



# W.A.M.M. NEWSLETTER

Women Against Military Madness

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Women Against Military Madness

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## Ecocide in Palestine/GAZA

by Carol Masters

The U.S.-supported military occupation in Israel has a devastating effect on the Palestinian people, but it also causes radical changes in the natural world.

This is evident in the desertification of parts of the Jordan Valley in the West Bank. It's the outcome of Israel's intentional policy to create a constant, artificial shortage of water for Palestinians.

Indigenous people have traditionally acted as stewards of the land on which they depend for their livelihoods. Bedouin shepherds grazed their flocks of sheep in this region. However, Israel controls all the water sources and diverts most of them to Israelis. The natural water sources and vegetation

the Bedouin need have been rapidly disappearing, along with more and more of the land usurped by Israelis for building settlements and by the Israeli Defense Force commanding it for military firing ranges.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported on "settler expansion and the imposed restrictions on natural water sources." Mahdi Daraghmeh, a member of the Bedouin community of Wahdi Al-Maleh recalled to the ICRC that "there were 11 springs in the past and most of them dried up."

"Our biggest problem is water. We watch every drop and save it for our flock, which cannot survive for a minute without water. If we don't do laundry, and don't shower, and don't wash dishes, we'll get sick because of bacteria and rodents," says Yusef Bsharat from the village of Khallet Makhul.<sup>1</sup>

In another and very different part of Palestine, the genocidal bombardment of the densely-populated Gaza Strip caused 85% of the population to flee from the north to the south or be subject to further attack. 1.7 million Palestinian people were displaced – many of them forced to crowd together, eventually in Rafah (population 275,000) near the Egyptian border. Weakened from exhaustion,



Not only are people dying of starvation, dehydration, disease, injury, sniper fire, drone and bomb attacks, but Gaza's natural and cultural environments are destroyed.

*Ecocide, continued on page 2*



# NEWSLETTER

The statements and opinions reflected in this newsletter are the views of the author and not necessarily official positions of WAMM. We encourage a diversity of opinion to represent the range of perspectives that coexist under the banner of WAMM's mission statement.

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### Women Against Military Madness

(WAMM) is a member-based organization whose mission is to oppose U.S. militarism and involvement in wars. WAMM challenges systems of harm, oppression and exploitation, and helps build movements of solidarity with others for peace and justice through education and action.

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## Ecocide, *continued from page 1*

starvation, dehydration, injury, and assaulted in additional attacks, disease began to spread among the traumatized population.

Israel's assault on Gaza, using U.S.-supplied weapons, constitutes a hurtle toward ecocide.<sup>2</sup> Stop Ecocide International defines ecocide as "broadly understood to mean mass damage and destruction of ecosystems – severe harm to nature which is widespread and long term." Further, the organization's panel of independent law experts proposes that ecocide be categorized as a war crime: "unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts."<sup>3</sup>

Mazin Qumsiyeh, founder and director of the Palestine Museum of Natural History and the Palestine University of Biodiversity and Sustainability at Bethlehem University, working in the fields of genetics and biology in the U.S. and in most recent decades in Palestine, has a concern for sociologic, humanitarian applications. He says that "in nature, when a forest is dominated by one species, it is a forest in decline." He explains how in natural systems, at high levels of disturbance such as frequent forest fires or effects like *deforestation*, all species are at risk of going extinct. The beauty of humanity is its diversity: the horror of genocide happens when peoples think somehow they are "better" than other cultures and attempt to destroy diversity.<sup>4</sup>

The environment is being destroyed at a slightly slower pace in the West Bank, but in Gaza, it will be difficult to sustain life at all in Gaza.

The very air for those trapped in Gaza has become unbreathable. As Israel's

assaults continued in February, in addition to "the pollution caused by Israel's weapons [read: U.S. weapons], the air in Gaza has been fouled by the widespread burning of wood and other material" in the streets, for displaced people to keep warm and to cook what little food is still available.<sup>5</sup> Nasreen Tamimi, the head of the Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority, says, "The environmental impact of the war on Gaza is catastrophic" and that "the martyrs' bodies under rubble, hazardous medical waste, the shutdown of treatment and desalination plants have all contributed to the current crisis . . ."<sup>6</sup>

By destroying essential infrastructure, Israel has targeted the environment. Most water supplies in Gaza are pumped from a coastal aquifer, which had become undrinkable because of outdated and damaged infrastructure. Without Gaza's water and sewage treatment facilities – and with airstrikes ongoing – sewage is flowing into the Mediterranean, with dire consequences.

A recent report by Human Rights Watch documents the use of white phosphorus in military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, severely damaging to the ecosystem. And since many Gazans depend on fishing as a source of food and income, contaminated waterways impact the water, the fish, and people's health and livelihoods. Agricultural land, a source of food, also becomes contaminated.

