

# Nuclear Shorts

## Bill to Cancel US Space Force

The “No Militarization of Space Act” was introduced in September 2021 by Rep. Jared Huffman, D-Calif. The bill would abolish the new “Space Force,” established in 2019 as a new military branch. “Since its creation ... the Space Force has threatened longstanding peace and flagrantly wasted billions of taxpayer dollars,” said Rep. Huffman. According to former astronaut and Democratic junior Senator from Arizona Mark Kelly, any threats in space are already taken care of in the US Air Force,” and it “doesn’t make sense to build a whole other level of bureaucracy in an incredibly bureaucratic [Pentagon].” However, the redundant Space Force currently has Republican and Democrat supporters — based on the voting numbers that established the branch — leading Taxpayers for Common Sense, the National Taxpayers Union, Peace Action, R Street Institute, Demand Progress and others to endorse the bill. “The Space Force has quickly become a taxpayer boondoggle,” said Andrew Lutz of the TPU. The Biden administration endorsed Space Force with a statement in February 2021, but Rep. Huffman encourages a return to earth: “Our mission must be to support the American people, not spend billions on the militarization of space.” — Govtrackinsider.com, Sep. 30, 2021; *American Military News*, Sep. 24; Huffman.hour.gov, Sep. 22, 2021, *The Hill*, Aug. 9, 2018

## US Nuclear Arsenal Size Reportedly Made Public

In October 2021 the Biden White House is said to have declassified the number of nuclear weapons in the US arsenal. The Trump White House had kept the information secret for the last three years. The military has a total of 3,750 nuclear warheads, with about 2,000 more retired and awaiting disposal, although the actual number may still be declassified. The number indicates an increase in the stockpile. The number of nuclear weapons increased by 20 warheads between 2018 and 2019. While the increase is unexplained, there are a few theories. Production of the new W76-2 warhead, which began in 2019, might account for the difference. Another reason might be the “return from reserve” of a few warheads, as the government has about 2,050 usable warheads it holds in reserve. The increase is the first ever reported since the end of the Cold War in 1990. — Slate, Feb. 18, 2020; Federation of American Scientists, Oct. 6, 2021; *The Warzone*, Oct. 7, 2021; *Bulletin of Atomic the Scientists*, Nuclear Notebook, Jan. 1, 2020; “Obama Backs Biggest Nuclear Arms Buildup Since Cold War,” *Forbes*, Dec. 15, 2015; “U.S. Ramping Up Major Renewal in Nuclear Arms,” *New York Times*, Sep. 21, 2014

## Congress: Compensate Radiation Exposed

The 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) is set to expire in July of 2022. Public pressure has seen the introduction of HR 5338 and S 2798, which would retain and expand current programs that provide compensation to some nuclear bomb testing downwinders, uranium workers, and atomic veterans. Since many impacted communities were excluded from the current RECA, the expansion includes medical benefits for additional uranium workers and downwinders from a larger geographical area. “We bury our loved ones on a regular basis. Somebody dies and somebody else is diagnosed,” Tina Cordova told Kyodo news. Cordova is a cancer survivor and co-founder of Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, which formed to seek health care coverage for survivors of the 1945 Trinity test and other downwinders. “The health care coverage component will mean the difference between life and death for people,” Cordova added. In the meantime, a down-winder clinic in St. George, Utah is holding public meetings to teach people affected by fallout how to apply for benefits under the current version of RECA before it expires. Don’t let that happen: Tell your representatives to support HR 5338 and S 2798. — Kyodo News, Oct. 31, 2021; St. George News online, Oct. 10, 2021

## World Nuclear Industry Status Report Summary

The conclusion of the 2021 World Nuclear Industry Status Report is that nuclear power is in decline.

The 409-page report reveals that nuclear’s share of global electricity production is falling, having generated 3.9 percent less electricity in 2020 than the previous year. “Nuclear energy’s share of global gross electricity generation continues its slow but steady decline from a peak of 17.5% in 1996 [to] a share of 10.1% in 2020,” the report found. The report also reminds readers that “small modular reactors,” under development in the US, Canada and elsewhere, may never be commercially viable. The data indicate that renewable energy sources are fast becoming more available and increasingly cheaper than nuclear. Even China has slowed its reactor expansion and only increased its nuclear electricity capacity by 2 gigawatts (GW) in 2020, compared to a total of 133 GW from renewables. The world nuclear report also highlights the increasing levels of reported corruption in the nuclear industry, with an entire chapter devoted to the topic. — *Deutsche Welle*, Sep. 28, 2021; *The World Nuclear Industry Status Report 2021*

## Ex Reactor Builder Sentenced for Fraud

A former Chairman and CEO of SCANA Corp. in South Carolina, Kevin Marsh, was sentenced to two years in prison for fraud in the construction of two nuclear reactors that never produced a single watt of electricity. Marsh and other officials knowingly covered up various failings during construction of the “Westinghouse AP1000” reactors at the VC Summer site, in order to win rate increases and to \$2.2 billion in tax credits.

