By Beatrice Fihn

Americans like a good comeback story, but the recent behavior of the nuclear arms race is not one to be cheered. President Trump plans to charge the US taxpayer nearly $100,000,000 per year to expand the nation’s nuclear weapons capabilities.

Other nuclear-armed countries are doing the same. A new generation of nuclear weapons requires a new generation of workers to develop and maintain these weapons of mass destruction. The National Nuclear Security Administration reported to Congress that 40 percent of its workforce will be eligible to retire in the next five years. The US government and its contractors have turned to the nation’s universities to provide this human capital. A new report documents formal ties between nearly 50 college campuses and the nuclear weapons complex.

The extent to which universities have joined this endeavor is surprising. Supporting weapons of mass destruction does not show up in any university mission statements. By far, it is often the opposite: universities like to talk about bringing the benefits of knowledge to a global community. The dangers posed by nuclear weapons are clear. Yet universities still choose to support them.

Students and faculty now face a choice. They can become the next generation of weapons scientists. Or they can refuse to be complicit in this scheme, denying research partnerships or internships at nuclear weapons labs.

Currently, universities across the country receive millions and in some cases billions of dollars to support nuclear weapons development. Universities are key partners in the global nuclear infrastructure, managing US spending on nuclear weapons.

In the United States, while the federal administration has identified nuclear-weapon-complicit states—such as Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, and Spain—as “nuclear-weapon-complicit states,” these states do not themselves possess nuclear weapons but have outsourced their nuclear objectives to one or more nuclear-armed allies through arrangements of extended nuclear [colabilitation] or umbrella agreements. These countries endorse or acquire in the continued possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons on their behalf.

It is not only the nine nuclear-armed states that stand between the international community and its long-standing goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The 31 nuclear-weapon-complicit states do not support the TPNW, and some of them actively oppose it. However, the great majority of the world’s states stand behind the Treaty. Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor counts a total of 135 countries as TPNW supporters.

As of November 2019, 34 countries are full “States Parties” to the TPNW; while another 48 have signed it, but not yet ratified it. An additional 50 countries have voted in favor of the Treaty in the UN, but not yet taken steps to adhere to it, says Østern. *See:* <file:///C:/Users/Nukewatch/Downloads/Nuclear_Weapons_Ban_Monitor_2019.pdf>

Grassroots Propelling the Nuclear Ban Treaty

“You should support the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor! Your signature makes a difference!”

“Don’t Bank on the Bomb” is the slogan of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning campaign. By becoming compliant with the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, INGOs and social movements both the Treaty Ban and the Green New Deal. A new report documents formal ties between nearly 50 college campuses and the nuclear weapons complex.

The figures have been weighted and are representative of all US adults (aged 18+).