

News Index 2009

December Trident Ploughshares 2009 Action Round Up

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Trident Ploughshares 2009 Action Round Up

(Items in italics relate to non-Trident Ploughshares (TP) actions)

January

12th Sylvia Boyes is released from HMP New Hall in West Yorkshire after serving three and a half weeks of a three-month sentence (which included Christmas and New Year) for refusing to carry out so-called "community payback." Her original conviction for criminal damage was for cutting the fence to enter Fylingdales Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station in North Yorkshire and symbolically pouring red paint with Erica Wilson on Hiroshima Day, 6 August 2008 in opposition to the US "missile defence" programme.

February

4th Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp(aign) (AWPC) celebrates victory in the Court of Appeal in London in their judicial review against the Ministry of Defence (MoD) bylaws outlawing their 24-year-old protest camp outside the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) nuclear bomb factory in Berkshire.

11th TP's Angie Zelter is involved in organising Edinburgh conference titled "Trident and International Law: Scotland's Obligations." Speakers include Judge Christopher Weeramantry, former vice-president of the International Court of Justice, who tells the conference: "Anti nuclear civil resistance is the right of every citizen of this planet. For the nuclear threat, attacking as it does every core concept of human rights, calls for urgent and universal action for its prevention."

March

9th Five TP women argue international law at their trial at Reading Magistrates' Court for blockading AWE Aldermaston during the Big Blockade in October 2008. The district judge hears their arguments but still finds all the defendants guilty of obstructing the highway and issues fines.

April

4th Five TP activists form part of a small British contingent joining a two hundred-strong five-hour international nonviolent blockade of NATO's 60th anniversary summit in Strasbourg, France. None of the participants is arrested. Two TP members later get pepper sprayed but recover quickly.

17th Lindis Percy is arrested at a protest outside Menwith Hill "Star Wars" / spy base, for an alleged bail offence. On the 21st she is sentenced by Harrogate Magistrates' Court to 45 days' imprisonment at HMP Low Newton, County Durham for refusing to pay outstanding fines for aggravated trespass at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales. She is released after just a week and a half, on 1st May.

29th TP sends an open letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown calling on the Government to comply with its obligations under international law and disarm its Trident nuclear weapons.

30th TP activists from the Muriel Lester affinity group visit the offices of US firm Jacobs

Engineering in London following the news in December that the company has bought BNFL's one-third stake in AWE ML, the private consortium operating AWE on behalf of the MoD.

May

28th As the world condemns North Korea for carrying out underground nuclear weapons tests, TP activists visit Faslane, Scotland - the base for Britain's nuclear-armed submarines - to draw attention to UK double standards. Janet Fenton gets arrested engaging with workers entering the base.

June

15th TP is joined by Bikes Block Bombs, Scrap Cars - Scrap Trident, AWPC and Eastern Region CND in a surprise blockade of AWE Aldermaston. Cars, a caravan, bikes and lock-on tubes are used to block four gates for several hours, resulting in 11 arrests. The blockaders seek to stop the building of new nuclear warhead facilities at the site and are protesting at the lack of democratic accountability.

July

2nd Fifteen activists from TP and Women in Black enter the lobby of Parliament in Westminster to call on the Government to scrap Trident and its planned replacement. They stand displaying t-shirts painted with the messages 'DISARM NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW', 'SCRAP TRIDENT' and 'STOP TRIDENT REPLACEMENT' whilst waiting to lobby their MPs. They refuse to move when told that slogans on t-shirts constitute a protest, not allowed inside Parliament. They are asked to remove their t-shirts or turn them inside out but they refuse. They remain in the building for two hours, meeting with their MPs and making their visual protest. They finally join hands before being escorted outside.

Also 2nd Eleven activists attend Newbury Magistrates' Court for plea hearings for the June blockade of Aldermaston. Mell, Helen, Irene and Emma from the cars blockade at Tadley Gate all plead guilty. Helen is fined and ordered to pay compensation totalling £150 (first offence) and the other three are given £175 fines and are also ordered to pay compensation. Alison C, Alison P, Morgan, Roger and Zina from the caravan blockade at Boilerhouse Gate all plead not guilty and trial is set for December. Ippy and Charlotte from the lock-ons at Home Office / Aldermaston Gate plead not guilty and try to get their bail conditions changed but are given short shrift by the court despite arguing their case well. They then try to change their pleas to guilty so they can attend the AWPC Cocktail Party (their bail conditions would prevent this), but the court will not accept this and trial is set for November.

August

3rd Irene Willis is sentenced to 20 days' imprisonment by Aberystwyth Magistrates' Court for non-payment of fines totalling over £600 for her part in nonviolent protests against nuclear weapons and the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon from 2006-8. She is released after serving 10 days of her sentence.

15th - 23rd Twenty-five activists take part in the 10th TP Coulport Camp. Campers maintain a daily morning vigil at the gates of Coulport nuclear warhead depot and engage in various other actions (see below).

17th Five activists walk straight past security guards to enter the main gate into Faslane naval base. They reach the high security fence a hundred and fifty yards inside the base before being stopped by MoD police. They hand out a letter calling on those within the base to join them in beginning disarming Trident while one member of the group hands out flowers to police. The

bandit alarm sounds and the base is locked down for nearly an hour. The five are charged with entering a restricted area under section 128 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005. Angie and Sylvia are later sent citations to appear at court for alleged offences under the MoD bylaws, while charges against the remaining three are dropped.

Later in the week, Sylvia Boyes and Mary Millington paint a rock outside the main entrance to Faslane with the slogan "SCOTS! SAY NO TO TRIDENT." They are both charged with malicious mischief. Sylvia still faces prosecution.

25th Coulport warhead depot is blockaded by three TP members joined by three Faslane Peace Campers. Four of the group link arms inside lock-on tubes to block the main gate while two others attempt to block the construction gate. Work at the site is disrupted for three hours as traffic is diverted.

October

23rd As President Obama is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for calling for nuclear disarmament, five Aldermaston blockaders (one from Switzerland) go on trial at Reading Magistrates' Court for doing the same a year ago, in October 2008. An expert report from Dr Nick Ritchie on developments at AWE does not convince the judge of their illegality, but on 12th November four of the defendants are acquitted on a technicality regarding the status of the access road (the fifth defendant earlier changed her plea to guilty and was given an 18-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £85 in costs).

November

2nd In the early hours, five senior US activists reach high security area of Trident submarine base in Bangor, Washington in US Disarm Now Plowshares action. They are being prosecuted for trespass and destruction of Government property.

17th Six TP activists are arrested in Edinburgh attempting to enter conference centre to highlight NATO hypocrisy as delegates "pay their respects" to fallen troops in Afghanistan during the coalition's Parliamentary Assembly. All are charged with breach of the peace, held overnight and then released with the charges being dropped. This was part of the Smash NATO mobilisation working with other groups in the Anti-Militarist Network.

20th TP activists initiate protest to "welcome" the arrival of the first Astute Class "hunter-killer" submarine at Faslane.

26th AWPC's Ippy and Charlotte are on trial for car blockade of Aldermaston in June. They are found guilty despite questionable evidence from the prosecution and are given conditional discharges and ordered to pay over £300 each in costs.

December

4th TP pledges support for the Rethink Trident coalition opposing Trident replacement.

8th The five activists who blockaded Boilerhouse gate at Aldermaston with a caravan in June have the charges against them dropped at the eleventh hour.

9th Helensburgh District Court, scene of many TP / Faslane trials over the years, finally closes.

11th Nuclear weapons profiteers Lockheed Martin are serenaded with "updated" festive tunes at their central London office by fourteen activists, from TP affinity group the Muriel Lesters plus

friends.

