News Index 2007

October'Merchants of Megadeath' Lockheed Martin paid another visit in London

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'Merchants of Megadeath' Lockheed Martin paid another visit in London

"We never forget who we're murdering and spying for". Cornerstone of the UK military-industrial complex / Orwellian state, US-based firm Lockheed Martin was targeted on Monday lunchtime at their London HQ for the second time in 5 days by activists from Trident Ploughshares.

Lockheed Martin, whose corporate slogan is "We never forget who we're working for", was paid another visit on Monday by four activists from a Trident Ploughshares affinity group, the Muriel Lesters. The four leafleted, engaged the public and displayed banners and placards on busy Vauxhall Bridge Road, near Victoria Station to highlight the precise location of the UK corporate headquarters of Trident nuclear weapons manufacturers (warheads and missiles), data-mining specialists and all-round baddies Lockheed Martin, hidden away in an anonymous building in a nearby side street.

One of the activists, holding a large sign with the words "Lockheed bomb makers" and an arrow pointing in the direction of their offices in nearby Carlisle Place, delivered market trader sales patter to passers by, uttering such phrases as "Come and get your lovely nuclear weapons, cluster bombs, depleted uranium munitions, bunker busters - you name it, we've got it"; "This month only - 3 WMD for the price of 2 - all stocks must go" and "Wanna start World War III? We've got the tools to do it!".

Their substantial wad of leaflets exhausted by a public horrified to learn of the nefarious corporate activities being conducted in their neighbourhood, and the arms giant's bid to run the UK national census (where's Hannibal Lecter when you need him?), the group proceeded to the company's offices at Manning House (22 Carlisle Place, London. SW1P 1JA). There, they continued to address curious passers by and perform the marker trader routine, whilst also engaging building security in good-natured banter. On Thursday, a "corpse" in a bodybag (one of the activists, not quite dead) had been dumped unceremoniously at the foot of the steps by the group. The protesters have vowed to pay their "nemesis" yet another visit before the year is out.

Block the Builders have called a non-violent blockade of the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Berkshire on Monday 12th November, and are encouraging groups and individuals to come along and blockade and/or support. Please visit the website for further details.

Derby Rolls Royce workers are war criminals say Trident Ploughshares 22nd October 2007

Derby Rolls Royce workers are war criminals say Trident Ploughshares

Protesters were stopped and searched by Derbyshire Police today (22 Oct 2007) on their way to hand out anti-Trident leaflets at the Rolls Royce plant in Derby. Their vehicles were stopped by three police vehicles. Everyone was searched, as were the vehicles. Their names and addresses were taken and they were photographed before being coralled by police and told they would be arrested if they handed out leaflets at the gates of the Rolls Royce plant.

The leaflets were to warn Derby's Rolls Royce workers that they were breaching international law by working on Trident's nuclear reactor system and could be prosecuted under war crimes

legislation for their part in manufacturing components for the Trident weapons system.

The police presence stopped protesters handing out the leaflets explaining the legal situation as workers arrived at the Raynesway site this morning. The planned action comes on the day of the Scottish National Party's nuclear weapons summit in Scotland, to discuss the continued presence of nuclear weapons at the Trident submarine base at Faslane, and follows the findings of a legal opinion issued by top lawyers.

The reactor cores, made at the Derby plant, are a key part of the Trident submarine weapons system which was declared illegal in an opinion issued by Phillipe Sands QC, of Matrix chambers [1]

Trident Ploughshares spokesperson Peter Lux, speaking today at the Raynesway plant, said: "International law is very clear. The use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is illegal. It is a war crime. Under the 1950 Nuremberg Principles, companies and their employees are directly accountable for any part they play in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"Trident is our weapon of mass destruction. It also breaches the Non-proliferation Treaty and the Charter of the UN, as well as such accepted legal principles as proportionality and the definitions of self-defence."

Pete added: "It's not a pleasant thought that local people could be involved in war crimes, but the fact is that we are all responsible for our actions and the Trident weapons system breaks international law."

[1] The full legal opinion from Phillipe Sands QC, Matrix Chambers, is available here.

19th Bodybag dumped on doorstep of nuclear bomb makers / Big Brother agents Lockheed 19th October 2007

Bodybag dumped on doorstep of nuclear bomb makers / Big Brother agents Lockheed

"We never forget who we're murdering and spying for". Cornerstone of the UK military-industrial complex / Orwellian state, US-based firm Lockheed Martin were targeted on Thursday lunchtime at their central London HQ by activists from Trident Ploughshares.



Five activists from a Trident Ploughshares affinity group, the Muriel Lesters, leafleted, engaged the public (and police) and displayed banners and placards on busy Vauxhall Bridge Road, near Victoria Station to highlight the precise location of the UK corporate headquarters of nuclear weapons manufacturers, data-mining specialists and all-round baddies Lockheed Martin, hidden away in an anonymous building in a nearby side street.

Their substantial wad of leaflets exhausted by a public horrified to learn of the nefarious corporate activities being conducted in their neighbourhood, and the arms giant's bid to run the UK census (where's Hannibal Lecter when you need him?), the group proceeded to the company's offices at Manning House (22 Carlisle Place, London. SW1P 1JA). There, at the foot of the steps, they dumped a "corpse" zipped up in a bodybag (one of the activists, not quite dead), accompanied by a sign with an arrow indicating the exact whereabouts of the "bomb makers", and unfurled a large banner reading "Lockheed Martin - Merchants of MEGA-DEATH" (not a heavy metal band). The "cadaver" itself carried a small placard reading "Lockheed Martin, 22 Carlisle Place - Cold War - Big Brother profiteers". The protesters have vowed to revisit their "nemesis" in the not-too-distant future.

Notes:

- 1. Lockheed Martin, Serco and British Nuclear Fuels Plc (BNFL) are equal shareholders in AWE Management Ltd, which the UK Ministry of Defence has awarded a multi-billion pound contract to manage and operate the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) sites at Aldermaston and nearby Burghfield, both in Berkshire, until at least 2025. Lockheed Martin and its bedfellows would seem to have no qualms about lining their pockets producing illegal weapons of mass murder and destruction, at the behest of Brown and Browne and the other warmongers in Whitehall.
- 2. Block the Builders, supported by Trident Ploughshares and CND, have called a major blockade of AWE Aldermaston on MONDAY 12th NOVEMBER, to demand that the MoD immediately suspends the construction of the Orion laser and other new multi-million pound facilities at AWE, and that the UK government launches a full public inquiry into the

alarming new developments at AWE. The new facilities are designed to facilitate the production of a new generation of nuclear warheads - a material breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which the UK is a signatory - and to circumvent the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, to which the UK is also a signatory, ahead of any parliamentary decision on the future of 'British' nuclear warheads and missiles.

