Imagine a world free of nuclear weapons, be committed to that goal, join OMNI to strive with others for that goal. OMNI, a northwest Arkansas advocacy organization, is part of the international peace, justice, and ecology movement against the US NATIONAL SECURITY STATE: the CORPORATE-PENTAGON-Congress-President-Secrecy-Surveillance-NUCLEAR Complex.

For seven years, these 19 newsletters, related newsletters, and the OMNI Center for Peace, Justice, and Ecology have been Arkansas’ only sustained resistance to nuclear weapons dangers and harms and advocate of the Nuclear Abolition Movement. OMNI deserves your support.

See OMNI’s Related NEWSLETTERS:

Nuclear Abolition Day June 2.

International Day against Nuclear Tests August 29.

OMNI NUCLEAR FREE AND INDEPENDENT PACIFIC DAY AND MARSHALL ISLANDS NUCLEAR VICTIMS DAY, MARCH 1. NEWSLETTER #1. March 1, 2012.

OMNI’s NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DAYS PROJECT: Castle Bravo Explosion 60 Anniversary Feb. 28.
Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/ These hundreds of newsletters provide OMNI and the peace, justice, and ecology movement with information and criticism independent of money or party. Here is the link to the Index to the newsletters: http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

Nos. 14-18 at end of this newsletter.

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    Pax Christi
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  Glenn Alcalay, Radiation Experiments in Pacific, Marshall Islands
  Robert Alvarez, US Military Radioactive Wastes

Call Your Congressmen and tell them you want them to work to abolish nuclear weapons, our only possible safety.
Thursday, April 10, 2014

Dear Dick,

On April 7, WAND launched a Thunderclap to promote the SANE and REIN-\nIN Acts, bills that would make smart reductions to the U.S. nuclear arsenal and save billions of dollars over 10 years. This action marked the fifth anniversary of President Obama’s Prague Speech in which he pledged, "America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

177 people participated in the Thunderclap through Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr! You reached over 212,000 people! Because of your participation in the Thunderclap and previous actions, hundreds of conscientious people urged their Members of Congress to support these bills.

We at WAND are ever-grateful for your relentless energy to combat excessive weapons spending and reduce the dangers of nuclear weapons.

If you weren’t able to participate yet, you can still help make a difference. Take action today!

Peace,

The WAND Team
Council for a Livable World

On Thursday, April 24th from 6-8PM, Council for a Livable World will host a reception in honor of former chairman and executive director, Jerome Grossman ...

Google+ page · Be the first to review

Who We Are
Our Mission. Council for a Livable World is a Washington, D.C ...

Donate to Candidates
... latest endorsements! Click here to contribute to multiple ...

Make a Donation
There is no other organization in the United States that can equal ...

Support All Our Candidates
If you support the above candidates, will you also ...

Latest No. of *Nukewatch Quarterly* (Spring 2014)
The magazine covers all aspects of weapons and power.
Dick's Selection:

Cover Page has 2 articles: 1) German pilots are trained to fly “Tornado” Jet Bombers that carry US H-bombs. 60 of these bombers have crashed, 33 pilots or navigators have been killed. 2) The Los Alamos/Sandia labs in NM have successfully tested a new B61 bomb. The Obama admin. is upgrading all of the nuclear weapons.

Page 1 has 2 articles: 1) Annotated list of all the nuclear arsenals around the world, plus map of nuclear bases in US; 2) Report on 3 nuclear weapons protestors sentenced to long prison terms: Sr. Megan Rice (age 84), Greg Boertje-Obed, Michael Walli

Contact me for address if you would like to subscribe. OMNI/NWA needs more people speaking out for Nuclear Weapons Abolition.

CATHOLIC OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

TRANSFORM NOW PLOUGHSHARES Google Search, April 26, 2014

[See Nonviolence and Just War newsletters --Dick]

1. Transform Now Plowshares | They will hammer their swords ...
   transformnowplowshares.wordpress.com/

   Several people requested we post this song, performed at the most recent Festival of Hope. Lyrics are by Ralph Hutchison; the performed version lifted the tune ...

   Megan Rice
   Francis Lloyd, counsel for Megan Rice, has filed her sentencing ...

   Judge Sends Transform Now ...
   Judge Sends Transform Now Plowshares Resisters to Prison ...

   More results from wordpress.com »

2. Disarmnowplowshares's Blog | Love of enemies means ...
   disarmnowplowshares.wordpress.com/


3. Plowshares Movement - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plowshares_Movement

   Wikipedia

   The Plowshares Movement is an anti-nuclear weapons and (mostly) .... who compose the Transform Now Plowshares movement, breached security at the U.S. ...