You can read more about the TP activities above at: www.tridentploughshares.org

11th

Nuclear bomb-makers serenaded with "updated" festive tunes

11th December 2009

Nuclear bomb-makers serenaded with "updated" festive tunes



FOURTEEN anti-nuclear peace campaigners from Trident Ploughshares affinity group the Muriel Lesters, the London and Oxford Catholic Worker, Campaign Against Arms Trade, World March for Peace and Nonviolence and Kingston Peace Council and friends dressed in white "weapons inspector" overalls and festive hats and decorations serenaded employees of nuclear weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin outside the US arms giant's central London office on Thursday 10 December, UN Human Rights Day.

They brought messages of peace and condemnation through the verses of popular festive tunes with specially-modified lyrics and called for the suspension of work on existing nuclear warheads and on the construction of new facilities and research to develop a new generation of warheads at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire, south-east England.

As well as serenading employees of the arms giant and fellow occupants of the building they share, participants in the protest displayed banners and distributed hundreds of leaflets to passers-by, many of whom stopped to chat and signed petitions to the Government calling on it to abandon Trident and its planned replacement and sign up to a Nuclear Weapons Convention - a global ban on nuclear arms - and wrote messages on a large Christmas card which was then handed in to the company.

One of the protesters, wearing a Father Christmas mask and hat and a white overall marked

"Weapons Inspector" lay down "dead" in a plastic bodybag in front of his singing colleagues outside Lockheed Martin's building to symbolise the victims of nuclear weapons, including the approximately two hundred thousand casualties from the two bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and those from any future nuclear strikes, as well as nuclear bomb test veterans and other victims of leukaemias, lymphomas and other cancers caused by exposure to radioactive discharges from AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield, Sellafield in Cumbria, Rolls Royce Raynesway in Derby and other nuclear sites, and by the widespread use of radioactive and toxic "depleted" uranium shells in recent conflicts, including Iraq, the Balkans and possibly Afghanistan.

Trident Ploughshares member Daniel Viesnik, 35, from north London said yesterday, ***"Christmas is a time of year when we would all do well to reflect on what we personally can do to bring about peace and justice in the world in these increasingly troubled times."***

"As politicians from around the world negotiate in Copenhagen for a new treaty to avert climate catastrophe, we must not forget that the many thousands of nuclear weapons that still exist in the world could wipe out humanity and destroy the biosphere in a flash."

"Instead of wasting tens of billions of pounds on a new generation of nuclear weapons and submarines, we should be investing in developing a sustainable, nuclear-free society, in education, in health and social care and other socially useful things."

"We welcome recent initiatives by the Prime Minister, President Obama, receiving his Noble Peace Prize in Oslo today, on Human Rights Day, and others in the direction of achieving a nuclear weapons-free world, but the UK must show leadership by taking its submarines off patrol and abandoning its Trident nuclear white elephants."









Notes:

1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign to disarm the UK Trident nuclear weapon system in a nonviolent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner. <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/TridentPlough>

2. British Trident nuclear warheads are manufactured at AWE Aldermaston in Berkshire on behalf of the Ministry of Defence by AWE ML, a private consortium comprising US firm Lockheed Martin (22 Carlisle Place, Victoria), US firm Jacobs Engineering and British firm Serco. Thus AWE ML has, since December 2008, been two-thirds under US ownership (with the Ministry of Defence retaining a "golden share").

Furthermore, Britain's nuclear-armed Trident II D5 submarine-launched ballistic missiles, also manufactured by Lockheed Martin, are leased from the US and maintained there, whilst the guidance systems software and certain critical components of the warheads, including the neutron generators <http://bit.ly/8NeHqx>, are also sourced from the US. Hence Britain's Trident nuclear weapon system, referred to by the Government as being "independent", is in fact very highly dependent upon the transatlantic "special relationship".

3. Since 2005, a multi-billion pound expansion of the warhead manufacturing facilities at AWE Aldermaston - on the scale of Heathrow Terminal 5 according to AWE itself - has been in progress. At the same time, hundreds of scientists and other members of staff have been recruited, including warhead designers.

4. Campaigners are opposed to new nuclear weapons developments on account of the cost, especially in light of the current economic situation in the UK and globally, but also on moral, legal, international security and democratic grounds. It is argued that the developments breach the UK's disarmament obligations under Article VI of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) [see 5 below], and that they have a destabilising effect by setting a bad example and encouraging other states to develop their own nuclear arsenals. Furthermore, it is argued that the developments at AWE are undemocratic since they have never been put out to a national

public consultation, nor has Parliament ever been consulted.

5. Article VI of the NPT, ratified by both the UK and the US, stipulates: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

6. On 15 February 2010, members and supporters of Trident Ploughshares, CND, Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp(aign) and others will nonviolently blockade AWE Aldermaston, seeking to prevent workers and contractors entering the site. <http://blockawe.blogspot.com>
<http://www.cnduk.org> <http://www.aldermaston.net>

7. In an ICM poll for the Guardian published on 13 July 2009, 54% of respondents indicated that they wanted to see Britain abandon its nuclear weapons and not replace its Trident system. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/13/icm-poll-nuclear-weapons>

8. On 9 September 2009, during the parliamentary recess, Quentin Davies MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ministry of Defence, announced that an average of £1bn per annum of taxpayers' money would be spent on capital investment at AWE. <http://bit.ly/481R0E>

9. The Ministry of Defence submitted an application in November 2009 for an enriched uranium handling and storage facility, codenamed Project Pegasus, at AWE Aldermaston. Critics claim this facility would be used to produce vital nuclear components for a new generation of nuclear warheads.

See the following briefings from the Nuclear Information Service for further details:
<http://nuclearinfo.org/view/item/a2038> <http://nuclearinfo.org/view/item/a2040>

10. On 9 February 2009, The Guardian revealed that the United States makes extensive use of the facilities and expertise at AWE for its own nuclear warhead programme, which critics claim undermines the UK and the US's international treaty obligations, including the NPT. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/09/us-uk-atomic-weapons-nuclear-power> 11. In a recent report by Greenpeace (In The Firing Line, September 2009), the lifetime cost of replacing Trident, including running costs, is calculated as £97bn. <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/media/reports/firing-line-hidden-costs-supercarrier-project-and-replacing-trident>

4th

[Trident Ploughshares joins calls to Rethink Trident](#)

4th December 2009

Trident Ploughshares joins calls to Rethink Trident

Trident Ploughshares has pledged its support for the Rethink Trident coalition statement launched today calling for the scrapping of plans to replace Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system and for the money to be spent on socially-responsible schemes.

They have issued the following statement:

"We consider the existing UK Trident nuclear weapon system to be illegal, immoral and a criminal waste of resources. We believe that the many billions of pounds wasted on Trident and its planned replacement should instead be invested in tackling climate change, education and other socially useful things, not weapons of mass murder and destruction for which there can never be any legal or moral justification, regardless of the state of the economy. The UK can, as a first step, show leadership on nuclear disarmament by immediately taking its submarines off

patrol.

"We further believe that part of the resistance to this illegal and immoral weapon system should include nonviolent direct action, which is why we are calling for all right-minded people opposed to Trident to come and join us in blockading the construction of new nuclear warhead-manufacturing facilities at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, Berkshire on 15 February 2010, sending a loud and clear message to the Government: Disarm Now!"

ENDS

Notes:

1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign to disarm Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system in a peaceful, nonviolent, open and accountable manner. <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>
2. The Aldermaston Blockade will take place on 15 February 2010, called by Trident Ploughshares and supported by CND and Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp(aign) <http://blockawe.blogspot.com>
3. More details regarding Rethink Trident:

<http://www.cnduk.org/index.php/20091204816/press-releases/trident/cut-trident-in-pre-budget-report-urges-100-strong-coalition-of-the-new-common-sense.html>

<http://action.compassonline.org.uk/page/s/stoptrident>

November Activists Protest Arrival of First Astute Class Sub

20th 20th November 2009

Activists Protest Arrival of First Astute Class Sub



Anti-nuclear activists held a banner which read Disarm the Seas on the Rhu Spit as the first nuclear powered Astute class submarine sailed through the Rhu narrows at 10:45 today.

