



From:-

**Academics' Trident Seminar Blockade**  
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**Faslane 365**

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23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006

**Invitation to the Academics' Trident Seminar Blockade**

*Can you imagine doing a blockade of the Trident Nuclear Weapons base at Faslane if  
at least 50 other academics joined you?*

Dear Colleague,

We are a group of concerned academics writing to ask if you would consider joining with other scholars and researchers in a prestigious *Academics' Trident Seminar Blockade* of the Faslane Naval Base in Scotland on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2007 – Faslane is the home base of Trident, the UK's Weapon of Mass Destruction. Our goal is to get together 100 plus academics and scholars to do an outdoor seminar at the gates of the nuclear base and while conducting what we are good at – theoretical reflection on the world – we will also blockade the base itself from its everyday business of preparing for nuclear war. As usual it will be possible to present papers (the deadline for proposals is 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2006). If you decide to join in the blockade you only promise to act if at least 50 other academics also join.

The deadline for showing your interest in the blockade/seminar is the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2006. If you do not want to risk arrest yourself you are welcome to do other support work and to join us in signing the *Statement of Support for Faslane 365* (which is at the end of this email message), either on behalf of your institute or organisation (Department or Centre) or as an individual and concerned scholar.

For your interest the following Academics and Scholars have already signed the statement of support and some of them will be joining the Academics Block:- Dr. Nadjé Al-Ali, University of Exeter; Bob Aldridge, Pacific Life Research Center, USA; Martin Arnold, University of Siegen, Germany ; Dr. Lucy Bland, London Metropolitan University; Dr. Andrew Boswell, University of East Anglia; Professor Francis A. Boyle, University of Illinois, USA; Dr. Maud Bracke, University of Glasgow; Howard Clark, Coventry University; Lara Coleman, University of Bristol; Dr. Julia Droeber, Aberdeen University; Dr. Peter van den Dungen, University of Bradford; Professor David Dwyer, Michigan State University, USA; Professor Stale Eskeland, University of Oslo, Norway; Dr. Anita Fabos, University of East London; Dr. Isabell Fremaeux, University of London; Distinguished Professor Henry Frisch, University of Chicago, USA; Jill Gibbon, PhD Student of Wimbledon University; Dr. Natalie Goldring, Georgetown University, USA; Diane Green, Northumberland College; Dr. Wolfgang Hertle, Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, Germany; Dr Kate Hudson, London South Bank University; Emeritus Professor John Hull, University of

Birmingham; Dr. David Lowry; Professor Alastair McIntosh, University of Strathclyde; Dr. Robert Marsh, Leicester University; Dr. Anat Matar, Tel Aviv University, Israel; Dr. Andy Mathers, University of the West of England; Emeritus Professor Ted Milburn CBE, Strathclyde University; Dr Anita Mir, independent researcher; Professor Eisaku Miyoshi, Kyushu University, Japan; Professor Peter Nicholls, University of Essex; Dr. Glen Rangwala, Cambridge University; Dr. Rupert Read, University of East Anglia; Professor Andrew Rigby, University of Coventry; Professor Paul Rogers, Bradford University; Professor Jonathan Schell, USA; Professor David Seddon, University of East Anglia; Dr Alberto Toscano, Goldsmiths College, London; Professor Kouichi Toyoshima, University of Saga, Japan; Professor Achin Vanaik, Delhi University, India; Dr. Stellan Vinthagen, Gothenburg University, Sweden; and Professor David Webb, Leeds Metropolitan University; Dr. Perry Willson, University of Edinburgh.

## **What is “Faslane 365”?**

Faslane 365 ([www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org)) is a civil resistance project, which will be starting on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 and focussed in Scotland to apply critical public pressure for the disarmament of Britain’s nuclear weapons by a continuous peaceful blockade of the Trident base at Faslane.

Building on the success of previous mass blockades of the Trident nuclear base at Faslane (see [www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org)), the goal is to have a year-long continuous peaceful blockade at Faslane in Scotland. To make this happen, groups and organisations from Scotland, England and Wales, as well as other countries, are being invited to come and shut down the base for at least one 1-day or one 2-day period each during the year.