   History - Actions - Recent actions - See also
The three are members of the organization "Transform Now Plowshares", a part of the Plowshares Movement, which references the Book of Isaiah’s call to... 

Feb 18, 2014 - The U.S. Marshals have placed a “cone of silence” over Sister Megan Rice, the 83-year-old defendant in the Transform Now Plowshares action...

The three, who call themselves the Transform Now Plowshares, are facing long prison sentences for sabotage following their July 28, 2012, ...

Patrick O’Neill, “Sr. Megan, Mike & Greg—Thanks!” Recounts and decries US District Court Judge Amul R. Thapar’s harsh sentencing of three Catholic antiwar activists, “three of the finest, most loving people on God’s Good Earth.” Then O’Neill explores the behavior of the judge in contrast to the TNP three. Excellent essay. Let us all speak up until the scourge of war is ended, just as public disapproval ended dueling and lynching. Let’s not merely wring our hands over the slaughters, but with Mother Jones we must protest as individuals and with groups.

“On Questions of War & Peace.” A different sort of judge presided over the trial of nine nuclear weapons resisters in Kansas City, Dec. 13, 2013. Judge Ardie Bland dound them guilty of trespass and “sentenced” them to answer a series of essay questions proposed by...
Judge Bland. Excerpts from some of the defendants’ answers are given. Let’s not give up on the judges, but struggle to acquire judges who understand international law under the US Constitution and who can imagine the consequences of nuclear war. --Dick

PAX CHRISTI  
http://paxchristiusa.org/

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: Pax Christi USA signs onto Catholic communities letter to Secretary Kerry regarding non-proliferation

Pax Christi USA has signed onto a letter from Catholic communities in the United States asking Secretary John Kerry to take specific steps toward disarmament at the Preparatory Committee of the Non-Proliferation Treaty meeting beginning next week at the UN.

The letter reads, in part:

As the leadership of Catholic communities and organizations in the United States, we are sending this letter in collaboration with the World Council of Churches and its member churches. It is an inter-regional call for action by a variety of churches that are also contacting their governments.

We would like to begin by expressing our disappointment that the United States did not take part in the 2nd International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Nayarit, Mexico, in February. The meeting clarified critical nuclear challenges by bringing together a significant cross-section of the international community for an evidence-based accounting of what nuclear weapons do to people, societies and the environment…

Click here to read the entire letter.

Leave a comment

Posted in Care for Creation, Nuclear Disarmament
Nuclear Weapons Are an Aging Society, Too

Russ Wellen, Op-Ed, NationofChange, May 25, 2014: In 2004 anthropologist Joseph Masco wrote a seminal article for the August issue of American Ethnologist titled Nuclear technoaesthetics. He followed that up with a book titled The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico (Princeton University Press, 2006). In his article, which addresses, among other things, the effects on the mentality of nuclear scientists after nuclear testing was banned, he reproduces the thoughts of a former deputy director of nuclear weapons technologies at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

ALMOST EVERYTHING IN “DR. STRANGELOVE” WAS TRUE.

POSTED BY ERIC SCHLOSSER.