According to the report, "The military detritus will continue to live in the soil, the earth, the sea and the bodies of the Palestinians living in Gaza – just as it does in other postwar contexts such as Iraq."<sup>7</sup> Thanks in part to pressure from the U.S. and its militarism establishment, the climate consequences of war and occupation are underreported and poorly understood.

*Ecocide, continued on page 3*

## Ecocide,

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## Climate Change

The Eastern Mediterranean is already among the world's regions most vulnerable to climate change, which does not recognize borders. Managing climate change will be especially hard for Palestine, where Israeli policy has effectively engineered elevated vulnerability. Israel and Palestine are part of the Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot – but Gaza is in a far weaker position than ever before.

Climate crisis is a reality worldwide but the genocide on Gaza is exacerbating the global climate emergency. Besides the immediate human suffering, according to Nina Lakhani, the climate reporter for *The Guardian*, a study showed that the climate cost of the first 60 days of Israel's military attacks is equivalent to burning at least 150,000 tons of coal. She wrote this "includes CO2 from aircraft missions, tanks and fuel from other vehicles, as well as emissions generated by making and exploding the bombs, artillery and rockets." Almost half the total CO2 emissions were from U.S. cargo planes flying military supplies to Israel. As it was only possible for scientists to take a limited amount of samples, Lakhani estimates that the damage would probably have been much greater than found in the original reports. As of this writing, many more days have passed, so the damage would be even greater.<sup>8</sup>

Environmental injustice in one locale can affect the whole world. Annexing the Jordan Valley and building beachfront villas in Gaza on ethnically-cleansed land may be the dream of some, but ecocide renders it an uninhabitable nightmare for anyone. The sustainability of nature and the beauty of humanity is in its diversity, as Mazin Qumsiyeh says.

*Carol Masters is a member of the WAMM Newsletter Committee and a long-time WAMM member. Mary Beaudoin contributed to this article.*

### ACTION:

Join the weekly Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine. Every Friday 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the corner of Summit and Snelling Avenues, St. Paul. For more information: 612-827-5364

### Endnotes

- 1 Parched: Israel's Policy of Water Deprivation in the West Bank. B'Tselem: the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. May 23, 2023. [tinyurl.com/bdet72su](https://tinyurl.com/bdet72su)
- 2 Shuker, Zeinab. War Has Poisoned Gaza's Land and Water. Peace Will Require Environmental Justice. Century International. Century Foundation. December 19, 2023. [tinyurl.com/ye2bxu77](https://tinyurl.com/ye2bxu77)
- 3 Stop Ecocide International [stopecocide.earth](https://stopecocide.earth)
- 4 Mazin Quimseyeh delivered these remarks at: Under the Gun in Palestine: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Resistance. Live stream presentation from War Industry Resisters and Massachusetts Peace Action. January 18, 2024. Available for viewing on YouTube. [tinyurl.com/bz34mzft](https://tinyurl.com/bz34mzft) Accessed February 15, 2024.
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- 6 Sulaiman, Mohammed. Rivers of sewage, dirty water and toxic air. The environmental disaster unfolding in Gaza." EuroNews Green. [euronews.green](https://euronews.green) Dec. 21, 2023. [tinyurl.com/345whhwr](https://tinyurl.com/345whhwr)
- 7 Israel: White Phosphorus Used in Gaza, Lebanon. Human Rights Watch. [hrw.org](https://hrw.org). October 12, 2023. [tinyurl.com/y7sf4w4w](https://tinyurl.com/y7sf4w4w)
- 8 Lakhani, Nina, Emissions from Israel's war in Gaza have immense effect. *The Guardian*. January 19, 2024. January 9, 2024. [tinyurl.com/mrx6w473](https://tinyurl.com/mrx6w473)

### Additional resource:

#### Popular Resistance Blogspot

Frequent reports, news, actions, and more from Dr. Mazin Quimseyeh in Bethlehem. Visit the site, subscribe to receive by email. <https://popular-resistance.blogspot.com>

*"This is my beautiful Gaza, my beautiful street. Not only is there famine in Gaza, but sewage water is everywhere, which is increasing the spread of diseases!" – posted by Dalloul Neder, Feb. 27, 2024*



## WAMM Committees

### Action Groups:

- End Domestic Militarism
- End Military Madness Against the Earth
- End War Middle East
- St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers

### Movies

- Solidarity Committee on the Americas

- Tackling Torture at the Top

### Standing Committees:

- Coordinating
- Finance
- Fundraising
- Membership/Outreach
- Newsletter
- Personnel
- Program/New Issues

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# U.S. Cities Resolve to End Genocide!

by Kim DeFranco and Sarah Martin.