Further details of the forthcoming blockade are available on the Block the Builders website , which includes reports from previous actions, background, legal info, etc:

3. Lockheed Martin promotes itself thus:

"Our vision: As an increasing number of nations of all sizes around the world indicate the desire and capacity to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, it is necessary to expand our field of vision."

"Our aim: To sustain capability to design a warhead to succeed Trident by facilitating production of British nuclear warheads."

"Our priorities: The key elements of the science-based programme we are putting in place to maintain the country's nuclear stockpile."

"Our future: We can now look forward to a long-term stable future for AWE and for the UK nuclear weapons programme."

Lockheed Martin also makes - amongst a host of other killing and spying machines, devices and systems - 'bunker busters', cluster bombs and depleted uranium munitions, and is said to be the world's largest arms manufacturer and exporter.

16th Crown Abandons Remaining Prestwick Cases 16th October 2007

Crown Abandons Remaining Prestwick Cases

Three peace activists who entered Prestwick Airport as weapons inspectors during the August 2006 war in Lebanon have learned that the Ayr Procurator Fiscal has decided to withdraw the charges, after "further consideration of the evidence".

Sylvia Boyes from Yorkshire, Roz Bullen from Edinburgh and Kate Holcombe from Worcestershire were due to face trial at the end of the month accused of breaching the Civil Aviation Act. Acting on knowledge that the airport was being used in the transport of weapons for use in the invasion of Lebanon, they were inside Prestwick Airport for over 2 hours. They found the military area, monitored the flights and got up to a cargo plane they suspected was involved in carrying munitions, before they were arrested. Their action was the first of three consecutive nights of organised citizens' inspections at the airport. Out of the 17 people originally charged the Crown have been able to obtain only two convictions.

The activists are disappointed that they will not have the opportunity to explain to the court the context for their actions. The use of Prestwick Airport for the arming of one side in an undeclared war was a breach of international law, amounting to the aiding and abetting of war crimes. The authorities which should have responded to these allegations, principally Strathclyde Police and the (then Labour-controlled) Scottish Executive, showed no signs of taking investigative action. In this vacuum the women decided to act in the public interest and look for the evidence themselves.

The case also touched on another vitally important issue: the impossible contradiction between

the constitutional law which does not permit the Scottish Parliament to enact any law on matters reserved to the Westminster Parliament, and the International Criminal Court (Scotland) Act 2001 which allows for the prosecution of those suspected of war crimes. Aviation is a reserved matter.

Kate Holcombe said: "I'm sorry I have been deprived of the opportunity to bring to the attention of the court, the legal issues which give Westminster the power to continue committing war crimes on Scottish soil with impunity. By adopting the International Criminal Court (Scotland) Act 2001, Scotland has shown it has no desire to participate in international war crimes. Unfortunately, the Act has no power over war crimes when those crimes are ordered or committed by Westminster."

The activists believe that the legal contradiction is unsustainable, especially given the growing concern within Scotland about local collusion in other breaches of international law in regard to Trident, the treatment of asylum seekers, and the transfer of prisoners for torture.

August WMD in Aldermaston, not Iraq: Protest at East London Court 20th August 2007

20th

13th

WMD in Aldermaston, not Iraq: Protest at East London Court

Peace campaigners demonstrated outside Stratford Magistrates' Court in east London on Thursday 16th August as a local activist surrendered to a no bail arrest warrant received two weeks previously.

Chris Gwyntopher of Forest Gate, east London expected to be taken into immediate custody and brought before a magistrate for charges relating to non-violent direct actions against the Iraq war and Trident nuclear weapons. Supporting and demonstrating at the court were Chris's wife Gwyn and representatives from Trident Ploughshares, Wanstead Friends Meeting, London Catholic Worker and the Green Party.

The warrant referred to two charges; the first dating back to 2001 (the wheels of 'justice' turn slowly), for cutting through the perimeter fence at AWE (Atomic Weapons Establishment) Aldermaston, Berkshire - Britain's nuclear bomb factory and research centre - where the intention had been to carry out a citizen's inspection of the facility. This case had already been heard, however, with Chris refusing to pay a £40 fine, for which he had 'served time' at the back of the court.

The second charge related to Chris's participation in the 'War is Pants' D10 blockade in 2003 just prior to the invasion of Iraq, at Northwood HQ, north-west London (British military headquarters for planning and controlling overseas, including operations in Iraq; also the nerve centre for Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system)

As it turned out, the issuing of a 'no bail' warrant was due to an administrative error; so instead of being taken into immediate custody, Chris was bailed to re-appear before Stratford Magistrates on Tuesday 28th August, 9.30am.

28 Days for Prestwick Protester 13th August 2007

28 Days for Prestwick Protester

Following the acquittal of seven of the eight Prestwick protesters at Ayr Sheriff Court on Friday, the remaining accused, Marcus Armstrong (46) from Milton Keynes, was found guilty and sent to prison for 28 days, after refusing to pay the £750 fine imposed by Sheriff John Montgomery.

Marcus had argued that although he had been on an aircraft without permission he did have a reasonable excuse for doing so - the suspicion that the airport authorities and the British government were colluding in a war crime. Israel had been breaching international law by targeting its air strikes in Lebanon at areas and installations liable to contain civilians. They had asked the US for an emergency top-up supply of bombs. US planes delivering these armaments would need a fuel stop-over in the UK and Prestwick was one of the options.

Sheriff Montgomery said that Marcus had had no firm evidence to show that the UK government was aware that a war crime was being committed and so did not have a reasonable excuse for his actions.

Marcus told the Sheriff he would not pay the fine and asked that any substitute sanction be imposed immediately. He was sentenced to 28 days which he is likely to serve at HMP Kilmarnock*.