JANUARY 23, 2014
This month marks the fiftieth anniversary of Stanley Kubrick’s black comedy about nuclear weapons, “Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb.” Released on January 29, 1964, the film caused a good deal of controversy. Its plot suggested that a mentally deranged American general could order a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, without consulting the President. One reviewer described the film as “dangerous … an evil thing about an evil thing.” Another compared it to Soviet propaganda. Although “Strangelove” was clearly a farce, with the comedian Peter Sellers playing three roles, it was criticized for being implausible. An expert at the Institute for Strategic Studies called the events in the film “impossible on a dozen counts.” A former Deputy Secretary of Defense dismissed the idea that someone could authorize the use of a nuclear weapon without the President’s approval: “Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth.” (See a compendium of clips from the film.) When “Fail-Safe”—a Hollywood thriller with a similar plot, directed by Sidney Lumet—opened, later that year, it was criticized in much the same way. “The incidents in ‘Fail-Safe’ are deliberate lies!” General Curtis LeMay, the Air Force chief of staff, said. “Nothing like that could happen.” The first casualty of every war is the truth—and the Cold War was no exception to that dictum. Half a century after Kubrick’s mad general, Jack D. Ripper, launched a nuclear strike on the Soviets to defend the purity of “our precious bodily fluids” from Communist subversion, we now know that American officers did indeed have the ability to start a Third World War on their own. And despite the introduction of rigorous safeguards in the years since then, the risk of an accidental or unauthorized nuclear detonation hasn’t been completely eliminated.
The command and control of nuclear weapons has long been plagued by an “always/never” dilemma. The administrative and technological systems that are necessary to insure that nuclear weapons are always available for use in wartime may be quite different from those necessary to guarantee that such weapons can never be used, without proper authorization, in peacetime. During the nineteen-fifties and sixties, the “always” in American war planning was given far greater precedence than the “never.” Through two terms in office, beginning in 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower struggled with this dilemma. He wanted to retain Presidential control of nuclear weapons while defending America and its allies from attack. But, in a crisis, those two goals might prove contradictory, raising all sorts of difficult questions. What if Soviet bombers were en route to the United States but the President somehow couldn’t be reached? What if Soviet tanks were rolling into West Germany but a communications breakdown prevented NATO officers from contacting the White House? What if the President were killed during a surprise attack on Washington, D.C., along with the rest of the nation’s civilian leadership? Who would order a nuclear retaliation then?

With great reluctance, Eisenhower agreed to let American officers use their nuclear weapons, in an emergency, if there were no time or no means to contact the President. Air Force pilots were allowed to fire their nuclear anti-aircraft rockets to shoot down Soviet bombers heading toward the United States. And about half a dozen high-level American commanders were allowed to use far more powerful nuclear weapons, without contacting the White House first, when their forces were under attack and “the urgency of time and circumstances clearly does not permit a specific decision by the President, or other person empowered to act in his stead.” Eisenhower worried that providing that sort of authorization in advance could make it possible for someone to do “something foolish down the chain of command” and start an all-out nuclear war. But the alternative—allowing an attack on the United States to go unanswered or NATO forces to be overrun—seemed a lot worse. Aware that his decision might create public unease about who really controlled America’s nuclear arsenal, Eisenhower insisted that his delegation of Presidential authority be kept secret. At a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he confessed to being “very fearful of having written papers on this matter.”

President John F. Kennedy was surprised to learn, just a few weeks after taking office, about this secret delegation of power. “A subordinate commander faced with a substantial military action,” Kennedy was told in a top-secret memo, “could start the thermonuclear holocaust on his own initiative if he could not reach you.” Kennedy and his national-security advisers were shocked not only by the wide latitude given to American officers but also by the loose custody of the roughly three thousand American nuclear weapons stored in Europe. Few of the weapons had locks on them. Anyone who got hold of them could detonate them. And there was little to prevent NATO officers from Turkey, Holland, Italy, Great Britain, and Germany from using them without the approval of the United States.
In December, 1960, fifteen members of Congress serving on the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy had toured NATO bases to investigate how American nuclear weapons were being deployed. They found that the weapons—some of them about a hundred times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima—were routinely guarded, transported, and handled by foreign military personnel. American control of the weapons was practically nonexistent. Harold Agnew, a Los Alamos physicist who accompanied the group, was especially concerned to see German pilots sitting in German planes that were decorated with Iron Crosses—and carrying American atomic bombs. Agnew, in his own words, “nearly wet his pants” when he realized that a lone American sentry with a rifle was all that prevented someone from taking off in one of those planes and bombing the Soviet Union.

* * *

The Kennedy Administration soon decided to put locking devices inside NATO’s nuclear weapons. The coded electromechanical switches, known as “permissive action links” (PALs), would be placed on the arming lines. The weapons would be inoperable without the proper code—and that code would be shared with NATO allies only when the White House was prepared to fight the Soviets. The American military didn’t like the idea of these coded switches, fearing that mechanical devices installed to improve weapon safety would diminish weapon reliability. A top-secret State Department memo summarized the view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1961: “all is well with the atomic stockpile program and there is no need for any changes.”

After a crash program to develop the new control technology, during the mid-nineteen-sixties, permissive action links were finally placed inside most of the nuclear weapons deployed by NATO forces. But Kennedy’s directive applied only to the NATO arsenal. For years, the Air Force and the Navy blocked attempts to add coded switches to the weapons solely in their custody. During a national emergency, they argued, the consequences of not receiving the proper code from the White House might be disastrous. And locked weapons might play into the hands of Communist saboteurs. “The very existence of the lock capability,” a top Air Force general claimed, “would create a fail-disable potential for knowledgeable agents to ‘dud’ the entire Minuteman [missile] force.” The Joint Chiefs thought that strict military discipline was the best safeguard against an unauthorized nuclear strike. A two-man rule was instituted to make it more difficult for someone to use a nuclear weapon without permission. And a new screening program, the Human Reliability Program, was created to stop people with emotional, psychological, and substance-abuse problems from gaining access to nuclear weapons.