*This is what democracy looks like:  
The power of the government comes  
from the consent of the governed.*

Since October 7, 2024, the world has watched in horror as the government of Israel and the IDF continue relentless carpet bombing and murdering Palestinians in Gaza.

In response, people across the United States have been demanding that their city councils pass ceasefire resolutions including an end to the military aid to Israel. Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Atlanta, Detroit, Portland, St. Louis, Austin, and Oakland are among the more than 70 cities that passed resolutions, as of February 2.<sup>1</sup>

Even though city councils can't make foreign policy, these resolutions bring pressure on policy makers at the federal level. Most importantly, community members are demanding that their city council go on record on the right side of history by opposing this genocide.

U.S. foreign policy issues are connected to our cities for reasons which affect their overall health and wellbeing. For our Muslim and Jewish neighbors, hate crimes are rising across the country. We want *all* our neighbors to be safe.

Another way that foreign policy connects to local issues is in residents' contributions to the federal budget. The U.S. government sends \$3,800,000,000 to Israel annually for weapons that are used to terrorize the Palestinian people, while at this time *even more* is being requested from Congress to fund this genocidal war.

## The State of Minnesota and Municipalities

Altogether, federal taxes that Minnesotans pay for Israel which it uses against the Palestinian people: \$65,219,237.<sup>2</sup>

The indigenous Minnesota community of Red Lake, in what it calls "a powerful statement of solidarity" with the indigenous population of Palestine, passed a resolution that not only calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, but also calls for the Palestinian Right of Return, a rejection of a two-state solution in favor of Palestine's self-determination, and no more funding for Israel. Resolutions for a ceasefire are pending in the city councils of Brooklyn Park, Northfield, and Moorhead. The city councils of Hastings, Columbia Heights, and Minneapolis have passed resolutions.

## Minneapolis City Council: You Made Us Proud!

In the city of Minneapolis alone, residents pay altogether an average of \$6,674,042<sup>3</sup> each year for Israel. Residents could only imagine how much the city could benefit if this money were used instead for public housing, healthcare for children, additional elementary-school teachers, or other items contributing to health and wellbeing in the city.

When it became clear shortly after October 7 that Israel was going to wage an unprecedented brutal genocidal war and ethnic cleansing of Gaza, the Free Palestine Coalition began a campaign to gain the support of at least nine Minneapolis City Council members for a veto-proof majority of a ceasefire resolution. To build this support,

*End Genocide!, continued on page 5*



*Inside St. Paul's City Council Chambers, people say it's a local issue; demand that the council pass a resolution to end genocide. Photo: Kim DeFranco*

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## End Genocide!,

*continued from page 4*

the coalition organized several call-in days to the council and people flooded their phones and computers with messages to pass the resolution. Rallies of hundreds of people were held and when the resolution came up for a vote, they packed three council meetings.

The council passed a resolution, which Mayor Frey then vetoed. The coalition continued to keep up the pressure and chanted at a rally of 400 in a show of popular support, “‘Ceasefire,’ say it loud! City Council, make us proud!”

On February 8, the 13-member council overrode the mayor’s veto by voting 9 to 3 in favor, and Minneapolis passed a strong, progressive resolution to set a bar for subsequent cities to reach. Within the resolution, the four “Be it Resolved” items are: 1) Advance a full, immediate, and permanent ceasefire, along with urgently needed humanitarian aid as a necessary step towards lasting peace. 2) Support an end to U.S. military funding to the State of Israel, and an end to U.S. tax dollars contributing to humanitarian catastrophe and loss of life. 3) Ensure the release of all Israeli hostages taken by Hamas. 4) Ensure the release of thousands of Palestinians held indefinitely without cause and trial in Israeli military prisons.

The crowd was elated and after leaving the chambers held an impromptu rally in the lobby. They celebrated, and the chant, “‘Ceasefire,’ say it loud! City Council made us proud!” rang out and filled the building.

## St. Paul City Council: Help Us Stop This Genocide!

With the Minneapolis ceasefire resolution on Gaza passing, the Free Palestine Coalition initiated a campaign to pass a similar strong resolution on the other side of the Mississippi River. Women Against Military Madness joined this coalition, along with other social justice and peace organizations. St. Paul constituents were highly encouraged about getting a resolution since the newly elected city council is comprised of a diverse group of young women of Asian, East Asian, Middle Eastern, African-American, and Jewish heritage who claim to be progressive.

The campaign began with a call-in to the council members and was followed by a rally on February 6th. Then ceasefire supporters packed city council meetings on February 7th and 14th. On the 21st of February, St. Paul residents and supporters were losing patience with the City Council’s refusal to hear a resolution. Lamenting that 1,500 Palestinians had been killed since the previous council meeting, they filled the council chambers, holding signs calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire resolution. One constituent held up a color photo of a young Palestinian child, his body horrifically burned by white phosphorous – the kind of image of carnage, aided and abetted by the U.S. government with taxpayer dollars, that people are seeing in media daily.