Rainbow peace flags and a colourful CND banner fluttered in a brisk wind to greet the crew of the HMS Astute who stood at attention on deck of the brand new hunter killer submarine as she sailed into Faslane for the first time. The demonstration was organized by Helensburgh CND and Trident Ploughshares.

Jane Tallents of Helensburgh CND said "We are here to let it be known that Astute is not welcomed by everyone in this community. This submarine plays an integral role in the Trident system, escorting the nuclear armed subs as they enter and leave Faslane, and is armed with Tomahawk Cruise missiles with a range of 1,400 miles. With its technical capability to sail anywhere on the planet without detection Astute is clearly not just for defence of UK territorial waters. It is more heavily armed than previous hunter-killer submarines. Moreover the nuclear reactor on board Astute poses a risk to the people living in the West of Scotland in the event of any major accident. Even the routine operation of the Trafalgar and Trident submarines has led to ongoing leaks of radiation. Astute will produce a new radioactive waste stream at a time when there is still no adequate storage and disposal plan for the current submarines."

"The arrival of the submarine comes at a time when Alan Reid MP has voiced opposition to the news that the MOD is considering one or more possible sites in Argyle and Bute for storage of waste from old submarines. If Alan Reid sincerely wants to protect the people of Argyle & Bute from the risk of exposure to radioactivity he should be even more concerned about the MOD's placing of a whole new generation of nuclear reactors at Faslane."

"The Scottish government has a clear policy of opposition to building nuclear power plants on Scottish soil. We want to know why it is not speaking out in opposition to these new nuclear power stations sailing up the Clyde."

Click [here](#) to see more pictures

Notes to editor

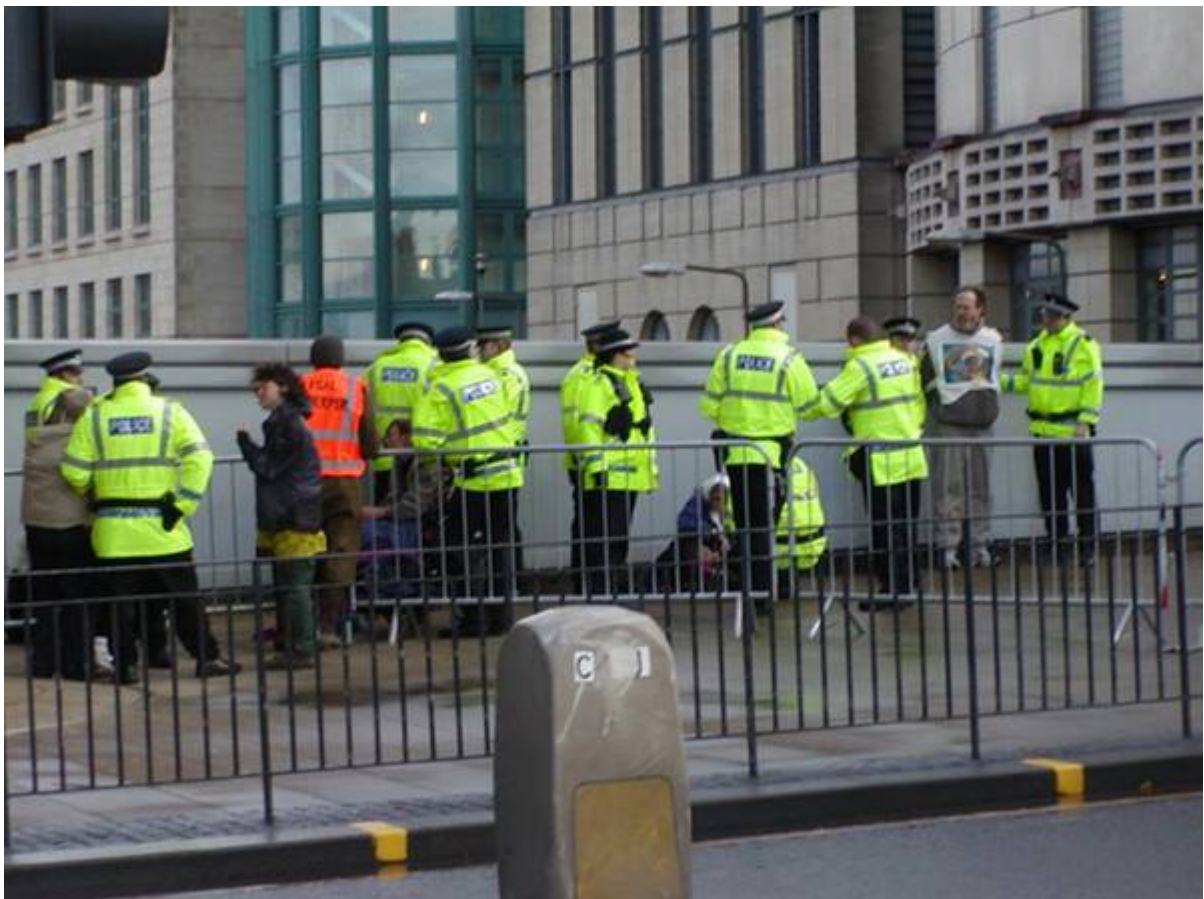
1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign initiated in 1998 to disarm Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system in a nonviolent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner. It opposes all nuclear weapons and rejects violence as a means of resolving conflict. For more info see here: <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>

Media enquiries: Jane Tallents or Brian Larkin Tel. 01436 671845, (m) 07787887502

19th

[Trident Ploughshares Activists Disrupt NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Edinburgh](#)
19th November 2009

Trident Ploughshares Activists Disrupt NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Edinburgh



Just after eight thirty on the 17th November, several members of Trident Ploughshares blocked the entrance of the Edinburgh International Conference Center for quarter of an hour as Parliamentarians from NATO countries met for the final session of the assembly. Foreign Secretary David Milliband and the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen were due to speak following a minute's silence. The

protesters wore shirts emblazoned with the images of wounded and traumatized Afghan children, graphically demonstrating the fact that NATO's war in Afghanistan is killing innocent civilians and traumatizing children in violation of international law.

Anti-War Activists Disrupt NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Edinburgh

Just after eight thirty on the 17th November, several members of Trident Ploughshares blocked the entrance of the Edinburgh International Conference Center for quarter of an hour as Parliamentarians from NATO countries met for the final session of the assembly. Foreign Secretary David Milliband and the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen were due to speak following a minute's silence. The protesters wore shirts emblazoned with the images of wounded and traumatized Afghan children, graphically demonstrating the fact that NATO's war in Afghanistan is killing innocent civilians and traumatizing children in violation of international law. They recited the names of Afghan civilians who have died since the war began. Several protesters were blocking the entrance to the Conference Centre so that Parliamentarians could see them on their way into the session or from the escalators inside the building. Police arrested six of them.

The protesters called for an immediate moratorium on drone and air strikes, an end to NATO's war in Afghanistan, withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, investment in humanitarian aid, disarmament of NATO nuclear weapons, a halt to the expansion of and the dissolution of NATO.

A statement from Trident Ploughshares read:

We Will Not Be Silent Action at NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Today the NATO Parliamentary Assembly is having a one minute silence which it claims is a 'mark of respect to all those who have been affected by the conflict in Afghanistan.' This hypocrisy must not go unchallenged. NATO is responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent men, women and children. Its war has forced five million people to flee to refugee camps. To claim to "respect" those affected while planning to send in yet more troops, which will inevitably lead to more civilian deaths, is an affront to the Afghan people and an insult to the families of those who have been killed. But we will not be silent. In the name of the innocent civilians who have died in this tragic and foolish war we call for an immediate moratorium on drone and air strikes, an end to NATO's war in Afghanistan, withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and investment in humanitarian aid, a halt to the expansion of and, finally, the dissolution of NATO.

