NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND GENOCIDE NEWSLETTER # 10, February 27, 2012. OMNI Building a Culture of PEACE, Dick Bennett, Editor.

An editor is wanted for the Newsletter who can devote adequate attention to the subject. We must watch the nuclear weapons programs!

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters: [http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/](http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/) The dozens of newsletters provide OMNI and the peace and justice movement with subject-focused information and criticism.

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Though it has been decades since the Cold War came to a close, the United States government spends more money on nuclear warheads now than it did during its stand-off with the Soviet Union.

As the US vows to cut down its arsenal of nuclear weapons, the cost the country spends annually on maintaining its supply is much more than America invested each year during the Cold War. Estimates suggest that currently the US puts around $55 billion annually into its nuclear weapons program, reports Mother Jones; by comparison, the cost of the nuke complex for the country during the Cold War ran at an average of only $35 billion each year.
Only three months into his presidency, Barack Obama said in April 2009 that he envisioned an Earth in the future free of nuclear weapons. Just two years later, however, America’s arsenal of those warheads amounts to roughly 2,500 nukes ready to be deployed.

It was only less than two weeks ago that the United States finally dismantled its largest atomic bomb, the B53, which was said to be 600 times more powerful than the nuke that was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan towards the finale of the Second World War. As that nuke was dismantled, Deputy Secretary of Energy Dan Poneman told NPR that the bomb was a “Cold War relic” and showed the direction of dismantling that the United States was heading towards.

Even if the country is cutting back on its nukes, the United States has a backup stash larger than the active bombs, allowing for the country to in total have 5,113 nuclear warheads in its position. The surplus of not-quite-ready nukes is at 2,600, and though they cannot be deployed at a drop of a hat like the others, they can be reanimated as full-fledged warheads.

Peter Fedewa of the pro-disarmament Ploughshares Fund says that those nukes “could be 'raised from the dead' and brought back into deployment with relative ease.”

Under the START treaty that the US signed with Russia last year, both countries vow to soon enough limit their stash of active warheads to only 1,500. The document does not, however, say how many back-up nukes either country can have. In the interim, Mother Jones reports that the Pantex plant near Amarillo, Texas holds around 3,000 warheads that are on the schedule to be dismantled, something America used to do at a pace of around 1,300 per year. Last year, however, both Congress and the White House said that the country would cut back on the cost of dismantling the warheads and instead now invest the money on the upkeep of already dead nukes.

At the country’s current rate, dismantling the thousands of atomic nukes would take longer than a decade Joe Cirincione, a longtime analyst of nuclear weapons policy, tells NPR. Currently, only around 250 warheads are dismantled at Pantex each year.
It doesn’t help that the country is more interested in revamping the retired nukes than pulling the plug on them entirely, either.

In 2012, the country will spend $4.1 billion on the “refurbishment” of retired nukes, while only a fraction of that — $57 million — will be invested in dismantling them. That figure accounts for less than one percent of the country’s total budget for the nuclear program. In all, America’s nuclear program operates at a cost of around $55 billion, which is spread across the Departments of Defense, Energy and Homeland Security. Despite Obama’s instance on curbing the program, the tally of funding is believed to have gone up by around $3 billion since only 2008, which at the time accounted for five times the budget of the Department of State — or 14 times what the Energy Department spends on everything else.

"The same facilities that dismantle U.S. nuclear warheads are also refurbishing US warheads," Cirincione adds to NPR. "And right now a decision has been made to prioritize refurbishment. So we're actually building more nuclear weapons than we're dismantling. That didn't use to be the case, but it is now."

When weapons are dismantled and the current snail's pace, the risks in place are of immense danger as well."There are very strict manuals on exactly what you have to do," Hans Kristensen, spokesman for the Federation of American Scientists, tells MSNBC. "How much pressure can you apply to each screw, what kind of glue holds the chemical high explosives together around the spear of highly enriched uranium."

