



- **Perspectives**
 - [Preventing War Against Iran by David Krieger](#)
 - [The Nuclear Elephant in the Room: Why No One Talks About the US Nuclear Threat by James Dinwiddie](#)
- **US Nuclear Policy**
 - [DOE Announces New Warhead and Research for Second RRW Design](#)
 - [Pentagon Urged Not to Go Forward with Conventional Trident Replacement](#)
- **Nuclear Proliferation**
 - [North Korea and US Reach Agreement](#)
- **Nuclear Insanity**
 - [Los Alamos Lab Receives Symbolic Fine for Chronic Incompetence](#)
- **Nuclear Testing**
 - [Grassroots Activism Leads to Cancellation of “Divine Strake” Test](#)
- **Iraq War**
 - [UCSB Students Rise Up, Strike Against War and Block Freeway](#)
- **Resources**
 - [Report on RRW Warhead Program](#)
 - [Report on Arms Control and Non-Proliferation](#)
- **Foundation Activities**
 - [Founder of Right Livelihood Awards Visits Santa Barbara](#)
 - [Youth Empowerment Initiative Luncheon](#)
 - [Foundation President to Address the Organization of American States](#)
 - [Foundation Representative to Attend Article VI Forum](#)
 - [NAPF to Help Host ANA Lobby Day](#)
- **Quotes**
 - [Alexander Cockburn](#)
 - [Senator Harry Reid](#)

Perspectives

Preventing War Against Iran

by David Krieger

Why would the Bush administration contemplate a new war against Iran? How would a war against Iran in any conceivable way benefit the United States? There are no clear answers that explain the Bush administration's increased threats toward Iran. Yet, despite the president's statements that he will pursue “robust diplomacy,” the possibility that the United States will launch an attack against Iran cannot be dismissed.

The Bush administration has continued trumpeting the fear that Iran may develop nuclear weapons, a technological possibility because of the uranium enrichment program it is pursuing. This charge, however, is not credible, at least in the near-term. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei reports there is no evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. The CIA indicates that it

would take Iran a decade to develop nuclear weapons, if that were its intention. Thus, the charge that Iran is on the brink of becoming a nuclear weapons state appears farfetched. The charge, and the lack of evidence to support it, is ominously similar to the spurious claims the Bush administration leveled against Iraq as a cause for initiating that war. Read more at www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2007/02/16_kreiger_preventing_war_against_iran.htm

The Nuclear Elephant in the Room: Why No One Talks About the US Nuclear Threat

by James Dinwiddie

The Bush administration has imposed its famous love of secrecy on all matters pertaining to U.S. production, storage, and deployment of nuclear weapons. The American people, whose “security” is asserted as the reason for the enormous U.S. nuclear arsenal, are now prohibited from knowing about the size, content, deployment, or status of this world-threatening arsenal built in their name, even in historic terms.

The imposition of a secretive “security” regime regarding nuclear weapons is nothing new. It has been employed since the beginning of the Nuclear Age to both ensure the unfettered development of nuclear weapons and to silence knowledgeable critics. One only has to regard the history of Robert Oppenheimer's purge from the nuclear establishment, or the sneering persecution of Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling, to understand the current reluctance of scientists and media professionals to speak openly about the threat implied by American nuclear weapons. The nuclear “security” regime is notoriously good at keeping its secrets, oversensitive to criticism, and vindictive towards its critics. Read more at www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2007/02/09_dinwiddie_nuclear_elephant.htm

US Nuclear Policy

DOE Announces New Warhead and Research for Second RRW Design

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the semi-autonomous agency responsible for maintaining the US nuclear arsenal, has announced two important decisions. The NNSA first announced that it is now researching the possibility of a second design for their Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). The NNSA budget document stated, “the [Nuclear Weapons Council] determined that the RRW is to be adopted as the strategy for maintaining a long-term safe, secure and reliable nuclear deterrent and as such also directed the initiation of a conceptual study for an additional RRW design.” The announcement that a second design will be necessary has come as a surprise to many. There was no mention of a second RRW design when the NNSA first proposed the program. A second design suggests that the first RRW will be submarine-based and the second will be used for land.

Congress has not yet approved the production of these new nuclear weapons. However, large amounts of money are already being allocated for this program. In the FY 2008 budget request, the Department of Energy (DOE) increased RRW funding from approximately \$27 million to \$88 million. The Navy is spending approximately \$30 million this year and intends to spend \$725 million over the next five years.

