

News release – For immediate release



Interviews available – See contact below
Photos available from 29th June – Photographers and camera crews welcome

Students don't get drunk in the woods

A new form of protest is to take place around the Faslane nuclear base in Scotland

On 28th June-3rd July, 150 students from across Britain will create an alternative to the hedonistic summer festival circuit near Faslane nuclear base, Scotland. They will establish the **Strident Tent State** to interrogate the concept of nuclear deterrence with experts from NGOs, thinktanks, pressure groups and parliament. Throughout the week, these informed students will also take direct action at RNAD Coulport, where Britain's nuclear warheads are stored.

The decision to renew Trident, made on 14th March in the House of Commons, means that nuclear weapons and their attendant threats will remain a reality until today's students are in their fifties and sixties. The camp represents a new form of creative protest, bringing together students and experts to explicitly link intellectual arguments and creative discussion to direct action against Britain's nuclear weapons system.

Jo Tyabji, one of the national co-ordinators, and a student at St Catherines College, Oxford, describes the camp's approach:

“Everyone will have a voice. There’s a lot we can learn from the experts working in this field, but the student-led discussions and workshops are just as important. Yes, many of us are frustrated with the decision rushed through on March 14th, frustrated enough to risk arrest at Faslane and Coulport, but what we are doing goes beyond that frustration to instigate real change. We are equipping ourselves with the skills needed to make that change a reality”

Katie Ulrick, a participant in the Strident Tent State and student at Leeds University says

“I want my presence to bear witness to the threat nuclear weapons pose. We are the generation who will live alongside these proposed new nuclear weapons – I am not prepared to let my life be overshadowed by such an apocalyptic presence.”

This action forms part of a year-long protest, Faslane 365, in which civil society groups daily attempt to block access to the base.

(Ends)

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Notes to Editors:

1. The Faslane 365 Students Summer Blockade and Strident Tent State forms part of *Faslane 365*, a civil resistance initiative to apply critical public pressure for the disarmament of Britain's nuclear weapons. Groups from around the country are blockading the Faslane nuclear weapons base from 1st October 2006 until 30th September 2007. For more information, see: www.faslane365.org and www.faslane365students.org.
2. The Tent State is one of several new initiatives, which express young people's disengagement from parliamentary decisions, which do not reflect their concerns. On 20-22 June, Sussex University Students Union hosted 'Tent State University UK' to protest against war in the Middle East and advocate alternative education. On 14-21 August, young people will join the 'Climate Camp' near Heathrow to take direct action against the sources of climate change.
3. Strident Tent State organisers have had extensive contact with local residents' group Peninsula 24/7, to minimise the impact of any direct action taken on the local community. They will continue to be in contact throughout the week. This is key to the principles of openness and accountability Strident hopes to embody, as well as demonstrating the pragmatic use of dialogue.
4. The current Trident weapons system consists of four nuclear-armed submarines, each carrying 48 warheads. Each bomb is eight times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped by the US on Hiroshima, which killed around 140,000 people.
5. Replacing Trident conflicts with the British Government's international commitments, including under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which calls for both disarmament and no nuclear proliferation. Under this, Britain has made 'an unequivocal undertaking' to eliminate its nuclear weapons.
6. On 4th December 2006, the Prime Minister unveiled a White Paper proposing to develop a new generation of submarines for Trident missiles. He said the UK would also join the US programme to extend the life of the Trident missiles until 2042 - and would then "work with" the US on successor missiles. See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6205174.stm
7. On 14th March 2007, the House of Commons voted in favour of Trident renewal, despite the biggest backbench rebellion since the beginning of the Iraq war. See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6448173.stm