

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day Call-to-Action

The following was abridged from a speech by Kelly Lundeen of Nukewatch at Peace Action Wisconsin's Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration event in Milwaukee, August 10, 2018.

Nukewatch has been around since the last anti-nuclear movement and survived the chill after the Cold War. Right now the world is in a renewed anti-nuclear fervor. I'm sure you've heard about the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), for their work to see a nuclear weapons treaty ban adopted by the United Nations last year. Nukewatch is working to bring this movement back to the United States. Trump is helping us.

A movement against nukes is necessary because we cannot stand for another Hiroshima and too many people have forgotten what that means. We are just lucky that Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the atomic bomb tests were the only times bombs were dropped on humans. It is really something I can't even fathom. I don't know how someone could have ever conceived of doing this in the first place. To lose 140,000 lives in Hiroshima in one instant? And 90,000 more in Nagasaki? How could anyone ever have done this? And how can we continue to develop and research new nuclear weapons? It's total insanity. ... (To read the complete talk see nukewatchinfo.org.)

If the \$1.7 trillion federal nuclear weapons budget is broken down, we are spending \$7 million per hour on nuclear weapons. That means stealing \$7 million per hour from every homeless person that does not have a bed. It means \$7 million that does not help schools struggling to meet Adequate Yearly Progress. It means \$7 million that is being taken from every one of us who need real health care.

The CEOs at the top of the military industrial complex are part of the "1 percent." We cannot afford to subsidize them anymore. The military budget is part of a transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich. The three wealthiest people in the United States have the same amount of wealth as the bottom 50 percent. There are way more of us than them. If we are the 99 percent, then there are 99 of us for every one of them. So what can we do? We can resist!

We need to do the things that we are good at to make the world better in our homes, in our communities, in our cities, or whatever scale we choose to work on. We can follow the example of the Kings Bay Plowshares. They snuck into the Kings Bay Naval Base in St. Mary's, Georgia on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, April 4. The Kings Bay Naval Base is the largest nuclear submarine base in the world. It is home to six ballistic missile submarines and two guided missile subs. For breaking into the base, pouring their own blood in order to raise awareness about the horrors of nuclear weapons, each one of these activists could be facing many years in prison. Currently Nukewatch is involved in similar direct action in Germany. In the past month my colleague John LaForge, and dozens of others in solidarity with a German campaign to have the bombs removed, has cut through fences to enter the Büchel air base which is home to 20 US nuclear bombs. [They hope to fight the issue in court.]

Do we need more actions like this? Yes! But we also need more people to produce independent media, raise food in a way that will nourish our bodies and our world, teach our children the truth. We should value the part we are playing.

Then we need to break out of our comfort zones and do more of these things in solidarity with other struggles. If we are people with privilege we need to support struggles of people of color and the poor and recognize the oppression that they live with. In the case of the nuclear industry, it is easy to see that the people on the frontlines are the people of North and South Korea, Japan, Russia or anyone who has ever been the target of a nuclear weapon.

While the nuclear bomb is the most horrific thing humankind has ever created, it is part of the nuclear industry that comes as a package deal. The entire nuclear industry needs to be stopped, because we

will always be facing all the same dangers that come with the entire nuclear fuel and weapons cycle which is riddled with radiation and death from uranium mining, to nuclear power and weapons testing, to transport and storage of radioactive waste.

You may be surprised to hear that way more people died from nuclear weapons testing than in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. McClatchy Newspapers reported in 2015 that at least 33,000 workers in the nuclear weapons industry died of cancers caused by workplace radiation exposures.

Native people all over the world have been disproportionately affected by uranium mining—in Niger, Australia, Canada and the US. Indigenous people in the southwest US are the survivors of uranium mining radiation, nuclear weapons tests, milling, and radioactive transportation.

I want to highlight one of the groups doing great work in New Mexico to oppose a centralized radioactive waste storage dump proposal that would involve 10,000 train cars of high-level radioactive waste travelling from nuclear reactors to the site. The group "Halt Holtec" has worked in coalition with many organizations to encourage the public to comment on the proposed dump. This work produced 25,000 letters to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Here is what Micheáilín Butler of Gallup, New Mexico said in an interview with Halt Holtec:

I'm out here at the NRC public scoping meeting to stand and speak out against the proposed nuclear waste site. I've been involved in a lot of issues around uranium mining, nuclear colonialism and the legacy of New Mexico as a nuclear sacrifice for the United States. I oppose this very strongly. It is a



Nukewatch co-director Kelly Lundeen presented the keynote at the Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemoration in Milwaukee August 10.

really terrible and awful idea. It will have a lasting impact that we should not have to face in addition to all the other issues we face in nuclear New Mexico.