Despite public assurances that everything was fully under control, in the winter of 1964, while “Dr. Strangelove” was playing in theatres and being condemned as Soviet propaganda, there was nothing to
prevent an American bomber crew or missile launch crew from using their weapons against the Soviets. Kubrick had researched the subject for years, consulted experts, and worked closely with a former R.A.F. pilot, Peter George, on the screenplay of the film. George’s novel about the risk of accidental nuclear war, “Red Alert,” was the source for most of “Strangelove” ’s plot. Unbeknownst to both Kubrick and George, a top official at the Department of Defense had already sent a copy of “Red Alert” to every member of the Pentagon’s Scientific Advisory Committee for Ballistic Missiles. At the Pentagon, the book was taken seriously as a cautionary tale about what might go wrong. Even Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara privately worried that an accident, a mistake, or a rogue American officer could start a nuclear war.

Coded switches to prevent the unauthorized use of nuclear weapons were finally added to the control systems of American missiles and bombers in the early nineteen-seventies. The Air Force was not pleased, and considered the new security measures to be an insult, a lack of confidence in its personnel. Although the Air Force now denies this claim, according to more than one source I contacted, the code necessary to launch a missile was set to be the same at every Minuteman site: 00000000.

* * *

The early permissive action links were rudimentary. Placed in NATO weapons during the nineteen-sixties and known as Category A PALs, the switches relied on a split four-digit code, with ten thousand possible combinations. If the United States went to war, two people would be necessary to unlock a nuclear weapon, each of them provided with half the code. Category A PALs were useful mainly to delay unauthorized use, to buy time after a weapon had been taken or to thwart an individual psychotic hoping to cause a large explosion. A skilled technician could open a stolen weapon and unlock it within a few hours. Today’s Category D PALs, installed in the Air Force’s hydrogen bombs, are more sophisticated. They require a six-digit code, with a million possible combinations, and have a limited-try feature that disables a weapon when the wrong code is repeatedly entered.

The Air Force’s land-based Minuteman III missiles and the Navy’s submarine-based Trident II missiles now require an eight-digit code—which is no longer 00000000—in order to be launched. The Minuteman crews receive the code via underground cables or an aboveground radio antenna. Sending the launch code to submarines deep underwater presents a greater challenge. Trident submarines contain two safes. One holds the keys necessary to launch a missile; the other holds the combination to the safe with the keys; and the combination to the safe holding the combination must be transmitted to the sub by very-low-frequency or extremely-low-frequency radio. In a pinch, if Washington, D.C., has been destroyed and the launch code doesn’t arrive, the sub’s crew can open the safes with a blowtorch.

The security measures now used to control America’s nuclear weapons are a vast improvement over
Vice Admiral Tim Giardina, the second-highest-ranking officer at the U.S. Strategic Command—the organization responsible for all of America’s nuclear forces—was investigated last summer for allegedly using counterfeit gambling chips at the Horseshoe Casino in Council Bluffs, Iowa. According to the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, “a significant monetary amount” of counterfeit chips was involved. Giardina was relieved of his command on October 3, 2013. A few days later, Major General Michael Carey, the Air Force commander in charge of America’s intercontinental ballistic missiles, was fired for conduct “unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.” According to a report by the Inspector General of the Air Force, Carey had consumed too much alcohol during an official trip to Russia, behaved rudely toward Russian officers, spent time with “suspect” young foreign women in Moscow, loudly discussed sensitive information in a public hotel lounge there, and drunkenly pleaded to get onstage and sing with a Beatles cover band at La Cantina, a Mexican restaurant near Red Square. Despite his requests, the band wouldn’t let Carey onstage to sing or to play the guitar.

