



Sacramento Area Peace Action

Newsletter

November
2020

Working to end U.S. militarism since 1983

909 12th St, Suite 118, Sacramento, CA 95814 916-448-7157 www.sacpeace.org

UN Nuke Ban Ratified!

By B. Jaensch

75 years after their first use, nukes are on the verge of becoming “illegal weapons of mass destruction”

Although none of the nine nuclear weapons states has signed onto the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on October 24, 2020, this Treaty

reached the required number of ratifications for its entry into force. The three nations that took it over the 50-state line were Honduras, Jamaica and Nauru.

The Treaty will become effective 90 days after the October 24, 2020 date and nuclear weapons will be prohibited weapons of mass

destruction, just like chemical weapons and biological weapons.

Unfortunately, U.N. laws are too often NOT enforced. Although this Treaty will certainly be no exception, should the horror of another use of nuclear weapons occur, it will be an illegal use. Illegal is illegal.



For more information, go to: icanw.org

An Upcoming International Webinar on Nukes!
Target 2045: A new rallying call for nuclear weapons elimination
Monday November 2, 2020
7-8:30 am Pacific Time
[Click here to register.](#)

...but the US Is Still Addicted to Nukes

Latest defense spending news from Peace Action's affiliate list

The Pentagon has raised to **\$95.8 billion** the estimated cost of fielding a new fleet of land-based nuclear missiles to replace the Minuteman 3 arsenal that has operated continuously for 50 years. The estimate has increased about \$10 billion from four years ago. The new intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, are part of a near-total replacement of the American nuclear force over the next few decades at a total cost of more than \$1.2 trillion.

Last month the Air Force awarded Northrop Grumman a **\$13.3 billion** contract for engineering and manufacturing development of the new missiles. The total “lifecycle” cost, including operating and sustaining the missiles over their expected lifetime is set at **\$263.9 billion**.

The current fleet of 400 missiles, each one armed with a single nuclear warhead, is based in underground silos in Montana, (*Cont. on p. 4*)

Threat of Vote Suppression in 2020

By B. Jaensch

Voting in federal elections in the United States basically means choosing either the Republican Party candidate or the Democratic Party candidate. When a so-called 3rd party presidential candidate has traction – e.g., Ralph Nader in 2000 and Jill Stein in 2016 -- they get blamed for the losing party's loss. Two-party elections bear some similarities to team sports and just as teams seek any advantage to win, so do political parties. For political parties, one way is vote suppression.

There are two different categories of vote suppression. One involves actions or activities intended to discourage/prevent eligible voters from even casting a ballot. The other involves situations and processes that dilute or even nullify the impact of how voters voted.

Discouraging/preventing voting are things like poll taxes, overzealous purging of voter rolls, shortening the days and hours of early voting, hours-long waits at polling places in certain neighborhoods, etc. Discriminatory impediments and hurdles. Tools of past and

present racism.

One way to lessen the impact of votes actually cast is something both major political parties scramble to do every decade after the census: Gerrymender, i.e., (re)configure congressional districts into really bizarre shapes to their advantage.



A more frequent, but perhaps less obvious example of how voters' votes get diluted or even nullified, is influence: dark money (i.e., big amounts of mystery donor money), big money donors whose identity is known, special interest groups, lobbyists, etc. When that happens, the candidate for House of Representatives and/or the Senate will really be working for some entity other than for the voters who elected them.

There are differences and

similarities, between the who/what/how of court appointments and the who/what/how of presidential and congressional election candidates, but on the 2nd day of Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) used his allotted 30 minutes to give hearing viewers a lesson

about who, what and how this works in regard to lifetime federal judge and justice appointments. (Look for the video “Sen. Whitehouse Speaks at the 2nd Day of Hearing for Judge Barrett in the Judiciary Committee” at <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/videos>)

In 2020, the Supreme Court

changed dramatically. Plus, of course, it's a presidential election year. Add to that, that it's a census year. Although the Trump administration did not ultimately include a citizenship question on the census, in early October, the Supreme Court, in an 8-1 ruling (Justice Sonia Sotomayor), permitted the Trump administration to cut short the census reporting period. This will almost certainly result in an undercount of persons of color, the poor

and young people. And for the next decade where they live will be shortchanged of certain federal funds. It may change the configuration of congressional districts or cut the number of congressional districts.

This year the presidential election is all about (defeating) Donald Trump. In the Democratic primaries, Biden fared badly. Then, Rep. Jim Clyburn endorsed him on the eve of the South Carolina primary. (Clayburn is the 3rd, highest ranking Democrat in the House. Nancy Pelosi is Speaker and Steny Hoyer is # 2.)