Since the US/NATO war in Afghanistan began eight years ago more than 7,000 civilians have died and countless innocents wounded and traumatized. On Friday Gordon Brown announced plans to send 5,000 more NATO troops into the conflict in which more than 200 UK soldiers have died. And Barack Obama is poised to announce that the US will send some 34,000 troops. Every time air and drone strikes kill civilians more people will turn against NATO and the UK and the US. Eight years of war have failed to accomplish anything. Stepping up the war is folly and will only increase terrorism. Troop increases and the creation of a larger Afghan police and army will not bring peace to Afghanistan. We should be putting more resources into humanitarian aid, building schools and hospitals, providing doctors and teachers. That is the way to build peace, not by sending in more troops.

We also call upon NATO to disarm its nuclear weapons. Trident - with around 160 warheads, each ten times as destructive as the Hiroshima bomb - is assigned to NATO, and the US deploys hundreds of nuclear weapons at bases across Europe under the NATO alliance. This is in violation of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, under which nuclear weapons states are obligated to bring to a conclusion negotiations for disarmament of nuclear weapons. NATO's policy of deterrence threatens global peace and security. As long as NATO continues to rely on nuclear weapons for security other countries will want them too. Moreover the people of

Scotland and our Scottish Parliament have rejected Trident. It is encouraging that Obama and Medvedev announced plans for a new START Treaty for reductions of strategic nuclear weapons. But we must go further. The only way to ensure peace and security is to abolish nuclear weapons.

We believe that the peaceful world we seek cannot be achieved through the warmongering that characterise NATO, but only through a spirit of co-operation and dialogue between nations. We cannot stand idly by as NATO leaders plot further bloodshed and destruction. [There are more photos here](#)

12th

[Aldermaston blockaders acquitted!](#)

12th November 2009

Aldermaston blockaders acquitted!



Four people who took part in the Aldermaston Big Blockade on 27 October 2008 were found not guilty on Thursday (12 November, 2009) of obstructing the highway by a district judge at Reading Magistrates' Court.

DJ Peter Crabtree ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove that the defendants were in fact on a highway or obstructing a highway. The defendants successfully argued that their blockade took place on the access road to the Tadley Gate entrance to the Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston, which they claimed lies on Ministry of Defence land, and that their action to impede the development and deployment of nuclear weapons did not significantly affect traffic flow on the adjacent main road, the A340. The judge did not, however, find that it had been

shown that the Atomic Weapons Establishment was engaged in unlawful activity.

The successful defendants, who have each been awarded costs, are Jean Oliver from Lanarkshire in Scotland, David Polden and Emma Sangster, both from London, and Renate Zauner from Switzerland.

The trial took place on 21-22 October, 2009, but the defendants were required to return to court on Thursday to hear the judgment.

A fifth defendant, Barbara Dowling, from Glasgow, pleaded guilty on 21 October and was given an 18-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £85 in costs.

ENDS

Notes to editor:

1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign initiated in 1998 to disarm Britain's Trident nuclear weapons systems in a peaceful, nonviolent, open and accountable manner.
<http://www.tridentploughshares.org>

2. For further information and quotes in relation to this trial, please see the earlier press releases:
<http://www.tridentploughshares.org/article1579>

3. The attached photo (credit D. Viesnik) shows defendants with counsel and supporters outside Reading Magistrates' Court on the first day of the trial, 21 October 2009

October Aldermaston five were trying to halt "preparations for nuclear war crimes"

23rd

23rd October 2009

Anti Nuclear protestors in court

Aldermaston five were trying to halt "preparations for nuclear war crimes"

Five anti-nuclear activists who used their bodies to peacefully block access to the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston last autumn told Reading Magistrates' Court during their trial this week (21-22 October) that they were acting to prevent future war crimes involving nuclear weapons.

Several of the defendants indicated that they believed some of the activities at the facility in West Berkshire, south-east England, over which there is a lack of transparency from the state, the court heard, would constitute preparations for and/or conspiracy to commit war crimes, which they felt they had a right and a duty to prevent.

The defendants, Barbara Dowling, from Glasgow, Jean Oliver, from Lanarkshire, David Polden, from London, Emma Sangster, also from London (all self-represented) and Renate Zauner from Switzerland (represented by Prof. Nicholas Grief) were facing the charge of "wilfully obstructing the highway without lawful authority or reasonable excuse". They were among 33 people arrested during a peaceful mass blockade of the Aldermaston site that took place on 27 October 2008 (and had been announced well in advance) during the annual UN Disarmament Week. [1]

The court heard how, by lying down in or close to the access road to the Tadley Gate entrance to the

base and linking arms using rigid plastic tubes - in one case incorporated inside a large teddy bear - the defendants believed they were acting to uphold international law and fulfil their moral duty to stop the development, deployment and use of indiscriminate nuclear weapons by preventing workers and contractors entering the site in their vehicles.

The first defendant, Barbara Dowling was sentenced on Wednesday (21 October) after changing her plea to guilty.

She said in her statement in mitigation:

"I lay down in the road using my body to nonviolently blockade the illegal, immoral work of the [Aldermaston] nuclear bomb factory. I was alive when Hiroshima was bombed; it happened in my lifetime: it's personal. Now I weep. Guilty or not guilty here today, nothing will change: the work continues at AWE and I'll just carry on."

Describing Ms Dowling as "an extremely genuine and committed person," District Judge Peter Crabtree handed her an 18-month conditional discharge and ordered her to pay £85 in costs. The remaining four defendants, all of whom pleaded not guilty, will have to return to court on Wednesday 12 November, at 2pm, to hear the judgment, all the evidence and submissions having been heard by Thursday (22 October).

As indicated by an expert report specially-prepared for the case by Dr. Nick Ritchie of the University of Bradford and submitted to the court as background evidence by counsel for Ms Zauner, AWE Aldermaston is used not only for research, development and maintenance of nuclear warheads for the UK Trident missile system, but also for the US nuclear weapons programme in collaboration with UK-based scientists. [2]

On 9 September this year, during the parliamentary recess, Quentin Davies, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, quietly announced to parliament via a brief written statement that £1 billion per year of taxpayers' money would go to AWE until 2013. [3]

Renate Zauner said, "I recently discovered that my grandfather was a Nazi party official (cell leader) during the Second World War. Apparently he never broke a single national law. At the end of the war, six million people had died in the Holocaust. He might not have realised the consequences of his actions at the time, but I do: if I simply watch while crimes against humanity and war crimes are being prepared at Aldermaston and don't act, then I am co-responsible for the preparation of these crimes and for the possible deaths of millions of people."

Emma Sangster added, "A poll taken in July this year showed that the majority of people in Britain want all of this country's nuclear weapons scrapped, rather than see Trident be replaced. Despite all the concern about nuclear proliferation and talk of a nuclear-free world, this Government is developing a new generation of nuclear weapons. I believe we all must do what we can to stop this process." [4]

David Polden is a veteran anti-nuclear campaigner who said in court he had been arrested over 100 times and imprisoned 16 times for civil disobedience over a period of nearly 50 years. He said in evidence, "Nonviolent direct action is a good tool for drawing attention to views on nuclear weapons and their dangers".

Jean Oliver, a member of the Iona religious community, added, "Nuclear weapons are theologically and morally indefensible, and I feel I have a clear duty to stop them."

