

No More Bombs



Information and Advocacy for Nuclear Disarmament

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Greetings All Lovers of Peace,

This issue includes updates on a few ongoing processes of interest to our nonproliferation community. One is the long drawn out efforts to clean up the Hanford site. Another is recent release of the Biden administration's Nuclear Posture Review. On the local scene, our steering committee has been making plans for our activities in the coming year. We begin with some thoughts about **Veterans Day**.

November 11, 1918, at 5:45 AM, in a railway car in the forest at Compiegne France, an agreement was signed between commanders of the French Army, the British Navy, and German High Command that declared all hostilities to cease, ending World War I. The Armistice Agreement was to take effect on the 11th hour Paris Time, of the 11th day of the 11th month, and stayed in effect for 36 days, after which it was subsequently renewed several times. The Treaty of Versailles was finally signed on June 28, 1919. The Central Powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire, had suffered serious defeats, and the leaders had accepted that the war must end. The Allies, France, Britain, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the U.S., also realized that further fighting would gain no advantages, and the devastation of Europe was already horrific.

Negotiations among all the political and military leaders took many forms, and was very complicated, but it was finally the sincere desire of all parties to end the bloodshed that mattered, and produced the Armistice. And it held for two decades. In later years, the various nations changed the name of the holiday celebrating the end of the war to Remembrance Day in Europe and Britain, and Veterans Day in the U.S. Remembering the Armistice reminds us all that it took determined efforts by all parties to finally stop fighting.

Remembering how soon thereafter the next World War began reminds us how fragile Peace can be, and how diligent we all must stay to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

2022 Presidential Nuclear Posture Review

After a long wait this year, during which many observers and advocates had high hopes for rational changes, the latest NPR was just released on October 27. We should have known better. The term deterrence occurred 134 times in 24 pages. Negotiation none. Arms Control and Nonproliferation are left to others to initiate. Our strategic posturing remains even more macho than ever. More on this later. Here is a revealing quote from the document:

“For the foreseeable future, nuclear weapons will continue to provide unique deterrence effects that no other element of U.S. military power can replace. To deter aggression and preserve our security in the current security environment, we will maintain nuclear forces that are responsive to the threats we face. U.S. nuclear weapons deter aggression, assure allies and partners, and allow us to achieve Presidential objectives if deterrence fails.”

Let that statement sink in.....

Here are some of the details on the Department of Defense nuclear shopping list:

- Fully fund the Sentinel ICBM** program, replacing all 400 Minuteman III missiles, and upgrading all nuclear warheads.
- Upgrade the entire **B-52H** nuclear armed bomber fleet. Replace 100 B-2A Spirit bombers with **100 new B-21 Raiders**.
- Retire the B-83 gravity bomb, and **develop a newer warhead** for deeper penetration of hardened and buried targets.
- Fully fund the **new Long Range Standoff Weapon, with W-80-4 warheads** to replace the Air Launched Cruise Missile.
- Fully fund the new Columbia Class nuclear armed submarine fleet, at least 12 boats**, to replace the Ohio Class subs.
- Invest in industrial infrastructure to maintain Ohio Class subs while building the new fleet.**
- Cancel nuclear armed Sea Launch Cruise Missile, while retaining and upgrading Low and Medium yield nuclear missiles for new submarines.
- Complete **replacement of F-15 nuclear armed fighter fleet with F-35** dual purpose conventional and nuclear armed fighter/bombers, for US and NATO forces.

Here is a link to the complete document:

[**2022 National Defense Strategy, which includes the Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review**](#)

We have expected that this NPR would mostly continue the long accepted practice of increased spending on newer nukes, keeping the industrial giants like Boeing, Raytheon, Lockheed, General Dynamics, Northrup Grumman, Honeywell, and the others fully employed and rich. The tone this year is somewhat enhanced by references to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and China’s renewed threats against Taiwan. Both of these scenarios have been exploited to ratchet up the fear level among Americans, and reintroduce some dormant historical interpretations. **The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis** has been brought to bear, and misrepresented again as proof that the US must be tough and stand up to the Russian bullies. The fact that it was not deterrence and threats that resolved that situation, but thoughtful discussion and negotiation, has once again been ignored. In 1962 the USSR was in fact reacting to US placement of nuclear weapons in Turkey, on missiles capable of reaching Moscow, and hoping to insert similar missiles close enough to our borders. Krushchev was afraid of a first strike by Kennedy, and sensibly so. The crisis was finally resolved by the US withdrawing those missiles and warheads from Turkey, in exchange for Russian missile withdrawal from Cuba, even though the deal was not made public for decades. Restraint and common sense prevailed, not bluster and fist shaking. Apparently, we have still not learned the lesson, and are once again building a crisis we may not survive.

Hanford remains the most severely contaminated place in the western hemisphere. Beginning in the 1940s and continuing for the next 40 years, nearly all the plutonium for US nuclear weapons was produced there. Waste products of the process were stored on site, some as liquid mixed with water, some as slush, some more solid, in concrete or steel tanks in the ground. Currently Hanford stores about 56 million gallons of various levels of radioactive wastes. Over the years, tanks have leaked highly radioactive waste into the soil, and some has gone as deep as the groundwater. Efforts to clean up these wastes have been ongoing since the plants were started, and continued after they were shut down, but so far no permanent solution has been found. The latest waste treatment program is called vitrification: glass beads will be melted to form a hot liquid into which nuclear waste products are poured, and where those waste products will be trapped when the glass cools into solid blocks. The glass blocks will then be buried in a new facility called the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant. Construction of the Melters, designed to sustain temperatures of 2100 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 years at a time, began 20 years ago, and the first one was brought online in October, for testing before radioactive waste was actually loaded into the glass. After a couple days, excess heating in the power supply panels prompted the shut down of the Melter. It is uncertain whether or when DOE will restart the test. Years behind schedule, and the tanks continue to leak.

Another approach has recently been explored by the Department of Energy: reclassifying a portion of the Low Activity Waste as being less dangerously radioactive, and mixing it with grout, or cement, instead of glassifying it. The benefit of course would be saving billions of dollars. Whether or not the grouted wastes would be safe to store has not been determined. There is a [General Accounting Office report](#) on our website.

Here is a great video from Hanford Challenge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8eDFhHpf2s&t=103s>

Our little group continues the work. Steering Committee members Bud and Jackie Anderson, Julia Hurd, Kathleen Flanagan, Wim Houppermans, and Tracy Powell have been recently meeting on Zoom, to plan how to proceed in the upcoming new year. We will continue to hold up our big NMB banner and peace flags, and wave on the I-5 overpass in downtown Mount Vernon, first and third Fridays at 3 PM, as weather permits. We will continue to have Zoom meetings featuring guest speakers as often as we can, such as the October 18 presentation by Joanne Dufour, which was recorded here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSeWeJp8zzM> . We hope to resume in person meetings too.

All of you, and anyone else who may be interested, are invited to join us in these activities, as well as suggest more ways that we may reach out to our local communities. The world, our children and grandchildren desperately need Peace and Nuclear Disarmament. We obviously don't have the answers to bring about the changes in human behavior that must happen to allow that Peace to flourish. But maybe together we can move in that direction. All ideas are welcome. Thank you. For Peace and Love,

Tracy Powell

