OREPA newsletter
OAK RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE ALLIANCE

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NNSA Announces New Bomb Plant for Oak Ridge—it’s official!

INSIDE: 3 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO STOP THE NEW BOMB PLANT

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New bomb plant announced—but it ain’t over

It’s official. The National Nuclear Security Administration has announced its plan to build a new $6.5 BILLION bomb plant to produce thermonuclear bomb parts in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. They call it the Uranium Processing Facility and its main mission will be to perform “life extension upgrades” on US nuclear warheads to extend their useful life from 45-120 years. In the process of being upgraded, some warheads will be modified to have new military capabilities—in other words, they will be new nukes.

It’s official, but it’s not over. Now is the time to act.

The announcement of the plan to go forward with the new bomb plant launches the end-game of the campaign to stop the UPF. There are still several things to do, and each of them depends on political strength.

In other words, it is time for every single person who opposes the new bomb plant to take action. If we let this one go by because we are busy with other things, our silence will be taken as assent.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here are four key things you can do. But be forewarned; it’s not really pick-and-choose time. We need everyone to do all four.

1. Show up to protest.
   Young people in Tennessee are planning an action in Oak Ridge for Saturday, April 16, 2011 called A Safer World Is Our Right. It will include a march from Bissell Park in Oak Ridge to the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex; we’ll have a concert for disarmament and a peace rally there. You can find details on OREPA’s new web site: www.orepa.org. We are calling for everyone to come to Oak Ridge on Saturday, April 16 to help write the first page of a new chapter in the story of nuclear abolition.

2. Cut off the money.
   While the rest of the nation is tightening its belt, the weaponeers are buying bigger trousers. It’s crazy. And it can be stopped if we aggressively work on the budget process in Congress. You can be part of this effort in several ways: a) write or visit your elected representatives and suggest they pick this low hanging fruit; b) write a letter (and organize your friends) to the editor of your local paper—put the new bomb plant on the map (if only Tennesseans raise a ruckus, we’ll be ignored); c) consider a trip to DC for the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability’s DC Days—the easiest, most energizing and fun lobbying experience you’ll ever have.

3. Support OREPA as we educate and organize—and maybe sue them. We are exploring litigation as a way to send the NNSA back to the drawing board, and the Natural Resources Defense Council is interested in helping. But we need funds to retain counsel and develop the case. We believe this can be a very effective way to put the brakes on the project, and we believe delay is tantamount to victory—the “need” for this bomb plant diminishes as time passes.

4. Help us organize opposition. In these days of electronic organizing, some of it is easy—put the action on your facebook page and share it with friends; write on walls and tweet and tell your LinkedIn friends and do what you do. But old-fashioned face-to-face and on-the-phone organizing is important, too. Contact OREPA to schedule a presentation. We believe we are in the first stages of a campaign that can put the new bomb plant idea to rest for good, but it will take a compelling display of people power.

THE FACTS ARE ON OUR SIDE

The new bomb plant is every bit as bad an idea as you think it is—

• It is outrageously expensive (when first proposed five years ago, the pricetag was $600 million; it has increased 1000% since then!).

• It is utterly unnecessary (by the time it is complete in 2024, 90% of the US stockpile will have already undergone the life extension process in existing facilities which are being modernized right now for 1/10 the price of the UPF).

• It is shockingly provocative (major investments in new facilities to produce nuclear weapons will deeply undermine US efforts to stop Iran and other nations from pursuing nuclear capabilities)

• It is patently illegal (the US promised in 1970 to pursue complete disarmament “at an early date” in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The US Constitution declares treaties to be the Supreme Law of the Land—their caps, not mine).

• And it is immoral (the act of preparing for the destruction of continued on page 5
NONVIOLENCE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES. Its power is compelling because it is rooted in the deepest truth—we are bound by our desire for justice and peace. Nonviolence knows that justice is indivisible, and peace is possible for me only if you know peace as well. We were deeply moved to watch it on the streets of Cairo as young people laid hold of the possibility of a different future. They gave themselves fearlessly to that future; they faced down thugs; they persevered in the face of history; they remained disciplined through violence and adversity, and they created hope where there had been none.