Marcus said: "I acted to protect my brothers and sisters in the Lebanon. It is the only way I know how to live."

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "It is disappointing that Sheriff Montgomery, who was up to that point meticulously fair in his approach, came up with such inadequate reasoning in reaching his verdict. The provision in the statute for justification by reasonable excuse cannot logically require absolute proof of the validity of that excuse. It rather allows for exceptional action by a person acting reasonably. As the Sheriff will know, there was at the time of the incident general and widespread public and governmental knowledge of both Israel's indiscriminate bombardment and of the re-arming flights stopping over in the UK. In that context, given that no-one in officialdom had the will or gumption to act, Marcus behaved entirely reasonably. The Sheriff's error is not trivial - it attacks the right and duty of ordinary citizens to take responsibility when humanitarian law is being breached. That is dangerous for us all."

"In the meantime there is continuing uncertainty about what, if anything, has been done by the authorities to ensure that Prestwick is not presently being used and will not be used in the future for the illegal transfer of armaments by the US military. In particular we are asking the Scottish Executive to take responsibility for this matter by ascertaining the current state of activity and commitments and acting appropriately on any knowledge gained. This is about war crime and the new Scottish Government needs to take a stand."

The activists carried out the inspections of Prestwick Airport on the night of the 6th/7th August last year.

*HMP Kilmarnock Bowhouse KILMARNOCK KA1 5AA 01563 548800

Ayr Sheriff Acquits Seven Prestwick Protesters 10th August 2007

10th

Ayr Sheriff Acquits Seven Prestwick Protesters

War crime was an issue, claims expert witness

Following the acquittal of seven of the eight Prestwick protesters at Ayr Sheriff Court due to inadequacies in the Crown case a prominent expert witness testified that collusion in war crime was relevant to the context of the trial.

Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University told the court that war crime by Israel was very much an issue at the time of the incident at the airport. Israel had been breaching international law by targeting its air strikes in Lebanon at areas and installations liable to contain civilians. They had asked the US for an emergency top-up supply of bombs. US planes delivering these armaments would need a fuel stop-over in the UK and Prestwick was one of the options.

The accused activists carried out inspections of Prestwick Airport on the night of the 6th/7th August last year to look for evidence of US munitions bound for Israel for use in the Lebanon conflict. Facing trial were Matt Bury (50) from Somerset, Sarah Lasenby (68) from Oxford, Jean Oliver (48) and Douglas Shaw (56), both from Biggar, Olivia Agate (65) from Helensburgh, Marcus Armstrong (46) from Milton Keynes, Chris Bluemel (25) from Southampton, and Angie Zelter (55) from Cromer.

All eight accused were facing a charge of trespass, or in the case of Olivia, a charge of aiding and abetting a trespass. At the end of the prosecution case, a defence submission that there was no case to answer on that charge was accepted by Sheriff Montgomery. This left Angie, Marcus and Chris facing the other charge, that of being on an aircraft without permission. The Crown had already accepted that in the case of Angie there was lack of identification and the Sheriff decided this was also true for Chris. He was however persuaded by the prosecution argument that given the circumstances it could be inferred that Marcus did not have the required permission.

Marcus' trial has been adjourned until Monday.

Angie said: "I am delighted that when Paul Rogers gave his evidence the real issue got the attention of the court at long last. Since there was good reason to suspect that Prestwick was colluding in war crime we had every justification for doing what we did. The big worry is that it was left to ordinary citizens like us to act when there were whole layers which should have taken responsibility, from the Scottish Executive, through the police, down to the airport authorities and the civilian contractors. All the way down it was the same sorry story. Not my problem, nothing to do with me, I am just doing my job. Our whole society needs to be educated in the Nuremberg Principles and their insistence on the duty of everyone to recognise their responsibility and act to uphold international law."

More background on the case

8th

Photos (updated today) (once you view an individual photo you can see it at the original resolution by clicking where it says "Full size" above the photo)

No special training for Prestwick fire-fighters, claims trial witness 8th August 2007

No special training for Prestwick fire-fighters, claims trial witness

During a trial of peace activists today at Ayr Sheriff Court a witness has given surprising evidence about fire-fighting arrangements at Prestwick Airport.

Richard Wilson, who was a fire-fighter at the airport during the incident last August, told the court that fire-fighters would be informed that a particular flight had "hot cargo", implying some element of hazard, but were given no guidance or training in dealing with fires involving munitions, in spite of the fact that the airport was regularly used by US military aircraft. Bizarrely, the witness added that he was confident they would have been able to deal with any such situation, since the munitions would be "stable" in a fire if it was extinguished quickly.

The accused activists carried out inspections of Prestwick Airport on the night of the 6th/7th August last year to look for evidence of US munitions bound for Israel for use in the Lebanon conflict. They had been alerted to the likelihood that the airport was being used by the US military to supply Israel with munitions that would be used in their military bombardment of civilian areas of Lebanon.

The trial has been adjourned till tomorrow, having been stalled by legal argument.

Facing trial are Matt Bury (50) from Somerset, Sarah Lasenby (68) from Oxford, Jean Oliver (48) and Douglas Shaw (56), both from Biggar, Olivia Agate (65) from Helensburgh, Marcus Armstrong (46) from Milton Keynes, Chris Bluemel (25) from Southampton, and Angie Zelter (55) from Cromer. They are charged with various offences under the Civil Aviation Act.

1st Nine Arrested in International Teachers Blockade of Faslane Nuclear Base
1st August 2007

Nine Arrested in International Teachers Blockade of Faslane Nuclear Base

Nine people were arrested early this morning during a Teachers blockade of the Faslane Naval Base in Scotland, home to Britain's Trident Nuclear-Armed Submarines. Six of those arrested had sat down across one of the main accesses to Faslane, to take a peaceful stand against the bullying approach of the nuclear weapons states. Three supporters were also arrested.

Chris Bluemel, a music teacher and one of those arrested said "It is estimated that a replacement for the Trident nuclear weapons system would cost £76bn over its lifetime. Yet the UN estimates that just £8bn would be enough to provide universal primary education. As a teacher, I strongly believe that the latter would be rather more likely to increase our security."

Brian Larkin, a teacher and peace activist who was also arrested said "As a teacher I believe it is my duty to help children learn to cooperate and to resolve conflicts without violence. But it is hard to teach peace when our government provides such a poor role model and relies on the threat of massive destruction for its own security."