The NNSA also announced their selection of a Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) design for its first RRW warhead, a replacement for the W-76. This warhead is a conservative design for the Trident nuclear attack submarine. The announcement came as a surprise to many, who expected a hybrid of designs from LLNL and Los Alamos National Laboratory to be chosen.

The NNSA has proposed the RRW in order to replace nuclear weapons that are thought to be harder and more costly to maintain. They have also stated that these new designs will not require nuclear testing. There are many non-proliferation experts and congressional offices that are concerned that the development of new nuclear weapons will seriously undermine non-proliferation and disarmament efforts

around the world.

Sources: Lobsenz, George, "NNSA pursuing second RRW design 'concept,'" *Defense Daily*, February 12, 2007.

Hoffman, Ian, "US picks Lawrence Livemore to build first new H-bomb in two decades," *San Mateo County Times*, March 2, 2007.

Pentagon Urged Not to Go Forward with Conventional Trident Replacement

Republicans and Democrats have seriously undermined the Department of Defense's (DOD) plan to use submarine-based Trident missiles for Prompt Global Strike (PGS) missions. At recent meetings with Congressional staffers, DOD was told to find another way to implement PGS.

The PGS program was to replace the nuclear warhead on submarine-based Trident missiles with a conventional warhead. Replacing Trident missiles was a way for DOD to accomplish this task without having to design an entirely new warhead. Many in Congress were concerned that foreign nations would not be able to differentiate between conventional and nuclear warheads being launched from submarines and would have no choice but to assume that any Trident missile launch was a nuclear attack.

Source: Bennett, John T., "Official: Pentagon told to scrap conventional Trident missile concept," *DefenseNews.com*, February 1, 2007.

Nuclear Proliferation

North Korea and US Reach Agreement

After a standoff of almost five years, the United States and North Korea have reached an agreement on taking steps toward the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear production facilities. On Tuesday, 13 February, chief US negotiator Christopher R. Hill and North Korean negotiator Kim Kye-gwan agreed that the US would supply energy aid to North Korea in exchange for shutting down the Yongbyon nuclear facility and allowing inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The US will supply 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil for the Yongbyon reactor. It will provide an additional 950,000 tons of fuel if North Korea declares and disables its nuclear facilities. The total cost of the fuel is estimated at \$320 million.

This agreement represents a breakthrough in negotiations between the two countries. Relations between the North Korean government and the Bush administration have always been poor. In 2002, the US accused Pyongyang of attempting to produce weapons grade plutonium. This accusation led to the collapse of the 1994 agreement between the Clinton Administration and Pyongyang in which the US traded energy for North Korean dismantlement commitments. This was followed by North Korea's withdrawal from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In October 2006, North Korea conducted an underground nuclear weapon test, making an agreement on disarmament seem even less likely.

Many are skeptical whether this deal will hold up. In a conversation between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso, Aso said "This is a first step. Whether it actually goes ahead remains to be seen. We do not know whether it will go ahead just because it has been signed." In 2005, a similar agreement was reached only to have Pyongyang back out after the US Treasury Department suspended certain North Korean bank accounts thought to be linked to money counterfeiting.

Source: "Kim, Jack and Chris Buckley, "North Korea nuclear talks poised for accord," *Reuters*, February 13, 2007.

Nuclear Insanity

Los Alamos Lab Receives Symbolic Fine for Chronic Incompetence

The University of California will not have to pay the massive penalty that federal nuclear safety regulators have issued for recurring safety violations at the Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Lab (LANL).

The \$1.1 million fine was issued for 15 safety violations that occurred in 2005, during the time that UC was running LANL and had nonprofit status and an exemption from civil penalties for safety violations.

This symbolic gesture comes on the heels of a federal hearing looking into problems at LANL. The House Energy and Commerce Committee is calling for an investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO). “The repeated failures to protect national security assets have cast doubt on whether Los Alamos National Security, LLC...and the National Nuclear Security Administration are capable of assuring adequate safety, security and sound business management practices,” U.S. Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) wrote to the GAO. “More dramatic steps are necessary, and we intend to develop and implement a range of options to solve the problems at LANL.” The GAO has been asking to inventory all programs at the lab and their cost; to evaluate how to “reduce and consolidate the volume of classified material and the size of the security footprint at LANL, as a means to make it more manageable, and [to determine] whether it is feasible to move classified activities to other weapons labs where there is a better track record with respect to security”; and to look at how the NNSA evaluates a security track record.