St. Paul residents pay a total of \$4,372,249<sup>4</sup> in tax dollars to Israel each year.

Several council members are said to be in favor of a ceasefire but did not stand with the people. Council President Mitra Jalali stated that she is sympathetic but unable hear

a resolution for procedural reasons. She then introduced a business-as-usual resolution on the agenda for funding the Como Zoo. Ignored by the council, people came to the podium and spoke of how taxpayer money could be used for the benefit not only of the zoo but also for other needs in St. Paul rather than genocide in Gaza. When Jalali said she would not allow more comments such as those, the crowd broke out in chants: “We want a vote!” and “City Council, you can’t hide! Help us stop this genocide!” Council members left the room, and the meeting was shut down. Only Ward 6 Council member Nelsie Yang, who is outspoken in solidarity and firmly in support of a resolution, remained; she joined the rally of ceasefire advocates outside City Hall.

On February 28, at the end of the council meeting, Yang attempted to call for a public hearing to allow comments on a written ceasefire resolution, but the meeting was abruptly adjourned.

As of this writing, there has not been a ceasefire. The campaign will keep the pressure up until the resolution is passed.

*Sarah Martin and Kim DeFranco are members of the WAMM Middle East Committee, which is part of the Free Palestine Coalition.*

### Endnotes

1 Reuters: U.S. city councils increasingly call for Israel-Gaza ceasefire, analysis shows.

2 US Campaign for Palestinians Rights [uscpr.org](http://uscpr.org)

3 Ibid 2

4 Ibid 2

# Modernizing Nuclear War

by Joel Weisberg

**The danger of nuclear weapons has not gone away. If anything, it's worse than it was at the height of the Cold War.**

The term nuclear “modernization” is actually a euphemism and fig leaf for significantly upgrading weapons with the frightening idea of fighting and winning a nuclear war. It also brings with it the attendant dangers of deploying the new weapons. This article focuses on the U.S., because much more information is available and also because its announced modernization plans are much more grandiose, though the other great powers, Russia and China, are engaged in competing, if smaller, modernization plans.

First, in order to have some sense of the size of this project, it is crucial to note that the U.S. plans to spend over 1.5 trillion dollars (which is more than one-million million dollars!) on this effort in the next decade or so, not to mention the ongoing maintenance costs running far into the future. Not surprisingly, cost estimates for much of the planned modernization have already escalated tremendously in the last several years. Anti-war activists will shudder at the waste of resources that these sums represent, not to mention the horror that will ensue if even a fraction of available nuclear weapons (whether current ones or “modernized” replacements) are ever used – e.g., the soot from burning cities and forests, even from a “limited” nuclear war, would block the sun for a long period, leading to loss of crops, starvation, and mass death, in what is called a “nuclear winter.”<sup>1</sup> According to a 2022 study by Lili Xia, et al in the scientific journal *Nature Food*, a



*Dr. Strangelove is still with us in a new generation of the masters of war. (Photo: Peter Sellers in Stanley Kubrick's 1964 Cold War film. Columbia Pictures.)*

“limited” nuclear war involving a “mere” 100 Hiroshima – or Nagasaki-sized weapons is estimated to cause 255 million people to have no food two years after the war. Note that a single U.S. missile submarine, of the 12 at sea at any given time, carries approximately this much explosive energy in its onboard nuclear weapons as it cruises the world’s waterways.<sup>2</sup>

Fatalities from the direct causes, alone, in a limited nuclear war would be 27 million people and would themselves be more catastrophic to life on earth than any event since the dinosaur-killing asteroid impact about 65 million years ago.

In the worst-case scenario – a war using most of the nuclear weapons of the U.S. and Russia, 360 million people would die from direct causes and about five billion would be starving at the two-year mark. The full arsenal of China would

cause proportionately smaller (yet still devastating) consequences, since its nuclear cache is much smaller than those of the two nuclear superpowers.

Even as we recoil from these thoughts, we need to assume what’s in the minds of professional nuclear war planners for the purpose of understanding their rationales. Some U.S. nuclear analysts claim that the mere existence of U.S. nuclear forces deters other nations from attacking. The chilling and absurd claim that these weapons can actually be used for fighting and winning a nuclear war is another rationale less well known to the public. According to this logic, the “modernization” of nuclear weapons systems will render them more effective and deadly.

What are the components of the modernization program? There are four: the three means of delivering

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nuclear bombs: from land, sea, and air, which the U.S. Department of Defense refers to as the “Nuclear Triad.” And then there are the nuclear bombs themselves. The estimated size of each category for the U.S., Russia, and China is listed in the “Deployed” table at the end of this article.