ENDS

Notes to editor:

1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign initiated in 1998 to disarm Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system in a nonviolent, open, safe and accountable manner. Website: <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>

On 27 October 2008, three to four hundred campaigners joined the peaceful Big Blockade at AWE Aldermaston, organised by Trident Ploughshares and supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Aldermaston Women's Peace Campaign and others. Of the dozens of people who peacefully blocked access to the base on that day, 33 were arrested. Other blockaders were not arrested, despite some remaining in position for up to five hours. More information: <http://blockawe.blogspot.com>

2. The latter is carried out under the auspices of the bilateral UK-US 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (with subsequent revisions), which some critics claim breaches both countries' legal obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

3. See: <http://bit.ly/481R0E>

4. ICM poll in the Guardian, 13 July 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/13/icm-poll-nuclear-weapons>

5. More details and some key references can be found in the earlier press release pertaining to this trial, viewable at:

<http://www.tridentploughshares.org/article1578>

19th [Five in court for stopping nuclear proliferation at Aldermaston while Obama gets Nobel peace prize for calling for disarmament](#)
19th October 2009

Five in court for stopping nuclear proliferation at Aldermaston while Obama gets Nobel peace prize for calling for disarmament

Trial at Reading Magistrates' Court, Berkshire on Wednesday, 21st October and Thursday 22nd October 2009

While Barack Obama is being congratulated for receiving the Nobel peace prize, partly for his commitment to 'a world without nuclear weapons', five people who protested at the gates of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston, where the renewal of Britain's nuclear weapons is being planned, will be on trial for exactly the same commitment.

Renate Zauner from Switzerland, Barbara Dowling and Jean Oliver from Scotland, and Emma

Sangster and David Polden from London will be on trial at Reading Magistrates' Court on October 21st and 22nd.

On 27 October 2008, the five defendants lay down at one of the entrances to AWE Aldermaston,

successfully preventing workers and contractors driving into the base, where Britain's nuclear warheads

are developed and maintained. It took the police more than an hour to remove and arrest the blockaders.. (2)

The defendants believe that the ongoing activities at, and expansion of, AWE Aldermaston and nearby AWE Burghfield, together with the ongoing deployment and planned renewal of Britain's submarine-launched Trident nuclear missile system, contravene Britain's obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. (3)

They also believe that Britain's Trident nuclear missile system violates the 1996 landmark ruling of the International Court of Justice regarding the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, which could find no lawful use for these weapons of mass destruction. (4)

They further argue against the massive cost of replacing and maintaining Trident, particularly in the current economic climate. On 9 September this year, during the parliamentary recess, Quentin Davies, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ministry of Defence, quietly announced that an extra £1 billion per year of taxpayers' money would be given to AWE Aldermaston. (5)

The defendants have submitted to the court a report by expert Dr. Nick Ritchie, from the University of Bradford, to underpin their claims.

On 24 September 2009, President Obama chaired an historic meeting of the UN Security Council which affirmed its commitment to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and established a broad framework for reducing global nuclear dangers. The Security Council passed a new UN resolution strengthening the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. (6)

Commenting before the trial, Renate Zauner said, "I recently discovered that my grandfather was a Nazi party official (cell leader) during the Second World War. Apparently he never broke a single national law.

At the end of the war, six million people had died in the Holocaust. He might not have realised the consequences of his actions at the time, but I do: if I simply watch while crimes against humanity and war crimes are being prepared at Aldermaston and don't act, then I am co-responsible for the preparation of these crimes and for the possible deaths of millions of people."

Emma Sangster added, "A poll taken in July this year showed that the majority of people in Britain want all of this country's nuclear weapons scrapped, rather than see Trident be replaced. Despite all the concern about nuclear proliferation and talk of a nuclear-free world, this Government is developing a new generation of nuclear weapons. I believe we all must do what we can to stop this process." (7)

For further information see: <http://blockawe.blogspot.com> and <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>

Notes

1. The White House Fact Sheet on the United Nations Security Council Summit on Nuclear Nonproliferation

and Nuclear Disarmament UNSC Resolution 1887, September 24, 2009.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Fact-Sheet-on-the-United-Nations-Security-Council-Summit-on-Nuclear-Nonproliferation-and-Nuclear-Disarmament-UNSC-Resolution-1887/

2. On 27 October 2008, three to four hundred campaigners joined the Big Blockade at AWE Aldermaston, organised by Trident Ploughshares and supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Aldermaston Women's Peace Campaign and Block the Builders. Of the dozens of people who peacefully blockaded access to the base on that day, thirty-three were arrested. Other blockaders were not arrested, despite some remaining in position for up to five hours.

3. Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty, which has been ratified by Great Britain, stipulates: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

4. See 5. See <http://bit.ly/481R0E>

6. Security Council calls for world free of nuclear weapons during historic summit, 24 September 2009. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32223&Cr=disarmament&Cr1>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Court_of_Justice_advisory_opinion_on_the_Legality_of_the_Threat_or_Use_of_Nuclear_Weapons

7. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/13/icm-poll-nuclear-weapons>

August Summary of the week long disarmament camp at Coulport

31st August 2009

31st Summary of the week long disarmament camp at Coulport

Twenty five members of Trident Ploughshares took part in the tenth annual week long disarmament camp near Faslane, Scotland, the homeport of Trident, Britain's nuclear weapons system. Members of the group maintained a peaceful daily morning vigil at the gates of RNAD Coulport, the UK's nuclear weapons depot and engaged in dramatic nonviolent direct actions calling for the disarmament of Trident.

Five members of the group kicked off the week of action on Monday August 17th, by walking past security guards through the main gate straight into Faslane. They reached the high security perimeter approximately one hundred fifty yards inside the base before being stopped by MOD Police. They handed out a letter calling on everyone within the base to join with them in beginning disarming Trident while one member of the group handed out flowers to police. The bandit alarm was sounded and the base was locked down for nearly an hour. The five were charged with entering a restricted area under SOCPA (Serious Organized Crime and Police Act). Their letter stated: "It is the presence of Trident submarines ... which constitutes a serious organized crime." They cited the opinion of Judge Bedjaoui, President of the International Court of Justice, on a nuclear weapons system such as Trident "that deploys over 100 nuclear warheads with an approximate yield of 100

kilotons per warhead." He stated: "that warheads of this size constitute around eight times the explosive power of the bomb that flattened Hiroshima ... and killed over 100,000 civilians. ... In my opinion, such a system deployed and ready for action would be unlawful."

The statement, signed by Sylvia Boyes, Angie Zelter, Brian Larkin, Penny Stone and Mary Millington, noted "that the UK government, as signatory to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty undertook more than 40 years ago to complete the disarmament of its nuclear weapons." And the "Scottish government formed a working group for a future of a Scotland without nuclear weapons nearly two years ago but has failed to release a report let alone take any relevant action while the people of Scotland overwhelmingly oppose the presence of nuclear weapons in these waters. As long as the governments fail to begin a process of disarmament members of Trident Ploughshares are committed to nonviolent action to begin that process. Disarmament would not have to mean the loss of jobs in the area. We urge the government to redirect the resources currently allocated to Trident to meet real human needs. The skills of people working at this base could well be employed in building the infrastructure for renewable energy among other possibilities. Rather than continue to threaten millions of innocent civilians with nuclear weapons Scotland and the UK could lead the world towards nuclear disarmament by scrapping Trident. We invite others to follow us through this gate and restore humanitarian law."

Later in the week Sylvia Boyes, 66 of Keighley, and Mary Millington, 61 of Glasgow, both Quakers, painted a rock outside Faslane with the slogan "SCOTS! SAY NO TO TRIDENT."

Signalling ongoing resistance to the deployment of nuclear weapons three members of Trident Ploughshares joined three members of Faslane Peace Camp in blockading Coulport today. Work at the nuclear bomb depot was disrupted for three hours as traffic was diverted due to the blockade. Four of the group linked arms inside drain pipes made into layered lock-ons to block the main gate while two others attempted to block the construction gate. A specialist cutting team was called to the spot to remove the protesters.

18th [Five activists walk straight into Faslane nuclear weapons base](#)
18th August 2009

Five activists walk straight into Faslane nuclear weapons base

On August 17th five Trident Ploughshares peace activists walked unchallenged straight into Faslane naval base in Scotland, the home of Britain 's nuclear-armed Trident submarines.

The activists are Brian Larkin, 49, an unemployed teacher, Sylvia Boyes, 65, a Peace Campaigner from Keighley, Mary Millington, 61, a retired welsh language tutor, Penny Stone, 25, a Musician, and Angie Zelter, 58, a Human Being!

