

Resurrecting Nuclear Sanity

In the tumult of these times, much wrong is being disclosed. What was once tolerated –such as disproportionate harm to people of color—is no longer accepted. We are urged to face that we have been operating under some shared delusions of what security means and what violence accomplishes. We are encouraged to do our own individual and cultural moral reckoning in the company of other seekers of the Beloved Community.

May this also be a time of grappling with the delusions involved in nuclear weapons. For this effort, we can turn to *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner* by Daniel Ellsberg. Ellsberg is famous as the insider whistleblower related to the release of the Pentagon Papers (written for the Pentagon) which chronicled how the US public had been lied to related to the Vietnam War—an effort both painful and pointless.

But beyond Vietnam, Ellsberg was among the brilliant minds devoted to planning how to annihilate the world – quickly and automatically without human intervention – on behalf of US taxpayers. Contrary to what the public thought, the nuclear arms buildup has not been a matter of deterrence of nuclear attack on the United States, but rather the illusionary strategy of improving first-strike capability. The huge public expenditures related to nuclear weapons are based on the concept that one superpower might survive. In reality, any discharge of a nuclear weapon by Russia or the US would set off a chain of events that would result in the omnicide of nuclear winter. Ellsberg writes now appalled at the incapacity of insiders like him to recognize and renounce the catastrophes they were planning. So many of us are complicit in the banality of evil-doing.

The Joint Chiefs expected to kill with our own weapons more than half a billion humans within months. “How to describe that, other than insanity? Should the Pentagon officials and their subordinates have been institutionalized? But that was precisely the problem: they already were. Their institutions not only promoted this insanity, they demanded it. And still do.”

He further asks: “Does any nation on earth have a right to possess such a capability? A right to threaten – by its simple possession of that capability – the continued existence of all other nations and their populations, their cities, and civilization as a whole?” Ellsberg’s research has not identified any official, in or out of office, not even in private notes, who has raised that question of moral right.

Meanwhile, we remain at risk that an electronic false alarm (which occurred in Hawaii recently), an accidental detonation, or a terrorist blow will trigger a quick pre-emptive attack from land-based missile forces kept on high alert under the false assumption that firing them early enough would limit damage.

Sanity may be on the way, however! Instead of refurbishing those missiles, current legislation, the “Investing in Cures Before Missiles” ICBM Act would save up to \$96 billion by halting development of a new ICBM. Contact your federal representative and senators! Rep. Ilhan Omar is a co-sponsor.
(<https://www.psr.org/blog/time-for-congress-to-re-think-security/>)

Ellsberg calls for the long-neglected duty of the US Congress to hold hearings and demand the truth about nuclear targeting and the prospective consequences of nuclear war. He further asks for courageous whistle-blowers to alert their countries and the world to fatally reckless secret policies.

“It should be commonly recognized that no stake whatever, no cause, no principle, no consideration of honor or obligation or prestige or maintaining leadership in current alliances – still less, no concern for remaining in office, or maintaining a particular power structure, or sustaining jobs, profits, votes – can justify maintaining any risk whatever of causing the near extinction of human and other animal life on this planet. Omnicide – threatened, prepared, or carried out – is flatly illegitimate, unacceptable, as an instrument of national policy; indeed, it cannot be regarded as anything less than criminal, immoral, evil.”

And may our brother Lutherans--in the synod, the nation, and the world--also press for the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – per the OSLC resolution being considered April 23-24.

{For info on the nuclear winter see
https://www.icanw.org/climate_disruption_new_study}

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