### The Delivery Systems of the Nuclear Triad

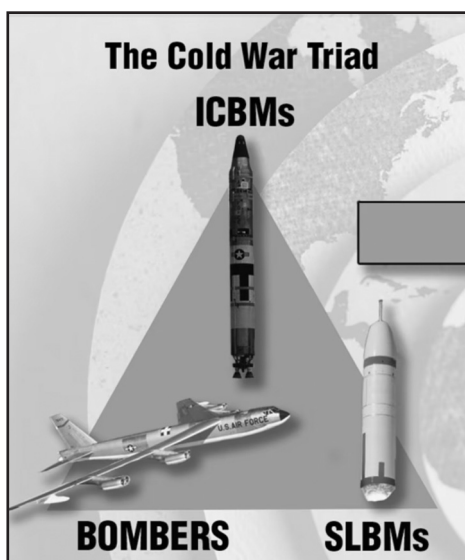
- **from land: Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)**

ICBMs are rockets that can travel from one continent to another in less than an hour, carrying from one to a dozen or so individual nuclear warheads, each of which can be aimed at a different target.

They are housed in underground, concrete-lined “silos,” which should prevent their destruction in war unless they suffer a nuclear bomb hit on or above a silo. Unfortunately, a direct hit is exactly what can happen. Recent advances in targeting accuracy permit ICBMs to land and detonate right atop their adversary’s silos and the missiles harbored inside them.

This development renders them vulnerable to destruction in a surprise attack, only a few minutes after it would be initiated. It puts great pressure on the military commanders in charge of these weapons to launch them immediately upon the warning of an attack and before they are absolutely sure that it is real. (Once launched, they would be safe from the attack.) Such policies, aptly called “Launch on Warning,” place the whole world at risk of nuclear destruction due to accident or miscalculation.

Furthermore, because it’s possible to wipe out an enemy’s ICBMs in their silos before they can be used, their bases become principal targets of an aggressor nation. The U.S. component of 400 ICBMs and their silos is located in Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, Montana and North Dakota, so one of the consequences of an attack upon them would be the creation of **catastrophic quantities of deadly radioactive fallout drifting – depending on the direction the wind is blowing – toward the upper Midwest, including Minnesota.**



*Image: Defense Logistics Agency*

A December 2023 *Scientific American* article indicates that more than a million Americans would die shortly after an all-out Russian attack on these silos alone, mostly from fallout-induced radiation sickness. Only the comparatively sparse population density of the upper Midwest – in contrast to the rest of the United States – would prevent a much higher toll.

Most experts agree that the current force of 400 U.S. Minuteman III ICBMs will remain potent for decades and can remain so for additional decades if modest maintenance measures are implemented.

Yet many billions of dollars are slated to be spent to replace them with a new set of ICBMs, called “Sentinels.”

What a colossal waste, to replace well-functioning devices with an expensive new generation, even if one were to grant the necessity of their existence at all! Nevertheless, the program keeps barreling on not least because all senators from states hosting missiles are strong supporters of the Sentinel program and have even formed an unofficial “ICBM Coalition” to lobby for it. Apparently, they are more interested in the limited number of jobs generated by the ICBM than in avoiding having their home states act as “nuclear sponges” in the event of war!

In contrast, more sober nuclear weapons analysts suggest that the best solution to the problem of ICBM vulnerability to attack is simply to eliminate them, and to rely solely on the other two means of nuclear weapons delivery. See the “Deployed” table at the end of this article: the large numbers of weapons in the other two categories suggest that more than enough would still exist to satisfy the “need” to deter opponents’ attacks. These other two categories are:

- **by sea: Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs)**

SLBMs are similar to ICBMs, except that their basing in submarines allows them to have shorter ranges (since a submarine can sneak close to the opponent’s shores), and to be smaller in size (to fit into a submarine’s cramped quarters). The great advantage of SLBMs is that submarines are hard to detect and attack, so their missiles need not be launched quickly in order to avoid destruction upon

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## Modernizing,

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(possibly faulty) warning of attack. This gives the crew of the submarine precious time to evaluate the reality of the supposed attack. In this fashion, they are considered a more reliable mode of nuclear weapons delivery than ICBMs are. SLBMs and their hosting submarines are also slated for “modernization” and replacement.

### • by air: Bombers

Bombers, not unlike airliners, are relatively slow and vulnerable to attack over their opponent’s territory. But they, like SLBMs, need not release their warheads immediately, which gives commanders a chance to assess the reality of a possible attack before the bombs are used. A new generation of bomber, the B-21 Raider, is in the works.