What happened in Tunisia and Cairo, and what is unfolding in the streets of Bahrain and even in Libya, where the dark forces of violence are struggling to fend off the challenge, took the world by surprise—but only because the world sets its clock to the rising and setting of violence.

Could it happen here?

If the truth of nonviolence can not be contained in national boundaries, then is it even possible that young people, motivated by the power of the possible, could shape the future of their own country? Could they, if they dream of a world free of nuclear weapons, create that world by confronting the old regime, morally bankrupt, motivated by fear, desperately clinging to the old currency of power, nuclear weapons and bloated military machines?

A SAFER WORLD IS OUR RIGHT

On April 16, 2011, young people and believers of all ages will gather in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, home of the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex, to lay hold of the arc of the moral universe that Theodore Parker first described in the 1850s, and by the weight and the power of their dreams, bend the arc toward justice and peace.

Events on Saturday, April 16 will begin with a brief gathering rally at Bissell Park in Oak Ridge (at the corner of Tulane Ave and the Oak Ridge Turnpike, behind the Civic Center) at 1:00pm. At 1:20 we will set out on a march from the park to the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex, where we will enjoy a concert for disarmament—music and spoken word—and join in a nonviolent action for peace.

The day’s program is being planned by a committee of young people from the Knoxville area; it will be designed to be inclusive of everyone, family friendly, and promises to be a powerful declaration of an alternative vision of the future at the gates of a weapons plant dedicated to the destruction of the planet.

THE RIGHT TIME

The National Nuclear Security Administration has released its plan to build a new $6.5 BILLION bomb plant at Y12 to replace aging facilities and to expand the capacity of the United States to produce nuclear weapons.

With the plans March 4 release, the gathering in April will send a message to the federal government. The power of our message will be simple numbers, political power in its most basic form: there is no single thing you can do that will be more effective in delivering your message of opposition than showing up on April 16.

The proposed new bomb plant—the Uranium Processing Facility—is a provocative and dangerously wrong-headed idea; it undermines US efforts to constrain the proliferation of nuclear weapons. How can we have any credibility when talking about Iran’s nuclear ambitions when we are investing billions and billions of dollars in new weapons production facilities?

The April Action—A Safer World Is Our Right—recognizes that nuclear weapons make the world a more dangerous place. Not just other countries’ nuclear weapons, but ours as well—maybe especially ours, since we have 5,900 and are the only nation to have used nuclear weapons on a civilian population. The work happening at Y12 right now, life extension upgrades on the W76 warhead, contradicts our promise in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, ratified in 1969, to pursue complete disarmament “at an early date.” When the US does “life extensions” on its nuclear weapons it tells the world that nukes will remain the currency of power for the next century.

EVERY ONE WHO BELIEVES

It was not simply the power of the dream, the careful preparation, the commitment to nonviolence, and the
The Budget and the Bomb Plant

THERE ARE TWO BUDGET BATTLES going on in Washington, DC right now, so if you’re a little confused, don’t feel bad about it. The bad news is politicians are creating sound and fury. The good news is: it’s a perfect storm for cutting irrational programs, like nuclear weapons “modernization.”

BATTLE #1. This year’s budget (FY2011)
Since the FY2010 budget expired last October, the country has been operating under a Continuing Resolution—instead of adopting a budget last year, Congress extended the FY2010 budget with one exception—money for nuclear weapons was increased (part of the START Treaty deal)!

The current Continuing Resolution is about to expire again. If a new CR (or a new budget, but no one expects that) isn’t passed, the government will run out of money—hence the talk of shutdown.

In order to 1] restore fiscal responsibility to the nation’s finances or 2] score political points and mollify the Tea Party or 3] a little of both (depends on how you see things), Republicans vowed to cut $100 Billion from the budget, and they are scrambling to find those cuts.

No one in Congress has put funding for new bomb plants on the chopping block—but that’s where we come in.

BATTLE #2. Next year’s budget (FY2012)
In February the Administration released its FY2012 budget. Obama promised to freeze spending on everything but defense.

The National Nuclear Security Administration piece of the Obama budget has an increase of half a billion dollars for more bombs, including a 30% increase in funding for the new bomb plant in Oak Ridge and an even bigger increase for the plutonium bomb plant at Los Alamos—part of Obama’s deal with Republicans to “modernize” the US weapons complex and stockpile in exchange for START votes.