The Teachers Blockade was part of the Faslane 365 year-long nonviolent blockade of the Faslane Nuclear Base and of the Trident Ploughshares Coulport Camp. They join over 160 other groups who have organised blockades of the base since 1st October 2006, including health professionals, lawyers, academics and elected representatives. Their action brings the total number of arrests during Faslane 365 to 919.

July 8 Young people arrested campaigning for an anti-nuclear future. 28th July 2007

8 Young people arrested campaigning for an anti-nuclear future.

Eight young people from Wales, Germany and Belgium have been arrested this morning, blockading the gate at Faslane Nuclear Base in a protest against the renewal of the British Trident Nuclear weapons system. The blockade came amongst lively and colourful actions carried out by young people from many countries, from Wales and Germany to Japan and the US. The action takes the number of arrests during the Faslane 365 year long blockade

of Faslane naval base to over 900.

The group decided to take action after having met at an 'academy' in Glasgow where they discussed the issue of Trident nuclear weapons in the context of Europe and the rest of the world. They decided that Trident Replacement, which the British Parliament voted for this spring, is not only a current British issue but will also affect and endanger the next generation across the world.

They made a human knot in the road at the North Gate entrance to the base and stuck their hands together with super glue to make it as difficult as possible for the police to remove them. They were supported by action from an international clown army, a simultaneous teddy blockade, dancing and music from Japanese students and the poignant speech of a Hibakusha (Hiroshima survivor).

The blockaders included five people from Wales (Pembrokeshire), Hannah Chester (15), Naomi Proszynska (15), Georgia Coles-Riley (16) Alexander Ferraro (19) and Craig Wilkinson (18). For some this is their second arrest as they have already been active in the Faslane365 campaign which has been running since October 2006. There were also two blockaders from Germany, Stefan Hittmeyer (21) and Tobias Bollinger (22) and one from Belgium, Andy Vermaut (30).

Naomi Proszynska from Wales said: "Blockading at Faslane changed the way I look at things. The reason why young people are not active on these issues is not because they don't care about them, it's because they don't know about them."

The young people decided to take action to raise awareness among all young people that any nuclear weapons are a danger to everyone. They also planned an awareness-raising media campaign, a European Postcard competition on nuclear weapons and have been keeping a blog. This will be continued by five girls who will travel with Japanese Peace Boat to New York.

It is almost impossible for the youth of today to imagine a world without nuclear weapons, let alone a future.

The group also participated in the Trident Ploughshares Coulport Camp.

18th Heavy Penalties for Anti-Trident Protesters
18th July 2007

Heavy Penalties for Anti-Trident Protesters

At Helensburgh District Court today two anti-Trident activists were given heavy fines and compensation orders for protests at Faslane and Coulport.

Jane Tallents (49), from Helensburgh, was accused of a breach of the peace for her part in a Trident Ploughshares blockade of Faslane naval base in April this year, as part of the ongoing Faslane 365 campaign. At the conclusion of the Crown case she submitted that there was no case to answer. She cited the case of a group of protesters who had blockaded the Weir Pumps factory in Glasgow in 2005 and whose submission of no case to answer had been accepted by a Glasgow Sheriff, an acquittal which was upheld by the High Court (c.f. PF Dyer v Brady). Jane argued that, as with the Weir Pumps case, her actions had not been sufficiently flagrant to warrant a breach of the peace conviction, given that the blockade was small in scale and there was no evidence of serious disturbance. Justice of the Peace Fraser Gillies rejected her submission and the case continued. As evidence of the reasonableness of her actions she told the court that no less than 27 members of the Scottish Parliament had indicated their support for the ongoing blockades of Faslane.

JP Gillies found her guilty and fined her £300.

Barbara Dowling (62), from Glasgow was fined £180 and given a compensation order of £575 for

painting peace slogans (Peace, Joy, Baby Jesus Hates Bombs) at the entrance to RNAD Coulport in December last year. Barbara told the JP that she had often stood in the court and given an explanation of the faith and conviction that had led her to act. However while she had been listened to she had not been heard and she intended to say no more. Both women made it clear that they will not pay the fines.

Jane said: "Unlike other JPs we meet in Helensburgh Court Mr. Gillies makes obvious his personal bias against what we stand for. He shows his disdain for us by giving the case only minimal attention, deciding for the Crown without asking for defence submissions, making his mind up on the spot without the time and consideration that is due, and handing out punishments much more severe than other justices. The hopeful thing is that his attitude is these days quite untypical, as civil, community and political life in Scotland makes its intolerance of Trident ever clearer."

On 28th August Trident Ploughshares activists will begin their two-week disarmament camp at Coulport. Meanwhile the Faslane 365 blockades continue with groups in the next few weeks from Japan and Assynt.

May Ploughshares on Parade 19th May 2007

19th

Ploughshares on Parade

Today, and in defiance of an undemocratic and unreasonable ban imposed by Plymouth City Council, members of Plymouth CND and Plymouth Trident Ploughshares joined in the annual Lord Mayor's Parade through the streets of Plymouth.

Despite the ban imposed so unfairly upon anti-nuclear debate on this occasion, members followed the route down as far as the Barbican where, our point made and presence firmly established, we decided enough was enough and withdrew from the march itself.

This is now the third year in succession that we have managed to defy official attempts to block our presence and have defied this ban while maintaining polite and civil relations with all concerned.

One member said: "We have defied the ban for three years now, and we will continue to do so. This will now be an annual event for us."

15th Two Convicted for Spray Painting at Faslane on Nagaski Day 2006 15th May 2007

Two Convicted for Spray Painting at Faslane on Nagaski Day 2006

Two peace activists, Morag Balfour and Barbara Dowling, were yesterday convicted for painting slogans including "Trident is Terrorism" and "Trident = Terror" on a railway bridge next to Faslane on Nagasaki Day (9 August) 2006.

After evidence from three MoD Police Officers which was somewhat inconsistent as to whether they had sat in their car watching Morag and Barbara paint for 3-4 minutes or jumped out and stopped them immediately, both defendants gave evidence themselves.

