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Occupying the Merchants of Death
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The foundations of injustice favoring the 1% are everywhere and Occupy has found many suitable targets among the corporate elite. The financial and extraction sectors have been clearly located (Phillips and Soeiro, 2012). One target hard to find is the force that propels us toward nuclear war. The potential persists for nuclear weapons to terminate much of human life immediately and to make the environment unable to support the continuation of life. Public concern, once high, has declined. Unfortunately the risk has not. The likelihood of nuclear weapons use is increasing by new weapons research and by the proliferation of drones. The hidden hand that exacerbates this danger needs to be occupied, but it first must be located.

THE DANGER

Much of the concern over matters nuclear has been reshaped by official response to the tragedy of 9/11. Had that been an attack with just one 20 megaton bomb exploding on the surface of Columbus Circle in New York, it would have produced a hole where twenty city blocks had been, a hole deep enough to hide a 20 story building. All brick and wood frame houses within 7.7 miles would be completely destroyed. The blast waves would carry through the entire underground subway system. Up to fifteen miles from ground zero flying debris, propelled by displacement effects would cause more casualties. 200,000 separate fires would be ignited producing a firestorm with temperatures up to 1,500 degrees F. and wind velocities to 150 MPH. The fabric of water supplies, food and fuel for transportation, medical services, and electric power would be

destroyed. And radiation damages that destroy and deform living things would continue for 240,000 years. Such bombs, and others still larger and more destructive, are contained in the warheads of missiles, many of them capable of delivering multiple warheads from a single launch (Pilisuk, 2008).

The Physicians for Social Responsibility released a study estimating one billion people -- one-sixth of the human race -- could starve over the decade following a single nuclear detonation. A key finding was that corn production in the US would decline by an average of 10% for an entire decade, with the most severe decline (20%) in year 5. Another forecast was that increases in food prices would make food inaccessible to hundreds of millions of the world's poorest. The 925 million people in the world who are already chronically malnourished (with a baseline consumption of 1,750 calories or less per day), would be put at risk by a 10% decline in their food consumption.

These nukes are dangerous, useless and expensive. More than two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, they cannot address today's actual security threats. Today, there are nine nuclear powers and the dangers of nuclear proliferation are even more acute than 28 years ago. Even the hard-line defenders of nuclear weapons are scared. The *Wall Street Journal* ran an editorial by Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry, and Sam Nunn -- four senior architects of the Cold War and here-to-fore ardent defenders of the theory of nuclear deterrence -- calling on the United States to lead the way toward the global abolition of nuclear weapons. They describe the present state as "precarious." and indicate no strategic need for these weapons (Schultz et al, 2011). Worse, they rely on outdated technology and are prone to accidents. Yet vast sums of taxpayer dollars are pumped into keeping them mission-ready – in a world in which they have no mission.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), released its 180-page study showing that nuclear-armed nations spend over 100 billion dollars each year assembling new warheads, modernizing old ones, and building ballistic missiles, bombers and submarines to launch them. The United States still has about 2,500 nuclear weapons deployed and 2,600 more as backup (Rosenthal, 2011). Washington and Moscow account for 90% of all nuclear weapons. In the 2010 New Start treaty, both countries pledged to reduce their number of deployed long-range nuclear weapons to 1,550 (from 2,200) by 2017. But both countries plan to increase nuclear spending in coming years, as they replace or upgrade aging nuclear production facilities and delivery vehicles — submarines, missiles and bombers (AFSC, 2010) This makes no sense and presses the question, “Why.”

Nuclear weapons, missile delivery systems and anti-missile defenses in Europe continue a cold war game that prevents getting rid of nuclear weapons. Most European nuclear weapon sites do not meet US security needs (Kristensen, 2012). Ending that game in Europe, would clear the way for the US and Russia to agree on unprecedented cuts to their bloated arsenals – which now represent more than 90% of the nuclear weapons on the planet. This is a critical step in ending the threat of nuclear weapons.

THE COST

The annual Pentagon budget request conceals many expenses including those for conducting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and others related to covert operations.

Homeland Security. Also absent, and to the point of this paper, is an additional \$19.3 billion for nuclear-weapons-related activities like making sure our current stockpile of warheads will work as expected and cleaning up the waste created by seven decades of

developing and producing them (Hellman, 2012). Two reports, one by Brookings and another by the Carnegie Endowment for Peace confirm that world spending on nuclear weapons now surpasses 1 Trillion dollars in a decade (Blair & Brown, 2011). Some is obviously beyond any conceivable military need.

