In the world of nuclear weapons activism, there are certain dates that are marked every year—August 6 and 9, the dates of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; July 16 the day of the Trinity test.

From now until the end of nuclear weapons, and maybe even after that, January 22 will be one of those anniversaries to mark every year. That's the day the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force in 2021.

Last year, OREPA joined with several other groups to try to organize events at weapons sites and other places across the country on January 22. The effort was a bigger success than we expected, and it turned into an ongoing movement that we call the Nuclear Ban Treaty Collaborative.

This year, OREPA put time and energy not only into our own events, but in expanding the efforts to celebrate the Ban Treaty and call for the United States to join the treaty. Our web site became the go-to place to find resources—banners, signs, readings, templates for press releases and letters to Congress and much more.

We believe the Ban Treaty is the most powerful tool the nuclear abolition movement has had in decades, and we are committed to using that tool to educate, organize, and mobilize a new movement for nuclear disarmament.

At the University

One piece of that effort is a new initiative to organize on university and college campuses that are involved in nuclear weapons production.

On January 22, the University of Tennessee’s flagship campus in Knoxville was challenged to face up to its complicity in nuclear bomb building. UT has a Memorandum of Agreement with the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex to provide support for the nuclear weapons work there.

But not many people on campus know it. So we start by educating. In the late morning, OREPA and the UT student environmental
The Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance is a grassroots nonprofit organization working to educate and organize people about nuclear weapons production in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. We advocate an end to weapons production and we work to create and nurture nonviolent community in East Tennessee.

OREPA’s newsletter is printed four times a year by Ullrich Printing in Knoxville, Tennessee and is on-line at orepa.org. Contributions to OREPA’s work may be sent to P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831 or may be made securely on-line at OREPA’s web site: www.orepa.org. All gifts to OREPA are tax deductible.

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If you could do one or two little things every day and end up making a big difference, would you?

The world of social media can seem overwhelming. You might worry about intrusive data collection polices or perhaps just think that it’s too confusing to even bother with, but like it or not, social media is here to stay.

Platforms like Facebook and Twitter play a key part in public discourse. They are our modern day public square. These online platforms allow us to broadcast who we are to people who don’t know we exist. They have become a valuable tool for people looking to change the world.

When OREPA hired me to be an organizer, they put the social media portfolio in my hands. In the past, OREPA has had a quiet presence on Facebook, a web page, an email list, and not much more. But social media can be an important tool in advancing our work, educating people about nuclear weapons, and calling people to action.

We have the potential to benefit greatly from the use of social media—all we need is your help.

ME? WHAT CAN I DO?

One of the biggest ways that you can support OREPA doesn’t cost a dime and only takes a minute or two each day. If you’re brave enough to wade into the social media waters then it’s as easy as 1-2-3:

• follow our accounts
• like our posts and share/retweet them
• leave comments.

All of our social media posts are public and are available to be shared. This means you can see our posts even if you don’t have an account. If you do follow us on social media but have not seen any of our recent posts, that may be because you haven’t interacted with us in a while.

You can change that. Just visit us again on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or your favorite platform and be sure to like and comment on our posts. When you like, comment, and share, not only will you see more posts from us, but we are more likely to be recommended to your friends.

Using the simple one-click tools can amplify our message—that nuclear weapons should be abolished and that the US should join the Ban Treaty. The more people interact with OREPA’s postings, the wider they are spread—that’s how the algorithms work.

WELL, I’M NOT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

If you are not on social media or are taking a hiatus from it, there are other ways you can help spread the message. Tell your friends where they can find us on social media, visit our website periodically; even just typing “Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance” into google helps us a lot. It may not feel like much, but when all these tiny actions add up it helps our organization grow. When people see that we exist, they’ll be more likely to interact with us and in turn become more conscious about nuclear weapons.

These small interactions really help us reach new people; they are the universal currency in the world of social media. Whether it’s Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram it always helps to leave a “like” and “comment” on every post you want to support.

SHARING IS CONTAGIOUS

And that’s a good thing.

One of the biggest strengths of social media is the boost it can give to events and actions. Facebook especially has a large toolset that can help organizations plan and promote events. In today’s world it’s even possible to promote a successful event solely on social media with no other advertisement.

It’s easy to imagine corporate social media
The goal of our content is first to educate people about nuclear weapons—it’s amazing how little people are aware, especially younger people.

Step two is to have a discourse about the dangers of nuclear weapons and threat they pose to humanity. Occasionally we may post about non-nuclear weapons related issues as it pertains to our goals and values, especially our work creating a culture of nonviolence, but our priority will always be on nuclear weapons.