While drinking beer in the executive lounge at Moscow’s Marriott Aurora during that visit, General Carey made an admission with serious public-policy implications. He off-handedly told a delegation of U.S. national-security officials that his missile-launch officers have the “worst morale in the Air Force.” Recent events suggest that may be true. In the spring of 2013, nineteen launch officers at Minot Air Force base in North Dakota were decertified for violating safety rules and poor discipline. In August, 2013, the entire missile wing at Malmstrom Air Force base in Montana failed its safety inspection. Last week, the Air Force revealed that thirty-four launch officers at Malmstrom had been decertified for cheating on proficiency exams—and that at least three launch officers are being investigated for illegal drug use. The findings of a report by the RAND Corporation, leaked to the A.P., were equally disturbing. The study found that the rates of spousal abuse and court martials among Air Force personnel with nuclear responsibilities are much higher than those among people with other jobs in the Air Force. “We don’t care if things go properly,” a launch officer told RAND. “We just don’t want to get in trouble.”

The most unlikely and absurd plot element in “Strangelove” is the existence of a Soviet “Doomsday Machine.” The device would trigger itself, automatically, if the Soviet Union were attacked with nuclear weapons. It was meant to be the ultimate deterrent, a threat to destroy the world in order to prevent an American nuclear strike. But the failure of the Soviets to tell the United States about the
contraption defeats its purpose and, at the end of the film, inadvertently causes a nuclear Armageddon. “The whole point of the Doomsday Machine is lost,” Dr. Strangelove, the President’s science adviser, explains to the Soviet Ambassador, “if you keep it a secret!”

A decade after the release of “Strangelove,” the Soviet Union began work on the Perimeter system—a network of sensors and computers that could allow junior military officials to launch missiles without oversight from the Soviet leadership. Perhaps nobody at the Kremlin had seen the film. Completed in 1985, the system was known as the Dead Hand. Once it was activated, Perimeter would order the launch of long-range missiles at the United States if it detected nuclear detonations on Soviet soil and Soviet leaders couldn’t be reached. Like the Doomsday Machine in “Strangelove,” Perimeter was kept secret from the United States; its existence was not revealed until years after the Cold War ended.

In retrospect, Kubrick’s black comedy provided a far more accurate description of the dangers inherent in nuclear command-and-control systems than the ones that the American people got from the White House, the Pentagon, and the mainstream media.

“This is absolute madness, Ambassador,” President Merkin Muffley says in the film, after being told about the Soviets’ automated retaliatory system. “Why should you build such a thing?” Fifty years later, that question remains unanswered, and “Strangelove” seems all the more brilliant, bleak, and terrifyingly on the mark.

You can read Eric Schlosser’s guide to the long-secret documents that help explain the risks America took with its nuclear arsenal, and watch and read his deconstruction of clips from “Dr. Strangelove” and from a little-seen film about permissive action links.

Eric Schlosser is the author of “Command and Control.”

History of US nuclear weapons testing - a revolting legacy of power’s lack of empathy

**Human Radiation Experiments in the Pacific**

Friday, 21 March 2014 09:29 By Glenn Alcalay, CounterPunch | News Analysis

” . . . protect the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources; protect the health of the inhabitants . . .” (1)

According to Marshallese folklore a half-bad and half-good god named Etao was associated with slyness and trickery. When bad things happened people knew that Etao was behind it. “He’s dangerous, that Etao,” some people said. “He does bad things to people and then laughs at them.”(2) Many in the Marshall Islands now view their United States patron as a latter day Etao.
Sixty years ago this month the American Etao unleashed its unprecedented fury at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. It was nine years after the searing and indelible images of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the world first learned about the dangers of radioactive fallout from hydrogen bombs that use atomic Hiroshima-sized bombs as triggers.

Castle-Bravo, the first in a series of megaton-range hydrogen bomb tests at Bikini Atoll on March first of 1954, was nicknamed “the shrimp” by its designer – Edward Teller – because it was the first deliverable thermonuclear weapon in the megaton range in the U.S. nuclear holster. We had beaten the Soviets in this key area of nuclear weapons miniaturization when the Cold War was hot and the United States did not need to seek approval from anybody, especially the Marshallese entrusted to them through the U.N.

At fifteen megatons – 1,000 times the Hiroshima A-bomb – the Bravo behemoth was a fission-fusion-fission [3-F] thermonuclear bomb that spread deadly radioactive fallout over an enormous swath of the central Pacific Ocean, including the inhabited atolls of Rongelap, Rongerik and Utrik in the Marshalls archipelago. The downwind people of Rongelap [120 miles downwind of Bikini] and Utrik [300 miles east of Bikini] were evacuated as they suffered from the acute effects of radiation exposure.

As an international fallout controversy reached a crescendo, a hastily called press conference was held in Washington in mid-March 1954 with Eisenhower and AEC chair Admiral Lewis ["nuclear energy too cheap to meter"] Strauss, his Administration’s top lieutenant in nuclear matters.