In the past eight years, there have been 12 hearings on security, safety and management problems at Los Alamos.

Sources: Hoffman, Ian, “UC slapped with \$1 million penalty for violations at Los Alamos,” *Inside the Bay Area*, February 26, 2007.

Lenderman, Andy, “Panel may push for removal of secret work,” *The New Mexican*, February 21, 2007.

Nuclear Testing

Grassroots Activism Leads to Cancellation of “Divine Strake” Test

Public outcry in Utah is being credited for stopping the Divine Strake conventional weapons test. On Thursday, 23 February, James Tegnalia, Director of the Pentagon’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency released a statement saying, “I have become convinced that it’s time to look at alternative methods that obviate the need for this type of large-scale test.”

Utah Governor Jon Huntsman stated, “It had everything to do with the voices that spoke out very passionately and emotionally from our state. That absolutely carried the day and that shouldn’t be forgotten by anybody.”

Representative Shelley Berkley (D-NV) also said that Divine Strake’s demise could be attributed to the public voicing their concerns. She also said that the Defense Department did not give her a reason for Divine Strake’s cancellation. “We were never told they were going to do it, and they never told us when they weren’t going to do it; but we sure made their lives miserable in the meantime.”

Originally scheduled for 2 June 2006, Divine Strake was to be the final of a series of conventional weapons tests designed to simulate bunker buster nuclear weapons. Eighty-five miles northwest of Las Vegas, 700 tons of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil were to be detonated, creating a cloud of smoke that could reach 10,000 feet. In 2005, Tegnalia stated, “I don’t want to sound glib here, but it is the first time in Nevada that you’ll see a mushroom cloud over Las Vegas since we stopped testing nuclear weapons.”

In 2006, a lawsuit was filed on behalf of downwinders and Western Shoeshone, which postponed the test indefinitely. There were concerns that dust from the Nevada Test Site, which had been contaminated from decades of nuclear testing, would be kicked up into the atmosphere and threaten the health of communities in Nevada and surrounding states. Divine Strake has cost taxpayers approximately \$26 million.

Iraq War

UCSB Students Rise Up, Strike Against War and Block Freeway

Nearly 1,500 UCSB students, staff, faculty members and local residents participated in a powerful and transformative strike against war on February 15th. The day culminated with a mass sit-in on Highway 217, the main freeway leading to campus, that blocked traffic for roughly two hours, followed by a lock-down of the campus administration building, Cheadle Hall.

The strike was one of 27 coordinated anti-war actions at high school and college campuses across the country. These included walk-outs, rallies, and die-ins, and also four other strikes at Columbia University, Columbia College (Illinois), Sonoma State University, and Occidental College (Los Angeles).

The day of action was timed to mark the fourth anniversary of the largest global protest in history, when up to 15 million people demonstrated against the Iraq War on February 15, 2003. The UCSB strike played out over six main acts: a picket line from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pardall Tunnel entrance to campus; a rally in Isla Vista; a march across campus; the Highway 217 blockade; a march to the campus administration building, Cheadle Hall, to issue a handful of impromptu demands to the campus administration; and a rally at Cheadle Hall.

Among the most common messages expressed during the day were: "Troops Home Now," "Drop Tuition, Not Bombs," and "Ain't No Power Like the Power of the People 'Cuz the Power of the People Don't Stop!"

The strike heralded a dramatic return of the UCSB anti-war movement. "Protest 101 was one of the best classes I've ever taken. By the end of the strike against war, I gained more knowledge in those three and a half hours than I ever had in an entire quarter-long class," one student commented.

Another wrote, "Today was by far one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I witnessed peace, organization, and youth voice in action."

Two people were arrested during the action. CHP officers arrested former UCSB student Jesse Carrieri and UCSB Associate Professor of Women's Studies Mireille Miller-Young for "crossing law-enforcement lines and failing to disperse when ordered to do so." Each was released at around 7 p.m. that evening.

Source: Mackie, Drew, "UCSB students protest war, block Highway 217," *Santa Barbara Independent*, February 15, 2007.