Social media is a powerful tool for reaching the next generation of nuclear abolitionists. There is a lot of great grassroots activism happening online and we need to be involved with it.

So OREPA is stepping up our game, and using our social media platforms to elevate some new voices for the movement. Reaching this next generation is vital for our organization to not only have longevity but to add new, diverse people from a variety backgrounds who will strengthen the case for a future without nuclear weapons.

- Cody Dishner

### Doomsday Clock remains fixed at 100 seconds to midnight

On January 20, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* announced that the hands of the Doomsday Clock would remain for the third year in a row at 100 seconds to midnight.

“We live in a perilous moment,” said a *Bulletin* spokeswoman, explaining the decision to leave the hands in place, closer to midnight than ever before in the 75 year history of the clock.

Citing some positive changes in US posture — rejoining the Paris climate accord and reopening talks with Iran — the *Bulletin* said those changes alone were “not enough to reverse the negative international security trends” that present dangers in 2022. These included tense relations between the US and Russia and China.

As it did last year, the *Bulletin* warned that leaving the hands where they were should not be mistaken as a sign of stability. “On the contrary,” read the press release, “the Clock remains the closest it has ever been to civilization-ending apocalypse because the world remains stuck in an extremely dangerous moment.”

### New report details who profits from building nuclear bombs

**Perilous Profiteers: The companies building nuclear arsenals and their financial backers** is the latest report in the Don’t Bank on the Bomb series from PAX, The Netherlands and ICAN.

“Nuclear weapons are prohibited by international law,” the introduction notes, “yet 25 companies remain heavily involved in their production, manufacture, and development. These companies are supported by 160 banks that lend them money or underwrite bonds, while another 186 institutions seek to profit from holding shares or bonds.

“Altogether, 338 financial institutions made more than $685 billion available to the nuclear weapon industry since 2019.”

The report notes that more than 100 institutions divested from nuclear weapons; less than half of them were replaced by other investors.

The report is comprehensive, filled with pages of tables of data laying out the complicity of corporations and their financial backers.

You can download the report at [www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org).

### No Place to Hide: what the bomb will do in the real world

**No Place to Hide: Nuclear Weapons and the Collapse of Health Care Systems** is an ICAN report that looks at the effects of nuclear war by taking a deep dive in ten cities around the globe to see what would happen in the event of a nuclear war.

Washington, DC, was selected to represent the United States.

The report uses complex modeling and publicly available information about medical facilities and personnel to evaluate the immediate health response capacity after a 100 kiloton airburst nuclear detonation.

The results will surprise no one who has an understanding of the devastating power of nuclear weapons.

In New Delhi, for example, 50,000 beds would have to accommodate more than two and half million injured.

The report’s devastating conclusions undoubtedly understate the extent of the shortfall; it is highly likely that each of the ten cities studied would be targeted by many more than one nuclear bomb in the event of a nuclear attack.

The report is available at icanw.org.
What does a full-on global nuclear arms race look like?

We got another jarring reminder last month in Tennessee when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission held a meeting to hear about a proposed license amendment by the Tennessee Valley Authority to increase the amount of tritium production (for nuclear bombs) in TVA's two Watts Bar commercial power nuclear reactors.

The Watts Bar reactors are located on the Tennessee River between Knoxville and Chattanooga.

At the meeting, TVA said it sought permission to increase tritium production by an astonishing 40%. TVA is not doing this on its own; it gets its tritium orders from the National Nuclear Security Administration.

The 40% increase in the number of tritium fuel elements in the reactors will mean a 40% increase in the amount of radioactive tritium released into the Tennessee River, to as much as 7,500 to 10,000 curies per fuel cycle.

Originally, TVA said the tritium created in the special fuel rods would be "held in solid form," and estimated a possible release of 1 curie per fuel rod. Once they started making tritium, though, they discovered tritium was permeating the cladding on the fuel rods at a rate three to four times as high as predicted.

TO THE MAX

The ramp up of tritium production brings the US commitment to the new nuclear arms race full circle. The multibillion dollar Uranium Processing Facility bomb plant in Oak Ridge is under construction. The UPF’s sole purpose will be to produce thermonuclear cores for US warheads and bombs — as many as 80/year.

Plans are also underway to expand the production of plutonium pits at Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico to 30/year, and to build a brand new plutonium pit bomb plant at Savannah River in South Carolina; the SC plant will have a production capacity of 50 pits/year, meaning total pit production capacity will reach the magic number: 80/year. Plutonium pits are the trigger for US nuclear weapons. Small spheres with tritium vials inserted, when the pit explodes it detonates the thermonuclear secondary made at Y-12 in Oak Ridge.

