

Ten Arrested in Protest at Honeywell Corp. Nuclear Weapons Factory in Kansas City

Fifty anti-war activists from eight states converged on the giant nuclear weapons plant in Kansas City, Missouri Monday, April 15, Tax Day, in a protest against the ongoing production of weapons of mass destruction, and against plans to expand the site — which would double its current size. The early morning demonstration took place at the nuclear weapons production site run by Honeywell. Three people were handcuffed and arrested for entering the construction site, which is being readied for the factory’s expansion, and placing “CRIME SCENE” tape around a giant earth-moving vehicle. Another seven people were arrested after walking through the main gate toward the Honeywell, Inc. complex. All ten were later released with trespass citations ordering them to appear in court in June.

The 1.5-million sq-ft Kansas City facility procures and produces over 80% of the (non-nuclear) mechanical and electronic parts that make up U.S. nuclear weapons. The parts include firing and arming systems, radars and guidance systems, foams, adhesives, reservoirs for tritium, etc.

Known as “Kansas City National Nuclear Security Campus,” an academic euphemism used to disguise the complex’s purpose, its website says the complex “plays an integral part of weapon modernization from concept through design, production, delivery, and lifecycle management.”

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On October 30, 2023, President Biden signed an executive order on the “Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence.” In regard to developing guidelines for AI safety and security in the nuclear sector, it ordered the Secretary of Energy to “develop tools to evaluate AI capabilities to generate outputs that may represent nuclear, nonproliferation, biological, chemical, critical infrastructure, and energy-security threats or hazards” solely for the purposes of “guarding against these threats.”

On December 12, 2023, as per the aforementioned executive order, the DOE launched the Office of Critical and Emerging Technology to coordinate research on AI that could be used in the energy, military, and health sectors. On May 30, 2024, it announced that Vanderbilt University and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, both in Tennessee, will partner to develop dependable AI for U.S. military applications.

In May 2023, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission published the Artificial Intelligence Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2023-2027. It describes how the agency will execute its five strategic goals which include strengthening and expanding AI partnerships. Furthermore, in its policy memo of April 25, 2024, the NRC concluded that “successful internal adoption of AI” will “strengthen the agency’s ability to regulate the use of AI in NRC-regulated activities.” In fiscal year 2025, the NRC plans to invest in acquiring generative AI services and integrating AI with the online public search technology used by the NRC, also known as ADAMS.

In March 2024, the Office of Management and Budget issued its first government-wide policy to mitigate the risks of AI, and recognized, among other things, that the use of AI is presumed to be safety-impacting if used to control the safety-critical functions within nuclear reactors, materials, and waste.

AI is energy intensive. According to the recent analysis by the Electric Power Research Institute, data centers could consume up to 9% of U.S. electricity generation by 2030, more than double the amount currently used. Furthermore, internet queries using AI require approximately ten times the electricity of traditional internet searches. The nuclear energy sector, backed by Silicon Valley billionaires, is aiming to build new reactors to power data centers in order to meet the energy demand of the AI industry. — Oak Ridge National Laboratory, May 30; NBC, March 7, 2024; Department of Energy, Dec. 12, 2023 — *Mari Inoue, is a lawyer and activist based in New York City, born and raised in Tokyo, and co-founder of Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World (mp-nuclear-free.com).*

Every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal is made up of materials that are procured, engineered, or assembled at the site, under contract to the National Nuclear Security Administration. The factory was called “Kansas City Plant” from 1949 until 2014, when the new \$750 million facility replaced its forerunner. “The U.S. has embarked on the largest and most expensive nuclear build-out ever,” according to the December *Scientific American*. This is the 30-year-long, \$1.7 trillion nuclear weapons and infrastructure replacement program launched in September 2014 by then President Barak Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. The *New York Times* reported then, “The administration has told the Pentagon to plan for 12 new [nuclear-armed] missile submarines, up to 100 new [nuclear-armed] bombers, and 400 [nuclear-armed] land-based missiles, either new or refurbished.” Honeywell in Kansas City makes weapons for all this nuclear madness.

“I’m protesting because nuclear weapons are illegal,” said Charles Carney, a protest organizer from Kansas City, Kansas. “And it’s a moral outrage that we are ramping up our death-dealing poison machine, when we should be spending the money on healthcare for our most vulnerable citizens.”