“Due to this fraud,” said acting US attorney M. Rhett DeHart, “an \$11 billion nuclear ghost town, paid for by SCANA investors and customers, now sits vacant in Jenkinsville, South Carolina.” Both SCANA and Westinghouse were forced into

bankruptcy in 2017, and construction at VC Summer was halted, leaving 5,000 workers unemployed. Marsh has paid \$5 million in fines in a plea agreement. This case follows a July 2017 Westinghouse fraud scandal in which Senior VP Jeffrey Benjamin was charged with 16 felonies and could face up to



Some resources noted in this edition

- \* **Beyond Nuclear**, Email: info@beyondnuclear.org; Web: beyondnuclear.org
- \* **Costs of War Project** (401) 863-2809; Web: watson.brown.edu/costsofwar
- \* **Fairewinds Energy Education** (802) 865-9933; Web: fairewinds.org
- \* **Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition**, Web: gullah-geecheenation.com/gullahgeechee-sea-island-coalition
- \* **International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War**, Web: ippnw.org
- \* **Medact UK**, Web: medact.org
- \* **Medical Association for Prevention of War** (Australia), Web: mapw.org.au
- \* **Nonviolent Action to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**, Email: marion.kuepker@gaaa.org; Web: gaaa.org
- \* **Nuclear Ban Treaty Collaborative**, Facebook Group: Nuclear Ban Treaty Days of Action
- \* **Nuclear Issues Study Group**, Web: nuclearenewmexico.com/NISG; Email: protectnewmexico@gmail.com
- \* **Nuclear Watch New Mexico**, Web: nukewatch.org, Email: sophia@nukewatch.org
- \* **Parents vs SSFL**, Web: parentsagainstsfl.com
- \* **Physicians for Social Responsibility**, Web: psr.org
- \* **Physicians for Social Responsibility-LA**, (213) 689-9170; Web: psr-la.org
- \* **Savannah River Site Watch**, (803) 834-3084; Web: srswatch.org
- \* **Southwest Research and Information Center**, (505) 262-1862; Web: sric.org
- \* **Tri-Valley Communities Against a Radioactive Environment**, Email: marylia@trivalleycares.org; Web: trivalleycares.org
- \* **Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium**, Web: trinitydownwinders.com

20 years in prison and a \$5 million fine. Three other Westinghouse officials pleaded guilty to charges. In 2020, federal prosecutors accused Ohio’s Republican House Speaker Larry Householder and four associates of funneling \$60 million in bribes to themselves in exchange for passing a financial bailout of the state’s decrepit old reactors. Power corrupts of course, but nuclear power means corruption on steroids. — US Attorney’s Office, District of South Carolina, Press Release, Oct. 7, 2021; *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Aug. 31, 2021; AP, Aug. 2, 2020

## Mass Destruction for the Whole Family

Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, R-Nebr., introduced a bill October 7 to designate the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum outside Omaha “America’s National Museum of the Cold War.” Two weeks later a federal grand jury indicted Rep. Fortenberry on charges of lying and hiding evidence of illegal campaign contributions. Fortenberry’s bill would add to an extensive national effort to make believe nuclear weapons are quaint and a thing of the past. Fortenberry even said in a statement: “The Strategic Air Command in Bellevue, Nebraska *was* the literal and figurative ‘ground zero’ for thermo-nuclear exchange during the Cold War.” [emphasis added]. StratCom is more ground zero now than during the cold war, when it controlled Air Force weapons, as it now controls the entire US nuclear arsenal including submarine-launched missiles. Nuclear war wildlife or theme parks already operate at the “B Reactor” at Hanford in Washington State; the plutonium machining site in Rocky Flats, Colorado; a closed missile silo near Fargo, North Dakota; a retired ICBM launch control center and missile silo in South Dakota; a Titan Missile site by Tucson, Arizona; a 1,000-person fallout shelter in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia; and a planned “Manhattan Project National Historic Park” inside the Oak Ridge National Lab in Tennessee. — KETV 7, Omaha, Oct. 7, 2021; Politico, Oct. 19, 2021; “Nuclear War Theme Parks,” Counterpunch, Sep. 5, 2015

— *Shorts were compiled by Christine Manwiller, Adrian Monty, Kelly Lundeen, and John LaForge.*

## Roger Franklin, Presente!

We are sorry to note the death at age 93 of our friend, colleague, and supporter, the life-long peace campaigner Roger Franklin, of Gloucester, England, and are grateful to him for leaving Nukewatch a considerable bequest — in British pounds sterling no less.

## NUKEWATCH QUARTERLY



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