What else is needed for maximum production capacity? Last year the NNSA announced it would double the size of the Kansas City Plant where Honeywell manufactures the electronic components — arming, fuzing, and firing mechanisms, wiring harnesses, etc.

HEADING INTO THE FIRST TURN

While it's not easy to compare the technical and military efforts of the nuclear weapons nations, one place we can get a sense of the relative places of the nuclear powers in the nuclear arms race is by checking their spending.

ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, crunched the numbers so you won’t have to. Here’s what they found.

From 2018 to 2019, as the arms race began to pick up speed, the United States increased its nuclear weapons spending by $5.8 billion. Russia increased it’s spending by $ 0.5 billion; China increased its spending by $ 0.4. That’s right — in one year, the US outspent its nuclear rivals by well over ten to one. More recent estimates have shown the US outspending China 4 - 1 and Russia 5 – 1.

Recent stories in the media have noted that China, whose nuclear stockpile has not grown significantly in more than 20 years, is showing signs of breaking out of its disciplined box. Satellite imagery shows excavations that could be silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles like the ones the US has scattered through the midwest.

Two things are useful to remember when we read these stories. One: they always seem to appear in the media when Congress is debating the budget—and it always works.

Two: the global nuclear arms race in 2022 is one the United States single-handedly started when we committed to modernize our entire nuclear weapons program, from new bomb plants to new warheads to new delivery systems – at a cost of more than $2 trillion.

WHOA THERE?

Can anything be done to rein in the spending and slow down the racers? It doesn’t look great in the short run. The budget Congress is currently...
ly creating adds money to what the President requested for nuclear weapons.

There are two ways things could be turned around, one quicker than the other. The Biden Administration is preparing a Nuclear Posture Review to establish US policy for the coming years. The NPR could — could — signal a slowdown in the arms race by stating policies that reduce US reliance on nuclear weapons and by cutting funding for some weapons systems.

Right now, observers are not hopeful. The process of creating the NPR is secret; the policies it sets are crafted by people from the military, the State Department, and the National Nuclear Security Administration. In light of recent events in Ukraine, it seems unlikely that the US will signal a reduction in its defense posture. (While we’re waiting for the official NPR, if you want to see an alternative Nuclear Posture Review, google Veterans for Peace and look for their excellent NPR released in January of this year.)

The second way to turn things around is more long-term and much friendlier to the public — it’s good old-fashioned education, organizing, and mobilization of the public in numbers that compel Congress to listen. It won’t happen quickly, and it won’t be easy, but unless we commit to doing the hard work of making peace, it won’t happen ever.

OREPA has made a commitment to the Nuclear Ban Treaty Collaborative. We think the Ban Treaty is the best tool nuclear abolitionists have had in 30 years. It can be used to educate people about the existential threat of nuclear weapons and their devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences. And it can be used to organize people to find their voices and take action for disarmament.

The bottom line is that we must develop the grassroots strength to overcome the moneyed interests of nuclear weapons manufacturers—the military-industrial-academic-financial complex.

Where are your tax dollars going?

Nobody likes paying taxes. In fact, some of our war tax resister readers don’t pay them, at least not to the war machine known as the United States Department of Treasury.

But most of us do pay taxes, year after year, facing the day of reckoning in mid-April.

Tax Day is April 18 this year, and OREPA is using the occasion to educate people about how the government is spending their money.

We’ll be at Market Square in Knoxville at 11:30 on the 18th, asking people how they would like their tax dollars spent and explaining the sad truth about how the people we have elected to represent us will actually spend their money.

Far too much of it, of course, goes to defense contractors to fund war and preparations for war. Those contractors, of course, are generous contributors to the campaign coffers of the men and women in Congress who decide, year after year, to hand our taxes over to them.

If you join us on Market Square, you’ll have a chance to do some shopping at a store that has shelves lined with life-affirming things—but beware! There are likely to be thugs lying in wait to snatch your tax dollars and spend them on nefarious goods, things like bombs and bomb plants.

In the last year of the Trump administration, when social programs were under the budget axe, one program got an amazing 29% budget increase. That’s right, nuclear weapons.

Those who hoped the Biden Administration might roll back that huge increase were disappointed when the budget rolled out last year—the budget for nuclear weapons just keeps going up.

Why? Because the decisions about nuclear weapons spending will continue to be made by the corporate overlords until we build a strong enough base to compel our Senators and Representatives to do something different. It was an old general, Dwight Eisenhower, who said, “One of these days people are going to want peace so much the government will have to get out of the way and give it to them.”

Tax Day is a good day to remind ourselves that the government we elect is not there to make corporate CEOs happy, it is there to serve the best interests of the people who live in this country. Come join us on Market Square!