

FASLANE - POINTS OF ORDER

1. I refer to comments made in this Chamber on Monday afternoon with respect to the anti-nuclear demonstration at the Faslane nuclear submarine base in Scotland.
2. As you know, Madame President, I took part in that demonstration, and I would like to thank all those members who have expressed support for the action that I took, participating in the largest ever peaceful blockade of the base, and being arrested - ironically enough - for a breach of the peace.
3. But I just want to say a word to those members who implied that my actions were somehow irresponsible or inappropriate for an elected member.
4. First I would say that nuclear weapons are not only immoral and inhumane, they are also illegal. The International Court of Justice in the Hague ruled that the possession of nuclear weapons is contrary to international law back in 1996, and this was reaffirmed by a Scottish court in 1999. **My action on Monday was therefore upholding the law, not breaking it.**
5. Second, I believe nuclear weapons pose such a threat to all of us that it is legitimate and indeed essential to use all peaceful avenues open to us to try to rid our countries of these weapons.
6. Of course there are parliamentary channels to use to achieve this too, and I regularly use them - questions to the Council, a written declaration that I put down in this House with 3 other members last year.
7. But I believe it is also **legitimate and essential** to be able to use extra-parliamentary channels as well. Indeed it is our responsibility to use them.
8. **A democratic state is not just a gift and a right - it is a responsibility as well.** If citizens do not responsibly demonstrate against the operation of inhumane acts by their governments, then governments become increasingly unresponsive and corrupt.
9. Finally Madame President, it is every citizen's right and duty, elected or not, to use all peaceful avenues to try to uphold international law and to prevent war-crimes. My action on Monday was one further small step in achieving that goal.