Morag explained the significance of the day, that the action as not just for themselves but for all those slaughtered in Japan that day, just to test a new weapons. She said that the move to replace Trident was so abhorrent that she felt the need to express her fear, alarm and distress in every possible way.

This included the political route (she is national co-chair of the SSP), although her local MP could not see anything beyond the Government line on anything so she felt there was no route left there. She is also involved in various forms of campaigning and is vice-chair of Scottish CND. However, she felt she also had to express her opposition physically, since all other avenues were being closed off.

Barbara explained how her Christianity motivated and supported her in this action. She said it was not enough to be just sympathetic, you must also act on your beliefs and do what you can.

After convicting both women of Malicious Mischief, JP Andrew Nicholson offered to defer sentence for six months for them to be "of good behaviour" in which case he would then admonish them. Both refused this, explaining that their definition of "good behaviour" included "acting in love" to uphold International Law and oppose Trident, After some debate about what the court could and could not do, procedurally, at this point, JP Nicholson fined each woman £60 and, when they refused to pay, imposed a Supervised Attendance Order of 20 hours each.

April Trident Rock Painters Admonished

23rd _{23rd April 2007}

Trident Rock Painters Admonished

At Helensburgh District Court today two Trident Ploughshares activists, Sylvia Boyes (63) from Keighley in Yorkshire and Jane Tallents (48), from Helensburgh were admonished after being found guilty of damaging a rock outside Faslane naval base by painting on it.

On 2nd August last year, during the Trident Ploughshares disarmament camp at nearby Coulport, Sylvia and Jane painted "Trident is terrorism" on the rock face. The rock has been painted frequently over the years with anti-Trident messages.

The women pointed out that without their sign there was nothing to indicate that Faslane was involved in the deployment of weapons of mass destruction. Painting the rock was a way of alerting people to the reality behind the razor wire. Sylvia read out a moving testimony from a Hiroshima survivor. Jane quoted the dictionary definition of terrorism: "a term used to describe violence or other harmful acts committed (or threatened) against civilians by groups or persons for political or ideological goals." Given that the threat of Trident was currently being used to advance British power and interests, "terrorism" was a fair description.

Justice of the Peace Andrew Nicholson found them both guilty but was content to admonish them.

When Trident Ploughshares activists were arrested at a Faslane 365 blockade on 13th April a number of them were released after giving an undertaking to appear in court today. When they did so, in spite of the submission by the Procurator that they be put on bail, JP Nicholson decided that it was sufficient to ordain them to appear for their plea hearings, without imposing bail.

21st Clown in Court Theatre 21st April 2007

Clown in Court Theatre

Last year me and my friend Marcus decided to have some fun with some paint we found so we found a big white bridge near a place called 'Faslane' which looked like it needed some cheering up - we painted the words "Trident is Terrorism' in great big letters and some peace signs on it and it really brightened it up all in black and red - then some banana people came to help but we had finished painting by then but they must have had something else to paint because they took our paint and went away. They must have liked our painting a lot because they invited us to the theatre to see a show they were in.

So I get into costume of 3 piece suit - red nose in pocket - and go to see the show in Helensburgh Court - on the way in I meet Marcus who is a fellow artist and we go and join the audience queuing to get in - it must be a very popular show - and inside a Kangaroo appears and starts jumping around on the stage - telling the audience that things are 'Fine' - she thinks things are so fine that she prices how fine everything is - £50 fine for having some cannabis - £150 fine for swearing at a banana - and we sit bemused waiting to go on stage ourselves - and the talking Kangaroo (who's name is Dance!) gets us to sit on a special seat and there is a man in a wig who likes to whisper a lot and a woman called 'Procurator Fiscal' who forgot to change when she got out of bed - she's wearing a big black sleeping gown and she looks very tired - maybe she is dressed up as a crow - but someone says that the Kangaroo is The Beak so I get confused and sit on the special seat all cosy next to Marcus and it is nice sitting next to him as we wait for the show - then Dance the Kangaroo asks us to be guilty or not - and I get embarrassed and put on my best guilty look though I play a game and say 'not guilty' and we go back to sit in the audience again and the show continues with a lot of people being made fine by Dance the Kangaroo - at the interval we go and sit in the sunshine by the sea and then go back for part two.

We are allowed to sit in the special seat again but the cast seem to have trouble remembering their lines because they do a lot of whispering before they ever say anything - then one after another two Bananas come and are told to swear but I'm glad they don't actually say any bad words which might spoil the show and they might be made fine as well.

Dance the Kangaroo likes to talk very loud and I miss the plot but it's still a good game as we play stand up sit down stand up sit down and I ask the first banana if we were friendly when we last met and Dance the Talking Kangaroo buts in and says I can only ask questions if she lets me so I have to guess what I can ask - it's all very confusing so Marcus and I play the stand up sit down game a bit more - and I am told that I am 'malicious' for painting words on a bridge and I say no it was fun and mischievous but not 'malicious'.

Then Marcus gets to stand behind a teachers desk thing and he says a lot of things about big bombs and painting and almost starts to cry and so do I but hold it in till after the show - Dance the Kangaroo leaps about her small stage playing at being angry and shouting a bit but I don't know why - this must be a very serious play - then I am asked to say what I think of the play and the painting bit and I say some stuff about not being malicious but wanting a nice planet with lots of places to play in and not all wrecked by big bombs - then there's lots more whispering and when she remembers her lines we play the stand up sit down game again then Dance the Kangaroo says she will make us fine for £250 each - I don't have £250 so she says I can pay later but I don't think I will as I didn't feel that fine after seeing this show where everyone forgets their lines and has to whisper - and Dance the Kangaroo puts on her butch voice and says that we mustn't do any more painting as it 'defiles' the lovely countryside but we only wanted to brighten up the bridge - I begin to think that this Kangaroo is no fun - she forgets her lines and likes to shout - then we ask to see the bill for someone else painting the bridge after us - they must have done a very good picture because they charged £1500! - and we did it for nothing because it was fun! I think perhaps we should put in a bill too but then decide that it was just fun but if they did pay us then I could afford to be fine and have enough over for everyone else in the theatre to be fine too - that would be great - well the Procurator Fiscal doesn't have the bill and someone passes us a note that £1500 is 'hearsay' which sounds like a fun new game so Marcus says that we don't want paying for painting the bridge as it was such fun but nor should anyone else who likes painting - then Dance the Talking Kangaroo says all right then painting should only be done for fun and she really tries to make us fine again but I feel a bit disappointed in the whole show so at the end we don't clap or anything but just go out to play in the sunshine.