Both Russia and America have agreed to have an arsenal of only 1,550 deployed nukes come 2018, only a fraction of the 22,000-plus on hand at the end of the Cold War. Obama told an audience in Prague in 2009 he aimed "To put an end to Cold War thinking," adding that America "will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same." As the country is investing more money in rebuilding nukes than kicking them to the curb, however, will the president follow through with his plea or will it be added to the list of other promises gone unfulfilled?
In 2007 two former U.S. secretaries of state, a defense secretary, and a former senator wrote persuasively in the Wall Street Journal that the time had come to move seriously toward a nuclear-free world. Almost two years later, the Global Zero movement was born with its chief aim to rid the world of such weapons once and for all by 2030.

But is it realistic or even wise to envision a world without nuclear weapons? More and more people seem to think so. Barack Obama has declared “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” But that is easier said than done. Michael O’Hanlon places his own indelible stamp on this critical issue, putting forth a “friendly skeptic's case for nuclear disarmament.”

Calls to “ban the bomb” are as old as the bomb itself, but the pace and organization of nonproliferation campaigns have picked up greatly recently. The growing Global Zero movement, for example, wants treaty negotiations to begin in 2019. Would this be prudent or even feasible in a world that remains dangerous, divided, and unpredictable? After all, America’s nuclear arsenal has been its military trump card for much of the period since World War II. Pursuing a nuclear weapons ban prematurely or carelessly could alarm allies, leading them to consider building their own weapons—the opposite of the intended effect.

O’Hanlon clearly presents the dangers of nuclear weapons and the advantages of
disarmament as a goal. But even once an accord is in place, he notes, temporary suspension of restrictions may be necessary in response to urgent threats such as nuclear “cheating” or discovery of an advanced biological weapons program. To take all nuclear options off the table forever strengthens the hand of those that either do not make that pledge or do not honor it. For the near term, traditional approaches to arms control, including dismantling existing bomb inventories, can pave the way to make a true nonproliferation regime possible in the decades ahead.

Praise for the Book:

"A Skeptic's Case for Nuclear Disarmament is a hard-headed look at the tough issues we face in reducing global nuclear dangers and preventing catastrophic terrorism. O'Hanlon provides a thoughtful, pragmatic, and detailed plan for reversing reliance on nuclear weapons and moving toward a world without them—and he makes a convincing case why this will make America and the world more secure."
—Sam Nunn, Co-chairman, Nuclear Threat Initiative, and former senator from Georgia

"No policy debate today is more important than the ongoing debate on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Michael O'Hanlon takes a clear, analytical look at the implications of nuclear disarmament. He argues that abolition is impractical, but that dismantlement of all nuclear weapons is imperative. His book makes a major contribution to this vital issue."
—William J. Perry, former U.S. Secretary of Defense

"A Skeptic's Case for Nuclear Disarmament is a thoughtful exploration of key issues that citizens and government officials should evaluate prior to deciding whether to pursue the elimination of nuclear weapons. Michael O’Hanlon analyzes these questions in a fair and balanced way, presenting the arguments on both sides and drawing his own conclusions. The book is an important contribution to the continuing debate on the roles of nuclear weapons in international security and the risks run by all nations by their continued existence."
—Barry M. Blechman, Distinguished Fellow, Henry L. Stimson Center

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Michael E. O'Hanlon is the director of research and a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution, where he holds the Sydney Stein Jr. Chair. He is the author of numerous books, including Toughing It Out in Afghanistan, with Hassina Sherjan (Brookings, 2010), The Science of War (Princeton University Press, 2009), and Hard Power: The New Politics of National Security, with Kurt Campbell (Basic Books, 2006). He is also senior author of the Brookings Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan indexes.
**Map: The Nuclear Bombs In Your Backyard**

*Look up where in the United States the Pentagon keeps its atomic weaponry.*

By Adam Weinstein and Tasneem Raja | Wed Nov. 9, 2011

**Also see:** An investigation into our expensive, expanding nuclear weapons complex and a look at some of the wackiest (and worst) ideas for using atomic weapons.

The United States currently has 5,113 atomic warheads deployed in silos, bombers, and submarines, mostly in the continental US. That doesn't include thousands of "zombies" being kept in reserve and a backlog of more than 3,000 warheads awaiting dismantlement. Meanwhile, we're telling the world that we're on the path to disarmament, even as we're spending more on the nuclear weapons complex than we did during the Cold War.

