

WNC -Physicians for Social Responsibility Quarterly Newsletter

Momentum Grows for Scrapping Land-based Nukes

Nuclear experts have long argued that land-based ICBMs are unnecessary, dangerous, and extraordinarily costly. Since their location is known by friend and foe alike (unlike submarine-based missiles) they are considered “sitting ducks” in a nuclear conflict. They actually invite the hair-trigger launch of a nuclear attack (by us) since their only possible military use is for them to be launched before they are destroyed by incoming missiles. Detection systems are not foolproof. A hair-trigger reaction to a false indicator on a radar screen or the commission of a human error (both of which have happened already) could destroy civilization as we know it.

This is timely and relevant because the Pentagon is in the midst of a program to replace our current Minuteman III missiles with a program called Sentinel. That program is currently estimated to cost \$264 billion (\$214 million per missile) and is already 81% over budget!

To avoid a catastrophe of incalculable proportions both the Minuteman III and the Sentinel programs need to be abandoned.

The new administration says it wants to cut down on waste, fraud and abuse. For the sake of our nation and the world, this is the place to start. Please contact our representatives and tell them to scratch this dangerous and wasteful program.

Scott Baker



A word from the Chair

Low Patrie, MD --A Steadfast Voice for Peace

We at WNC/PSR want to honor the life of a founding member of our chapter, Low Patrie, who died in October at age 96. Low spent the majority of his career serving with the Indian Health Service (continued on page 2)

Environmental Impact of Hurricane Helene on WNC

Hurricane Helene was the deadliest hurricane to hit mainland United States since Katrina in 2005. Over 200 lives were lost and there were billions of dollars in property damage. What about the environmental impact?

As ocean temperatures rise, the intensity of storms like Helene become more pronounced, threatening both human populations and wildlife habitats. Climate change has upended understanding of how natural disasters will be forecast, especially in areas with constantly changing weather like the Gulf Coast, where Helene grew intense strength and power from the increasingly hot ocean temperatures.

Hurricane Helene caused significant environmental damage in Western North Carolina, primarily through widespread flooding, massive landslides triggered by record rainfall, and extensive destruction of

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Next PSR Meeting: Friday January 17th at 12:30 pm (meetings third Friday of each month at First Congregation Church at 20 Oak St. Asheville)

Climate Change Workgroup :
TBD

Upcoming Events:

Past Events:

Potluck At Dot Sullock's house- December 13th, 2024



Chairperson- Brita Clark

Secretary- Terry Clark

Treasurer- Bert Crain

Editor- Scott Mahan

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Environmental Impact of Helen (continued)

forests, leading to potential long-term impacts like increased wildfire risk, disrupted wildlife habitats, and potential invasion of non-native species due to the cleared vegetation; the region's steep terrain exacerbated these effects significantly.

As we try to claw back to normal lives after the local devastation wrought by Helene, we at PSR need to point to the devastation as a rallying cry in our fight against climate change.

Scott Mahan, MD

A word from the Chair (continued)

in Arizona, South Dakota, Montana and Oklahoma. He and his family then moved to our community, where he was a psychiatrist with Blue Ridge Mental health until his retirement in 2000.

Lew remained physically active and was always a person to act on his commitment to Peace and social justice. He was never shy about sharing his convictions. He understood that groups like PSR are an important part of building a strong community and his integrity, courage, steadfastness, and kindness continue to be an inspiration.

Thank you, Lew.

Brita Clark

Chairwoman, WNCPSR

TOWARD A SANER U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY AND A MORE SECURE WORLD

(excerpted from letter published in Charlotte Observer)

As we approach 79 years since the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, we would do well to take stock of where we are. Many, including the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, feel that we, right now, are facing the most dangerous time in our history. We are in a new Cold War with Russia and China and wisdom must prevail... Humanity has succumbed to the collective madness of nuclear deterrence; the dangerously flawed belief that they will never be used and an ever-escalating spiral of technological complexity that increases the danger and benefits no one.

All the major players have declared that “a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought”; but with so much distrust, they renew their weapons and Russia threatens to use them...The grassroots Back from the Brink campaign endorsed by hundreds of NGOs includes eliminating sole presidential authority, removing all missiles from hyper-alert status and rigidly verified total abolition.

The solution is difficult but within reach. The U.N. General Assembly has produced the TPNW-The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force in January 2021, and now ratified by 70 countries, provides a path forward. This product of international democracy implicitly demands that the nuclear weapon states honor their obligations under article 6 of the bedrock 1970 Nonproliferation Treaty. ... The democracies must convince the authoritarian states that it is in no countries best interest to have nuclear weapons; that the centerpiece of any nation’s defense policy should be to abolish nuclear weapons realizing that this will be the only way that we can have real common security without the horrendous risk.

The stakes are too high to settle for anything less than the goal of abolition imbedded in U.N. Resolution One. The U.S. should lead the way, aspiring to give our children a world without nuclear weapons.

Bert Crain M.D.- Physicians for Social Responsibility- North Carolina Chapter