I'm also here representing the Red Nation. The Red Nation is an organization that is very strongly opposed to anything to do with nuclear from the mining, the milling, and the processing, to the creation of the bombs, and to using land for nuclear waste storage. The United States and the people on this continent should be thinking about how to shut down and deactivate all the nuclear facilities so that we don't create the need for anymore storage.

Obviously we are going to have to think about a way in which all of the waste gets stored properly. We are already dealing with that legacy: the legacy of contamination from the mines, the legacy of the contamination from Los Alamos and other areas. What a lot of us don't understand is why we have to create new issues to have to deal with new waste. We shouldn't have to be dealing with this.

The only reason why they're dumping it on New Mexico is that we are a poor state. They know that we are desperate for cleanup jobs, waste jobs. They know that no one cares, that it's a politically safe move to dump it on the poor people of New Mexico. So just say no to nuclear waste.

The work that is being done to oppose the centralized radioactive waste dump in New Mexico is also helping us. If one of these dumps opens and radioactive waste begins to be transported, waste from two

closed nuclear reactors in Wisconsin will be transported through Milwaukee by train. A single train car of this radioactive waste would carry as much plutonium as the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. Worse than that, is the potential for transport by barge on Lake Michigan! This is why Milwaukee is more likely to be hit with a radioactive waste transport accident than by any enemy attack.

Right now there are some specific actions we can take related to the nuclear industry to take part in the growing anti-nuclear movement to make sure Hiroshima never happens again. Legislatively, there are a few proposals that you can urge representatives to support.

Yes!—H.R.669 is the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017. It is not perfect, but it is a step in the right direction to prevent the US from dropping a nuclear weapon without a Declaration of War by Congress.

No!—H.R. 3053 is a bill that would authorize the New Mexico dump Micheáilín opposes and revive the option for Yucca Mountain, which is not an option. Yes we need a safe place to store this dangerous waste, but Yucca Mountain is not it. It is not even on our land. It was never ceded by the Western Shoshone people.

No! All the separate parts of the \$1.7 trillion nuclear weapons rebuild need to be opposed.

Outside of lobbying work, we need to be in the streets opposing war and the bomb. If radioactive waste begins to be transported we might need people out to stop the trains or out watching for radioactive transport vehicles. So I hope to see you in the streets!

Parking Lot Dumps for Rad Waste Not Welcome in Texas or New Mexico

Radioactive waste storage proposals have gained renewed vigor under the Trump administration but are facing an uphill battle. Congress is attempting to revive the Yucca Mountain waste repository in Nevada for up to 110,000 tons of waste reactor fuel, and to proceed with lesser-known "Centralized Interim Storage" (CIS) proposals. Two private CIS sites are currently seeking licenses from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, even prior to Congressional approval: Holtec International/Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance's facility in New Mexico, for 173,600 metric tons; and Waste Control Specialists' (now known as Interim Storage Partners) expansion of their Texas facility to allow storage of 40,000 metric tons.

The type of dump that Holtec is proposing, (referred to as an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation) is currently illegal in the US. Nevertheless, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is allowing Holtec's licensing process to move ahead. In April a public comment period opened regarding the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement. It met fierce opposition from the low income and people of color being targeted for the "parking lot dumps" as well as a large nationwide coalition.

During a short comment period, the efforts to raise public awareness were far-reaching. Twenty-one members of the New Mexico House of Representatives and nine state senators sent letters to the NRC opposing the Holtec dump. The two largest cities in New Mexico, Albuquerque and Las Cruces, both passed resolutions opposing the dump, along with Bernalillo County and the cities of Lake Arthur and Jal. Additionally, the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association passed a resolution opposing the dump after not being consulted or considered by Holtec. Gubernatorial candidate Michelle Lujan Grisham has expressed opposition to the dump. In all, 25,000 comments against the dump were submitted to the NRC. A draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected in the summer of 2019.

The application for the other CIS proposal, the expansion of the Interim Storage Partners facility 40 miles from the Holtec site in Texas, was accepted by the NRC on August 27. Dallas, Bexar and Midland Counties passed resolutions opposing the dumps and radioactive waste transport.

The next step for both proposed CIS facilities is to establish standing for legal interventions. A coalition led by Beyond Nuclear is currently submitting formal "contentions to the NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. —KL