As if weapons giant Honeywell needs corporate welfare, State Rep. Chris Brown, a Kansas City Re-



Jane Stoever of Kansas City and Scot Bohl of Duluth, Minnesota, were detained while placing crime scene tape on earth movers at the expansion site across from Honeywell’s H-bomb factory. Photo by John LaForge

publican, has authored a bill offering an exemption from sales taxes on all materials needed to expand the weapons complex. According to the *Kansas City Star*, Brown’s proposal initially won bipartisan support from Kansas City-area lawmakers and the Missouri House, and the tax give-away was approved by legislators May 17. The *Star* report noted that since moving to the new location in 2014, “the facility has grown from 2,400 employees to more than 7,000.”

Ann Suellentrop, a national board member for the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Physicians for Social Responsibility from Kansas City, and member of Kansas City Peace Works which helped organize the Tax Day protest action, told the *Star*, “We’re going the wrong way. We’re manufacturing our doom.”

The public prosecutor in Kansas City has chosen not to pursue charges against the ten people detained April 15. While all were handcuffed and delivered to a local precinct’s holding cells for several hours, none of the ten were called to court for their appointed arraignment. Sometimes local law enforcement officials object to carrying water for the feds in cases involving controversial federal government programs. With no U.S. district attorney threatening to bring separate charges, the cases appear to be nullified.

— JML

Two More to Prison for Nonviolent Actions at Germany’s Büchel Airbase

By The Nuclear Resister

On Tuesday, June 4, the first ever female U.S. peace activist sentenced to prison in Germany in the 25-year-long campaign demanding the withdrawal of the U.S. nuclear weapons stationed at Germany’s Büchel Air Force base, began her sentence of 229 days, the longest ever imposed in the campaign.

Susan Crane, 80, from Redwood City, California, along with Dutch citizen Susan van der Hijden from Amsterdam, both are serving “substitute” sentences — for nonpayment of financial penalties — at the Wöllstein-Rohrbach prison in Rhineland-Palatinate. Susan van der Hijden was given a 115-day sentence, resulting from Büchel actions in 2018 and 2019.

Crane was convicted September 20, 2021, in Koblenz Regional Court in Germany on six counts of trespass stemming from repeated protests against the nuclear weapons “forward deployed” by the United States at Büchel, 80 miles southeast of Cologne.

A third resister, Gerd Büntzly, a musician and composer from Herford, has been sentenced to 90 days and expects to serve 45. It will be Büntzly’s fifth incarceration for actions at Büchel.

Büchel houses approximately 10-20 U.S. Air Force thermonuclear gravity bombs known as B61s, which have been transferred to Germany in violation of explicit prohibitions set out in the 1970 Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Many of the resisters have argued in their defense at trial that interference with the nuclear air base is “crime prevention” done to uphold and enforce the treaty. Germany’s public prosecutor in Koblenz has objected that even if “nuclear sharing” were illegal, the only relevant facts at trial are related to trespassing and possible damage to fencing, in spite of the

supremacy of international treaty law. Crane was sentenced to either pay 1,150 euros (\$1,119), or serve 229 days in prison. Crane’s appeal to Germany’s Constitutional Court was dismissed without comment.

Crane has worked for decades at the Catholic Worker where she supports people in poverty who are often homeless. She said in a statement, “When I look at Büchel air base, I see nothing but the organization of death ... At the same time, I see the suffering of people around the world who lack basic needs that could be available if our economies weren’t based on war-making.”

Last year, the first ever U.S. citizens sentenced to prison in the long campaign — Dennis DuVall, formerly of Prescott, Arizona, and John LaForge, of Luck, Wisconsin — were incarcerated in Germany for several months each, after they likewise refused to pay fines imposed for Büchel protest convictions.

Beginning May 30, about 30 nuclear weapons opponents from Germany, the U.S., and the Netherlands conducted a five-day solidarity walk with the prison-goers from Büchel to the prison in Rohrbach. Local activists have promised to hold a weekly vigil in front of the prison.

Büchel, and five other NATO air bases hosting U.S. B61s, are currently being upgraded to allow for the arrival of both U.S. F-35 jet fighters, and new nuclear bombs — so-called B61-12s — that are set to be transferred from the U.S. this year or next.

Cards or letters can be sent to: Susan Crane or Susan van der Hijden, JVA Rohrbach, Peter-Caesar-Allee 1, 55597 Wöllstein, Germany