

RETIRING THE BOMB- GATHERING AT LIVERMORE LAB TO STOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS

by Scott Yundt

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Thank you and Good morning! I'm Scott Yundt, the Staff Attorney at Tri-Valley CAREs, which stands for Communities Against a Radioactive Environment. Many of you know us -- we are the Livermore-based watchdog group that monitors activities at Livermore Lab. Since 1983 we have worked hard each day to stop nuclear weapons in our community, the US and the world. We also work to make the Lab clean up the terrible toxic and radioactive mess created by the weapons work done behind this fence.

You know, seeing all of you out here today, standing with us and demonstrating your opposition to the nuclear bomb programs done behind these gates and on this ground reinvigorates this work and I want to express my deepest gratitude to you for making it out here this morning.

I also want to quickly acknowledge the efforts of the committee that worked so hard to bring this event together and I want to give my sincerest appreciation to Tri-Valley CAREs Executive Director Marylia Kelley, who works tirelessly for this cause, to our summer legal interns, Nick and Jordan who brought tons of energy and smarts to the office this summer, and our graphic design intern Chloe who painted this beautiful banner behind me and designed the event poster. And to all of our committed volunteers without whom we could not continue to carry out this work. So a huge thanks to all of you.

As Mr. Tanemori detailed, on August 6, 1945, a nuclear bomb was unleashed in war and dropped on the civilian population of Hiroshima, Japan -- and the world was changed. On this solemn occasion - the 65th anniversary of the day our government dropped that bomb, we gather together- here -- at the Livermore nuclear weapons design laboratory to say ENOUGH! The time is now to retire these bombs, retire this nuclear weapons complex, and retire these weapons around the world.

In 1952, Livermore Lab opened its doors. It is one of the two locations where every U.S. nuclear weapon has been developed. (the other being LANL in NM) It is referred to as the most sophisticated nuclear weapons R&D facility in the world. (Pause) Thus, it is deeply meaningful that we are here, together to remember the victims of nuclear weapons and war and holds the U.S. government accountable for the future as well as the past.

So, what does our future hold?

In our second year of President Obama's Administration, we find ourselves travelling down two roads, simultaneously, and in opposite directions, towards two very different futures.

One path is paved by the president's words in Prague, where he declared, "clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons".

The other path is paved by the administration's "new" Nuclear Posture, which fails to significantly change the Bush Doctrine of how we threaten to use our nuclear forces in the world, and paves the way to "modernizing" our nuclear weapons complex.

These two paths also lead to very different futures for this ground, and for the work done behind these gates.

On the path towards a brighter future there are 3 recent developments of note

- First, President Obama and Russian President Medvedev signed New START (short for Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) "creating measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms." This treaty commits both countries to reductions in the numbers of deployed strategic nuclear weapons from 2200 to 1550. But, while this is a modest step in the right direction, it still awaits ratification in the US Senate and the Republicans are holding the treaty hostage in exchange for increased funding for the nuclear weapons complex
- Second, in June, at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, participants unanimously adopted a resolution calling on the Senate to ratify the NEW START agreement and to do so without adding billions to the nuclear weapons budget. Specifically, the Mayors resolution calls on Congress to slash funding for nuclear weapons to well below Cold War levels and redirect funds to meet the urgent needs of cities, who stand to lose the most from the use of a nuclear weapon.
- And Third, in May, the Non-proliferation Treaty review conference took place in New York. The participating countries, which includes the US, agreed on a Final Document that expresses the unanimous intent to seek the abolition of nuclear weapons

We can applaud these efforts that point to a future where there is hope and where this facilities nuclear weapons work comes to an end. However, the other path we are travelling down is one that leads us toward a continued nuclear future without any end in sight. This path is paved by the administrations new favorite nuclear weapons euphemism- "Modernization"

To Modernize the weapons complex the administration authorized the largest nuclear weapons budget ever for FY2011. Its 14% larger than last year, larger than the average budget for nuclear weapons during the cold war, even when adjusted for inflation. Modernization includes building 3 new bomb plants, one at Los Alamos to enable more plu pits, one at Oak Ridge, Tenn for new Uranium secondaries and one in Kansas City, for other nuclear weapons components.

Together, these new facilities will give us the capacity to build up to **80** entirely new nuclear weapons per year and cost **\$80 billion** over the next ten years. Moreover, add to this \$80 billion \$100 more to modernize the arsenal itself and you have \$180 billion for new nukes and bomb plants

We must speak out against this increase in funding. Otherwise, it would demonstrate to the world that the US foresees no end in sight for its nuclear weapons development and that the US does not intend to actually abide by the intent behind the Non Proliferation Treaty.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the lab directors advocate for this new weapons funding. So, let me tell you about three dangerous weapons programs @ Livermore Lab and how they look through these “modernization goggles.”

First is the lab’s favorite pet project, the National Ignition Facility or NIF. This facility lies just out there, in a giant building that houses 192 lasers that can be fired into a target chamber at microscopic radioactive isotope targets. The NIF program has now received more than 15 years of time and \$6 billion of our tax money, despite having little to show for it.

85% of its budget is for experiments that help Livermore weapons designers create new and modified nuclear weapons technology. Though they tout the facility as being for energy, that goal only takes up less than 15% of the funding.

“Modernization” for NIF means continued and expanded funding for the long term.

Next is the High Explosives Applications Facility or HEAF. The Lab plans to capitalize on the “Modernization” funding bandwagon to get HEAF expanded. This facility will enable scientists to research new and novel High Explosives for new bomb designs.

Third is the lab’s Biowarfare research facilities. We continue to monitor the expansion of LLNL’s biowarfare research facilities. It continues to be the only facility in the US that is co-located within a nuclear weapon R&D facility. Its scientists aerosolize and genetically modify virulent pathogens like plague and anthrax and do experiments on small animals. Tri-Valley CAREs sued the government in federal court over the environmental and potential human health impacts of these expanded facilities and we are currently awaiting a decision. If we win, the lab will have to conduct a more thorough environmental review and hold public hearings. If we lose, you can expect more and more money for extremely dangerous experiments.

On these and more issues surrounding this site, Tri-Valley CARES will keep you posted via our website, and our newsletter CW, which you can sign up to receive for free at our table over there if you don’t receive it already.

Talking about the work being done at Livermore Lab and in our nuclear weapons complex can overwhelm even the most scientifically inclined among us. So I want to ask

us all to stop for a moment and try to absorb what this work means to us deep down, on a moral level.

We are familiar with the images of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima 65 years ago, and they are horrible, but that weapon was only the first stage, or "trigger," for the much more devastating power of today's hydrogen bombs. To consider what the devastation caused by today's weapons might be like is almost inconceivable. And that these weapons are developed here, on this land, in this community has serious moral implications.

So, I ask you to think about it as we go to the gates today.

For, I am certain that we owe this to the victims of Hiroshima-- to stop the use of another nuclear bomb before it happens. To stop developing these Weapons of Nuclear Destruction.

Together we can make a positive difference. We have had successes. Together, we convinced Congress in the past to terminate funding for other nuclear weapons increases. Together we have shut down incinerators and stopped other bad projects here. Together, we can make meaningful change.

I want to end by quoting Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima who stated in his Peace Declaration from yesterday

“Now is the time to devote ourselves unreservedly to the most crucial duty facing the human family, to give the *hibakusha*, within their lifetimes, the nuclear-weapon-free world that will make them blissfully exclaim, “I’m so happy I lived to see this day.”

May we all live to see that day. Thanks again for being here.