

## **“Why We Gather Today at the Livermore Lab”**

*Delivered by Tara Dorabji, former outreach director and current board member at Tri-Valley CAREs, on August 5, 2012 at “Foreclose on the Bomb, Not the People”*

How many of you are coming out for the first time to a protest at the Livermore nuclear weapons lab? Anyone been here for over 30 years? 10 years? Welcome, everyone.

We are joining today with hundreds of thousands of people around the world who are gathering to remember the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan by the United States government. We are part of the people worldwide who are calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons; we are saying, “Never Again.”

We gather here in Livermore because every nuclear weapon in the US nuclear arsenal was designed by a University of California employee at the Livermore and Los Alamos National Labs.

We gather in Livermore today to foreclose on the nuclear bomb. We know that many Americans have lost their homes to foreclosure and millions of people are in need of financial help. Yet our government is scheduled to spend hundreds of billions of dollars over the next decade for new nuclear bomb plants to create newly modified nuclear weapons for the U.S. arsenal. We have “life extension programs” for maintaining our nuclear warheads into the future, but many Americans don’t have access to basic health care. We want universal health care for people not bombs.

Today, we remember all who have suffered and died in the nuclear chain – from uranium mining to designing to testing nuclear weapons to their production and use in warfare.

We gather here in Livermore because, in its routine operations, the Livermore Lab has released more than one million curies of airborne radiation, roughly equivalent to the amount deposited by the U.S. bomb on the people of Hiroshima. Of course this is a different beast; it is not the type of death that you see explode at once in the sky, it is silent, invisible and seeping out over time, but still sickening and killing people.

According to a National Academy of Sciences report on ionizing radiation, there is no safe level of radiation exposure. Any amount can cause damage. The National Academy of Sciences also found that female infants are the most vulnerable to cancer risk from radiation exposure. A male infant has 3-4 times the cancer risk of an adult man. Female infants have almost double the risk of male infants.

We don't know exactly how many sicknesses and premature deaths have been caused by the radiation released by Livermore Lab and other sites in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. But we do know from statistical analyses done by Dr. Gofman and others that here in Livermore alone there are scores of lives that have been cut short. One study by the California Dept. of Health found that children born in Livermore are 6 times more likely to develop malignant melanoma than other children living in Alameda County.

We understand that the Livermore nuclear weapons lab is one of Alameda County's top employers. But, we also know that the price some lab employees pay for their work is with their life. There are more than 1,600 former and current Livermore Lab employees who have filed for compensation for their illnesses or for the death of their loved ones caused by on the job exposures.

We are also here today because President Obama has requested the largest nuclear weapons activities budget in U.S. history. Adjusted for inflation, the current budget request is for more money than we spent for the same activities during the Cold War.

We are here, today, in the center of the nuclear weapons complex, Because of the 1.1 billion dollar budget for Livermore Lab, 88% of it goes directly to nuclear weapons activities.

We are here to say, “no more.” We are here because this system is not working. We are here because too many have already died. We are here because behind this institution are smart, well-meaning people whose skills are serving violence, not life. We are here because even in *this* community, with the atomic symbol at the center of its city seal, there is no consensus for nuclear weapons work in Livermore. We are here because we will not be silenced by fear or apathy.

We are here because the end of nuclear weapons on this earth has a beginning. And while that beginning may be hard to see, we are all a part of it. Though we may not see the fruits of our labor in the near-term, we are here today to sow the seeds of nuclear disarmament.

We are here today because our belief in the dignity of life is stronger than the technology that is created to destroy it.

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