

DU is not a risk to life have been undermined by news that the British army is issuing a card to soldiers in Iraq warning that it can cause ill-health.

Professor Doug Rokke, said: "The MoD card acknowledges the risks. It contradicts the position it has taken publicly - that there was no risk - in order to sustain the use of DU rounds and avoid liability." He attacked the US and UK for "contaminating the world" with DU munitions and said the issuing of the card meant that they had "a moral obligation to provide care for all those affected" and to clean up the environment in Iraq. "DU is in residential areas in Iraq ... and kids are playing in the same areas," he said.

Mothers Day Postcard Campaign

Mothers Against War is running a postcard campaign this year.

As you know the war against Iraq officially "ended" last year. But the US and UK forces left behind them unexploded cluster bombs and depleted uranium. The former have a failure rate of 5-30% and will explode into 100's of bomblets if detonated. Children are often attracted by the bright yellow packets, and many have already been injured or killed by cluster bombs. Depleted uranium (DU) is chemically toxic and weakly radioactive, and is implicated in the high rates of cancer and birth defects in Southern Iraq since the 1991 Gulf War. As the quote below shows, weapons and tanks contaminated with DU, pose an ongoing threat to people in Iraq:

"Aala goes there to cut bits of metal off the tanks ... I asked him if anyone had warned him it was dangerous to cut metal from burnt out tanks. A memory caught him: there were some journalists who

came with a machine and they said there was a reading on it, that it was dangerous to climb on the tanks and take the metal, there was something, what was it called? Radiation. But he didn't know anything about that." - Jo Wilding, Al Dora, Iraq January 2004.

The postcard calls on Tony Blair to set up an environmental programme to clean up these dangerous remnants of war. Mothers against War will also be holding a vigil opposite Downing St on 21st March from 2-3.30pm.(a year and a day after the war began).

There should be a copy of the postcard included with this bulletin. Alternatively, the two sides of the postcard are shown on the page opposite - you can photocopy that page and stick the two parts to each side of a postcard.