Republican Senator Tom Coburn, has called for cutting the number of deployed strategic warheads to 1,220, the ballistic missile submarine fleet to 11 from 14, and intercontinental ballistic missiles to 300 from 500. He also favors delaying the purchase of new bombers until the mid 2020s. Total savings, according to Mr. Coburn, would be at least \$79 billion over the next decade. It is a sensible beginning. Next he advises that we do not modernize the B61 tactical nuclear bombs in Europe. No one can imagine that the United States would ever use a nuclear weapon on a European battlefield, and Washington is in discussions with NATO to bring them home to be dismantled. If the Europeans want to keep them for political reasons, they could pick up the tab: Savings: \$1.6 billion. Actually 5 NATO countries have called for removal of all nuclear weapons from Europe, (Borger, 2012). Coburn urges a halt to construction of the new plutonium storage facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Costs have increased tenfold, and there are serious safety questions about the location — along a fault line and near an active volcano; savings: \$2.9 billion.

Coburn urges a halt construction of the Energy Department's Savannah River facility that is supposed to recycle plutonium from dismantled weapons into mox, a fuel for nuclear power plants. The sole customer for the fuel dropped the contract. Savings: \$4 billion. Another \$6 billion could be saved by canceling the uranium processing facility in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The nonpartisan Project on Government Oversight says that with \$100

million in upgrades, another facility there can do the same work. Down-blending more of the 400 metric tons of highly enriched uranium in United States weapons stocks for sale to nuclear power plants would save another \$23 billion. The administration has neglected this, while investing in programs that increase the life of nuclear warheads (Rosenthal, 2011).

Despite a White House pledge to seek a world without nuclear weapons, the 2011 federal budget for nuclear weapons research and development exceeded \$7 billion and could (if the Obama administration has its way) exceed \$8 billion per year by the end of this decade. This steady and growing investment stands in stark contrast to the promising U.S. rhetoric of nuclear disarmament (National Nuclear Security Administration, 2012). If instead of this increase, we were to freeze the DoE weapons budget at current levels – a saving of \$4.3 billion over five years it would permit an increase in current DoE cleanup budget by 15 percent annually for five years and provide 312,000 households with renewable energy for 20 years.

In 2011 there was a 25 percent budget increase for Stockpile Support, which translates as testing the reliability of nuclear bombs to explode as planned. Scientific reports prepared for the Pentagon have found “no evidence” that stockpiled U.S. nuclear weapons have deteriorated (Kristensen & Oelrich, 2009). According to the Federation of American Scientists (2010), the weapons are “good to go” for decades to come. Nor is there a logical reason why one needs to know whether these weapons, (which must never be used and which the major powers have pledged to eliminate), will explode precisely at the force level originally intended. The Livermore Laboratory was non-the less contracted to develop a National Ignition Facility tasked to replicate the effects of a

detonated Hydrogen bomb so that the widely unpopular underground testing could be replaced by another means for determining the reliability of weapons in the stockpile. The work is classified so details of what has been accomplished are not known. The project, however, has not visibly produced anything usable and has extended long beyond its predicted dates for success. Its initial budget of \$1.1 billion was intended for work to be completed in 2002. The price tag has risen to \$3.5 billion with congress dutifully adding about \$450 million every year. That 25% increase in Department of Energy budget could have provided four-year scholarships for 10,432 university students.

Some of the DOE budget is absolutely needed. The Cooperative Threat Reduction and Global Threat Reduction Initiatives are critical priorities to reduce the risk of terrorists being able to acquire sufficient nuclear materials. Currently the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) monitors the amounts of weapons grade uranium in most countries (Nuclear Threat Initiative, n,d). While the US and Russia have both failed to make good faith efforts toward elimination of nuclear weapons as required by the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the US has still done significant work in obtaining nuclear weapons materials from other nations before they become part of the nuclear weapons club (National Nuclear Security Administration, 2012). But geo-politically motivated efforts to restrict some nations while permitting nuclear weapons among others is a dangerous policy. Ultimately, we will never be able to secure loose nuclear-grade material if more countries continue to produce new nuclear weapons. The best hope for such security lies in a global nuclear disarmament campaign, spearheaded by the United States, showing a real commitment to reducing their arsenal through the ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Moreover,

the separation between uses for nuclear weapons and for nuclear power is illusive. The Fukushima disaster occurred in perhaps the world's most technically advanced nation. Norman Solomon who studied the victims of many nuclear tragedies comments, "Nuclear power -- from uranium mining to fuel fabrication to reactor operations to nuclear waste that will remain deadly for hundreds of thousands of years -- is, in fact, a moral crime against future generations" (Solomon, 2012).

