



Sacramento Area Peace Action Newsletter

January
2022

Working to end U.S. militarism since 1983

909 12th St, Suite 118, Sacramento, CA 95814 916-448-7157 www.sacpeace.org

Nuclear Weapons Are Now Illegal!

*By Lawrence S. Wittner
(edited by Mario Galván)*

January 22nd of this year marks the first anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This momentous international agreement, the result of a lengthy struggle by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and by many non-nuclear nations, bans the developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, and threatening to use nuclear weapons. Adopted by an overwhelming vote at a UN conference in July 2017, the treaty was subsequently signed by 86 nations. It received the required 50 national ratifications by late October 2020, and, on January 22, 2021, became international law.

Sadly, the US and the world's other nuclear powers are refusing to honor the treaty. The US, Britain, and France actually issued a statement declaring that they would never ratify the treaty. Even so, the treaty has acquired considerable momentum. An additional nine nations have ratified it, and dozens more are expected to ratify it in the near future. Furthermore, Norway and Germany, both members of NATO, have broken with the U.S. government's opposition, and will attend the first meeting of the countries that are parties to it.

In the U.S., most of the media haven't even mentioned the treaty, so it remains a well-kept secret. Even so, a 2019 YouGov poll showed

support still outweighed opposition by 49 to 32 percent. And when the US Conference of Mayors, representing 1,400 US cities, met in August 2021, they unanimously approved a resolution praising the treaty.

Despite this, the nuclear powers have accelerated their nuclear arms race. In the process of "modernization," they're building new weapons of increased accuracy and efficiency. These include hypersonic missiles, which travel at five times the speed of sound. The US has begun a massive project to refurbish its nuclear production facilities, enhance existing nuclear weapons, and build new ones, at a cost estimated to ultimately top \$1.5 trillion.

This arms race is particularly dangerous at a time of rising conflict between the U.S., Russia, and China. And what will happen when nuclear-armed India and Pakistan fight yet another war, or when nuclear-armed national leaders like Kim Jong-un and a possibly re-elected Donald Trump start trading insults again?

In this context, the most promising course of action for people interested in human survival might well lie in a popular mobilization to compel the nuclear nations to accept the treaty, and, more broadly, for their governments to accept a restrained role in a cooperatively-governed world.

*Dr. Lawrence Wittner, Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany, is the author of **Confronting the Bomb** (Stanford University Press).*

Attention All Members! Here it comes!

Our Annual Member Meeting & Board of Directors Election!

This is our most important meeting, and not only of this year! We elect our Board of Directors every two years, on even numbered years, so this is the most important meeting of the next two years! Please mark you calendars, and reserve this date and time slot:

Saturday, January 22nd from 4:00 to 5:00 pm!

Like most other meetings in the time of COVID, this will be an online Zoom call. Members will receive an invitation; *please register in advance!* On the 22nd, you can join either by computer (it helps to have Zoom installed in advance) or by phone. The invitation will include the link to the online call, as well as several phone numbers that can be used to join the call.

Celebrating the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons!

The date for this meeting was chosen to honor the first anniversary of the date on which this historic treaty became International Law! The meeting will open with a brief talk on the importance of this event, and the challenges that still remain.

Ever since the first use of nuclear weapons against Japan in World War II, which showed that a single bomb could destroy an entire city, people around the world have reacted in horror to the vast and indiscriminate destruction unleashed by nuclear weapons. Even some of the scientists who had helped to create them began to question what they had done. Though organized protests began as early as the 1950's, a continuing nuclear arms race, including the development of missiles that can deliver these bombs anywhere in the world in just a few minutes, has brought us to a point where all of human civilization as we know it could be destroyed in less than one hour. This treaty is the first international legal step toward reversing this incredibly dangerous course, and to step back from the brink of disaster.

The Board Election

Another first, again due to COVID, is that the voting for this election will be by mail-in ballots, which will be sent out to all members. During the meeting, each candidate will have a few minutes to introduce themselves in person. Members will then have one week to return their ballots. Members will receive an announcement of the results, including vote counts. Once in office, the new board will elect their board officers, and get to work!

An Open Mic Session

(Time permitting!)

There are few opportunities these days to share our thoughts in a public forum, so we want to open the floor to the membership. There is no set agenda or theme, only the desire to give everyone who wishes to speak the opportunity to do so, on the subject of their choice. Of course, time will have to be limited, depending on how many are in attendance. If you do choose to speak, please be concise and to the point, so that others may also have a chance to speak.

Though the formal meeting will conclude at 5:00 pm, those that wish to continue this open conversation will be welcome to stay on.

