

GOOD FRIDAY 2023 AT LIVERMORE LAB
Remarks of Marylia Kelley, Tri-Valley CAREs

Hi, I'm Marylia Kelley, the Executive Director of Tri-Valley CAREs and a Livermore resident for the past 47 years. Tri-Valley CAREs is a nonprofit organization that acts to change U.S. policy by stopping the further development of nuclear weapons and working tirelessly for their elimination. We also address the environmental and health effects of nuclear development... at Livermore Lab and throughout the nuclear weapons complex.

And, I have a special dedication to share: The Ecumenical Peace Institute, the Livermore Conversion Project and Tri-Valley CAREs are devoting today's Good Friday witness to the life and incredible work of our friend Daniel Ellsberg as he struggles with a likely fatal cancer. Dan's countless contributions to peace, justice, government accountability, and the abolition of nuclear weapons cannot be overstated.

He has asked all of us to continue the struggle – and here, on this day, at the Livermore Lab gates where Dan has risked arrest many times, we answer that call.

[Why are we here on Good Friday?](#)

We gather at the West Gate of the Livermore Lab while scientists, engineers and support personnel drive in on their way to work. Many will spend today creating new weapons of nuclear mass destruction. Livermore Lab is **one of two locations** that design every nuclear warhead and bomb in the U.S. stockpile. (*The other is the Los Alamos Lab in NM.*)

Livermore Lab is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration. The Lab is operated by a consortium of contractors, including Bechtel Corporation and the University of California, which has managed Livermore Lab since it was founded in 1952.

It is fitting that we are here today to reflect on what is being sacrificed in the name of so-called nuclear deterrence.

Many times I have heard workers inside this fence line tell me that nuclear deterrence keeps the peace. But in truth it does the opposite. For example, it's clear that Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine turns that myth of deterrence on its head; it is Russia's nuclear stockpile that emboldened Putin's aggression.

And, as Dan Ellsberg has pointed out many times, the U.S. has not only used nuclear weapons literally in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it has used them in veiled and not so veiled threats over the decades since.

Today, U.S. nuclear weapons policy is at an inflection point. Rethinking our peoples' safety and security is essential. Escalating the funding for multiple novel warheads carries financial and technical risks while it intensifies nuclear dangers and adds fuel to the fire of a spiraling global arms race. The U.S. and Russia hold approximately 90% of the world's nuclear weapons. Bi-lateral, as well as multi-lateral diplomacy, must be soberly considered and creatively centered in U.S. actions.

The entry into force in 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons challenges the U.S. and the other nuclear weapons states and their allies to re-examine the role of nuclear weapons in policy and practice. Catastrophic climate change effects, needed research to prevent pandemics, other human needs, and the dramatically increasing costs for nuclear weapons "modernization" all beg for a reassessment of our security priorities and call us to realign spending to meet peoples' safety needs on the ground – where they live.

I am reminded today of something Dr. King said: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom."

On this Good Friday we must consider King's words and confront the Biden Administration's budget request for the coming fiscal year. The President's requested \$886 Billion for the Pentagon and the Department of Energy's weapons activities. That's even more than last year. The funding specifically for nuclear weapons is also on the rise to \$56.5 Billion, and increase of nearly \$6 Billion over last year's request.

Here, at Livermore Lab, well over \$2 billion is requested for the coming year, and more than 80% of that total is for the nuclear "weapons activities." Therefore, when I speak about what goes on *inside* this classified fence line, it is fitting to begin with Livermore Lab's central role in driving a new and dangerous global arms race.

One new warhead that Livermore is developing is intended expressly for a "sneak" nuclear attack on an unsuspecting population anywhere in the world. This warhead is for what's called the "**Long-Range Stand Off**" weapon. It is intended for pilots to be able to "stand off" a target by thousands of miles and launch a precisely guided, radar evading nuclear weapon. By any measure Livermore's new warhead for this air-launched cruise missile is an offensive first-use weapon. The government is spending more than a billion dollars in the coming year for this new warhead, called the W80-4.