Nuclear weapons go along with ways to launch them. The missile budget is within the Department of Defense. The FY 2013 budget request is \$7.750 billion to develop and deploy sensors, interceptors, and command and control systems that constitute the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) to provide U.S. homeland defense and regional missile defense for deployed forces, allies, and friends (Missile Defense Agency, 2012)

The inherent difficulty in detecting missiles already launched, distinguishing those designed as decoys from the real ones and then shooting them in space adds up to expensive research with dubious results. To assure funds, the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, a non-profit educational institution, which does not reveal its donors, works to educate congress and the public of the necessity for such weapons, even while essential domestic services are squeezed. The waste has consequences.

The \$800 million budgeted to develop a new nuclear-capable cruise missile would provide one year of "HeadStart" for over 95,000 children. Revoking Stockpile support entirely for just one year would save \$2 billion, enough to create more than 58,000 education-related jobs. Reducing the Navy's Trident submarine fleet from 14 to 10 vessels would save \$1.3 billion over 10 years. This would build more than 4,500

affordable housing units (Hellman, 2012).

CROSSING THE LINE

Continued nuclear weapons development is more than a wasteful drain on the budget and more also than a threat of large-scale disaster. The use of depleted uranium in weapons has been common over the past decades but often disregarded since the major health consequences are long term rather than immediate. Moreover, the spread of Missile and anti-missile technology increases the number of players able to plan a nuclear weapon attack.

One critical line during the cold war was the tacit understanding that nuclear bombs were not to be used. This held even during times of US repudiation of a “no first use” agreement. With research and development of tactical nuclear weapons such as the “bunker buster” and with the use of depleted uranium in weapons, the line has been blurred.

Political support has been building for an Israeli strike against a nuclear weapons threat (which according to a consensus of all US intelligence agencies does not exist). The more credible objective is to retain political support for nuclear weapons development for a potent sector of scientific and corporate beneficiaries. Nothing would work better than an alleged victory using a smaller nuclear device to cripple deeply buried nuclear technology sites in Iran.

DRONES

Now another technology threatens to blur a distinction between those parties large enough and sufficiently equipped to have nuclear weapons and launching devices. A multitude of groups and municipalities are able to make use of drones. The drone

industry produces unmanned aircraft ranging from surveillance cameras the size of an insect, to the larger weaponized forms that have been used in Pakistan, Yemen and Afghanistan. Such use has been criticized as a violation of international law and a cause for anger toward the US. Drones have also moved society to place in which killing is no longer attributable to a soldier who did it and in which the perpetrator suffers no immediate loss. In fact, entire interconnected systems of surveillance are being designed to operate free of human guidance (Aftergood, 2012 b).

In March, 2012 two drones performed the first ever successful test of autonomous in-flight refueling at 45,000 feet, permitting longer distance strikes. It was revealed that Sandia National Labs & Northrup have favorably assessed the feasibility of a nuclear-powered drone. Two months later, NATO ended its summit by signing a \$1.7 billion deal with Northrup Grumman for its Global Hawk UAVs (unmanned aviation vehicles) to be integrated into NATO's "Allied Ground Surveillance" system. On June 1, a liquid hydrogen-fueled Boeing spy drone called "Phantom Eye," designed to stay aloft for four or more days at a time, completed a successful flight (Halloway, 2012; Common Dreams Staff, 2012). Firms like L-3 WESCAM work with highly advanced imaging products available to the defense industry for Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (ISRT). Most everyone and everything can now be watched and targeted.