Resources

Report on RRW Warhead Program

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) has recently released a report on the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. This report follows the January CRS report that addressed possible justifications for the RRW program. The most recent report, which was released 8 February, evaluates the possible advantages or disadvantages of the RRW compared to the Life Extension Program (LEP). Also included in the February report is analysis on Congressional action on the RRW and an RRW timeline. Read the report at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL32929.pdf

Report on Arms Control and Non-Proliferation

A report has been recently released by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) documenting the history of arms control. The patchwork of arms control that governs weapons of mass destruction and other arms is complex. The CRS breaks down arms control into three helpful categories: arms control between the United States and states of the former Soviet Union, multilateral nuclear non-proliferation activities, and non-nuclear multilateral endeavors. This is a helpful resource for surveying the broad field of arms control. Read the report at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL33865.pdf

Foundation Activities

Founder of Right Livelihood Awards Delivers 6th Annual Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future

Jakob von Uexkull, a former member of the European Parliament, recently delivered the 6th Annual Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future in Santa Barbara, California. The lecture series, a project of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, honors Frank K. Kelly, a founder and Senior Vice President of the Foundation.

The title of von Uexkull's Kelly Lecture is "Globalization: Values, Responsibility and Global Justice." It will be posted on the Foundation's www.wagingpeace.org website. A DVD of the talk will also be available from the Foundation. Previous Kelly Lectures on Humanity's Future by Frank K. Kelly, Richard Falk, Anita Roddick, Robert Jay Lifton and Mairead Maguire can also be found at the www.wagingpeace.org website.

For additional reading, see

www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2007/02/23_kreiger_Jacob_von_Uexkull_speaks.htm

Youth Empowerment Initiative Luncheon

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Youth Empowerment Initiative is holding an information luncheon Friday, March 9th at 12 p.m. During the event, we will air the recently-completed "Think Outside the Bomb" documentary, which focuses on our efforts to create a national network of young people working on nuclear disarmament and environmental justice. There will be a brief slideshow regarding the Youth Initiative's various other projects. Afterward, we will hold an open discussion regarding the challenges and importance of engaging young people in our work to create a nuclear weapons-free world, as well as discuss specific ideas related to upcoming Youth Initiative programs and events.

Now more than six years old, the Youth Empowerment Initiative aims to provide young people with the skills and tools they need to be effective advocates for nuclear disarmament in their own communities, as well as in national and international forums. I'm sure you agree that there has rarely been a more critical time for an effort of this kind, and we strongly value your feedback regarding its work.

For more information on the Youth Empowerment Initiative, visit www.wagingpeace.org/youth or call its Director, Will Parrish, at (805) 965-3443.

Foundation President to Address the Organization of American States

On 15 March, Foundation President David Krieger will speak to the Organization of American States in Washington, DC. Dr. Krieger will speak on the subject of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the treaty establishing 33 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean as a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone. He will speak to the need for a worldwide ban on nuclear weapons beginning with reaffirming the 13 Practical Steps for Nuclear Disarmament laid out at the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

Foundation Representative to Attend Article VI Forum

On 29-30 March, Foundation New York Representative Alice Slater will participate in the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) Article VI forum in Vienna, Austria. Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty obligates current nuclear weapons states to pursue in good faith negotiations for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. MPI is a network of eight prominent international non-governmental organizations that work with “middle power” governments to take practical steps to reduce the nuclear threat and eliminate nuclear weapons.

NAPF to Help Host ANA Lobby Day

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, a national network of organizations of which the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is a part, will be hosting its 19th Annual DC Days to be held in Washington, DC on April 22-25, 2007. The event will include four days of training, advocacy and community-building on issues related to nuclear policy and the nuclear weapons complex. This year’s theme is “Clean Up the Complex, Don’t Build the Bombplex: No New Nukes!” Congress will be asked to cut funding for the misguided Complex 2030 in favor of spending more money on cleaning up the environmental damage caused by nuclear weapons production. To receive more information, email the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation’s Washington, DC Office Director, Nickolas Roth, at nroth@napf.org.

Quotes

“It is worth comparing Rumsfeld’s behavior in the COG [Continuity of Government] games with his performance in a real war...The casual, maybe even irresponsible decisions taken in that war [Iraq], reflect attitudes and reactions better suited to an elaborate game, from which real-life costs and consequences are excluded...[Rumsfeld] always tried to unleash the maximum amount of nuclear firepower possible.”

-- Excerpted from a new book titled, *Rumsfeld: His Rise, Fall, and Catastrophic Legacy*, by Alexander Cockburn

“I think we should be grateful that it was canceled. It could have been the safest thing in the world, [but] they did nothing to alleviate the fears of the people of Nevada.”

-- Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) about the Divine Strake test

Editorial Team

- Nickolas Roth
- Andrew Culp
- David Krieger

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