Major Pant-Sweat

13th Two Hour Blockade Shuts Down All Entrances to Faslane Trident Sub Base 13th April 2007

Two Hour Blockade Shuts Down All Entrances to Faslane Trident Sub Base

Twenty-two Trident Ploughshares activists using heavy "lock-on" tubes shut down all gates at the Faslane Naval Base on the Clyde today for more than two hours, as part of the on-going Faslane 365 year-long blockade in opposition to the Trident nuclear weapons. In the wake of the government's decision in March to procure the next generation of Trident, Faslane 365 is determined to keep the pressure on because the Trident nuclear weapons system is illegal and immoral: it should be scrapped, not renewed.

In a coordinated action at 7.15 am, the non-violent activists blocked all three gates to the base by locking on to metal and concrete tubes. MoD cutting teams worked for two hours to remove the protesters, while traffic was completely prevented from entering or leaving the base. A group of eleven people blocked the North Gate. Eight blocked the South Gate and three blocked the smaller fuel depot gate, resulting in all traffic in and out of the base being blocked.

The blockaders came from many parts of the UK and ranged in age from 16 to 78. Shonagh Glen, 25, a resident of Faslane Peace Camp and daughter of Marlyn Glen, Labour MSP said: "Trident is monstrous and we have a legal and moral duty as international citizens to try to get rid of it". Julia Mercer, 56 of Huddersfield, a Mental Health Worker who is taking five months off work to participate in the campaign to stop Trident said: "Trident is an affront to our humanity. Even though Tony Blair has engineered a vote to spend billions on renewing it we still need to keep campaigning against this evil thing." Zina Zelter, 33, a violin teacher from Leicester said "It's outrageous that the government is planning to replace Trident, and since they aren't acting responsibly I am forced to take action. Nuclear weapons make the world unsafe. As an individual I will not be part of this."

Amongst the 24 people arrested was Helen Woodcock, 33 of Manchester - recipient of the 2006 International Service Human Rights Award for Defending Women's Rights.

The Faslane 365 year-long blockade began in October 2006. Thousands of people from as far as Japan and from all sectors of civil society have participated. In recent weeks groups from Spain, Switzerland, Germany and France have blocked the base for as much as three hours at a time.

Trident Ploughshares is a campaign of civil resistance calling for the UK government to begin disarming its nuclear weapons in compliance with international law and its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. To date Trident Ploughshares activists have spent 2204 days in prison, with 2240 arrests, 520 trials and have had £78,000 in fines imposed on them.

Faslane 365

11th Citizens Taking Action Where Parliament Fails 11th April 2007

Citizens Taking Action Where Parliament Fails

At least 11 people were arrested while are attempting to block access to the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment in Berkshire this morning in order to disrupt a multimillion pound development project at the site. Some roads around the site were blocked for nearly an hour. The protesters claim that this development is to develop new nuclear

weapons and shows that the decision to renew Britain's nuclear weapons was made years before the parliamentary vote last month.

The protesters are from the anti-Trident group Trident Ploughshares and the group Block the Builders which opposes the development at Aldermaston. They have chained themselves together and blocking gate at Aldermaston. The Atomic Weapons Establishment is currently undergoing massive renewal including new computing and laser facilities which will enable to scientists to simulate nuclear explosions to improve the design of nuclear warheads without actually exploding a weapon which would be banned under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The site was given a £5 billion refit after the signing of the Mutual Defence Agreement with the USA in 2005 which allows the sharing of nuclear information between the USA and Britain.

One of the protesters Emma Bateman, aged 39 from Leicester, said "Parliament have failed in their duty in overlooking the decision to renew Trident and so it is we the people that have to take action to uphold international law. The development of nuclear weapons at this site is clearly in breach of the Non Proliferation Treaty. The government claims that we do not know what threats we face in the future. It is very clear what sort of threats we face if we break the Non Proliferation Treaty - tens or hundreds of nuclear weapons states instead for the eight at present with the massive increase in the risk of nuclear war either intentionally or by accident".

CONTACTS

▶ Sian (At Aldermaston), 07887 802879

Peter (Background Information) 01603 628337

Websites:

Trident
 Block
 Ploughshares
 http://www.tridentploughshares.org/aldermaston
 http://www.blockthebuilders.org.uk

Aldermaston Women's Camp: http://www.aldermaston.net

Further Information

For brief and clear analysis of the parliamentary vote is Rebecca Johnson's "Trident dispatches" series at http://www.thebulletin.org/columns/ (scroll down page to find Rebecca Johnson's section), esp the last two (dispatches 5 and 6)

6th Citizens taking action where Parliament fails 6th April 2007

Citizens taking action where Parliament fails

Mass blockade of Atomic Weapons Establishment, Tuesday 10th April

Less than a month after Parliament voted to replace Trident, campaigners against nuclear weapons will come to AWE Aldermaston in Berkshire on Easter Tuesday. Using non-violent blockading tactics, they will disrupt the work on building Trident warheads and their successors, and aim to close all access to Britain's bomb factory for the morning.

With the government and shadow cabinet clinging to Cold War theories and pretending that we can protect ourselves with weapons of mass destruction, the vote to replace Trident on 14th March and to commit the UK to keeping nuclear weapons until 2050 was a foregone conclusion. Throughout the debate on Trident, no justification for a policy that depends on mass extermination was presented, and dozens of MPs put loyalty to their party line above their conscience in voting for the

government.