Like most weapon systems, drones under NATO control inspire the acquisition of drones by potential adversaries. The military has worried about this as long ago as 2005, when the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) wrote a 44-page report detailing the potential for terrorist-controlled drones. According to the IDA report, potential terrorists have considered using them. Al-Qaeda and Colombia's FARC have both experimented

with unmanned weaponry. One technology expert has noted that the U.S. needs to develop a way to disable remote drones before they are used in a terrorist attack (Koebler, 2012)

On American soil, a drone being operated by the Mexican federal police crashed in El Paso, Texas in late 2010. In detailing the incident, John Villasenor of the Brookings Institute wrote, "before the crash, U.S. officials had not even been aware that drones were operating in the area. Had the incursion been purposeful, targeted, and malicious, as opposed to accidental, it appears highly unlikely that it would have been detected and stopped in advance of reaching its target. As smaller and quieter drones are made, they become easier to move and launch, and harder to detect in operation. Villasenor urges that once the technology to jam drones is developed, it should be implemented at sensitive government locations.

Diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks reveal that several regimes, including those in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, have tried to secure contracts to purchase armed drones from American providers

WHO BENEFITS? THE NUCLEAR AND SPACE CABAL

The global economy finds itself unable to tap the increasing accumulation of wealth by a corporate elite. Hence, governments at all levels are pressing for ways to sustain essential human services. In return for a promise to pass a budget for 2012, the US Congress adopted legislation requiring across the board cuts in all discretionary programs. With health care, libraries, nutrition programs and schools being pinched, Senate Minority Whip Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) announced that he would be unwilling to consider any reductions to U.S. nuclear weapons spending in order to avoid budget

sequestration as mandated by the 2011 Budget Control Act (see *GSN*, June 21). Why the special treatment?

Bill Hartung lists major players in the nuclear weapons complex as General Dynamics which contracts for Ballistic Missile Submarines along with Boeing and Northrop Grumman, lead the contractors for bombers (with Lockheed Martin which is hoping to bid on the next generation bomber). Much of the work including, nuclear weapons labs, uranium and plutonium factories and related facilities, is carried out by corporations such as BAE Systems and Babcock International in the UK, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, Honeywell and Bechtel in the United States, Thales and Safran in France, and Larsen & Toubro in India (ICAN report). Not to be forgotten, the University of California, has management contracts for the Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore nuclear weapons laboratories. (ICAN; Hartung, 2011, 2012)

Nuclear-armed nations spend over 100 billion dollars each year on their weapons programs. The institutions most heavily involved in financing nuclear arms makers include Bank of America, BlackRock and JP Morgan Chase in the United States; BNP Paribas in France; Allianz and Deutsche Bank in Germany; Mitsubishi UJF Financial in Japan; BBVA and Banco Santander in Spain; Credit Suisse and UBS in Switzerland; and Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds and Royal Bank of Scotland in Britain. Of the 322 financial institutions identified in the report, about half are based in the United States and a third in Europe (Deen, 2012; ICAN; Hartung, 2012). A coordinated global campaign for nuclear weapons divestment is urgently needed. Nobel Prize winner Desmond Tutu has called for this and some banks of indicated qualms about support for world shattering work (Deen, 2012).

THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY

The top 12 nuclear weapons contractors have thrown millions of dollars at what some have called the "Doomsday Caucus" on Capitol Hill, with the biggest recipients including people like Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), the chair of the House Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Michael Turner (R-OH), who is perhaps the biggest single advocate for the nuclear weapons complex in the entire Congress. He is chair of the strategic forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee (Deen, 2012).

Nuclear weapons and expensive delivery systems have not played a central role in wars since the Second World War. They stood instead as ultimate threats permitting lower levels of destruction in the numerous wars sought to create corporate friendly allies among the nations of the world and as threats by the Soviet Union to protect its own militarily supported occupations. Large military bases marked the sphere of influence of major powers. That strategy of massive visible force is now being replaced to combat a less powerful and more dispersed set of governments and dissident groups who are more inclined to fight with asymmetrical tactics. The weapon of choice to address such enemies with a more agile set of smaller specialized units (The Lilly Pad strategy), is the drone. Drones can track people and target them without relying upon direct combat. They are one manufacturing market that is succeeding in the US. It contributes to an integrated network of information from drone and other surveillance technologies, called Trapwire .The Texas based Stratfor has led in developing this network of cameras and other surveillance tools, that the federal government is constructing as an impenetrable, inescapable theater of surveillance (Wolverton, 2012b). Most of this is going unnoticed by Americans and unreported by the mainstream media. However, TrapWire is in use at

military bases around the country. A leaked email message from Stratfor described how the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, and Pentagon have all begun using TrapWire and are "on the system now, " as are several multi-national corporations . Part of the 'Allied Ground Surveillance' system includes the five Global Hawk UAVs, built by Northrup Drummond at a cost of over \$1 billion. Part of the danger comes from the potential for unmanned vehicles to be both finder of targets and destroyer of them. Some models were designed to have nuclear propulsion to enable them to stay in flight for many months. Some are designed to evade air defense systems permitting the possible explosion of a very deadly weapon in a populated area (Aftergood, 2012a; Fielding, 2012).

