German Campaigners See Progress in Confronting US Nuclear Weapons

On March 26, nuclear abolitionists in Germany launched 20 weeks of nonviolent resistance at Büchel Air Base, continuing until August 9, 2018. The base controls 20 US nuclear bombs, a remnant of the US Cold War nuclear arsenal that used to number in the thousands.

The March start date is the anniversary of the bi-partisan approval in 2010 by the German Bundestag or Parliament to urge the government to permanently remove the remaining US bombs.

In spite of near unanimous German public opinion that the bombs should be permanently withdrawn (a 2016 poll showed that 89% of the German public is against the US nukes), German pilots are both trained and obligated to take off with these bombs in their Tornado jet fighter-bombers and—if the orders come from a US president through NATO—to use them on their targets.

Germany's peace movement is the only one in Europe that has built a nation-wide campaign coalition of 50 groups and organizations—called "Büchel is everywhere—nuclear weapons-free now!"—focused on nuclear abolition. Its goals are the removal of the US bombs, cancellation of the B61-12 replacement bomb, and seeing the country ratify the new International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In the last few years, because of increased military hostility toward Russia, and NATO discussion of "usable low-yield" nuclear weapons, the Campaign Council has endorsed nonviolent civil resistance at the Büchel Air Base to bring more attention to the issue. Besides lobby work to halt the B61 replacement, the council increases awareness and political pressure using nonviolent direct action.

Warheads discussing bombs. A congressional hearing room with a mock-up of a new B61-12 hydrogen bomb being developed as a $10-$13 billion make-work program to needlessly replace earlier models.

Last February 3rd, German Social Democratic Party members of the European Parliament met in a regional conference and unanimously approved a motion to withdraw all remaining US nuclear weapons from Germany. At the SDP's regional association convention in Rhineland, EP member Norbert Neuser issued a letter to members that said in part, "I know that this initiative does not necessarily meet the goodwill of the party in Berlin, but I agree absolutely with the compliant by [former SDP leader] Martin Schulz who made in the [2017] election campaign a clear call for the abolition of the last nuclear weapons from Germany."

B61-12 Cancellation Bills to Support

Parallel House and Senate bills that would prohibit spending on new and so-called "smaller" nuclear weapons including the B61-12 are under consideration in congress. The bills are H.R. 2668, the "Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures Act" introduced by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, and S. 1235 its tandem measure in the senate. While far from the global rejection of nuclear weapons embodied in the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the bills would halt spending for the new B61 gravity bomb; adding nuclear weapons carrying capability to the R-35 Joint Strike Fighter jet; any new air-launched Cruise missile (known as Long Range Stand-Off); and any replacement of today's 450 intercontinental ballistic missiles like the proposed $100 billion "Ground Based Strategic Deterrent." Call your Congressional Rep's and Senators and urge their support and co-sponsorship of these bills.

Germany's Bank to Divest from Nuclear Weapons

Expanding its investment restrictions, Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest, has agreed to exclude nuclear weapons producers. A statement on its website announced: "The policy published today makes clear that Deutsche Bank avoids entering into, or continuing, any kind of business relationship with entities with clear, direct links to the following types of controversial weapons business: Cluster Munitions; Anti-Personnel Mines; Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Weapons; Controversial Conventional Weapons." Maaike Beenens, with the group Don't Bank on the Bomb, welcomes the new policy by Deutsche Bank, saying "With the new policy, Deutsche Bank clearly recognizes that investments in any type of nuclear weapons companies are unacceptable. With growing threats to use nuclear weapons, this announcement is a timely reminder of the choice we all face—nuclear weapons or our collective future. We welcome this decision, and hope to see divestment by Deutsche Bank from all nuclear weapon producers." The move follows intense pressure and negotiations by campaigners from Don't Bank on the Bomb and ICAN Germany, who will be watching closely to see that the bank follows through with divestment.