The purpose of Faslane 365 is twofold: to bring a broad range of social groups to witness and impede the nuclear base where Britain’s nuclear weapons are deployed, and enable them to demonstrate the range of serious concerns – from human rights to climate change – that people in the real world consider to be the vital challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Engaging at a time when Tony Blair has put on the political agenda the prospect of spending some £40 billion more to keep nuclear weapons in Scotland until at least the year 2055, Faslane 365 will draw attention to the dangerous insecurity and waste of resources inherent in the Trident nuclear system, and will mobilise support for these nuclear mistakes to be disarmed. In preventing nuclear ‘business as usual’ we also intend to highlight our real, human security needs, which will require a very different allocation of resources and action.

In order to do this, Faslane 365 is asking a wide range of local, national and international groups from all sections of civil society to come to Faslane with at least 100 people committed to stay and make their visions for a just and peaceful future visible. To ensure effective coverage, groups will normally overlap on the first day with the previous group and on the second with the incoming group. However, as we are arranging for the Academics’ Trident Seminar Blockade to take place over one day only, we are aiming for a minimum of 50 blockaders over the one day period.

You will be pleased to know that there will be other professional groupings taking part including authors, journalists, artists, musicians, and health service professionals, along side the more usual peace and justice organisations and geographical groupings.

All who participate will contribute, but no one organisation will ‘own’ the continuous blockade. All groups will agree to a basic set of non-negotiable guidelines that stress

nonviolence and respect for all. All groups also commit to the main demand: Trident must be taken out of deployment and the government should make a timetable for dismantling the weapons, together with a commitment not to develop any new nuclear weapons. Beyond these basic commitments, it is up to individual groups to conduct the blockade as they see fit.

The start of Faslane 365 – October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 – is the anniversary of the Judgement of the Nuremberg Tribunal. The first blockade has already been booked for a women's blockade that links Faslane 365 with one of the biggest successes of the UK peace movement, the removal of 'cruise' nuclear weapons and closure of the Greenham Common airbase. Twenty-five years from the start of the Greenham Common Peace Camp, this connection carries proven experience of the effectiveness of combining civil society opposition at the physical site of deployment with creative actions and networking that will send our different visions of shared, cooperative security around the world. As of August 2006 there were 45 Blockading Groups booked in to the Faslane 365 Blockading Rota.

### **Why academics should blockade this nuclear war base**

So, why should we as academics and scholars participate in a blockade of a nuclear weapons base in the UK? There are a lot of possible general arguments as well as of course personal reasons to do such a thing. Here are some suggestions from our perspective:

1. It would *stimulate dialogue* in society. And our profession is about interrogating complicated social issues, in order to bring in different perspectives and through informed dialogue develop a more reasonable understanding. Doing such an action we would not ignore the law or violate a democratic government's policy but instead openly challenge it with our bodies and arguments, without using violence, being prepared to be arrested and to take the consequences of our actions, explaining in court why we see this action as necessary and legitimate. We would be hoping, by our actions, to convince others to act and vote against nuclear weapons. Since it is already clear that a majority of Scottish people are against nuclear weapons, it does not seem unreasonable that our actions, along with other groups joining the Faslane 365 blockades, to think that we can convince the majority of British people to support our position.
2. It is believed that nonviolent direct action against the deployment of the UK's nuclear weapons is *legal according to international law* (several acquittals have happened, see [www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org) for more information).
3. For some of us such an action can be seen as part of our objectives as academics: *to popularise and bring our knowledge to a broader society*, to contribute with our knowledge to the public dialogue (in Sweden this is called the "3rd objective", which besides teaching and research is part of our job-description).
4. We can't be only academics. *We are also citizens in our societies, like anyone else*, and thus responsible for what our governments are doing in our name. As such, we have to recognise that our actions (even non-actions) have an effect. There are times when we need to take sides and stand up and be counted.
5. When we act *we show that we are taking our own analysis of the world and our society seriously*. If we believe in what we say (e.g. that nuclear weapons

are a threat to humankind and its survival, that the rule of law is undermined by a nuclear armed alliance waging a “war against terror”, etc.) then that has certain political implications, which we have to act upon.

