

## No More Bombs



### Information and Advocacy for Nuclear Disarmament

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Newsletter no. 26

4th Quarter 2020

Greetings All Peace Activists,

Let's start with our congratulations to President Elect Joe Biden and Vice President Elect Kamala Harris, and all the wonderful voters who have placed their faith in sanity and wise governance. We should not kid ourselves. Joe Biden is not exactly a dove, and Congress will still be deeply entangled in the military industrial complex. We will have plenty of obstacles to overcome, but there will also be new opportunities. If we can coalesce around a consistent strategy in the next few years, progress is possible.

Many young politically active organizations were born and grew during the last 4 years, and the energy and techniques they developed in opposition to Trump policies can be applied to other related causes now. Social and racial justice, healthcare and nutrition, homelessness, education, gun violence, police reform, healing the hate, peace and disarmament. These are all interconnected. By combining our passions and our skills, these movements become one, and all of them advance together. We have all witnessed the worst in human behavior, in so many ways and with such vitriol, that we can no longer ignore injustice, no matter who perpetrates it, nor whom are victimized. We will be working harder than ever in the years to come. We must work together.

Here in our little corner of the world, our friends and neighbors are counting on us to reach out, with compassion and kindness, to help each other heal.

for Peace and Love, tracy w powell

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At the top of President Biden's agenda will be renewing New START, the critical treaty with Russia that is set to expire otherwise in February 2021. It is the only agreement remaining that binds the US and Russia together in limiting their nuclear arsenals, and has provided necessary verifications that both parties have abided by its conditions. To move forward toward further reductions, New START must first be renewed. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NewSTART> is an excellent resource about this treaty. Russian President Putin has said he would agree to its renewal, but Donald Trump has failed to negotiate in good faith. So far, the treaty is in jeopardy of termination.

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There is new emphasis on eliminating ICBMs, the third leg of the nuclear offense triad. According to recent analysis by the Union of Concerned Scientists, ICBMs are approaching the end of their service life, in terms of physical and technological reliability, and the latest round of military spending approved by Congress this year would commit to a wholesale replacement of these missiles with 600 new ones at a cost of \$100 Billion. Because these missiles and their warheads are all sitting ducks in their silos, they would be easily targeted and destroyed in any nuclear exchange, and in addition are less reliable than submarine launched, they should be all dismantled instead. Think of the health care and nutritional relief that amount of money could provide. Already proposals have been made in Congress to do just that, and there will be more. WA Representative Adam Smith chairs the House Armed Services Committee. Lobbying him and his colleagues will be one of our tasks in the new year. More information is found here: <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/rethinking-icbms>

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Wednesday, November 18, zoom a Ploughshares Fund post-election nuclear policy forum, with Representatives Adam Smith and Pramila Jayapal, Senator Ed Markey, and others. Learn about the national security outlook for the next administration and how hundreds of billions of dollars in excessive nuclear weapons spending could be better spent on higher national priorities such as responses to coronavirus, racial injustice and climate change. **Register today.**

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The ICAN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons achieved ratification by 50 nations last month. This began a 90 day countdown to its becoming international law. That date is January 22, 2021, the day after our new president's inauguration, and this link <https://www.ploughshares.org/issues-analysis/article/nuclear-weapons-are-illegal> explains its relevance in world affairs. For one aspect, the treaty nations, none of whom now possess nuclear weapons, become a unified coalition to apply political and economic pressure on the 9 nations that do. For our work, this will boost the perception of our message, that nuclear weapons are immoral and illegitimate. They rightly belong in the same category as chemical weapons, land mines, and cluster bombs, disproportionately destructive of civilians, and must be banned, everywhere and forever..

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Tritium alert: the National Nuclear Security Administration is preparing to approve the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL's) controversial plan to vent up to 100,000 curies of tritium gas. Tritium is a radioactive isotope of hydrogen, used to boost the explosive power of nuclear weapons. Most vented tritium will condense into water vapor which can then be readily ingested by living organisms, including humans. Fetuses are particularly at risk.

LANL's nuclear weapons budget has doubled over the last decade to \$2.9 billion in fiscal year 2021. But funding for so-called cleanup has remained flat at around \$220 million, or 8% that of nuclear weapons. In fact, LANL plans to "cap and cover" some 200,000 cubic yards of radioactive and toxic wastes, leaving them permanently buried in unlined pits above our groundwater, some three miles uphill from the Rio Grande, and call it cleaned up. To add to this, the Lab now plans to vent tritium into the air. <https://nukewatch.org/> has much more information.

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Book review: [Gambling with Armageddon](#) , by Martin J. Sherwin , 2020. Subtitled "Nuclear Roulette from Hiroshima to the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1945-1962", this book fills in lots of historical details about the showdown between Nikita Krushchev and John Kennedy that came very close to blowing up the world. Much closer than we ever knew. Using previously unrevealed resources to correct many long held beliefs and assumptions, Sherwin tells a frightening, and enlightening story, starring pride, prejudice, and dumb luck. I have the book, and you may borrow it.

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Our small group is, like many others, trying to cope with COVID 19 and adapt to what happens after the election, and we could use some guidance from you. We can grow more sensibly as an effective peace organization if we know what our members and supporters expect of us. When we got started, a few years ago, we were able to meet in person, share conversations, watch movies together, and all of that has changed. Without those get-togethers, we miss out on the dialogues and shared experiences that kept us working in the same directions. Maybe in a year or so we can reclaim that kind of face to face continuity, but for now it seems we must adjust our goals and expectations. Here is where we stand at the moment. Bud Anderson, Julia Hurd, Kathleen Flanagan, Wim Houpermanns, and I are a steering committee. We have planned to have quarterly zoom meetings, with guest speakers and relevant topics, the next one is Wednesday, February 17, when lifelong peace activist and author Betsy Bell will be our guest speaker. <https://betsybellauthor.com/> Tuesday May 18, Hanford downwinder Trisha Pritikin will speak to us . <https://www.corehanford.org/about> . More details to come, about both of these presentations. I will try to put out regular newsletters, probably also quarterly, to keep us up to date. Beyond that, we are open to your ideas. Our core mission is still to provide information for advocacy of global nuclear disarmament, but the details of how we do that is always subject to change. That is, we can do anything you all want. So please tell us.

Please contact us if you have suggestions, or complaints, or any ideas to share. Our steering committee is:

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**"We are not a perfect people. Yet we are called to a perfect mission -- to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to teach the illiterate, to provide jobs for the jobless, and to choose the human race over the nuclear race."**  
**Reverend Jesse Jackson**