Livermore Lab plans to also create a version of this warhead that would be placed on small attack subs that do not now have any nuclear weapons on them. The Biden Administration budget request does not include money for this particular warhead, but there are military hawks in Congress, allied with Livermore Lab, who plan to fund this warhead alteration anyway – just like they did last year.

Livermore Lab is developing another new warhead, called the W87-1, to sit atop a new intercontinental ballistic missile, called the Sentinel, being developed by the Pentagon. The W87-1 is the first warhead being designed with 100% new components since the announced end of what now must be called the first cold war. The government also plans to spend more than a billion dollars on this W87-1 warhead in the coming fiscal year.

Livermore's W87-1 warhead is a central reason the U.S. is planning to expand plutonium production at 2 locations - the Los Alamos Lab in NM and the Savannah River Site in SC. In fact every plutonium pit that will be produced for approximately 12-years will go inside a W87-1 warhead. The budget line to fund expanded plutonium pit production is nearly \$3 Billion for the coming year alone.

Overall, this so-called “nuclear modernization program” is slated to cost the U.S. upwards of **\$2 trillion over 30-years**. *When you hear that we as a nation cannot afford **what Dr. King called programs of social uplift** - I invite you to think about the \$2 trillion for nuclear weapons infrastructure that the US is buying into without much discussion.*

On this Good Friday I want to add a few words about what is being **sacrificed** by the nuclear weapons work specifically at Livermore Lab. And I want to conclude with some “**good news**” about what we can all do to created change.

Here at Livermore and globally, our environment and out health have been sacrificed in the name of nuclear development. Tri-Valley CAREs has documented that more than 1 million curies of radiation has been released into our air by Livermore Lab, right here in the Bay Area.

What is one million curies? According to documents, this is equal to the amount of radiation deposited on the people of Hiroshima. It's been dribbled out of stacks on these buildings over many years and not all at once in a flash of blinding heat. None-the-less, we too are its victims. Livermore Lab employees have experienced high levels of cancers and other illnesses stemming from toxic and radioactive exposures.

Past epidemiological studies have shown that children who are born in – or moved to – the City of Livermore have experienced more cancers than other, similar children elsewhere. And cancer is just one negative health outcome from radiation and toxic chemical exposure.

The soils and groundwater aquifer at the Livermore Lab main site when I am standing – and at the Livermore Lab's site 300 high explosives testing range near Tracy – have both been polluted by nuclear weapons activities. Both locations are on the EPA's "Superfund" list of most polluted sites in the country.

The good news? There are effective actions we can all take to change the future. Like Dr. King, we understand that true security and stability are grounded in peace and justice, and not in the continuing threat of nuclear carnage. We can and we must act for the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

We have a new tool in the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As many of you know, the TPNW entered into force and became part of international law in January 2021. The U.S. and other nuclear weapons states have declared their opposition to this treaty, but more and more countries are continuing to ratify it and join its regime.

Here in the U.S. we have a fresh opportunity this spring to highlight the TPNW. Congressman James McGovern of Mass has introduced H.Res.77, which expressly embraces the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It has 12 co-sponsors including Rep. Barbara Lee. H.Res.77 is seeking additional cosponsors and making calls or writing letters to your member of Congress is one concrete action you can take to move our country away from what Dr. King called "spiritual doom." It is, I believe, a fitting action on Good Friday. Similarly, calls and letters to Congress urging a defunding of Livermore Lab's nuclear warhead activities are needed.

And, there are other creative actions you can take to promote a world free of nuclear weapons and war. Check the Ecumenical Peace Institute website and the Tri-Valley CAREs website for more ideas. Together we can do this.

Thank you – and peace to you.

--Marylia Kelley, Good Friday 2023, at the West Gate of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.