



Reclaim The Bases

War Resisters' International calls for nonviolent actions at military bases on 5/6 April

War Resisters' International, the 81 year old international network of pacifist organisations with 90 affiliates in 45 countries, calls for nonviolent actions at military bases on the weekend 5/6 April under the slogan "**Reclaim The Bases**".

After the huge international demonstrations all over the world on 15 February – more than 10 million people took part in protests in more than 600 cities – it is important that the peace movement turns its attention to the military infrastructure that will be used for the war on Iraq. Although most of the troops which will be used for the war are already in the Middle East, the military infrastructure of the US, Britain, and other countries involved in the war will continue to play an important support role for the war: military supplies, food, munition, and soldiers still need to be flown to the Gulf, planes will take off from airbases in many countries, and the surveillance systems of the US and NATO all over the world will be used to guide the attacks on Iraq. Even if a country is not directly involved in the war, its infrastructure might be used for war, or its troops might replace troops of those countries in the war at other places, such as Afghanistan or the Balkans.

While the demonstrations on February 15th showed the strength of the peoples' global opposition to war, it is now necessary that – alongside continued demonstrations, lobbying efforts, vigils and other activities – the peace movement makes an attempt to actually disrupt the war machine.

In September 2001, War Resisters' International issued a statement, calling for conscientious objection to war, and direct nonviolent resistance to war and preparations for war. In calling for nonviolent actions to **Reclaim the Bases**, War Resisters' International urges the peace movement to strengthen its commitment to disrupt the war.

In the last months, a number of inspiring actions at military bases took place. Citizens weapons inspectors entered several US and British bases around the world, i.e. Volkel in the Netherlands, Fairford in Britain, among others. Anti-war activists blocked military supplies in Italy, Belgium, Britain, Germany, and the US. Blockades of military installations took place in the US, Belgium, Germany, Britain, among others. Irish activists managed to stop US Navy transport planes from using Shannon airport¹. These activities have a direct – albeit small – impact on the war machine.

War Resisters' International therefore calls for a wide range of nonviolent actions at military bases on the first weekend of April – 5/6 April 2003. Activities can include:

- q Citizens weapons inspections. Inspect military bases in your country for weapons of mass destruction;
- q Nonviolent blockades of military bases, headquarters, recruitment offices, or weapons manufacturers;
- q Vigils and demonstrations in front of military bases;
- q And many other creative actions.

We need to **Reclaim the Bases** from the military, and put them under civilian control. We at least need to become sand in the wheels of the military machine.

War Resisters' International, 24 February 2003

¹ For a compilation of some action reports, see the Iraq Crisis Page on WRI's website at <http://wri-irg.org>

Reclaim The Bases

Nonviolent actions at military bases on 5/6 April 2003 – world-wide!

War Resisters' International calls for nonviolent action at military bases world-wide on 5 and 6 April 2003. On these pages you will find some reports from inspiring actions, and some resources for planning actions, and contacts for groups organising nonviolent actions.

War Resisters' International's website will also carry updated information on Reclaim The Bases actions all over the world.

Citizens' Weapons Inspections

Citizens' weapons inspections highlight the hypocrisy of those states who want to go to war against Iraq, in order to – as they say – disarm Iraq.

In Britain, Gloucestershire Weapons Inspectors carried out several weapons inspections at RAF Fairford. The most recent one took place on 23 February, when people took down the main gate and entered the base.

Weapons inspections also took place at USAF Volkel in the Netherlands (see picture below), New Zealand, and the USA. A Citizens' Inspection Handbook is available on the Internet at <http://www.motherearth.org/nuke/inspectbook.php>.



Civilian inspector on Volkel military base, The Netherlands

Nonviolent blockades and other actions at military bases

Nonviolent blockades are the classic form of civil disobedience or nonviolent action, especially for mass-scale actions. Blockades of military bases and headquarters took place in many countries. On 7 October 2002, 160 protesters blockaded USAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, Britain. A second blockade took place on 3 February 2003. On 15 January, 4 activists were arrested during a blockade of New Boston Air Station, USA. On 19 January, 400 activists blocked the Permanent Joint Forces Headquarters in Northwood, London in Britain. 70

arrests were made. On 22 February, 3,000 people blockaded the main gate of US Rhein-Main Airbase in Frankfurt, Germany. It is impossible to mention all the blockades here. Other actions at military bases include entering a base, i.e. in order to disarm



Blockade of Rhein-Main Airbase, Germany, on 17 January 2003 (arbeiterfotografie.com)

military equipment, or to blockade the runway. Activists in Ireland achieved that Shannon airport is no longer used for US Navy transport planes. This was possible due to a combination of nonviolent direct action and disarmament actions, lobbying, demonstrations, calls to police to investigate the illegal use of Shannon airport, and many other actions.