6. In contrast to a lot of other professional groups in society *we have relatively protected jobs* where it is difficult for us to be sacked for voicing political opposition, at least those of us who are professors or have tenure. It would most likely be regarded as a violation of academic freedom to sack a professor who in her or his free-time engages in civil resistance.
7. Universities and scientific knowledge are known to be heavily influenced by military and defence interests. A major share of research in the world is steered by military agendas. In order to be “objective” or “neutral” we then need to show that *there are also academics who dare to show their clear opposition to nuclear “defence”*. We know, and others will understand, that by our actions we risk the loss of possible public funding for defence and security research and any job-opportunities in the arms industry. But by the same token, we increase the tolerance and plurality of academia, opening up new areas of research and funding.
8. We become *examples and role-models for our students*, either as obedient critics or as disobedient critics, depending on how we act. It is our choice and regardless of what we choose to do we build an understanding of what it means to be an “academic”.
9. This action is possible to understand as a kind of *action-research* and thus already part of the academic tradition. We learn more about how a social system works by a controlled intervention (our action) and a study of its reactions (observation and interviews of concerned people). The action can thus be seen as in itself an opportunity for research for those interested in this field.
10. It is *an old tradition* that university people – students as well as teachers – are engaged in radical politics and protest. Let’s honour that tradition!
11. *If not now, then when?* If we are not making nonviolent blockades of the preparations for mass-destruction when it could be legal to do so, then when would we academics say no or voice our firm opposition to something in society? Do we have to wait until mass-destruction does occur?
12. *If not we, then who?* If we as academics can not take part in the blockades, being a relatively privileged group, who is then supposed to do it? Who is then supposed to take responsibility for the nuclear weapons? Our students who live with the insecurity of not yet being recognized as serious/real academics? A normal objection is the perception that: “I will have more political influence (on nuclear politics) if I am seen by the public to be objective and neutral”. Well, if that is true, then there will not be any lack of academics who will have that greater influence...But, imagine what it means if that is not true, imagine if it is the other way around. What if those academics that voice their criticism to the government’s policies in articles and papers but remain obedient to the policy implementation are those who create the false and dangerous impression that nuclear policies are created by a deliberative democracy and an informed understanding of reality? Then obedient criticism becomes a vital (and indirect) support of nuclear mass-destruction...

## **The Academics' Trident Seminar Blockade**

We will do one day of blockading on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 2007, between 10 am and 4 pm. The goal is to get 100 plus participants, but at least 50 persons. If we don't reach the minimum of 50 academics by 1<sup>st</sup> of December we will cancel the action.

The plan is not just the usual sit-down and get arrested blockade but *an out-door seminar of scholars concerns about Nuclear Weapons*. Our Academic Trident Seminar will use the normal equipment for a university seminar - papers, tables and a mobile white-board. The only main difference is that we will have the seminar at the gates of the Trident nuclear base, not in a University building. The theme is: "Academia vs. Weapons of Mass Destruction". At the seminar we will present and discuss our academic papers, which should be short statements, with as usual appropriate academic references (1-5 pages, complete texts done by deadline 1<sup>st</sup> of January). The papers will be published beforehand on the web-site of Faslane 365 and will be available in the Press Packs produced for the media on the day.

As with all the other groups getting themselves organised for Faslane 365 it is up to us as academics ourselves to decide how we want to join in, how to do the action and link it to the issues we work with. Everyone is invited to make *suggestions and requests before* we meet up (email [stellan.vinthagen@globalstudies.gu.se](mailto:stellan.vinthagen@globalstudies.gu.se) ).

In order to make the action as smooth and effective as possible we will have a specific and readymade plan when you arrive. In order to be able to act efficiently and safely we will be divided into small action groups of about 6-8 people ("affinity-groups"). There will be a *short briefing the evening before* (Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> of January). Then the plan will be clarified and we will have a short training exercise on how to deal with police interrogation and the arrest situation (with a set of recommendations of how to behave). The action plan will then make it clear what groups do what, when and how, what our nonviolent safety guidelines are in order to make sure everyone is included and feels comfortable in taking part, etc.

Since the goal is to make a blockade with our seminar we will try to be at the two main gates, but if prevented by the police we will be on the road leading to the gates, or, if the police stop us from approaching, we will begin the seminar beside the police line and then try walking towards the gates until arrested.