The lead company in both surveillance and bombing drones is General Atomics which sold more than 430 Predator and Reaper drones to the Defense Department between 1994 and 2010. General Atomics CEO James Blue notes the company's political capital in its rapid rise. In 2006 the company led all other corporations in financing lavish trips for lawmakers, their families and staff to countries from Turkey to Australia where it is fighting to get sales of its drones approved. Sales are now approved to countries throughout the world as well as to local cities in the US (Benjamin, 2012).

General Atomics is not, however, the only American defense contractor anxious to peddle the Predator-style drones to other eager governments. Northrop Grumman and other companies continue to lobby Congress and the White House to ease export restrictions on drone sales. Such wide open sales could, of course, result in the drones ultimately ending up in the hands of regimes that would use the devices to harm American interests around the globe. AeroVironment, another California company, has grown rapidly with contracts for drones ranging from 5 and one half pounds to 13 pound

backpack varieties, They worklike unmanned Kamakazee fighters, detecting and then destroying targets. Raytheon has been pioneering a variety of weapons to be launched by drones (Benjamin, 2012).

The drone caucus — like the technology it promotes — is becoming increasingly important in the nation’s capitol as the government looks to unmanned vehicles to help save money on defense, better patrol the country’s borders and provide a new tool to U.S. law enforcement agencies and civilians. Its publicly stated mission includes support of policies and budgets that promote a larger, more robust national security unmanned system capability, and recognize the urgent need to rapidly develop and deploy more Unmanned Systems in support of ongoing civil, military, and law enforcement operations: “It’s definitely a powerful caucus,” said Alex Bronstein-Moffly, an analyst with First Street Research Group, a D.C.-based company that analyzes lobbying data. “It’s probably up there in the more powerful caucuses that sort of is not talked about.” And, he notes that, caucus members are well placed to influence government spending and regulations (Replogle, 2012).

Congressman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-Calif.) is the co-chair of the caucus. Notably, McKeon also serves as the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. It is noteworthy that the caucus includes eight members of the House Committee on Appropriations, the body that has substantial control over the federal government’s purse strings. Many of the drone caucus members are supported financially by the industry they endorse. According to Bronstein-Moffly’s data, the 58 drone caucus members received a total of \$2.3 million in contributions from political action committees affiliated with drone manufacturers since 2011. Furthermore, 21 members of the drone caucus represent

border states. These congressmen received about \$1 million in deposits to their campaign coffers from top large drone makers in the 2010 and 2012 election cycles, according to information reported by the Center for Responsive Politics and analyzed by Fronteras Desk and Investigative Newsource (Replogle, 2012; Wolverton, 2012a). For example, General Atomics is among the top three all-time campaign contributors to California Congressmen Brian Bilbray, Ken Calvert, Jerry Lewis, and Buck McKeon.

PUTTING THE PARTS TOGETHER

Nuclear Weapons Technologies are developing along with new capacities for delivery, particularly remote delivery. The staggering budget for this dangerous drift is staunchly defended by corporate lobbyists and gigantic contracts are awarded out of public view. The lines distinguishing larger nuclear weapons from those designed for battle are being crossed and a new growth industry of drones offers many nations and non-state actors the potential to launch very destructive weapons. . The world is quickly moving toward a matrix of surveillance vehicles of unknown origin and likely soon to include nuclear weapons. This is not the world that sane people wish to hand off to our children. The corporations and the members of congress most centrally involved in these changes are known but maintain a low public profile and the financial institutions funding them are among the world's largest and most powerful. If the 1 percent are now funding potential annihilation then the 99% should take notice. We cannot boycott nuclear weapons since they are not consumer products. But Occupy Wall Street has provided a model for going to where the money is with a large spotlight. We can pressure banks for divestiture. We can make the contributions to the informal doomsday caucus and the official drone caucus a matter of public record.

The Abolition Coalition combines some of the best informed scientists and attorneys with a network of anti-nuclear groups. We can help Occupy efforts to highlight the nuclear war and drone beneficiaries. The experiment of life on earth is too precious for us to allow it to disappear.

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