All five arrestees were released at around 9pm on Monday evening (17 August) and charged with criminal trespass under the Serious Organised Crime and Police (SOCPA) Act 2005 s.128 and under the Ministry of Defence byelaws (entry to the base without authority). A report is being sent to the Procurator Fiscal who will decide whether or not to prosecute.

They released the following statement:

Dear Friends at Faslane,

A group of us from Trident Ploughshares have entered the base today to call for the process of disarmament of Trident nuclear weapons to begin. We are here to remind all concerned that the UK government, as signatory to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty undertook more than 40 years ago to complete the disarmament of its nuclear weapons. The continuing deployment of Trident seriously threatens global security and peace, encouraging further proliferation. In 2009 Judge Bedjaoui, President of the International Court of Justice, gave an opinion on "the legality of a

nuclear weapons system that deploys over 100 nuclear warheads with an approximate yield of 100 kilotons per warhead." He stated: "Bearing in mind that warheads of this size constitute around eight times the explosive power of the bomb that flattened Hiroshima ... and killed over 100,000 civilians, it follows that the use of even a single such warhead in any circumstance, whether a first or second use and whether intended to be targeted against civilian populations or military objectives, would inevitably violate the prohibitions on the infliction of unnecessary suffering and indiscriminate harm as well as the rule of proportionality.... In my opinion, such a system deployed and ready for action would be unlawful."

The Scottish government formed a working group for a future of a Scotland without nuclear weapons nearly two years ago but has failed to release a report let alone take any relevant action while the people of Scotland overwhelmingly oppose the presence of nuclear weapons in these waters. As long as the governments fail to begin a process of disarmament members of Trident Ploughshares are committed to whatever nonviolent action possible to begin that process. We invite others to join us or contact us to discuss your concerns.

The process of disarmament would not have to mean the loss of jobs in the area. We urge the government to redirect the resources currently allocated to Trident to meet real human needs. The skills of people working at this base could well be employed in the area building the infrastructure for renewable energy, alleviating the threat of climate change, among other possibilities. We invite you to contact us so that we can enter into planning for the future of a Scotland and world without nuclear weapons.

Rather than continue to threaten other nations and millions of innocent civilians with nuclear weapons Scotland and the UK could lead the world by scrapping Trident. We entered the gate fully aware that we might be charged with violation of SOCPA. That laws was established ostensibly to deter "serious organized crime." But it is the presence of Trident submarines each carrying 48 warheads ten times more destructive than the Hiroshima bomb which constitutes a serious organized crime. We invite others to follow us through this gate and restore humanitarian law.

The five were in Scotland to take part in the Trident ploughshares disarmament camp at Coulport. The camp is a week long gathering during which peace activists share ideas, plan actions and enjoy themselves. The camp will run until the 23rd of August and everyone is invited to come and participate. Details can be found [here](#)

16th June 2009

Trident Ploughshares Blockade at Aldermaston on 15th June 2009

It was a glorious morning as 5 separate groups made their way towards Aldermaston. At 6.30a.m. the Muriel Lesters arrived at North Gate to find it had not been opened yet for the park and ride coaches so they further locked it with their own chains and some super-glue and arranged themselves as comfortably as possible in their lock-ons and hung their peace banners.

There were 5 of them locked on, including one in a wheel chair plus a lone supporter. A policeman soon arrived and asked them, in amazement, why they had chosen that particular gate (it being rather out of the way and not a usual target for demonstrators). They ingeniously replied that they had never blocked that gate before! They were then told that they were doing nothing illegal and could stay there all day if they wished! Well we know we are doing nothing illegal and that the real criminals are those building illegal weapons of mass destruction inside the fences. And the Muriel Lesters also knew, unlike the police, that they were an essential part of an overall blockade and that other gates were being blockaded. They remained where they were.

At 7a.m. women from the Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp pushed their heavy lock-ons into place at Home Office Gate, and three women locked on, slowing traffic down whilst the East Anglian group drove two cars into Tadley Gate completely blocking it. The two cars had been carefully provided with lock-on tubes fixed to the back-seat floors so that when the cars were positioned the supporters in the front could get out fast and the two in the back seat just opened their doors and then sat in the road and put their arms in the tube. Thus 2 people locked-on to each car and the rest of the supporting group spray painted CND signs on the cars and hung banners saying 'Nuclear Weapons are State Terrorism'.

Meanwhile, two intrepid cyclists managed to padlock shut both sets of gates at the Main Gate and then rush off without getting arrested in order to support the other groups. They were soon joined by 2 other cyclists and throughout the morning not only gave good support but also got lots of ideas about how to do some bicycle blockades another time. They put up their banner that said 'Bikes Block Bombs - No Trident' at the Tadley Gate.

At 7.30a.m. two combined TP affinity groups calling themselves the 'Birthday Group' (it was Alison's 60th birthday) manoeuvred a caravan into the Boilerhouse Gate stopping the line of traffic that had been directed around to that gate. There were 4 locked to each corner of the caravan sitting on the ground with their arms in concrete lock-ons that were fixed inside each corner of the caravan. One other blockader locked himself to the side of the caravan. Then the banner went up saying 'No Trident Replacement' and the birthday cake came around.

Streams of traffic were trying to get into the various gates and having to move slowly around the base trying to find a way to get in. The base had been successfully blocked at 5 gates and although the locks were broken within minutes at the main gates and traffic trickled in past the concrete blocks at Home Office Gate nevertheless 3 gates were blocked for between 2 to 3 hours. The hardest to move were the two cars as it was difficult for the cutting teams to remove the tubes within the restricted space inside the cars. Once everyone was removed the cars and the caravan then had to be towed away.

Eleven people were arrested and taken along to Loddon Valley Police Station. The 5 at North Gate had been released last of all, cut out and then plonked on the grass and instead of being arrested they were left free to join the supporters from the other blockading groups. We all sat down and shared food and drink and our experiences of the day. We had had a kind dedicated press person who got out the press releases for us as he cycled round collecting people's pictures and another support person who had driven me around to take pictures and to get an overall picture of what was going on. We were able to do a couple of interviews including one for the local radio. You can find local press accounts here at

<http://www.newburytoday.co.uk/News/Article.aspx?articleID=10297> and at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/berkshire/8101261.stm>

You can also find pictures of the blockades at <http://aldermaston.net/media>

In all eleven people were arrested and taken along to Loddon Valley Police Station. They were not kept inside too long and we were all re-united at around 4p.m. After more chatting and de-briefs we all set off home - tired but happy.

The 11 arrested were all charged with wilful obstruction of the highway either with or without a motor vehicle and were given rather stiff bail conditions to stay well away from Aldermaston and

Burghfield that some of them may challenge in court. They have to appear at Newbury Magistrates Court on the following dates:- 7 on the 25th June, 2 on the 26th June, 1 on the 30th June and 1 on 2nd July. If anyone lives near the court then some court support would be welcome for the actual court cases. You can contact me if you want to do this and I will let you know the dates.

Any groups reading this who want to be involved in the next hidden blockade do contact me.....we need to keep the pressure on Aldermaston and try to persuade our Government to fulfil its promise to the world community to disarm its nuclear weapons not make new ones.

Love and peace and hope, Angie Zelter.

May Woman arrested at nuclear sub base talking to workers

28th May 2009

28th

Woman arrested at nuclear sub base talking to workers

Early this morning, one woman was arrested as Trident Ploughshares activists took their legal right to protest to the north gate of Faslane nuclear submarine base in western Scotland.

Their placards showed quotations from President Obama and Prime Minister Brown reacting to the recent underground nuclear weapons tests carried out by North Korea. The activists wanted the workers at Faslane to consider how their work compared to the activity in that country.

The UK government is preparing to upgrade its submarine-based Trident nuclear missile system, which it is estimated will cost UK taxpayers at least £75 billion (or well in excess of £1000 for every person in the UK) during the worst economic crisis this country and the world have experienced since the invention of nuclear weapons at the end of the Second World War.