### The Bomb

Modern nuclear warheads, which the new delivery systems will be hosting, release far more energy than did the original bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those WWII bombs were powered by splitting the heavy

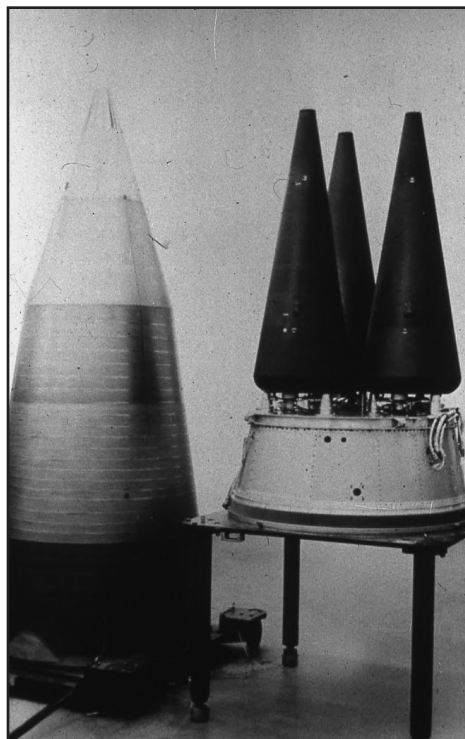
*A set of three Minuteman III ICBM nuclear warheads, each of which is nestled inside its own cone-shaped housing. Note for scale the coffee table-like structure underneath them. The whole structure was housed atop a single missile (its nosecone pictured on left), and each warhead was aimed at a separate target. Image is from the Nuclear Weapons Graphics Project, created by Mike Casper and managed by WAMM member Nancy Casper.*

*Since 2014, as a result of arms control (New START), every U.S. ICBM was limited to carrying only a single warhead, each with explosive energy equal to that of about 20 Hiroshima bombs.*

nuclei of uranium or plutonium. (This is what’s referred to as the “splitting of the atom” powering those types of nuclear bombs, which are therefore sometimes called “A-bombs.”)

In contrast, today’s modern nuclear bombs generate most of their energy by ramming together the nuclei of light elements such as hydrogen. For those who watched the recent movie, *Oppenheimer*, this bomb was called the “H-bomb” or the “Super,” and it was Oppenheimer’s opposition to its being built that led to his downfall and the loss of his security clearance. He and some other weapons scientists believed that H-bombs were so powerful that they would lead literally to overkill: meaning that one H-bomb could kill many more people or destroy most military targets many times over.

A modern H-bomb actually requires that a fission bomb (A-bomb) be exploded first in order to trigger the much more powerful fusion reaction. Indeed the fission bomb that initiates the fusion reaction is called a “trigger,”



“pit” or “core,” whose active part is usually a grapefruit-sized sphere of plutonium. (Yes, the guts of a highly destructive modern nuclear fusion bomb are roughly the size of a grapefruit! The entirety of the modern warhead is about the size of a child and yet has the explosive energy of about 20 Hiroshima or Nagasaki bombs.)

There is some concern that the plutonium core will degrade over the course of decades, thereby perhaps not being effective enough to trigger the H-bomb, or at least not as well as planned.

There is much disagreement among experts as to whether or not this plutonium “aging” process is significant enough to render some fraction of the H-bombs inoperable, but those committed to the “finest” possible weapons do not wish to take any chances. As a result, hundreds of billions of dollars will be spent on creating new plutonium cores, primarily in factories at Savannah River, Georgia, and Los Alamos, New Mexico (where the very first plutonium bombs were built). Both facilities are currently decrepit, so tremendous costs will be incurred to renovate them.

Sadly, although the New Mexico and Georgia Senators all range from fairly to very progressive, potential jobs seem once again to trump everything else. Therefore, all of these senators are vociferous supporters of the plutonium factories in their home states. Apparently, these senators have been captured by economic arguments and interests, much as the (mostly right-wing) ICBM Senate Coalition has been.

Another significant factor is the influence of defense contractors

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who lobby members of Congress, many of whom sit on key committees positioned to make decisions about modernizing weapons. In advance of the 2024 federal defense budget (the NDAA, or National Defense Authorization Act), \$70 million was spent lobbying senators and representatives of both parties, and from states throughout the U.S.<sup>3</sup>

With factors like these, is it any wonder that the immense costs of the planned modernization of the four principal components of the strategic nuclear weapons program are a staggering 1.5 trillion? Even if one accepts the need for nuclear weapons (which many of us do not), the upgrades are unnecessary. For at least one category, (ICBMs), its total elimination would provide more security than

would an upgrade. In our efforts to see a world without any nuclear weapons, we activists need to do all we can to prevent the waste and enhanced dangers associated with the planned modernization.