Zoom in on the map below to find the warheads near you as well as the nuclear labs that maintain the stockpile and develop the next generation of atomic weaponry. (For reference, we've also included the locations of the nation's civilian nuclear power plants.*)

**Note:** This map was made with 100% unclassified, public information. Even the military doesn't hide where it keeps its missiles and bombers. See links to sourcing below.

View full screen map

View Mother Jones: Nuke Facilities in the US in a full screen map

**Sources:** Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and Federation of American Scientists (PDF), Office of the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters, Nuclear Energy Institute

**Will Your Block Survive the Nuclear Apocalypse?**

A new Google Maps mashup takes our nuclear weapons data to a whole new cold-sweat-inducing level.

**We're Spending More on Nukes Than We Did During the Cold War?!**

Memo to budget supercommittee: If you're looking for billions in savings, check out the the bloated nuclear weapons complex.

**8 of the Wackiest (or Worst) Ideas for Nuclear Weapons**

Bomb-powered spaceships, mininukes, atomic excavation, and other bizarre uses for our nuclear arsenal.

**Report: World May Face New Nuclear Arms Race**

Russia and China are modernizing their arsenals—in part because of "dangerous and destabilising" new capabilities developed by the US.
Pressing Issues
Greg Mitchell on media, politics, film, music, satire, TV, more...."Not here, not here the darkness, in this twittering world." --T.S. Eliot, "Four Quartets"

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

My New Book 'Atomic Cover-up' Reveals Film Secrets

Just out this month, my 12th book: Atomic Cover-Up: Two U.S. Soldiers, Hiroshima & Nagasaki and The Greatest Movie Never Made (Sinclair Books). This is a haunting account of how the U.S. suppressed the only film footage shot in the atomic cities, by an American military crew, for decades. The shocking cover-up even extended to MGM and Hollywood -- and to President Truman. And there was no WikiLeaks to get the film aired.

America's "nuclear entrapment" continues to this day. Atomic Cover-up takes a wide angle look at the use of the bomb in 1945--and its impact right up to 2011. It might be sub-titled "From Hiroshima to Fukushima."

You can buy the e-book edition for Kindle, all phones, Blackberry, iPad, Macs and PCs (for just $3.99) via Amazon, and you do not need a Kindle. Print edition is available only at this site (for $9.95). Or purchase directly from the author, autographed, contact: epic1934@aol.com.

David Friend of Vanity Fair calls it "a new work of revelatory scholarship and insight by Greg Mitchell that will speak to all of those concerned about the lessons of the nuclear age."

Watch the controversial two-minute trailer for the book below or at YouTube -- it includes some of the hidden footage shot by the U.S. military crew. (It now has over 80,000 views.) CBS News just picked up my Hiroshima/Fukushima piece here. I was on Democracy Now! on August 9, now you can watch. A lengthy piece summarizes key parts of the book at The Nation, where I am a daily writer. Major piece on Nagasaki, the "forgotten city," getting wide play. See long list of my pieces in past month at Huff Post and The Nation.

And don't miss the wild Hollywood angle -- when the Truman White House censored the first major movie about The Bomb, from MGM, and even got the actor playing Truman fired! Atomic Cover-Up also charts my own visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and latest news and views right up to this summer.
Why did the cover-up of the film footage matter? While Americans were denied important truths about The Bomb -- filmed by their own military -- a costly nuclear arms race ensued, nuclear power became entrenched, and millions of Americans were exposed to dangerous levels of radiation in our own country.

Of the new book, Robert Jay Lifton, author of Death in Life (winner of the National Book Award) and numerous other acclaimed books, writes: "Greg Mitchell has been a leading chronicler for many years of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and American behavior toward them. Now he has written the first book devoted to the suppression of historic film footage shot by Japanese and Americans in the atomic cities in 1945 and 1946. This cover-up paved the way for the costly and dangerous nuclear arms race and contributed to the widespread reliance on nuclear power."