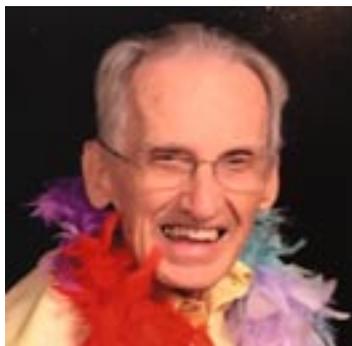
Kamala Harris had dropped out long before that, but within days after Biden's win, other Democrats simply ended their campaigns.

We've got four decades of information about Joe Biden. Less than one Senate term for Kamala Harris. What about the Democratic Party platform? The issues? NOT Trump!

This election should energize us to double-down. To keep tabs on who got elected. Who are their campaign donors? Which pieces of legislation do they author/co-sponsor/support? What do they vote against? Do you agree? If not let them know. What do they issue press releases about? When do they remain silent? Why?

Democracy is not a spectator sport. And not paying attention is a third kind of vote

Meet your Board Members!



Jerry Frink

I'm a transplant from the mid-west - Rockford, Illinois. I came to California in 1970 to be gay. I'm the guy that wears the feather boas at the demonstrations!

I started wearing the boas when the young Bush said he was against gay marriage. Once a woman objected. She said we were taking on too many issues. We had a meeting at a nearby restaurant after one of the demonstrations at 16th and J, and they decided I could continue. I'm grateful that Peace Action had room for me. I'm 86 years old and I'm grateful I can still demonstrate.

I'm so grateful for the many years that Winnie Detweiler was able to head our organization. Our board has been so agile in jumping into the breach after her passing.

The cause of peace is something that really grabs you! Caring for other people - and the world - will never go out of style.

Thank you all for being a part of something that is so positive and so vital!

suppression. A self-imposed one.

For 30+ years, Sacramento Area Peace Action has worked to reduce militarism, to abolish nuclear weapons, to oppose injustice, and to promote environmental sustainability.

It's time to re-energize and enhance activism. What's at stake? Trillions of dollars of our tax money. Tens of millions of refugees. The lives of hundreds of thousands. If not now, when? If not us, who?

Gulf of Mexico Coastline Polluted by Oil

By Gary Meyer

Earlier this month, a 5-mile stretch of shoreline on Perdido Key, located west of Pensacola Florida, was despoiled with oil. As of now, the exact source of the oil is unknown. However, what is known: storm surges caused by Hurricane Sally brought major flooding to Pensacola and nearby Alabama in mid-September. Two deaths and \$309 million in damages were reported countywide. Hurricane surges likely stirred up the oil from elsewhere in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Interior Department has been on oil companies to permanently plug thousands of abandoned oil wells since 2010, when the Deepwater Horizon blowout inspired that

enforcement. The policy aimed to make energy production safer and prevent catastrophic leaks at wells, many of which have been improperly abandoned for decades. However, many today are not even monitored for leaks. See figure (generated 10 years ago) below for general locations of these abandoned oil

wells on the Gulf coast.

Ten years ago environmental groups welcomed the directive. “This is an important step in cleaning up what has become an offshore dumping ground for the offshore oil and gas industry” said Peter Galvin of the Center for Biological Diversity, adding “old wells CAN and DO leak oil”

IF THE GULF IS TO BE RETURNED TO PRE-OIL INDUSTRY DECIMATION CONDITIONS, IT HAD BETTER BE DONE SOON.

Larger and more powerful hurricanes will continue to reveal the unseen blight.

Contact the Center for Biological Diversity for more information.

Abandoned oil wells in the Gulf

An Associated Press investigation found that more than 27,000 abandoned wells in the Gulf have been ignored for decades. The well beneath BP's Deepwater Horizon rig was being sealed with cement for temporary abandonment when it blew April 20.



SOURCES: The Associated Press, Minerals Management Service AP

(New Nukes, from p. 1) North Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska. Their numbers are governed in part by the 2010 New START treaty with Russia, which is due to expire in February. Russia wants to extend the treaty but the Trump administration has set conditions not accepted by Moscow.

The Trump administration affirmed its commitment to fielding a new generation of ICBMs in a 2018 review of

nuclear policy. “The ICBM force is highly survivable against any but a large-scale nuclear attack,” the review concluded. “To destroy U.S. ICBMs on the ground, an adversary would need to launch a precisely coordinated attack with hundreds of high-yield and accurate warheads.”

The U.S. also is building a new fleet of ballistic missile submarines to replace the current Ohio-class strategic subs; a new long-range nuclear-

capable bomber to replace the B-2 stealth aircraft; a next-generation air-launched nuclear cruise missile; and a new nuclear command and communications system. It also is working on updated warheads, including an ICBM warhead replacement for an estimated \$14.8 billion.

The nuclear modernization program was launched by the Obama administration and has been continued by President Donald Trump.