Obama’s budget opens a conversation that will play out over the next several months as Congress does its horse trading—another opportunity for us.

OUR JOB
In both processes, people are looking to cut money from

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A Safer World...

persistence of their witness that enabled the activists in Tahrir Square to re-create their world. It was also the power of a mass movement. What began as students soon included everyone who believed, and as more and more believed and came out, their triumph became inevitable.

So it will be when the movement for nuclear abolition comes to maturity—and the table has been set and is ready. Groups and organizations around the world have been educating and organizing as OREPA has for years.

What we need is for everyone who believes to take the next step. Set aside what you are doing on April 16 and come to Oak Ridge. If you are only coming to stand with young people, come—they need you. The future needs you, and no one can take your place. If you leave it to someone else, and they leave it to someone else, our children are left wondering where we were when we could have stopped the new bomb plant.

All of us, including You
How much would you like to see the world transformed into a place where nuclear weapons are relegated to the recesses of memory, thought of as a dark moment in history when our science outstripped our morality and we walked to the brink of self-annihilation?
It’s possible.
Would you like to see it enough to organize a carful of people to come to Oak Ridge? Would you be willing to assemble a group of friends, family or neighbors in your home and invite a speaker from OREPA—or show them a video and tell them about the ways they can be involved? Would you be willing to help organize?
An organizer’s packet is available on-line at www.orepa.org and we are hearing from people in Asheville and Michigan that they are preparing to come. We will be spreading out as far as we can to tell people about the action, but we need to multiply our reach, and you can help.

If you are ready to act, let us know. You can send an email to orep@earthlink.net. We’ll do whatever we can to support you.

And we’ll come together on April 16 to write another page in the remarkable history of 2011, the year the world changed, and of the nonviolent people power that made it happen.

The End of the Story?
The planned program for A Safer World Is Our Right will be over by 5:00 on Saturday, April 16. But the movement will not. Some may stay in Oak Ridge, at the bomb plant, to demand their government give them the future they have a right to. And others will continue to work, to build community, to practice nonviolence, to organize resistance, to raise awareness, to forge alliances—because we believe the world will one day look at April 2011 as the moment the history of nuclear weapons turned toward sanity and hope. And believing, we will work to make it so.
the budget. In both processes, funding for new bomb plants that expand US capacity for nuclear weapons is a potential savings spot. But **we have to make the case.**

It won’t be made by our arms control friends in DC, most of whom signed off or stood silent while Obama made the $85-billion-for-modernization START deal, or by defense contractors for obvious reasons. Their highly paid lobbyists maintain a laser focus on plundering the national treasury for profit.

It won’t be made by politicians who are in line for some of the pork or are worried about being labeled soft on defense.

It won’t be made by the Obama Administration—they may be willing to look the other way on the Nonproliferation Treaty promise to disarm, but they are keeping their word on the START deal.

**The case will only be made by us**—the people—the ones who have no stake in this except safety and security and the future for our children and grandchildren.

There is no reason to believe the US government is susceptible to people power in the Tahrir Square kind of way. But we can have an impact if we organize, demonstrate a high level of commitment, and persist. Because like the demonstrators in Egypt, we happen to be right.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

On the continuing resolution, you can write to Congress—House members, especially—articulating the case for cutting funding for “modernization,” and it’s a simple case:

*The US has 5,900 warheads; we’ve agreed to reduce the stockpile to 1,550. Our current stockpile is reliable; much of it has just been through “life extension.” And the work that needs to be done to keep the stockpile safe and secure as we move to a world free of nuclear weapons can be done in existing facilities. If there are problems, they can be addressed at a fraction of the cost (the existing Oak Ridge facilities are being modernized now for less than one tenth the cost of the new UPF). Just as importantly, new bomb plants are provocative—they undermine US arguments against a nuclear Iran and are used to justify a new global arms race as Russia moves to “modernize,” and Pakistan increases its stockpile.*

That’s the case in a nutshell. You can make it by writing to your elected officials. Or plan to visit them during the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability’s DC Days (April 3-6).

You can make it by writing a letter to the editor. Have a letter-writing party with five or six friends and send them in one after another. Mention your elected officials so their staff will clip the letter. It helps them know their constituents care, and it helps to shape the national debate.