Note that even the four components of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles described in this article are not the whole story. There is also an immense military infrastructure supporting these devices, including, for example, spy satellites, missile, and satellite interceptors. (In the next issue of *Women Against Military Madness Newsletter*: a look at one element that has been in the media recently – the newly revealed Russian space technology that is making people agog.)

*Joel Weisberg is the Stark Professor Emeritus of Physics and Astronomy and the Natural Sciences, Carleton College.*

## Endnotes

- 1 For further information, see “Nuclear Winter, the Other Climate Catastrophe,” by Mark Bird. *Women Against Military Madness Newsletter*. Fall II, 2022.
- 2 Specifically, a single typical U.S. missile-carrying submarine can launch about 80 independently targetable nuclear weapons on its missiles, each one having explosive energies ranging from one-half up to thirty Hiroshimas. Source: References cited under the “Deployed” table at the end of this article.
- 3 Schumer, Max. Defense Contractors spent \$70 million lobbying ahead of the annual defense budget bill. *Open Secrets*. October 20, 2023. [tinyurl.com/bdtnaknc](https://tinyurl.com/bdtnaknc)

## Deployed\* U.S., Russian, and Chinese strategic (long-range) delivery vehicles and warheads

	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and warheads deployed	Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles and warheads (SLBMs) deployed	Intercontinental Bombers and warheads deployed
U.S.	400 and 400	240 and 1000	50 and 300
Russia	321 and 834	176 and 640	55 and 200
China	142 and 240	72 and 72	474 and 410

\*Large numbers of most categories are also held in reserve and are not counted here. Totals do not include “tactical” (short-range) delivery vehicles or warheads. Source: U.S., Russian, and Chinese “Nuclear Notebooks,” 2023, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, authors Hans M. Kristensen, Matt Korda, and Eliana Johns.

# Scared of the Bear? A New Russian Nuclear Weapon in Orbit Soon?

by Joel Weisberg

Perhaps you have read recent reports in the media about a possible new Russian weapon, with a mission to destroy U.S. satellites and perhaps using an orbiting nuclear bomb to do so. Some say it will be placed in orbit in a year or so.

Many military and civilian activities are dependent on satellites, so if these reports are correct, one could imagine serious effects on our

economy, our military, and even our everyday activities. The mere placement of such a weapon in orbit would mark a major escalation of the nuclear arms race and violate the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

However, I find many reasons to be skeptical of these reports. First, why would Russians use a nuclear bomb when they already have demonstrated the capability to

shoot down satellites with non-nuclear interceptors (as have the U.S, China, and India)? Those alternate types of weapons would have many advantages over an anti-satellite weapon that uses a nuclear bomb and would not violate a major arms-control treaty. Such a system could be built, but my biggest question is, "why bother?" (More about this in the next newsletter.)

## Nuclear Waste Threatens Mississippi River

Nuclear power is the cousin of nuclear war and carries its own dangers. Is Xcel Energy's nuclear reactor in Monticello, Minnesota endangering our drinking water and health?

Xcel Energy has applied to run its old Monticello nuclear reactor in Minnesota until 2050, when it would be 80 years old. Please join Nukewatch in doing something fast and easy to help protect the

water we all depend on. The Monticello reactor lies on the banks of the Mississippi River only 200 miles from its headwaters – a major source of drinking water downstream including the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul and many more. It threatens accidental radiation releases, like the recent, 829,000-gallon leak of radioactive tritium wastewater which may have reached the Mississippi River.

### URGENT ACTION:

**What Can You Do? Make Your Comment Before March 30.** Add your voice to say "no way! I will not stand by while Xcel poisons our water!" Make your comments and find information on the license extension application at [nukewatchinfo.org/monticello](http://nukewatchinfo.org/monticello)

~ Kelly Lundeen, Nukewatch

## For the love of GAZA!

Become a WAMM member and show your support for the Palestinian people. **\$20 special** for new and lapsed members.

### WAMM Membership

- \$15–39 Low Income/Student membership
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Email \_\_\_\_\_  Add me to the WAMM email list

Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Make checks payable to WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407

## WAMM Calendar

Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other groups' events is not meant to convey or endorse any action contrary to public policy that would be inconsistent with exempt purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), i.e., charitable purposes.

### WAMM Ongoing Peace/Justice Vigils

#### *Pipeline Blues Vigil (Stop Line 3)*

Every Monday, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., outside MN Governor's Mansion, 1006 Summit Ave., St. Paul. Co-sponsored by WAMM and Veterans for Peace Chapter 27. FFI: 612-827-5364.

#### *Vigil to End War*

Every Wednesday. Please note time change: 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge. Signs available and brief circle up for announcements after on St. Paul side. Sponsored by WAMM End War Committee. FFI: 612-827-5364.