Did Someone Say “Blood for oil?”

By Mario Galvan

Ever since the US wars in the Middle East began, we’ve been hearing “No blood for oil.” That sad tale goes back at least to World War I, when British troops seized the oil fields in southern Iraq from the Turks. Britain had switched from coal to oil to power their navy, and alas, there was no oil in England. They had to look overseas, and their eyes fell on Iraq.

Jumping forward in time, let’s look at 9-11 in New York. After the initial “terrorist” fuss, the word began to slip out about a

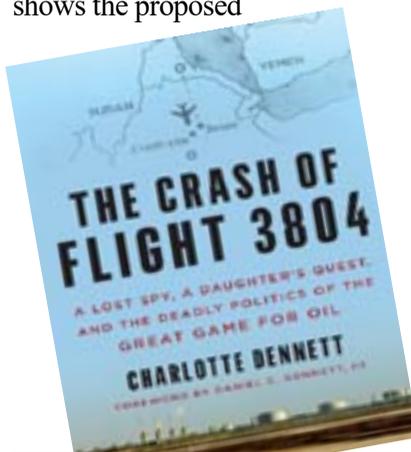


pipeline that was supposed to run through Afghanistan. Was that why we invaded Afghanistan instead of Saudi Arabia? But after the invasion of Iraq, it was clear that oil had been the underlying motive all along.

Now, a few days ago I ran across this amazing story on what the US has been doing in the Middle East. After the end of World War II, we were spying on our former allies, the British and French, who now had “Mandates” in the oil-rich

Middle East. The US was working with Saudi Arabia on a pipeline to the Mediterranean, where oil could be shipped to Europe or the Americas.

Even before WW II, the first pipelines had been begun from Iraq to the sea. The 1930’s map on the left shows their paths. The dotted line on that map shows the proposed



pipeline the US was working on with Saudi Arabia.

There are several current conflicts in the Middle East that are also “lubricated” by oil, in Syria, Gaza, and Yemen. The white line off the coast of Gaza (middle map) shows the area of

recently discovered oil fields. Can that be why Israel is doing everything it can to suffocate Palestine, which includes Gaza?

In Yemen, the discovery of oil there is driving the conflict with the Saudis, who support a government-in-exile that lays claim to significant oil fields.

An online interview with the author of *The Crash of Flight 3804* opened my eyes to all of this! I’ll share a link to it down below. I guarantee that it will leave your head spinning!

I’ll end with a quote from the book’s author: “*There is so much the American people*



have not been told.”

Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange, and Edward Snowden show us what happens to people who tell us the truth: that the wars to which we sacrifice our youth, our economy, and the lives of millions around the world are planned behind our backs by people more interested in power and wealth than peace, justice, and human rights.

It’s time we stopped letting them run the world!

([Click here for the interview.](#))

Popular Uprisings Against Iraqi Gov't

By Mario Galvan

17 years after the US invaded Iraq, things are not going very well. Just last month events were held to celebrate the first anniversary of a mass uprising that took place on October 1, 2019. In cities across Iraq, protests erupted against a government accused of corruption and ignoring the needs of the people. The government responded with a brutal repression that cost the lives of between 500-700 persons.

Still, the protesters won some major victories; they toppled the current government, forcing new elections. Above all, they raised the consciousness of the people to the possibility of real change.

The uprising (some called it a “revolution”) was led by young people and the poor, but was joined by middle class and union members. It grew to a massive size, something never seen before in Iraq.

It was a clear rejection of a political system imposed on the nation from outside that was stealing the wealth of the nation for the benefit of foreign interests. People complained of a “Green Zone Regime” of political actors – often exiles put in place by the US. They were facilitating the extraction

of resources from the country while, at the same time, the local population was being neglected. 99% of the nation’s income is from oil, but that sector employs only 1% of the population. Even in Basra, one of the richest oil-producing areas, most of the population still lacks basic necessities. Most of the people



who have steady jobs work for the government, and the rest scramble to eke out a living. Even farmers are suffering due to imports of food from outside started under the “Oil for Food” program under the pre-war US sanctions.

“We want a country!” and “We want a life!” were some of the popular slogans of the protest. After the destruction of the Iraqi state by the US invasion, reconstruction has

not been achieved. The protests weren’t so much anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist as they were over “bread and butter” issues that affect the daily lives of the majority of the people.

Along with high levels of unemployment, there is an ongoing atmosphere of violence. The country is “hyper-militarized” by competing militias, and kidnappings and murders are commonplace. This arises not only from the US invasion, but also from the internal war against the rise of ISIS in northern Iraq, and the “proxy war” being carried on in Iraq by Iran and the US. The US assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani upon his arrival at the Baghdad airport is the latest escalation of this conflict.