Adm. Lewis Strauss: “I’ve just returned from the Pacific Proving Grounds of the AEC where I witnessed the second part of a test series of thermonuclear weapons . . . For shot one [Bravo] the wind failed to follow the predictions, but shifted south of that line and the little islands of Rongelap, Rongerik and Utrik were in the edge of the path of the fallout . . . The 236 Marshallese natives appeared to me to be well and happy . . . The results, which the scientists at Los Alamos and Livermore had hoped to obtain from these two tests [Bravo and Union] were fully realized. An enormous potential has been added to our military posture.” Strauss added the caveat that “the medical staff on Kwajalein have advised us that they anticipate no illness, barring of course, diseases which may be hereafter contracted.” (3)

Even former Sec. of State Henry Kissinger took note of the significance of Bravo and the new perils associated with widespread radioactive fallout contamination from megaton sized H-bombs, as might happen if the Soviets dropped The Big One on our nation’s capital and the fallout headed up the Eastern Seaboard. Writing about nuclear weapons and foreign policy in 1957, Kissinger wrote: “The damage caused by radiation is twofold: direct damage leading to illness, death or reduced life expectancy, and genetic effects.”(4)

Almira Matayoshi was one of the Rongelap “natives” referred to by Adm. Strauss. When I interviewed her in 1981 in Majuro she recounted her experience with Bravo:

The flash of light was very strong, then came the big sound of the explosion; it was quite a while before the fallout came. The powder was yellowish and when you walked it was all over your body. Then people began to get very weak and began to vomit. Most of us were weak and my son was out of breath.

I have pains and much fear of the bomb. At that time I wanted to die, and we were really suffering; our bodies ached and our feet were covered with burns and our hair fell out. Now I see babies growing up abnormally and some are mentally disturbed, but none of these things happened before the bomb. It is sad to see the babies now.(5)
A persistent puzzle surrounds the question of intentionality. In a 1982 *New York Times* interview, Gene Curbow (the former weather technician during Bravo) confessed that the winds did not “shift” according to the official U.S. explanation for the massive contamination during Bravo. “The wind had been blowing straight at us for days before the test,” said Curbow. “It was blowing straight at us during the test, and straight at us after the test. The wind never shifted.” When asked why it had taken so long to come forth with this important information, Curbow replied “It was a mixture of patriotism and ignorance, I guess.”(6)

The late Dr. Robert Conard, head of the Brookhaven/AEC medical surveillance team for the islanders, wrote in his 1958 annual report on the exposed Marshallese: “The habitation of these people on Rongelap Island affords the opportunity for a most valuable ecological radiation study on human beings . . . The various radionuclides present on the island can be traced from the soil through the food chain and into the human being.”(7)

In reference to the exposed Marshallese after Bravo, AEC official Merrill Eisenbud bluntly stated during a NYC AEC meeting in 1956, “Now, data of this type has never been available. While it is true that these people do not live the way westerners do, civilized people, it is nonetheless also true that they are more like us than the mice.”(8)

At present, the atoll communities of Bikini, Enewetak, and Rongelap remain sociologically disrupted and uncertain about their future as their contaminated islands and lagoons have yet to be fully repatriated and restored for permanent human habitation.

**Kwajalein**

Following 67 A- and H-bombs at Bikini and Enewetak between 1946-58, the U.S. was not about to let go of its island capture, terminate the AEC-Brookhaven long-term human radiation studies at Rongelap and Utirik, nor forfeit the valuable “catcher’s mitt” at Kwajalein for monthly incoming ICBMs from Vandenberg air base in California and Kauai. In 1961 – following a polio outbreak on Ebeye, Kwajalein – Pres. Kennedy ordered a comprehensive review of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands by his Harvard economist friend Anthony M. Solomon, head of the New York Reserve Bank.

Correspondingly, JFK’s National Security Action Memorandum 145 of April 18, 1962 called for the movement of Micronesia into a permanent relationship with the U.S.(9)

Through legerdemain and the inherent asymmetry of the relationship, the U.S. took every conceivable advantage of its island wards, thus setting the stage for the ongoing human and ecological radiation studies and other Pentagon activities in perpetuity.