"My MP said that he disagreed with the government, and had not met any constituents who wanted to spend billions on replacing Trident," said Andrew Gray from Newcastle today. "But when it came to the vote, he still voted with the government. This vote has had nothing to do with our security or tackling the real threats that face the world (including climate change and nuclear proliferation), but everything to do with party ambitions and political posturing." (1)

The Aldermaston blockade will take place all around the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), and particularly at the West Gate area, where building vehicles are busy entering the AWE to build the new ORION laser building. ORION will enable a new generation of warheads to be developed, and is not needed merely for Trident stockpile stewardship. In combination with other developments at Aldermaston, including the new LARCH super-computer and a planned hydrodynamics research facility (HRF), the ORION laser is a clear sign that the decision to develop successor nuclear weapons long pre-dates the March vote in Parliament. (2)

The blockade on Easter Tuesday (10th April) will begin from about 7am and may continue all morning, with dozens of groups coming from Cornwall to Kent, and from Southampton to Swansea. Many of those coming have not been to Aldermaston before, and the blockade is expected to be the start of a growing and increased campaign against nuclear weapons in England. (3)

CONTACTS

- website: http://www.tridentploughshares.org/aldermastonAndrew, 0845 4588 368 (to Sunday) or 07804 640643 (Monday 9th)
- Kate (weekend and Monday), 07748 015601
- Sian (press contact for Tuesday), 07887 802879

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- (1) Andrew Gray lives within Nic Brown's constituency of Newcastle East and Wallsend. Nic has publicly opposed Trident replacement in the House of Commons (speech in Hansard for 1 Feb 2007, column 410) and in the local press (Newcastle Journal), but supported the government in both the amendment and substantive motion to replace Trident on 14th March. The cost of developing and maintaining a Trident replacement over its full life has been estimated at 76 billion pounds, equal to the sum identified by the Stern report as the contribution the UK needs to make to prevent climate change. Failures by the nuclear weapons states to disarm (coupled with plans for weapons renewal or replacement) have been blamed for the erosion of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, including failure to reach agreement at the last treaty review in 2005 and increasing risks of proliferation among non-nuclear weapons states.
- (2) The ORION laser building is currently being built at AWE, and the LARCH super-computer was due to be commissioned during 2006. These, together with the HRF and material testing laboratories were part of a site development plan for AWE (SDP) made public in July 2002, and have been widely seen as indicating a decision to build a new generation of warheads at AWE. Prior to the SDP, funding for AWE was expected to be cut by a third in March 2000: the move from funding cuts to investment in new weapons technologies indicates that the decision to replace Trident warheads was taken in principle four years before the vote in Parliament, and not within the next Parliament as claimed by government. See also brief notes at www.tridentploughshares.org/article1476.
- (3) The Easter Tuesday blockade at Aldermaston is being organised by Trident Ploughshares, working with Block the Builders. Block the Builders have held regular blockades at Aldermaston since May 2005. See www.blockthebuilders.org.uk for future blockades.

4th Nuclear Weapons Inspectors Refused Entry to Suspect London Sites
4th April 2007

Nuclear Weapons Inspectors Refused Entry to Suspect London Sites

Following the TP London Peace camp hosted by the Muriel Lesters on Monday 26th February 2007 two teams of peoples Nuclear Weapons Inspectors investigated the London headquarters of six corporations involved in involved in making Nuclear Weapons Systems.

The inspectors were dressed in white protective suits clearly marked Weapons Inspector. They sought to inspect the following :

- Serco, BNFL, and Lockheed Martin, who jointly manage Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston (AWE) where a replacement for the Trident nuclear missile system is being developed.
- Rolls Royce, who make the nuclear propulsion plant s for the Trident submarines,
- Rio Tinto who mine the uranium which is used to both to make nuclear weapons and to drive the submarines,
- BAE Systems who design and build the submarines and are suspected of pressing the Government to replace Trident in order to safeguard and increase the value of their investment,
- Raytheon a US company who build nuclear missiles.

The work on planning to replace or upgrade Trident puts the UK Government and the corporations is in material breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in force since 1970 and to which the UK is a signatory. This committed the UK to work actively for the decommissioning of its Nuclear weapons. AWE are also seeking to circumvent prohibitions on the testing of nuclear weapons under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by constructing the Orion laser at Aldermaston. After their endeavours to investigate breaches of UK Treaty and International Law obligations they sought to present their results to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The level of security alert was promptly raised when they approached the King Charles Street premises.

Each corporation was served with a document outlining the terms of the days inspection, in line with those to which Iraq was required to submit prior to the 2003 invasion. The only two companies willing to co-operate with the inspectors were Rolls Royce and Rio Tinto, whose slick PR reps eventually presented themselves for questioning. When the inspectors in their white suits demanded entry to conduct an inspection at the reception desk of Rio Tinto the man on reception, without raising an eyebrow, phoned up to say. "The Nuclear Weapons Inspectors have arrived. Please send somebody down to speak to them". Rolls Royce offices were effectively closed for visitors, including business people arriving for a lunch time meeting, for over an hour before the inspectors completed their questioning of a representative. The remainder of the corporations both refused to speak to the inspectors and denied them access to their facilities, thus heightening concerns about the legality of their operations. Most of the companies concerned did, however, agree to provide information in writing at a later date.

As of the start of April 2006, only Rio Tinto have written. They have denied all involvement in Trident or its replacement. All the Corporations appear to be in a hight state of denial of their complicity in the production of weapons of mass destruction. Having failed to allow the inspectors in BAE was taped off and closed as a Nuclear Weapons Crime Scene for about 15 minutes.

Any people's weapons inspectors wishing to do spot checks for breaches of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are welcome to contact the Muriel Lesters for an update. 07890 124276.

The two reports from the Weapons Inspectors may be downloaded here and here (both in PDF

format).

Photos from the inspection are available here.

March Anti-Trident Demonstrators Arrested at Faslane, Scottish Parliament and Parliament Square.

14th March 2007

14th

Anti-Trident Demonstrators Arrested at Faslane, Scottish Parliament and Parliament Square.

Individuals and groups from across the country today denounced Trident as illegal and immoral and called for disarmament of Britain's weapons of mass destruction in concurrent demonstrations at Faslane Naval Base, Scottish Parliament and Parliament Square. Four people were arrested after blocking the entrance to Faslane, where Trident nuclear weapons are based, while nine people were arrested blocking the road in Parliament Square in London. Five were arrested after unfurling a banner which read Whatever They Vote Trident is Still Wrong on the Scottish Parliament building.

The blockaders in Parliament Square, from Block the Builders and Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp, have brought their protest from the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston in Berkshire, where the UK's nuclear warheads for the current Trident system are built, and where construction work on facilities to build the next generation of nuclear weapons is going on apace, ahead of the vote in parliament.