The British government has also threatened first use of nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear state, namely Iraq in 2002, and is committed to the NATO military alliance, which has a first strike nuclear weapons policy that it considers to be binding on all member states. Thus the British government and NATO alike disregard the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice which could find no lawful use for nuclear weapons. Trident (or any) nuclear weapons could never be used discriminatingly in time or space, so their use would be in breach of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, and the hell that would be unleashed if used - or if subjected to a terrorist attack - would be barbaric beyond human experience to date.

There is a supreme hypocrisy in condemning other countries whilst failing to acknowledge the level of terror that Britain's own nuclear weapons and the policies which dictate their deployment engender in the governments of other countries, especially smaller countries, and especially those already damaged through imperialism. Understanding, communication and, most importantly, the laying down of arms is, we believe, the only way towards the global disarmament desired by US President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. In the words of one of the activists, Janet Fenton:

"A deterrent terrifies: that is its purpose. We are utterly saddened by the development of more of these weapons [in North Korea], albeit on a much smaller scale than anything in the arsenals of the US or the UK, but not surprised. It is a response which peace activists have predicted for years."

Activist Eoin McCarthy added, *"Another world is possible, and each of us has a responsibility to help make it happen."*

Ms Fenton stood in the road so that workers could clearly see her message about Faslane and North

Korea as they queued to enter the naval base, but the Ministry of Defence police moved her to the pavement and took away her placard. As she then attempted to communicate with workers by going over and speaking to them, she was quickly arrested.

April Campaigners visit nuclear bomb-makers in London

30th April 2009

30th

Campaigners visit nuclear bomb-makers in London

Six anti-nuclear campaigners from Trident Ploughshares affinity group the Muriel Lesters visited nuclear weapons profiteers Jacobs Engineering outside their Tower Bridge office in London earlier today.

The campaigners displayed a banner reading "Nuclear Bomb Makers" and various placards to the busy passing traffic and pedestrians and handed out leaflets to passers-by and users of the building, alerting them to the presence of nuclear proliferators in the capital and calling for the suspension of work on the current and new generation of nuclear warheads at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire, England.

One of the campaigners, Daniel Viesnik, 34, from London said, *"President Obama and Prime Minister Brown are making the right noises on global nuclear disarmament, but still we see multi-billion pound nuclear warhead developments pressing ahead in Berkshire. How does this tally with the UK's legally-binding commitment to nuclear disarmament, and how can it be justified in a time of increasing financial hardship? It cannot be right that private corporations like US firm Jacobs profit from making nuclear bombs at UK taxpayers' expense while we are denied the necessary resources to tackle climate change and meet the genuine needs of society."*

He added, *"The British Government demands that countries like North Korea and Iran renounce nuclear weapons, yet all the while plans to keep its own indefinitely. We cannot have one rule for one and one rule for another. We must lead by example, we must scrap Trident."*

29th Campaigners call for immediate UK compliance with international law on nuclear weapons

29th April 2009

Campaigners call for immediate UK compliance with international law on nuclear weapons

Trident Ploughshares has written an open letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown reminding him of Britain's legal obligations to disarm its nuclear weapons, ahead of next month's Preparatory Committee in New York for the 2010 Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The letter is additionally being sent to the Defence and Foreign Secretaries, and to the leaders of the major political parties in the UK.

Daniel Viesnik, a spokesperson for Trident Ploughshares and one of the signatories to the letter said: "All around the world, people from the US President and former statesmen and military generals to rank-and-file campaigners are united in recognising the pressing need for global nuclear disarmament and ridding the world of the threat of nuclear war once and for all.

"It is time for the British Government to tally its words with its actions by no longer deploying its current Trident nuclear weapons, scrapping plans for their replacement and signing up to a Nuclear Weapons Convention - a global ban on nuclear weapons; only then will Britain have any genuine credibility on nuclear disarmament.

"The current economic crisis presents the ideal opportunity for the Government to review the

advisability of wasting tens of billions of pounds on illegal, immoral and useless nuclear weapons, and instead focus limited resources on tackling climate change and meeting the genuine needs of society."

Please send a copy of the letter to your MP. You can download the letter by clicking on the word document called "letter to Gordon Brown" in the blue box in the top left corner of this page.

4th [Six Britons Join Two Hundred Strong Blockade of NATO Summit in Strasbourg](#)

4th April 2009

Six Britons Join Two Hundred Strong Blockade of NATO Summit in Strasbourg

Six British members and supporters of anti-nuclear campaign group Trident Ploughshares joined over two hundred protesters from a dozen countries in the five-hour NATO-ZU / Shut down NATO nonviolent blockade of NATO's 60th anniversary conference this morning [see note 1]. The activists blocked a main road into the red zone around the conference centre where NATO is meeting. There were no arrests. At the same time, other groups of five hundred and seven hundred activists blocked other main roads into the red zone. They are joining tens of thousands of protesters from across Europe.

See some photos [here](#).

The NATO-ZU / Shut Down NATO blockade included peace activists from Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and several other countries. The protesters are calling for disarmament of NATO nuclear weapons, withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, an end to the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the NATO Western military alliance.

The police established a "red" exclusion zone around the centre of Strasbourg, where delegates from 28 NATO countries are meeting, but protesters still succeeded in disrupting proceedings.

Daniel Viesnik, 34, a Trident Ploughshares activist who travelled from London to join the Strasbourg protests said, "We are calling for the disarmament of NATO nuclear weapons, the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan and an end to the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe.

"NATO has hundreds of nuclear weapons at bases across Europe, including Britain's submarine-launched Trident missiles, all in violation of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"NATO is a relic of the Cold War. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved nearly two decades ago, but NATO continues to expand eastwards across Europe to Russia's borders. Its plans to incorporate Georgia and Ukraine are heightening tensions with Russia; and the US Ballistic Missile Defence programme - involving the UK, Poland and the Czech Republic - is creating a new nuclear arms race and a new Cold War with Russia, destroying any hope of achieving global nuclear disarmament."

Matt Bury, a Trident Ploughshares activist who travelled from Scotland to join the blockade said, "NATO forces are responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians in Afghanistan, Serbia and elsewhere over the past ten years alone. We believe that the peaceful world we seek cannot be achieved through the military bullying and warmongering that characterise NATO, but only through a spirit of co-operation and dialogue between nations.

"We are encouraged that the new US president appears committed to global nuclear disarmament and is reconsidering whether to move forward with the provocative ballistic missile defence programme; but his plans to escalate the war in Afghanistan and his calls for NATO allies, including Britain, to commit further troops to the conflict will only lead to more civilian deaths, causing more Afghans to turn against the West. We cannot stand idly by as NATO leaders plot further bloodshed and

destruction. We are here to set an alternative path of peace.”

Angie Zelter, the founder of Trident Ploughshares, from London said, “If we want peace and to co-operate globally to solve poverty and climate chaos, then NATO must be disbanded. We have to solve our conflicts nonviolently and stop large corporations controlling the world’s resources for short-term profit. We cannot eat money.”

Mell Harrison, from Suffolk added, “I am here to take a stand against the hypocrisy of NATO sharing nuclear weapons amongst its members and its nuclear first strike policy, which breach the Non-Proliferation Treaty; while at the same time threatening war against countries it suspects possess or are seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction of their own.

“It is time for NATO to disband and start communicating. Peace is never achieved through violence.”

Note 1. Details of the NATO-ZU / Shut down NATO nonviolent actions can be found [here](#).

1st [NATO to be targeted in France by TP activists](#)

1st April 2009

NATO to be targeted in France by TP activists

Five members of British anti-nuclear campaign group Trident Ploughshares will join peace activists travelling to Strasbourg this week from the UK to take part in international protests during NATO’s 60th anniversary conference.

See some photo’s [here](#).

The campaigners plan to join thousands of European activists taking part in the NATO-ZU / Shut down NATO nonviolent civil disobedience actions [see note 2].