Declarations for a Nuclear Free World

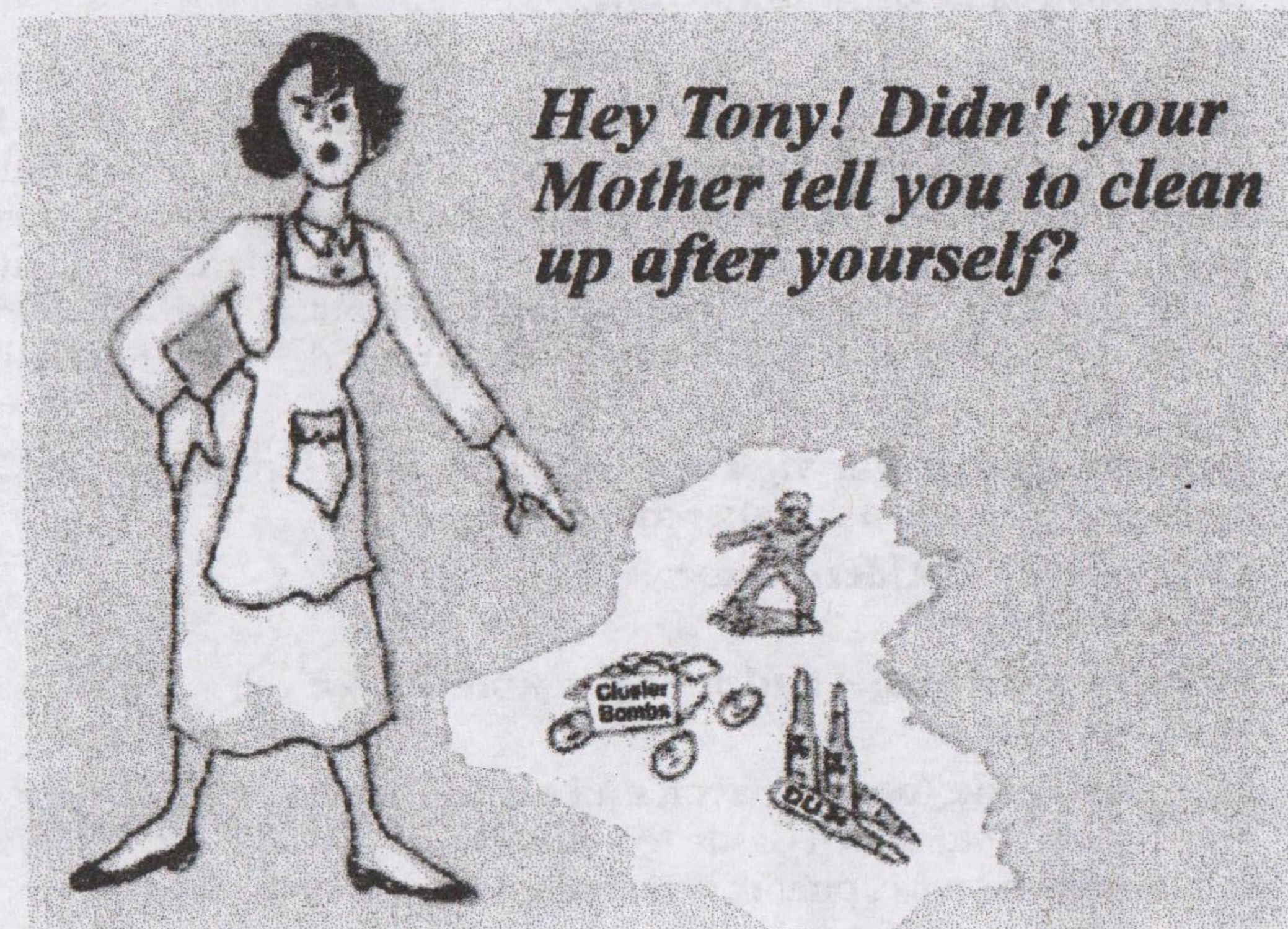
World Court Project UK collected 3.8 million Declarations of Public Conscience in 37 languages and presented them to the International Court of Justice in 1996 when it considered the legality of nuclear weapons. The Project has now launched its Declarations for a Nuclear-Free World. These will be collected from citizens worldwide for display at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Review Conference in New York in 2005.

The World Court Project UK describes itself as "The Public Conscience in Action". This concept first appeared in the 1907 Hague Convention and its status as a source of law was confirmed by the International Court of Justice in 1996. The fact that International Law develops through custom as well as through treaties, provides an important niche for the Public Conscience.

The Public Conscience reflects our natural sense of right and wrong. The Declarations of Public Conscience did not say that nuclear weapons are illegal. They said that they are wrong and should therefore be made illegal. The Declarations for a Nuclear-Free World state that nuclear weapons violate the values we stand for and demand that the promise of a nuclear-free world is fulfilled.

The Declarations are therefore not petitions, nor simply political tools. They are personal commitments intended to contribute towards the development of international law.

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Dear Mr Blair,

This Mother's Day marks a year since the US and UK launched its war against Iraq. Although the war may be over, the mothers of Iraq are still affected by the aftermath.

Cluster Bombs. According to Human Rights Watch, 13,000 cluster bombs were dropped during the war, often in highly populated residential areas. With a failure rate of 5-30%, these represent an ongoing threat to civilians, particularly children.

Depleted Uranium. US and UK forces used ammunition tipped with depleted uranium in densely populated areas. Depleted uranium is chemically toxic and weakly radioactive. It was used in the 1991 Gulf War and may be implicated in the large rise in cancers, and birth defects in Southern Iraq since then.

This Mother's Day you can ease the suffering of Iraqi mothers by making their country a cleaner, safer place to raise their children. I urge you to set up an environmental programme to identify and clean up all affected areas immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Name

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