Second US Delegation to Join International Peace Actions at Germany's Deployment Site for US H-Bombs

The German-wide campaign "Büchel is Everywhere: Nuclear Weapons-free Now!" demands: 1) that the remaining 20 US H-bombs at Büchel be sent home permanently; 2) that they not be replaced with new bombs as the US intends, and 3) that Germany ratify the new nuclear weapons ban treaty. A delegation from the United States coordinated by Nukewatch will join "International Week" at the Büchel peace camp, July 10-18. For info. visit the websites buechel-atombombenfrei.de and (click on *International* & *English*), where you can endorse the campaign by signing a "Declaration of Solidarity."

Outside the main gate into Büchell Air Base, peace camp organizer Marion Küpker (center) gave "newcomers" an introduction to the nuclear weapons site and the 20-year history of protest there.

This inflatable model of a high-level radioactive waste transport can is bringing needed attention to the dangers and proposed routes the material would use if Nevada, New Mexico, or Texas are licensed to build dump sites.

Screw Nevada...and New Mexico and Texas

The Trump Administration and some in Congress have moved to revive the Yucca Mountain waste repository for up to 80,000 tons of waste reactor fuel, and to move ahead with the lesser known "Centralized Interim Storage" (CIS) proposals for the same waste. Two potential 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' expansion of their Texas facility to allow storage of 40,000 metric tons. In a strong show of resistance, 233 citizens have publicly opposed Holtec's proposal at six public hearings. If licensing of Yucca Mountain or a CIS facility were approved, thousands of high-risk shipments of the waste, on highways, railroads and barges, would endanger a third of the US population that lives along transport routes that run through 44 states. In May, the House voted 340-72 to adopt H.R. 3053 which would resume the Yucca Mountain licensing process and authorize CIS. Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada slammed the bill which critics have labeled "Screw Nevada Act," and "Mobile Chernobyl." Sen. Masto said a senate version of the bill is "dead on arrival" and called the $15 billion already spent on the Yucca project "a massive waste of taxpayer dollars."

Trump Orders Perry to Stop Retirements of Failed Nuclear & Coal Generators

As nuclear power reactors age, the chances for catastrophic accidents increase because the equipment wears out. Most in the US have reached or exceeded their 40-year licenses. *Utility Dive* reports that President Trump has directed Energy Secretary Rick Perry to stop the closure of coal and nuclear generators, pushed offline by cheaper electricity from natural gas and renewables. The order came the same day Trump directed secretary Perry to consider using the Federal Power Act and the Defense Production Act to bail out dirty, bankrupt nuclear reactors and coal power plants that can't compete any longer with wind, solar, natural gas or efficiency programs. The possibility of extraordinary federal intervention—made possible by laws enacted for use during national emergencies like wars, hurricanes or floods—was called "legally indefensible" by the diverse group of experts.

A statement issued the same day by a broad coalition of industry, consumer and environmental groups including oil, gas, efficiency, solar and wind representatives condemned Trump's announced bailout as unnecessary, counterproductive and harmful to ratepayers.

"Government assistance" to failed coal and nuclear reactor operators "under the guise of national security" would be "misguided," said Todd Snitchler, a Market Development Group Director for the American Petroleum Institute. Malcolm Woolf, a vice president at the trade association Advanced Energy Economy, said, "There is no emergency that would justify propping up uneconomic power plants that are superfluous."

Amy Farrell, a vice president at the American Wind Energy Association said, "[O]rderly power plant retirements do *not* constitute an emergency for our electric grid. …there's certainly no credible justification to force taxpayers to bailout uneconomic power plants."

Referring to earlier federal assistance to failing coal and nuclear systems, John Shelk, president and CEO of the Electric Power Supply Association, said, "There was no emergency when coal and nuclear interests sought federal relief, and there is none today that justifies such unprecedented Executive Branch intervention in the economic life of the country."

—*New York Times;* American Petroleum Institute media advisory; and UtilityDive.com, all on June 1, 2018.