

SILENT VIGIL FOR PEACE

In front of Borough Hall Monday nights from 5:30-6:30. This vigil is silent and peaceful in the Quaker tradition. Feel free to join us.

Where are the Weapons of Mass Destruction?

U.S. Stockpiles

The United States currently possesses 5,400 warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles, 1,750 nuclear bombs and cruise missiles ready to be launched from B-2 and B-52 bombers, 1,670 'tactical' nuclear weapons and another 10,000 warheads in bunkers around the country. Up to 2,000 of these warheads are available for launch in time periods ranging from minutes to weeks.

Contrary to its commitment under the NPT to "an unequivocal undertaking" toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, the U.S. announced in its 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) that it will maintain thousands of these nuclear warheads well into the middle of this century. Further, the NPR blurs distinctions between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons - reserves the right of the U.S. to use nuclear weapons not only in retaliation against nuclear attack, but also to deter attacks with chemical or biological weapons, or to destroy facilities suspected of producing them.

U.S. Research and Development

The U.S. has announced its intention to 'modernize' its nuclear forces by adding new types of warheads that will eventually require a resumption of nuclear testing. These new weapons will likely include warheads capable of attacking submarines and underground bunkers.

The U.S. is also currently developing a ballistic defence system that will put nuclear and non-nuclear weapons in space, giving the U.S. what planners describe as "full-spectrum dominance of land, sea, air and space."

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Relevant Treaties:

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC):

The United States rejected a draft protocol to the BWC negotiated by BWC states parties to create transparency and verification mechanisms. Instead, the United States seeks only voluntary measures that will not provide sufficient information on facilities and agents that could be diverted for use in bioweapons. Meanwhile, the United States has conducted biodefense programs that may violate the BWC prohibition against developing biological weapons, though in the absence of transparency mechanisms there is no way for third parties to determine that. Although these activities were undertaken in the name of defense, the United States would not rely on another country's assurances that its bioweapons were created for defensive purposes. (source: Institute for Energy and Environmental Research)

U.S. Stockpiles

The U.S. military has been conducting a covert biological weapons program for decades. While they claim that their programs are defensive, extensive evidence suggests otherwise. For example, the U.S. has produced dried and weaponsized anthrax spores. The official purpose of this program was for testing U.S. bio-defences, but far more spores were allegedly produced than necessary for such purposes and it is unclear whether they have been destroyed or simply stored. U.S. bioweapons labs also work with botulism and genetically engineered bacteria that break down plastics, rubber, and metals.

U.S. Research and Development

According to a paper written by respected British and American scientists and published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in January 2003, the U.S. is attempting to develop biological cluster bombs (cluster bombs designed to disperse biological weapons) and that they are researching possibility of genetically engineering a new strain of antibiotic-resistant anthrax. This research and development undermines and possibly violates the Biological Weapons Convention.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Relevant Treaties

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC):

The United States limited its compliance with the declaration and inspection regime of the CWC. It narrowed the facilities open to inspection, prohibited removal of samples, and conferred on the president the right to refuse inspections for national security reasons. The CWC does not permit these limitations, and already contains thorough safeguards for the protection of confidential information. The limitations may prevent accurate results, and other states are applying them to inspections of their facilities. The United States recently led changes in management of the body charged with implementing the CWC, expressing a desire to strengthen CWC operations. (source: Institute for Energy and Environmental Research)

U.S. Stockpiles

The U.S. possesses tens of thousands of tons of chemical warfare agents including lethal nerve and blister agents. These agents are contained in bombs, cartridges, projectiles, landmines, spray tanks, and one ton drums.

U.S. Research and Development

The U.S. is currently working on a new generation of 'non-lethal' chemical weapons. These include agents which render people unconscious like the gas Russian forces used to break the Moscow theatre siege. 20% of the people exposed to this so-called 'non-lethal' weapon died. While these weapons are called non-lethal (defined as killing one percent or less of those exposed), they can cause permanent neurological damage. US Department of Defence Directive 3000.3 states that non-lethal weapons "shall not be required to have zero probability of producing fatalities or permanent injuries." Other documents describe that non-lethal weapons "may be used to enhance the effectiveness of lethal weapons." The U.S. is also developing long-range military delivery devices for these chemicals, including an 81mm chemical mortar round. The development of both the chemical agents and the delivery devices runs contrary to the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

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