Write Representative Hal Rogers—he’s the point man in the House effort to find $100 million in cuts. They say they are open to all ideas.

**TIME FOR OUR PERFECT STORM**

What do we need to get us to commit to a serious effort to stop the bomb plants?

The case against new bomb plants and the case for fiscal responsibility has never been clearer. And the need to put the brakes on has never been more crucial. In other words, **it’s time for our perfect storm.**

If we don’t stop funding now, it will get harder, maybe impossible. Until now, the funding has been for site preparation and construction, and once that starts... well, **NOW is when we have to make the move.**

So, if you think you may have one trip to DC in you to try to stop funding for the new bomb plants, it’s time to go. Check out ANAs DC Days (www.ananuclear.org). ANA makes DC Days easy for you (training, group visits, appointments already made), so you can step into an effort that is disciplined, experienced, effective and fun.

If you know three other people who might write letters, make the phone calls. If you connect with people on Facebook or Twitter, start writing on walls and tweeting. If all you can do is write a letter or call a Congressional office, do it NOW!

If you could do more if you had a speaker come to your community, contact us: orep@earthlink.net or 865 776 5050.

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**A New Bomb Plant?**

the planet offends all norms of fundamental human decency).

**BACKGROUND**

The Uranium Processing Facility will replace existing operations at Y12 and carry on the work of manufacturing thermonuclear secondaries and cases for nuclear weapons out of Highly Enriched Uranium, lithium deuteride, beryllium, depleted uranium, and other materials.

The UPF is being designed as 1/3 of a new US nuclear weapons complex. A facility at Los Alamos (the CMRR-NF) will produce plutonium pits; the UPF makes the secondaries; a new replacement facility at Kansas City, MO will make the electronic and non-nuclear components. Together, the three facilities will expand US weapon production capacity.

The UPF as announced will have the capacity to manufacture 80 warheads/year. The NNSA says it can carry out stockpile surveillance, maintenance and life extension with a throughput capacity of 10 warheads/year, but it is choosing to build a larger, more expensive bomb plant—the extra 70 warhead/year capacity is to “add increased numbers of secondaries and cases to the stockpile.”

Existing facilities at Y12 are already doing the work slated for the UPF. In fact, 90% of the US stockpile will have already undergone life extension before the UPF comes on-line in 2024. More than $100 million dollars is being spent now to modernize the existing Y12 facilities.
Y12 Resisters heard in court

TWO OF THIRTEEN defendants from last July’s action at the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex were joined by Dr. Charles Moxley to testify in federal court on March 4 on the government's motion to limit what they can say when they present their case to a jury on May 9.

Judge Bruce Guyton granted the defense motion to have oral arguments, and Mary Dennis Lentsch and Beth Rosdatter spoke for the defendants, explaining why they made a decision to cross the line in Oak Ridge.

“I must honor and trespass boundaries as love and justice demand,” said Lentsch. Rosdatter invoked her desire to heal the earth and described planting seeds to reclaim the land.

It was Charlie Moxley who spent the most time on the witness stand, called to testify to the illegality of nuclear weapons under international and US law. Moxley is the author of Nuclear Weapons and International Law in the Post Cold War World. As Moxley described the effects of nuclear weapons, he explained to the court that using nuclear weapons would violate the rules of war adopted by the US military services because their effects can not be constrained, can not be proportionate, and can not distinguish between combatants and others.

Judge Guyton listened carefully to the testimony as defense lawyers led witnesses through careful questioning and declared that he would issue a ruling at a later date.

Despite efforts by the prosecution to question his opinions, Moxley held firm to the guidance of the International Court of Justice and said that not only use, but even possession, in the context of a policy of deterrence, would be illegal as it constituted a threat to use.

The assistant District Attorney also tried to challenge Mary Dennis on the stand. At one point he asked her if she had gotten permission from the bishop of the Knoxville diocese before undertaking her action. When she said that was not required, he asked if she had even met with the bishop. “Yes,” she answered, “and I asked him to pray for me.”

Responding to one challenge by the prosecutor, Mary Dennis said, “I don’t think you live in hope. I live in hope.”

Following the hearing, we adjourned to the courtyard of the federal complex for a press conference.