Though the Iraqi government has asked the US to withdraw its military forces, the US almost certainly wants to hold on to its bases in Iraq as part of its attempts to “contain” Iranian influence in the region. And, of course, to keep Iraqi oil flowing to the US.

This article is based on notes were taken from a recent webinar. To see a recording of the webinar, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iml3ml4l7aQ&feature=youtu.be>

Our World Desperately Needs A New Path to Peace

By Mario Galvan

(This is a personal opinion piece, not the official position of Peace Action.)

Why, after ages of human misery and “civilization,” we continue to treat each other in such barbaric and uncivil ways? How has the incredible intelligence and creativity of which we are capable left us at the brink of self-extinction and planetary catastrophe?

There’s no one answer to these vast and existential questions, but one thing is clear; we are on the wrong road, and need to make a change.

War is not an accident, or an inherent part of our

human nature. It’s a product of our current social order, which is based on the principle of domination, and maintained by violence. That we have lived this way for most of human history doesn’t mean that we have to keep on living (and dying!) this way forever.

History also shows that we can learn, create new ideas, and build new things. We can turn from domination to partnership, and begin sharing, instead of fighting over, the wealth of resources the world offers us.

But to even have a chance to build that better future, we

must eliminate the deadly threat of nuclear war. We’ve created the possibility of destroying the world as we know it in minutes. Everything we love, cherish, and hold dear is at risk, every moment of every day. We can’t allow this to continue!

But the sad reality we have to face is that, we have no control over this. Despite all our talk of democracy, we have no real



voice in our own government. Two political parties, funded by wealthy interests, have taken control of our government.

In the public spectacle our elections have become, the two parties control the process. No other party or independent candidate has a chance to succeed. Our democracy is in a coma, kept on life support by political machines that pretend to speak in its name.

The “American Dream” has become a nightmare for most of us. And as long as we’re willing to be political sleepwalkers in this dream of democracy, the

nightmare will continue.

The “new path” opens up before us as we awake to the reality of the political machinery in which we allow ourselves to be held powerless. Only then will we be able to disrupt the age-old pattern of domination and control of the masses by an elite few. The change need not be violent. We don’t have to “destroy the village in order to save it.”

According to the U.S. Constitution, we actually *do* have political power! Let’s find the courage to use it

ourselves, and break free of the political machines!

The first step is to change our voter registration. We need to quit the political parties, and stop funding them. For now, we may still have to vote for one or the other, but if we can learn to work together, we can become an independent political force. A handful of us in Congress could shift the balance of power.

A better world, more just and peaceful, will only happen when – *and if* – we rise to the challenge of real democracy, and take control of ourselves and our government.

November Peace Events

[Click here](#) to go to our online calendar for **hot links** to all events below!

Sunday, Nov 1, 4pm, Online film and discussion: **Brooklyn Inshallah**. Film streaming Oct 25-Nov 1, discussion Nov 1. [Click to register](#).

Monday, Nov 2, 7 - 8:30am, Webinar: Target 2045: A new rallying call for nuclear weapons elimination. [Click to register](#).

Thursday, Nov 5, 4:30 - 6pm, Stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. 16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.

Monday, Nov 9, 6pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Poetry Night. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Tuesday, Nov 10, 6pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Palestine Cooking. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Wednesday, Nov 11, 6pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Palestinian Calligraphy . [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Thursday, Nov 12, 4:30 - 6pm, Stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. 16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.

Thursday, Nov 12, 6pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Dabke with Al-Juthoor. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Friday, Nov 13, 5pm, Online: International Concert Against the Blockade of Cuba. [Click to register](#).

Friday, Nov 13, 6pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Comedy Night. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Saturday, Nov 14, 11am, Online International Conference Webinar for The Normalization of US-Cuba Relations. [Click to register](#).

Saturday, Nov 14, 11am, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Celebrities. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Saturday, Nov 14, 6pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Music. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Sunday, Nov 15, 11am, Online International Conference Webinar for The Normalization of US-Cuba Relations. [Click to register](#).

Sunday, Nov 15, 2pm, **Palestinian Cultural Festival**: Politics. [Click to Register](#). FMI: palestineday@pac-sf.org

Thursday, Nov 19, 4:30 - 6pm, Support Palestinian rights. Stop U.S. militarism and wars. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. **End U.S. aid to Israel. & Boycott companies aiding Israel's abuses**. FMI: 916-448-7157.

Sunday, Nov 22, 12noon, Webinar with Ilan Pappé and Diana Buttu - What Next for Palestine? [Click to register](#). FMI: 510-548-0542, meca@mecaforpeace.org.

Thursday, Nov 26, 4:30pm, No Vigil at 16th & J. The stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil will resume next Thursday. FMI: sacpeace@dcn.org, 916.448.7157