The White Paper says that no decision will be needed on the warheads for the new Trident until the next parliament, said a spokesperson, Yet they've been building the new Orion laser at AWE Aldermaston for the past year.

The £183 million laser facility, which will test materials under conditions simulating a nuclear explosion, is one of more than 20 new facilities being built or planned for Aldermaston in Berkshire, which will equip the site to test, design and build new warheads.

We're taking this action because there has been no public debate, as promised by the government. This vote is a sham: the government decided several years ago to replace Trident and condemn us to another 50 years as a nuclear weapons' state instead of addressing people's real security needs.

BtB and AWPC consider that, in developing a new generation of nuclear weapons, the government is breach of its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and that the use of such weapons would be illegal under international law.

Those arrested at Scottish Parliament were residents of Faslane Peace Camp which has maintained a protest against nuclear weapons for 25 years. Amongst those arrested at Faslane were two Edinburgh University students.

A large contingent of students from Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh inflated a life size bin bag Trident at Faslane gate bearing the words Block the Bomb.

Sam Jones, 21, a Stirling University student said Thousands of people marched against war in Iraq and were ignored. We're not naïve. We know that Parliament won't listen to us today and will go

ahead with its decision to upgrade Trident. What will get rid of nuclear weapons is people taking direct action at Faslane and other nuclear weapons installations. It's time for people to stop asking the government nicely and start telling the government that we we want a timetable for nuclear disarmament starting now not further postponement of a decision. Nuclear weapons have such a destructive capability that even to threaten other human beings with that is gravely immoral.

The demonstrations are connecting with others at Westminster, where ten people have blockaded Parliament Square by locking on to concrete barrels, and across Scotland throughout the day to oppose the present Trident system and any upgrade as the government prepares to decide whether to commit the UK to build a new generation of nuclear weapons. Since 1 October there has been relentless opposition to Britain's continuing possession of nuclear weapons with nearly 600 people arrested thus far. People have also come to protest at Faslane from Belgium, Scandinavia, the US, and Japan. Groups representing diverse sectors of society, including Elected Representatives, Lawyers, Health Professionals, Clergy, and many others have demonstrated at the base since the start of the Faslane 365 year-long blockade.

More information:

▶ Faslane 365

Block the Builders
Aldermaston Womens Peace Camp(aign)

Faslane Peace Camp

February Anti-Nuclear Campaigners Block UK WMD Factory 12th February 2007

12th

Anti-Nuclear Campaigners Block UK WMD Factory

From 7am today, a group of around 50 anti-nuclear campaigners from Block the Builders participated in blockades and protests outside Britain's nuclear warhead factory - AWE Aldermaston in Berkshire.

Using a concrete-filled dustbin, metal lock-on tubes and D-locks, two groups blockaded the A340 on two sides of the base, close to entrances used by construction traffic. Roads were closed for one hour and ten minutes while specialist police teams cut out protesters. Cranes and other construction traffic was prevented from entering the site while the blockade was in progress. Other campaigners used large banners and flags to communicate their anti-nuclear message.

AWE is the site of ongoing construction work on new nuclear weapons facilities - on a similar scale to Heathrow's Terminal 5. Work on the new Orion laser has started, despite the fact that a vote on the future of the UK's nuclear weapons system is not due until March.

Six people were arrested during the protest, for obstruction of the highway. Two people were subsequently charged and will appear at Newbury Magistrates' Court on 22 February. Seven hours after being arrested, four people remain in custody at Abingdon police station in Oxfordshire (at 3pm) [Update: all four were released by 6pm]. All six were handcuffed on arrest by Thames Valley Police, though none had resisted arrest or attempted to abscond. Organising group Block the Builders - an explicitly nonviolent direct action group - are considering writing to Thames Valley Police to query this interpretation of police guidelines on the use of handcuffs.

With the government poised to force a parliamentary vote on whether to replace the Trident nuclear submarine fleet, campaigners are concerned that the decision to recommit Britain to a further 50 years as a nuclear weapons state is being made without public consultation. Polls have consistently suggested that a substantial majority of the British public do not want to spend taxes on a new nuclear weapons system.

A spokesperson for Block the Builders said, "In a fortnight there will be tens of thousands on the streets of London, demonstrating their opposition to Trident replacement. When asked, most people don't want UK WMD: today in this quiet corner of Berkshire, we are translating the will of this - frequently silent - majority, into practical resistance. If the parliamentary vote goes in the government's favour, then AWE and the MoD had better get used to the idea of a long and active campaign of opposition."

This morning's actions are part of an ongoing campaign of nonviolent resistance to new facilities being developed at the Aldermaston site - which campaigners believe will facilitate the next generation of nuclear weapons.

Block the Builders is supported by Trident Ploughshares

8th Faslane Blockade sees 500th Protester Arrested for Upholding International Law and Resisting
Trident
8th February 2007

Faslane Blockade sees 500th Protester Arrested for Upholding International Law and Resisting Trident

An audacious blockade today at the gates of the Faslane naval base in Scotland, where the Trident nuclear weapons are deployed, saw the Faslane 365 movement chalk up its 500th arrest since launching the year-long civil resistance on October 1st.

8 activists from Trident Ploughshares blocked the South Entrance to Faslane Naval Base for about 3 hours from 7.15 a.m. with concrete lock-ons.

"We want to rid Scotland of nuclear weapons," said Anna-Linnea who lives just 7 miles from the nuclear base and was among those arrested. "Trident is unnecessary and wrong, and the Faslane base is a blot on the landscape. Far from generating local jobs, as most people think, this nuclear base blocks the regeneration of the Gare Loch and stands in the way of more and better jobs."

"Trident shouldn't be replaced, it should be scrapped, starting now," said Angie, from Cromer in Norfolk. "Under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Britain made a commitment to eliminate its nuclear arsenal. Deploying these nuclear armed submarines is a direct violation of international law that has nothing to do with security and everything to do with the abuse of power."

"Over 500 people including elected representatives, doctors and teachers have been arrested and detained overnight for opposing Trident deployment, but no-one has been found guilty," said Adam Conway, "We're upholding the law at Faslane, and it's time for the police to stop arresting us and start arresting the criminals who are preparing and conspiring to commit nuclear mass murder."

Photos and reports of the Faslane 365blockades can be found on the Faslane 365 website: http://www.faslane365.org.