To this end the Solomon Report recommended a *massive spending program* just prior to a future status plebiscite being planned for Micronesia. “It is the Solomon Mission’s conclusion that those programs and the spending involved will not set off a self-sustaining development process of any significance in the area. It is important, therefore, that advantage be taken of the psychological impact of the capital investment program before some measure of disappointment is felt.”(10)

As the Pentagon and AEC used the isolated isles of the Marshalls to perfect its Cold War nuclear deterrent – replete with human subjects for longitudinal radiation studies – let us not forget the Pentagon’s *ongoing* project of missile defense, aka “Star Wars” at Kwajalein Atoll encompassing the world’s largest lagoon bull’s eye.

Characterized as “hitting a bullet with a bullet,” ballistic missile defense has always had a reputation for fantasy and wish fulfillment, sold to Pres. Reagan with an exciting and glitzy video designed to parallel the then-sensation called “Star Wars.” Kwajalein and the fiction of Ballistic Missile Defense has tragically dumped good money after bad, notwithstanding the huge profits by Boeing, Raytheon,
Northrup Grumman, MIT’s Lincoln Lab, Aerojet, Booz Allen et al. Between 1962 and 1996 the U.S. spent $100 billion. And between 1996 and 2012 the total comes to $274 billion and still counting.(11)

And what do we have to show for our nearly $300 billion missile defense boondoggle? Last July 4th was also the planned launch date for a test of the BMD program. The Ground Based Missile Defense system at Kwajalein Atoll failed again, despite the fact that the test was manipulated: “The intercept team knew ahead of time when to expect the incoming missile and all its relevant flight parameters. Such luxury is obviously not available in real-life combat. But even if the $214 million ‘test’ had worked it would not prove much.”(12)

The collateral damage known as Ebeye Island at Kwajalein is infamously tagged throughout the region as the “slum of the Pacific.” The appalling conditions on Ebeye for its 15,000 cramped residents and pool of cheap labor for the adjacent missile base are in stark contrast to the southern California-like setting on ten times as large Kwajalein Island for the 3,000 Americans manning the missile base.

Likening it to South African apartheid, I recall my first encounter with Kwajalein and Ebeye as a young Peace Corps volunteer in 1976:

Having spent the afternoon on Kwajalein yesterday left me feeling ashamed to be an American citizen. The overt segregation of the American civilian and military employees on Kwajalein Island, and the cheap labor pool of Marshallese living on nearby Ebeye Island, makes me realize that racism is not confined to the American south.(13)

And just to insure the longevity of the asymmetry, the American Etao embedded a little-noticed caveat into the 1963 Limited [Atmospheric] Test Ban Treaty that allows the U.S. to unilaterally resume nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, despite assurances to the contrary during the 1986 Compact status negotiations. Safeguard “C,” as the provision is known, also calls for the readiness of Johnston Atoll and Kauai in the Hawaiian archipelago, and Enewetak Atoll in the Marshalls under the auspices of the DOE’s Pacific Area Support Office in Honolulu.(14)

Several formerly inhabited atolls remain off limits due to lingering radioactivity decades after the last H-bomb shattered the peace on Bikini and Enewetak. Imagine if the U.S. finally saw fit to do the right thing and pay their past-due $2 billion nuclear legacy bill, a small morsel of the annual Star Wars budget.(15)

The recently discovered Mexican refugee fisherman on Ebon Atoll in the Marshall Islands drew world attention to these obscure coral formations atop extinct and submerged volcanoes where a continuous culture has survived and nearly thrived for the past two thousand years. And even though Jose Salvador Alvarenga said he had no idea where he was, Uncle Sam has always known where these tiny islands are, strategically located stepping stones in the bowels of the northwestern Pacific leading to Asia’s doorstep, now in the era of the pending Trans Pacific Partnership.

Undoubtedly the legendary Etao is somewhere lurking in these once-pacific isles savoring the work of its American protégé . . .

[Addendum: PBS is sitting on an important 90-minute film about the radiation experiments in the Marshall Islands titled "Nuclear Savage: The Islands of Secret Project 4.1" by Adam Horowitz. Please contact PBS and urge them to air "Nuclear Savage," a documentary film they funded and are keeping from the public's view. Also, please see these additional articles about the Marshall Islands: http://www.countrerpunch.org/2012/06/01/nuclear-savages and PBS' attempt to suppress this film: http://www.opednews.com/articles/2/Nuclear-Savage-by-William-Boardman-]
Endnotes


3. Adm. Lewis Strauss, chair-AEC. Press conference about Bravo with Pres. Eisenhower, March 12, 1954, Washington, D.C. The archival footage may be viewed in this clip @ 1:00-4:30 in Part 3 of O’Rourke’s Half Life.