It is very important that we really do attempt to make our blockade. We are not there only to "make a statement" but to do nonviolent direct action against the preparations for mass-destruction taking place at Faslane. If the police choose not to arrest anyone we will take turns with our affinity-groups and blockade with our seminar the whole day.

It will be cold and people will have to be dressed warmly for the long hours. Since we will not have the normal sound-system we will use a megaphone during our discussions. Each participant will bring their own folding-chair. Accommodation will be organised in Glasgow and transport by mini-bus will be available for those who can't use public transport or walk to Faslane.

*Seminar papers for “Academia vs. Weapons of Mass Destruction” could deal with:*

- Why I am here today
- What arguments are there for academics to do civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action against nuclear weapons?
- In what sense is academia militarised or part of the nuclear mass-destruction system. What can we do about it?
- Why and how academia can be a social force for peace, social change or nuclear disarmament?

.....Or it could deal with issues like how the present world-view and structures undermine our knowledge base, military involvement in research funding, buying up of research findings by corporations, the with-holding of research results that are “controversial” or in opposition to corporate/established positions, how human intelligence and knowledge is not being used for the good of all or for the continuance of life on this planet but for short-sighted “profit” for the few. What is happening to academia today?! Within my own discipline? Is it becoming less radical, funding-steered, policy relevant and usable for governments, an industry for producing academic certificates? What can we do about that?

### **How to get involved and show support**

The date set for the Academics’ Trident Seminar Blockade is the whole day of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2007 (with a briefing on the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> January). If you are at all interested in taking part then please contact Stellan Vinthagen direct on [stellan.vinthagen@globalstudies.gu.se](mailto:stellan.vinthagen@globalstudies.gu.se) Even if you cannot spare a whole day or cannot risk arrest we still need lots of academics to support those who can do these things both on the site on the 7<sup>th</sup> and in support declarations. And please fill in the tick boxes below (they appear after the statement of support) so we know what each of you can do and can plan the details of our participation.

If you are interested in finding out much more about Faslane 365 as a whole then you can look at the Resource Pack on their website at [www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org)

With wishes of peace, **Dr. Andrew Boswell** (University of East Anglia, UK); **Professor Peter Nicholls**, University of Essex, UK); **Professor Kouichi Toyoshima**, Saga University, Japan; **Dr. Stellan Vinthagen**, (Göteborg University, Sweden); and **Angie Zelter**, Faslane 365



## **Tick Boxes to Indicate your Support**

- I am interested in taking part in the Academics' Trident Seminar Blockade

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I am willing to consider blockading and can risk arrest

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I can be in Glasgow on the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2007 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. (for the briefing) and at Faslane on the 7<sup>th</sup> January from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (for the blockade/seminar)

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I would like to take part in a nonviolent direct action training as part of my personal preparation in Glasgow during the day of 6<sup>th</sup> Jan. in Glasgow

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I would prefer to join in a nonviolent direct action training with a group nearer where I live at some earlier time (other groups are having these trainings at various times and we could put you in touch with these groups)

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I am willing to be one of a number of press-speakers for the blockaders (we will try to get together a mixed group which will be of interest to the media)

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I would like to offer help in arranging the event (mostly by email) by joining a small organising group (e.g. press work, organising, banner-making, documentation, fact-finding)

YES ☐ NO ☐

- I will submit a paper for the seminar (abstract at the 10<sup>th</sup> of Dec) at the latest the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan 2007.

YES ☐ NO ☐

Name:-

Address, email, tel :-

Indicate what you want to be known as for this event (professor, lecturer, researcher, scholar, writer, editor, publisher, or whatever) :-

Please complete and return by email to Stellan Vinthagen at  
[stellan.vinthagen@globalstudies.gu.se](mailto:stellan.vinthagen@globalstudies.gu.se)

## **Faslane 365 Statement of Support**

*Like all weapons of mass destruction Trident is illegal under international law and is a complete betrayal of our humanity. In the absence of any genuine intention by the state to undertake disarmament I applaud and support those who respond to this gross evil by peaceful actions of civil resistance, including the nonviolent disruption of the Trident submarine base at Faslane by blockading.*

*Dated:-*

*Signed by :-*

*Name, address, email and status/position in named College/University/Institute of individual signatory:-*

**Please sign where appropriate and return by email to:- [reforest@gn.apc.org](mailto:reforest@gn.apc.org)**