#### **SAVE THE DATE!**

Wednesday, April 17  
25th Anniversary

#### *Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine*

Every Friday, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., corner of Summit Avenue and Snelling Avenue, St. Paul. Sponsored by WAMM Middle East Committee. FFI: 612-827-5364.

### Immigrant Solidarity Vigils

**Every Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.**  
Vigil at the ICE entrance on 6000 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis. (Not far from Bishop Whipple Building where Immigration Court is held.) Park at the Ft. Snelling commuter light-rail parking lot. Sponsored by WAMM. Call Pepper at 612-701-6963.

**Second Tuesday of every month, 7:30 a.m.**  
Vigil at 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, (Minneapolis/St. Paul), 55111, outside the Bishop Whipple Building, where Immigration Court is held for five-state area. Prayer, song, courtwatch. Sponsored by Minnesota Interfaith Coalition on Immigration. FFI: mnicom.org

### WAMM Action Groups

**Board Meeting**  
Third Tuesday of every month, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. + hybrid Zoom. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**End Domestic Militarism**  
Times/Dates pending. Updates at facebook.com/WAMMEDM. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**End Military Madness Against the Earth**  
Time/dates pending. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**End War**  
First Monday of every month via Zoom, 6:30 p.m. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**Middle East**  
Second and fourth Monday of every month via Zoom, 9:30 a.m. FFI: 612-827-5364.

**St. Joan of Arc WAMM Peacemakers**  
Fourth Tuesday of every month via Zoom, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. FFI: Call Bill 612-926-8459.

**Solidarity Committee on the Americas (SCOTA)**  
Every Friday via Zoom, 10:00 a.m. FFI: 612-827-5364.

### WAMM Ongoing Events

**WAMM Monthly Movie:**  
Please note: second Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. (entrance on 42nd Street). Projected on big screen. Free admission. All are welcome. Discussions follow film. Masks and social distancing by choice.

#### **“Union Maids” Monday, March 11**

An oral history, using a wealth of footage from the National Archives to chronicle the fight to form industrial unions as seen through the eyes of rank and file women. These three union organizers of the early depression era discuss and reminisce their actions of the time.

### Special Events

**2024 National Lawyers Guild Social Justice Dinner: “Defending the People’s Movements – From George Floyd Square, to the Gichi Ziibi, to Palestine”**

Saturday March 30, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., Walker Community Church, 3104 16th Ave. S., Minneapolis 55407. Keynote Speaker: Huwaida Arraf, Palestinian-American activist and lawyer; co-founder of International Solidarity Movement. Community Justice Awards.

**WAMM 2024 Annual Meeting**  
March 23, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Walker Community Church, 3104 16th Ave. S., Minneapolis. Free and open to the public! Our program this year will include a light breakfast at 9:30 a.m. followed by guest speakers from American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), and our Annual Business Meeting to elect/re-elect Board members. Come to the Annual Meeting to visit action group tables, catch up with old friends and make new friends! See back page for more info.

**UNAC Conference**  
April 5-7 at the Intercontinental Hotel, 11 East Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul  
The United National Antiwar Coalition national conference will be in St Paul this spring. WAMM will be participating and we encourage you to join us. Registration info: <https://unacconference2024.org/registration>

**Correction: “We Are Not Numbers”**  
from WAMM Newsletter Winter II 2023: Please note, with deep apologies for the mistake, the correct spelling of two of the “We Are Not Numbers” writers killed in the genocide of Gaza ([wearenotnumbers.org](http://wearenotnumbers.org)):  
Mahmoud Alnaoua is: Mahmoud Alnaouq  
Mohammed Zaher is: Mohammed Zaher Hamo

### FOR NEW ACTIONS

Check the calendar on the WAMM website:

**WomenAgainstMilitaryMadness.org**, Women Against Military Madness FB, and social media, or call the WAMM office: 612-827-5364



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**FREE ASSANGE!**  
*Revealing war crimes  
is not a crime!*

## **WAMM ANNUAL MEETING 2024**

**Saturday, March 23**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Walker Community Church,  
3104 16th Ave. S., Minneapolis**

- 9:00 a.m. – Light Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. – Program “Two Voices”  
Mariam El-Khatib from  
American Muslims for Palestine MN  
Rabbi Jessica Rosenberg from  
Jewish Voice for Peace
- 11:30 a.m. – Business Meeting  
*(Hear our lively Annual Report set to music!)*

## **UNAC CONFERENCE**

***Decolonization and the  
Fight Against Imperialism***

**Friday, April 5 - Sunday, April 7**

**Intercontinental Hotel,  
11 East Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul**

The United National Antiwar Coalition national conference will be held in St Paul. WAMM will be participating and we encourage you to join us.

**Registration info:**

<https://unacconference2024.org/registration>