Disruption of military supplies

In many countries there are no bases used for the war on Iraq. Here military transports can become a focus for action. But even in countries where bases



Action at Schiphol airport, The Netherlands, 25 February 2003

are used, military supplies can be an important focus.

In Belgium, the port of Antwerp is used for shipments of US military equipment from Europe to the Gulf. On several occasions activists blockaded trains to the port: on 16 February, trains were stopped, and a trainstopping weekend also took place on 1/2 March 2003. In the Netherlands, groups blockaded trains with military supplies to the port of Rotterdam, and also focused their action on Schiphol airport, used for military transports to the Gulf.



Military transport in Italy

In Italy, a peace camp was set up next to an important military train line, and several trains have been stopped so far.

Other actions

A wide range of actions is possible. In Paddington, Australia, activists staged a Reclaim the Streets party in front of their military barracks. In many cities Army Recruitment Centers were shut down. And vigils were held at military bases or other military facilities.

All these actions help to confront the military with our opposition to the war, and to raise awareness about the military infrastructure used for the war.



Reclaim The Streets party in Australia, 15 February 2003

Contacts:

Belgium: For Mother Earth, <http://www.motherearth.org>
Forum voor Vredesactie, <http://www.vredesactie.be>
Britain: Reclaim The Bases,
<http://www.reclaimthebases.org.uk>
Gloucestershire Weapons Inspectors,
<http://www.gwi.org.uk>
Berkshire Citizens Inspection Agency,
<http://www.risc.org.uk>
International Citizens' Weapons Inspectorate,
<http://www.icwi.org>
Germany: Resist – sich dem Irak-Krieg widersetzen,
<http://resistthewar.de>
Italy: Disobedienti, <http://www.disobedienti.org/>
Movimiento Nonviolento, <http://www.nonviolent.org>
Netherlands: Platform Tegen de 'Nieuwe Oorlog',
<http://www.wereldcrisis.nl/>
USA: War Resisters League, <http://www.warresisters.org>
Iraq Pledge to Resistance, <http://www.peacepledge.org>
Rooting Out Evil, <http://www.rootingsoutevil.org>
International: War Resisters' International, <http://wri-irg.org>. Contact War Resisters' International for contacts in other countries.

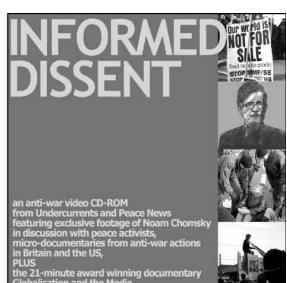
Resources:

Peace News' tools pages offer a wide range of resources for nonviolent actions at bases. Check out <http://www.peacenews.info/tools/index.php> for a listing of available resources (all as PDF files). War Resisters League's nonviolence training manual is available at <http://www.actupny.org/documents/CDdocuments/Guidelines.html>

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SAY NO!

A Call For Conscientious Objection to War and War Preparations

War Resisters' International, an international network of pacifist organisations with 85 affiliates in more than 40 countries, calls for conscientious objection whenever and wherever war is being prepared or fought. We are deeply shocked and outraged by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11th. Equally, we condemn the so-called war on terrorism. Responding to the crime of the terrorist attack by committing the crime of bombing and killing equally innocent people would not set the balance equal, nor make people feel more secure - it only adds to the suffering. We call for justice without war. A war of retaliation will only fuel the cycle of violence.

Confronted by President George W. Bush with the choice: "If you are not with us, you are with the terrorists", we choose a third option: nonviolence. Nonviolence is an active response and offers each and every one of us the opportunity to resist war and the preparations for war. It enables us to build a world in which security is gained through disarmament, international co-operation and social justice, not through escalation and retaliation.

Consequently, War Resisters' International urges

- all soldiers - in whichever forces they are supposed to fight: follow your conscience and refuse to take part: apply for conscientious objector status, refuse orders, desert, **Say No!**
- all those involved in preparations for war, in administration or in arms factories: refuse to do so, **Say No!**
- journalists and the media asked to promote war: refuse to do so, insist on writing and broadcasting the uncensored truth, **Say No!**
- all those who pay tax: demand that your taxes are used for peace, withhold the proportion of tax used for war, **Say No!**
- its members and everyone: support those refusing to participate in war and preparations for war, get involved in direct nonviolent resistance against war!

We are aware that not everybody in every country or situation will be in a position to take up any of these ways to resist. There are many other ways to express protest and resistance, too. War Resisters' International stands with all who take action against war, and commits itself to do its best to help those facing repression because of their resistance.,

War Resisters' International, 29th of September 2001

I support this declaration, and I agree to this call with my signature being made public:

Name	Address	Country	Signature	Please send me more information
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Signing this declaration may make you liable to prosecution in some countries. Please make sure that you are aware of your legal position before signing it.