Two Deadly Decades

January 11, 2022 marks the 20th anniversary of “enemy combatants” being imprisoned at the military prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Hundreds of people, mostly Muslim men, have been held there. This amount of prisoners is Too many for more than a decade. A couple of prisoners were as young as 12 years of age when they were first imprisoned. Not a single person has been convicted. 39 “detainees” remain at Guantanamo. At current capacity, the annual cost per detainee is about \$13 million per year, about 1/2 billion U.S. tax dollars per year.)

Recently, on August 30 last year, the US military left Afghanistan, the videos of those days taking us back 50 years to the pullout from Vietnam.

The Taliban, in power on 9/11 (2001), is in power again over Afghanistan. Because it is regarded as a “terrorist” organization, Afghan money is being held in US banks and there are all manner of restrictions on aid monies.

So, on top of everything else, international aid experts warn that the Afghans face a humanitarian catastrophe: mass starvation and freezing to death. And, although they are not all in Afghanistan, there are twice as many “terrorist” organizations today as in 2001.

Within days after 9/11 (2001), the U.S. government passed two defining pieces of legislation: the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and the Patriot Act.

The AUMF, which became law on 9/18 (in 2001?), gave the president carte blanche to make war on anyone, anytime and anywhere. The world is the battlefield and President George W. Bush warned: “we will hunt you

down.” (In the U.S. House of Representatives, Representative Barbara Lee was the lone NO vote in opposition to sending U.S. forces to Afghanistan.)

The Patriot Act became law on 9/26 (in 2001?). This law resulted in mass surveillance of people identified as Muslims from majority Muslim countries. In addition, secret lists were created of names of people identified as “bad persons”, and names of persons who might intend to “become bad”. There were mass roundups and deportations of Muslims. FBI sting operations resulted in the incarceration of not very bright (naive, rather than saying “not very bright?) folks who went along with dumb plots introduced to them by FBI plants. In the Senate, Senator Russ Feingold was the lone NO vote on passing the Patriot Act.)

On 10/07, short weeks after 9/11, the “shock and awe” bombing on Afghanistan began. All along, politicians, think tank talking heads, generals, and retired generals now working for weapons manufacturers or cable channel consultants, all assured us things were going well.

And not just Afghanistan was impacted by the U.S. War on terror - unsure what links these other events or nations have to the U.S. war on terror in Afghanistan. Iraq. “Arab Spring.” Libya. Refugees moving into Jordan. Into Syria. And Lebanon. Turkey. Drownings in the Mediterranean. Sure, enlistee suicides of U.S. soldiers exceeded battlefield deaths. Sure

Here is the end result of the U.S. War on terror: \$6 trillion. More than a million U.S. soldiers? Afghans? dead. Tens of millions of refugees have been displaced by two decades of fighting by the U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan.

January Peace Events

Go to sacpeace.org for *hot links* to all events below!

THU January 20 @ 4:30 pm Film Screening: Naila and the Uprising

The film is an inspiring and educational documentary about the key role of women in the nonviolent Palestinian struggle for self determination. The screening and discussion is being coordinated between Just Vision and the DSA BDS & Palestine Solidarity Working Group. Join at 4:30 to watch the film, or watch on your own, and join at 6:00 pm for the discussion. Fill out the form at bit.ly/mdcnaila... Read More »

THU January 20 @ 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm Palestine Rights Vigil

Third Thursday Vigil for Palestinian rights. 16th & J, Sacramento . Those participating are asked to follow CDC guidelines and wear a mask and maintain social distance if not fully vaccinated. End U.S. aid to Israel. & Boycott companies aiding Israel's abuses. FMI: 916-448-7157.

FRI 21 - January 17 - January 22 Events this week commemorating the anniversary of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Click here for calendar: Events - ICAN (icanw.org) January 22 will mark the first anniversary of entry-into-force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW prohibits the possession, development, testing, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons for the 59 countries that have so far ratified it. Groups around the... Read More »

SAT January 22 @ 9:00 am Film screening: The Law in These Part

The film chronicles Israel's 43-year military legal system in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The story unfolds through interviews with the architects of this legal system juxtaposed with historical footage showing the enactment of these laws upon the Palestinian population. FMI: info@palestinemuseum.us Please click here for more information and... Read More »

SAT January 22 @ 2:00 pm District Attorney Candidate Forum on Youth and

Immigration District Attorney Candidate forum covering a series of questions on legal issues facing our youth and immigrant communities. Register at <https://bit.ly/SACDAFORUM>
Confirmed candidates: Alana Mathews and Thien Ho Moderated by Sonseeahray Tonsall
Candidate forum is being organized by the following organizations: Sacramento ACT, ACLU Foundation of Northern California, CAIR Sacramento Valley/Central California, Justice 2 Jobs... Read More »

THU January 27 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Mountain Lions in California – from North to South, and One Researcher's Journey to Help Conserve Them

Webinar hosted by Mountain Lion Foundation. Register here FMI: info@mountainlion.org

THU January 27 @ 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm Stop Wars Weekly Vigil

16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.