Order print edition or e-book editions for most devices. Email me at: epic1934@aol.com.
The video trailer below:

"How to Save a Quarter of a Trillion Dollars"  By Lawrence S. Wittner, Huffington Post, posted August 8, 2011  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lawrence-wittner/budget-cuts-nuclear-missile_b_921157.html

Lawrence Wittner

In the midst of the current stampede to slash federal spending, Congress might want to take a look at two unnecessary (and dangerous) "national security" programs that, if cut, would save the United States over a quarter of a trillion dollars over the next decade. The first of these is the Obama administration's plan to spend at least $185 billion in the next ten years
to "modernize" the U.S. government's nuclear weapons arsenal. At present, the U.S. government possesses approximately 8,500 nuclear warheads, and it is hard to imagine that this country would be safer from attack if it built more nuclear weapons or "improved" those it already possesses. Indeed, President Barack Obama has declared -- both on the 2008 campaign trail and as President - that he is committed to building a world without nuclear weapons. This seems like a perfectly sensible position -- one favored by most nations and, as polls show, most people (including most people in the United States). Therefore, the administration should be working on securing further disarmament agreements -- not on upgrading the U.S. nuclear arsenal in preparation for future nuclear confrontations and nuclear wars.

In late June of this year, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, wrote: "It is deeply troubling that the US has allocated $185 billion to augment its nuclear stockpile over the next decade, on top of the ordinary annual nuclear-weapons budget of more than $50 billion." Not only has the International Court of Justice affirmed that nations "are legally obliged to negotiate in good faith for the complete elimination of their nuclear forces," but "every dollar invested in bolstering a country's nuclear arsenal is a diversion of resources from its schools, hospitals, and other social services, and a theft from the millions around the globe who go hungry or are denied access to basic medicines." He concluded: "Instead of investing in weapons of mass annihilation, governments must allocate resources towards meeting human needs."

Another project worth eliminating is the national missile defense program. Thanks to recent Congressional generosity, this Reagan era carryover, once derided by U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy as "Star Wars," is currently slated for an increase in federal spending, which will provide it with $8.6 billion in fiscal 2012.

The vast and expensive missile defense program -- costing about $150 billion since its inception -- has thus far produced remarkably meager results. Indeed, no one knows whether it will work. As an investigative article in Bloomberg News recently reported: "It has never been tested under conditions simulating a real attack by an intercontinental ballistic missile deploying sophisticated decoys and countermeasures. The system has flunked 7 of 15 more limited trials, yet remains exempted from normal Pentagon oversight."

Carl Levin, the Michigan Democrat who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, reported that his committee was "deeply concerned" about the test failures of the nation's missile defense program. He also implied that, given the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the United States might not need such a system to deter its potential enemies, which have a far inferior missile capability. "The threat we have now is either a distant threat or is not a realistic threat," he remarked.

Why, then, do other nations -- for example, Russia -- fiercely object to the deployment of a U.S. missile defense system near their borders? Perhaps they fear that, somehow, U.S. scientists and engineers will finally figure out how to build a system, often likened to hitting a bullet with a bullet, that makes the United States invulnerable while they are left vulnerable. Or perhaps they think that, one day, some U.S. government officials might believe that the United States actually is invulnerable and launch a first strike against their own nations. In any case, their favorite solution to the problem posed by U.S. national missile defense -- building more nuclear-armed missiles of their own -- significantly undermines the security of the United States.

Projecting the current annual cost of this program over the next decade, the United States would save $86 billion by eliminating it.

Thus, by scrapping plans for nuclear weapons "modernization" and for national missile defense -- programs that are both useless and provocative -- the United States would save $271 billion
(well over a quarter of a trillion dollars) in the next ten years. Whether used to balance the budget or to fund programs for jobs, healthcare, education, and the environment, this money would go a long way toward resolving some of the nation's current problems.

Dr. Lawrence Wittner is Professor of History emeritus at the State University of New York/Albany. His latest book is Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement (Stanford University Press).

“How the New Mexico Anti–Nuclear Campaign Achieved a Major Victory” by Subhankar Banerjee, Climate Story Tellers, Truthout, Feb. 26, 2012: "We're always so inundated with bad news and sad news that we rarely take the time and look back, when we do win, most importantly at the things that got us there, however fleeting that win might be. In activism there is no win however, only ongoing engagement.... What can the New Mexico activists tell us about how they stopped what they call a Plutonium Bomb Factory? Here is their story." Read the Article http://www.truth-out.org/how-new-mexico-antinuclear-campaign-achieved-major-victory/1330267883