Trident Ploughshares opposes NATO for the following reasons:

- NATO is today a belligerent military alliance that includes the UK. It has at its disposal hundreds of nuclear weapons spread across bases in Europe, violating the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. These include Britain’s submarine-launched Trident missiles. NATO has an illegal and immoral nuclear first strike policy.
- NATO forces are directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians in Afghanistan, Serbia and elsewhere over the past ten years alone.
- NATO is a relic of the Cold War. It came into existence in 1949, six years before the formation of the Warsaw Pact, which was dissolved nearly two decades ago, in 1991.
- Despite this, NATO continues to expand eastwards across Europe to Russia’s borders. Its plans to incorporate the former Soviet states Georgia and Ukraine are visibly heightening tensions and souring relations between Russia and the West. The recent violent conflict between Russia and Western-backed Georgia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia is symptomatic of this wider problem.
- There are fears that the US Ballistic Missile Defence programme in Europe - involving the UK, Poland and the Czech Republic - would be integrated into NATO’s defences, creating additional impetus for a new nuclear arms race and a new Cold War with Russia, and possibly China, destroying any hope of achieving global nuclear disarmament.
- We believe that the peaceful, nonviolent and equitable world we seek cannot be achieved through the military might, bullying and warmongering that characterise NATO, but only through a spirit of co-

operation and dialogue between nations.

A spokesperson for Trident Ploughshares said: "With the arrival of President Obama in the Whitehouse, we believe there has never been a better opportunity to move towards the disbandment of NATO. We are encouraged that the new US president appears committed to global nuclear disarmament and is reconsidering whether it is wise to push ahead with the provocative ballistic missile defence programme; but meanwhile his plans to escalate the war in Afghanistan and his calls for NATO allies, including Britain to commit further troops to the conflict give cause for concern. We as citizens cannot stand idly by as NATO leaders plot further bloodshed, misery and destruction. We are here to set an alternative path, an agenda of peace."

Ends

Notes to editor

1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign initiated in 1998 to disarm Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system in a nonviolent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner. It opposes all nuclear weapons and rejects violence as a means of resolving conflict. *Media enquiries: tp2000 (at) gn(dot)apc(dot)org
2. Details of the NATO-ZU / Shut down NATO nonviolent actions can be found here: <http://wri-irg.org/node/6990>

March Women fined for blockading nuclear weapons factory

11th March 2009

11th

Women fined for blockading nuclear weapons factory

Defendants disappointed at failure of judge to uphold international law

The founder of Trident Ploughshares, Angie Zelter, from London, was one of five experienced female members of the group on trial at Reading Magistrates' Court on Monday, 9 March 2009 for obstructing the highway during last October's Big Blockade of the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Berkshire, England.

The other defendants were Ms Zelter's daughter, Zina Zelter, from Leicester, Emma Bateman, from Leicester, Joan Meredith, from Cheshire and Marlene Yeo, from Leicestershire. The court heard how, at around dawn on Monday 27 October 2008, the five had lay down in the A340 just north of the Tadley roundabout, "locked-on" to concrete blocks, successfully preventing working and contractors driving into the Aldermaston base, where Britain's nuclear warheads are developed and maintained. It took the police six hours to remove and arrest the blockaders.

The women, all representing themselves, gave lengthy and impassioned evidence regarding their motivations and justifications in international and domestic law. They collectively relied on a defence of lawful authority or reasonable excuse under the Criminal Law Act 1967 Section 3, which permits the use of reasonable force in the prevention of crime; in this case war crimes, incorporated into domestic law via the International Criminal Court Act 2001.

The defendants explained how they believed that the ongoing activities at and expansion of AWE Aldermaston and nearby AWE Burghfield, together with the ongoing deployment and planned renewal of Britain's submarine-launched Trident nuclear missile system contravened Britain's

obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the 1996 landmark ruling of the International Court of Justice regarding the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, which could find no lawful use for these weapons of mass destruction. They also argued against the massive cost of replacing and maintaining Trident, particularly in the current economic climate.

After hearing the evidence and legal submissions from both sides, District Judge English found, "with some regret", all the defendants Guilty and fined all of them (except Emma Bateman) £100 and ordered payment of £100 each in costs, plus £15 victim support surcharge. Ms Bateman, pleading mitigating circumstances, was fined £25, with no costs, plus £15 surcharge.

Commenting after the trial, Joan Meredith said, "I'm disappointed the courts don't seem to be moving forward on international law; and despite the problems we're facing with the recession, we're still going to be burdened with billions of pounds being spent on the useless Trident missile system."

Zina Zelter added, "As usual, this court has failed to uphold international and domestic law, which make it clear that building and deploying nuclear weapons is illegal. The job of a legal system is to uphold the law and protect the people, which is what we were trying to do by preventing the developments at Aldermaston."

Emma Bateman added, "I hope one day we'll find a judge with the courage to uphold the law, but I understand why they find us guilty: it is difficult to stand up to Government when it is acting illegally."

Angie Zelter added, "The nonviolent civil resistance to prevent the building of a new nuclear weapons system at Aldermaston will continue, and one day we will succeed. I urge more local people to get involved in upholding international law."

ENDS

Notes 1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign initiated in 1998 to disarm the UK Trident nuclear weapons system in a nonviolent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner. <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>

2. On 27 October 2008, three to four hundred campaigners joined the Big Blockade at AWE Aldermaston, organised by Trident Ploughshares and supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp(aign) and Block the Builders. Of the dozens of people who peacefully blockaded access to the base on that day, thirty-three were arrested. Other blockaders were not arrested, despite some remaining in position for up to five hours. For further information and press coverage, see: <http://blockawe.blogspot.com>

3. Photos of campaigners outside the court building on Monday are available upon request.

February Conference on Trident and International Law: Scotland's

11th 11th February 2009

Conference on Trident and International Law: Scotland's Obligations

Trident Ploughshares was one of three organisations that planned and organised the successful *Trident and International Law: Scotland's Obligations* Conference held in Edinburgh on 3rd February. Around 45 lawyers, MSPs, civil servants and peace activists attended the conference to learn and exchange ideas about international law and Trident from an International and Scottish perspective.

The keynote speaker, Judge Weeramantry, was excellent, giving a humane and clear overview of

international law and the obligations it puts upon us all. He was very encouraging and confirmed that global citizens have a right to try in every nonviolent manner they can think of to try to stop the deployment and use of nuclear weapons.

Others who gave presentations included the lawyers Dr. John Burroughs who brought us up to date on the NPT obligations and what was happening in the USA. Aidan O'Neill, a Scottish QC who talked about the LAR in 2000 told us about recent developments in the law and gave some good ideas on how to proceed through the courts. MSP Roseanna Cunningham and MP Angus Robertson reminded us of the SNP commitment to nuclear disarmament.

I spoke a little about civil society. I have sent copies of some of the presentations to TP so you can read and think about the information provided. It was good that TP was once again part of the continuing civil society, pressuring for nuclear disarmament and respect and strengthening of international humanitarian law.

Thankyou to Rebecca Johnson from Acronym and Janet Fenton from the Peace and Justice Centre who were the co-organisers of the event with TP.

Angie Zelter, 4 Feb 2009. <http://www.nukewatch.org.uk/tp/>

Conference Agenda

KEYNOTE Speech: H.E. Judge Christopher Weeramantry, Vice President of the ICJ 1996 and Chair of the Weeramantry International Centre for Peace Education and Research "The meaning of the historic ICJ Advisory Opinion of July 8, 1996 and its implications for national obligations"

Dr John Burroughs, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, USA "New developments on the illegality of nuclear weapons"

Aidan O'Neill QC "Reviewing developments in Scottish law since the Decision of the High Court of Justiciary in the Lord Advocate's Reference on the 1999 nuclear weapons decision"

Angie Zelter, Trident Ploughshares - Civil Society and International Law

H.E. Judge Bedjaoui Keynote speech notes