5. Interview with Almira Matayoshi conducted by Glenn Alcalay in February 1981 in Majuro, Marshall Islands. This interview is online: http://archive.is/M5aH


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Glenn Alcalay

Glenn Alcalay is an adjunct professor of anthropology at William Paterson University and Montclair State University in New Jersey. Alcalay was a Peace Corps volunteer on Utrik Atoll in the Marshalls, speaks fluent Marshallese and has conducted anthropological research about reproductive abnormalities among the downwind islanders. He can be reached at alcalayg@wpunj.edu.

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Research, development, testing, and production of US nuclear weapons occurred at thousands of sites in nearly every state, as well as Puerto Rico, the Marshall Islands, Johnston Atoll, and Christmas Island in the Pacific. Between 1940 and 1996, the United States spent approximately $5.8 trillion dollars to develop and deploy nuclear weapons. As a result, the nuclear weapons
program created one of the largest radioactive waste legacies in the world—rivaling the former
Soviet Union's.

US nuclear weapons sites—many of them under the aegis of the Energy Department—constitute
some of the most contaminated zones in the Western hemisphere, and attempts to remediate
those sites are now approaching their fifth decade. It is the most costly, complex, and risky
environmental cleanup effort ever undertaken, dwarfing the cleanup of Defense Department sites
and the Environmental Protection Agency’s Superfund program. Long-term liability estimates
range from approximately $300 billion to $1 trillion. Site remediation and disposition of
radioactive detritus are expected to continue well into this century. After that, long-term
stewardship of profoundly contaminated areas will pose a challenge spanning hundreds of
centuries.

A MISHANDLED CLEANUP: TREASURE ISLAND

Research, development, testing and production of nuclear weapons by the United States created:

- More than 3 billion metric tons of uranium mining and milling wastes.
- More than 1 million cubic meters of transuranic radioactive wastes.
- Approximately 6 million cubic meters of low-level radioactive wastes.
- Approximately 4.7 billion cubic meters of contaminated soil and groundwater
  (according to an Energy Department document unavailable online).
- More than 10,000 radiation-contaminated structures such as uranium
  processing and enrichment plants, radiochemical processing and storage facilities and
  laboratories.
- About 100 million gallons of high-level radioactive wastes, considered among the
  most dangerous, left in aging tanks larger that most state capitol domes. More than a third of
  some 200 tanks have leaked and threaten groundwater and waterways such as the Columbia
  River.
- Areas contaminated by more than 1,054 nuclear weapons tests, 219 of which
  involved aboveground detonations. As of 1992, underground shots released about 300 million
curies of radioactive materials at the Nevada Test Site—making it the most radioactively
contaminated area in the United States. Areas in the Republic of the Marshall Islands remain
uninhabitable from US aboveground tests in the 1940s and 1950s.

- More than 700,000 metric tons of excess nuclear weapons production materials, in addition to hundreds of tons of weapons-usable plutonium and highly enriched uranium.

The human health legacy of the US nuclear weapons program is also quite significant. As of February 2014, more than 100,000 sick nuclear weapons workers have received more than $10 billion in compensation following exposure to ionizing radiation and other hazardous materials.

Even today, the radioactive waste from the dawn of the nuclear age remains a significant challenge to public health in highly populated areas. For instance, in 1973 a large amount of uranium processing wastes, generated to make the first nuclear weapons at the Mallinckrodt Chemical Works in St. Louis, was illegally dumped in a municipal landfill in a nearby suburb. The landfill is experiencing the latest of at least two subsurface fires over the past 21 years and lies on a floodplain approximately 1.2 miles from the Missouri River.

The dump contains the largest single amount of thorium 230 in the country and possibly the world. With a half-life of more than 75,000 years, it is comparable in toxicity to plutonium. Even though these concerns were repeatedly raised with the US Environmental Protection Agency, the agency issued a Record of Decision in 2008 that allows for “in place disposal” of these wastes, subject to institutional controls and with a cap over radiologically contaminated areas. Lost in this process is an important warning by a panel of the National Academy of Sciences in 2000 that "engineered barriers and institutional controls—are inherently failure prone."

The radiological legacy of nuclear weapons will be with us for a very long time.

[I read this article in Nukewatch Quarterly (Spring 2014). It appeared originally in The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (Feb. 24, 2014). --Dick]
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END NUCLEAR WEAPONS NEWSLETTER #19

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