

Failure to Disarm @ Livermore Lab

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Today, we gather outside this fence on this somber memorial to stand in solidarity with thousands of others around the world to remember the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The only time atom bombs were used in war, 69 years ago today in Hiroshima and 69 years ago from Saturday in Nagasaki, we are here to say “**Never Again.**”

We also stand in solidarity with the countless other Hibakusha, or victims of nuclear weapons, including those in the Marshall Islands, “downwinders” of the Nevada Test Site and other nuclear testing grounds, and the thousands of nuclear weapons workers who have been made ill by on the job exposures at places like right here at Livermore lab. For them, we are here to say, “No More Nukes!”

But, as we stand here today, more than 5000 people are going to work on the other side of these fences and gates, some work to maintain these tools of mass murder, while others are developing a new generation of nuclear weapons. They manage to spend nearly a billion of our tax-payer dollars right here on these pursuits every year!

Our theme today is failure to disarm – here is proof right behind these gates, every day, of our own country’s failure to disarm.

And this billion dollars spent per year at Livermore is just a portion of the overall fund devoted to these nuclear nightmares each year. The nuclear weapons complex of which Livermore is a part of sucks up 2 million tax payer dollars each hour, and by 2030 that amount is projected to double to \$4 million, that is, if the weapons hawks currently running the show get their way.

The plan is not only to refurbish all of the weapons in our stockpile, but to also build a new fleet of submarines, bombers and ICBMs to deliver those weapons. Some of which wont be ready for use for 10-15 years, or more. Adjusted for inflation we are spending more on nuclear weapons than we did at the height of the cold war, which has supposedly been over now for 23 years.

The saying goes “put your money where your mouth is.” Well, according to our money, our country’s mouth is saying that “We commit our children to another generation of excessive nuclear arsenals and the horrors they represent.”

I mention money, because people often ask me why we are still developing nuclear weapons. While politics is part of it, I have learned that the main reason is because of money. Sandia National Lab, which is managed by Lockheed Martin, has a magazine in which they recently touted their staffs efforts in Washington, DC to "help" decision-makers prioritize the new Long Range Stand Off Nuclear Cruise Missile, which Sandia will massively profit from. And Livermore is doing the studies for this new warhead. And the executives and stockholders at Lockheed and Livermore's management consortium, which includes, Bechtel, Babcock and Wilcox and Batelle corp, are running all the way to the bank.

Livermore Lab also continues to request funding to do plutonium experiments in its biggest program, the \$8 billion boondoggle that is the National Ignition Facility. We are proud to say, that thanks to the advocacy of TVC, our Senator Dianne Feinstein, prevented funding for these experiments for the time being. The Lab has to answer some serious questions before these proliferation provocative experiments can take place and we will continue to challenge them along the way.

You may also remember hearing of Livermore Lab's proposal to cart plutonium bomb cores from Los Alamos to Livermore up to six times a year to do tests on them here in building 334. We are proud to say that we have collected over 6000 signatures saying NO to this plan and we have brought these to congress. So far, there no funding has been allocated for this proposal and again we will continue to challenge it.

The impact of this escalating investment into nuclear weapons won't just be felt by the wallets of every American and those in other countries who are similarly "Modernizing" their stockpiles to keep up with us. The impacts will be felt in the form of more accidents, spills and leaks in nuclear weapons facilities and the communities that house them. It will be felt by the environment that continues to be short changed in so many ways, including the clean up of the very mess the development of these weapons has wrought. The clean up of contaminated groundwater under this lab at the current rate is estimated to take another 70 years.

Workers will also be impacted. I facilitate a Support Group for Sick Workers from LLNL and Sandia Ca who have been made ill by on the job exposure. They have aggressive cancers, mysterious skin ailments, lung conditions like beryllium disease and asbestosis, all from working on these weapons. Several of my clients are now homeless due to medical expenses. Nationally, over 100,000 nuclear weapons workers, or their survivors have filed compensation claims. (2500 from LLNL and Sandia CA). These are people who were told their jobs are safe, and who often were told to cover up accidents, spills and mistakes.

Additionally, the oppressively secret atmosphere at these facilities persists for even the high level workers. Just last week it came to light that Non proliferation specialist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, James Doyle, was fired for writing a piece in an international journal called “Why Eliminate Nuclear Weapons.” His article talked about the myth of deterrence and the need for disarmament. Despite the articles basic reiteration of president Obama’s own policies, Doyle, believes the sudden firing was part of a National Nuclear Security Administration Headquarters-inspired campaign of retribution for his refusal to stay on message and support the lab’s central mission, namely its continued development and production of nuclear arms. Top lab and Energy Department officials have responded to the case by urging that all writing by their employees on topics related to their work be subjected to pre-publication review, even when written on their own time.

This kind of censorship of our federal employees is not only dangerous, but in the immortal words of John Oliver who spoke on his show last week about the dangers of our enormous nuclear arsenal, “it’s weapons grade bull shit.”

A couple of miles down the road, in downtown Livermore, in a small office, Marylia Kelley and I come to work every day to speak truth to the power wielded in this community from behind this fence, to increase the transparency of this super secret weapons lab, to organize the peaceful together to show there is no consensus here (or anywhere) for these weapons, to ensure the environment in this community is protected as much as possible and that the toxic and radioactive mess created here over the decades is cleaned up to the highest standard of the law. To assist workers in getting justice for their on the job acquired illnesses. And to serve as a beacon of sanity amidst this nuclear darkness.

It is an honor and a privilege to work for Tri-Valley CAREs. We are blessed with a venerable executive director, Marylia Kelley, we have an amazing volunteer board, super duper interns, and committed volunteers. We have a table with more information or you can go to our website, www.trivalleycares.org.

Huge thanks to all the groups that organized this event this year and thanks for inviting me to share my thoughts. Finally thanks to all of you for showing up here to say “Never Again.” peace