

Seven of the 11 US participants in part of the “20 Weeks for 20 Bombs” campaign to remove US nuclear weapons from Germany (pictured) have served a combined total of 36 years incarcerated for antinuclear protests in the United States.

“The delegation\* wants to draw attention to the danger, uselessness, and illegality of US nuclear weapons deployed in Germany,” said John LaForge, Co-director of Nukewatch.



STEVE BAGGARLY, Catholic Worker/Plowshares activist, Norfolk, Virg.



KATHY BOYLAN, Catholic Worker/Plowshares activist, Washington, DC



ZARA BROWN, Photographer, Minneapolis, Minn.



CARMELLA COLE, Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, Knoxville, Tenn.



SUSAN CRANE, Plowshares activist/Catholic Worker, Redwood City, Calif.



Sr. CAROL GILBERT (L), Plowshares activist, Baltimore, Md.

Sr. ARDETH PLATTE (R), Plowshares activist, Baltimore, Md.



RALPH HUTCHISON, Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, Knoxville, Tenn.



JOHN LaFORGE, Nuke-watch staff/Plowshares activist, Luck, Wis.



LEONA MORGAN, Diné No Nukes, Albuquerque, New Mexico



BONNIE URFER, Nuke-watch/Plowshares activist, Luck, Wis.

## *New H-Bomb Production Defies Public Opinion, Common Sense, Nonproliferation Treaty, and Military Experts*

The US is the only government that deploys nuclear weapons in other countries. Air Force B61 hydrogen bombs are used in The Netherlands (20), Germany (20), Italy (40), Belgium (20), and Turkey (50-90).<sup>1</sup>

In January 2014, the Obama administration approved and Congress fully funded development and production of a new nuclear warhead — under a program dubbed “life extension” — known as B61-12.

The new device is a so-called “variable yield” thermonuclear bomb, and is designed to have four separate explosive yields, to be chosen like from a menu: 0.3 kilotons (kt); 1.5 kt; 10 kt; and 50 kt.<sup>2</sup> The dial-a-massacre weapon can burn with between 50 and 83 times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb that turned 140,000 people into powder and ash. Yet in the cold blooded jargon of nuclear war planners the B61-12 is known as “low-yield.” Wall St. writer Jeremy Bender called it “tiny”<sup>3</sup>

With a projected cost of \$12.2 billion the B61-12 may be the most expensive nuclear bomb in history. At about \$25 million apiece, and weighing 700 pounds, each bomb will *cost more than if it were made of solid gold* (\$14.6 million). Cancelling the program will save \$3.7 billion between 2017 and 2021, and \$6 billion overall.<sup>4</sup>

For 50 years the B61 has been a federal jobs program for the Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico, which has engineered 15 different versions. Five B61 types are still in use: the B61-3, -4, -10, -7; and -11. The Obama administration announced plans to retire three of them and “convert” the B61-4 into the B61-12.

According to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 300 of the current 820 B61s are kept at bases with B61-capable aircraft, “including 184 B61s deployed in Europe.” About 250 B61-7 and 50 B61-11 bombs are stored at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri and at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico.

While still in just an engineering phase, the first production of B61-12s could begin in 2022, and altogether about 480 may be built.

“One NATO exercise in 1962 estimated that 10 to 15 million German civilians would be killed in a tacti-

cal nuclear exchange,” *Foreign Affairs* reported.<sup>5</sup> The self-destructiveness of such war plans helps explain why the US European Command gave up “advocating for maintaining nuclear weapons in Europe,” the authors said. EUCOM leaders told an oversight task force in 2008 there would be “no military downside to the unilateral withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Europe.” They noted that, “prominent critics ... have long argued that the military rationale for keeping nuclear weapons in Europe is an anachronism.”

### “Militarily useless”

Opposition to the B61s and their replacement is gaining strength in the US and Europe where high-level politicians have called them “militarily useless.” Gen. James Cartwright, former Vice Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the B61s “redundant,” and Gen. Colin Powell favored eliminating them in the 1990s when he was Chair of the Joint Chiefs.<sup>6</sup> In 2010, five NATO partners — Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Holland and Norway — asked that the B61s be permanently removed from Europe. In 2012, NATO’s 28 ministers pledged to work for a world without nuclear weapons. In Germany, thanks to widespread protest and education, every major political party has formally called for withdrawal of the B61s. In one widely published article, former NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes and three senior Belgian politicians wrote, “US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe have lost all military importance.”

Germany’s *Der Spiegel* online reported Dec. 9, 2016: “By becoming a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1975, the Germans committed ‘not to receive the transfer of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly.’ During negotiations over German reunification in 1990, then-Chancellor Kohl also affirmed Germany’s ‘renunciation’ of the manufacture, possession and control of nuclear weapons.”

## “Prison Gang” Peace Delegation

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ing it more accurate and more likely to be used. New nuclear weapons are unlawful under the NPT, and even President Barak Obama’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review required that “upgrades” to the Pentagon’s current H-bombs must not have “new capabilities.” Overall cost of the new bomb, which is not yet in production, is estimated to be up to \$12 billion.

### Historic German Resolution to Evict US H-bombs

The March 26 start date of “20 Weeks for 20 Bombs” is doubly significant for Germans and others eager to see the bombs retired. First, on March 26, 2010, massive public support pushed Germany’s parliament, the Bundestag, to vote overwhelmingly — across all parties — to have the government remove the US weapons.

Second, between March 27 and 31 in New York, the United Nations General Assembly launched formal negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. The UN General Assembly will convene a second session — June 15 to July 7 — to produce a legally binding “convention” banning any manufacture, possession or deployment of the bomb, in accordance with Article 6 of the NPT. (Similar treaty bans already forbid poison, gas weapons, land mines, cluster bombs, and biological weapons.) Individual governments can later ratify or reject the treaty. Several nuclear-armed states led by the US worked unsuccessfully to derail the negotiations in October 2016.

“We want Germany to be nuclear weapons free,” said Marion Küpker, a disarmament activist and organizer of 20 Weeks for 20 Bombs with DFG-VK, Germany’s oldest peace organization. “The government must abide by the 2010 resolution, throw out the B61s, and not replace them,” Küpker said.

Germany’s current government under Angela Merkel followed the US lead in boycotting the opening UN session in spite of the huge majority of Germans that supports both the UN treaty ban and the removal of US nuclear weapons. A staggering 93 percent support the treaty according to a poll commissioned by the German chapter of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War published in March last year. A whopping 85 percent agreed that the US nuclear bombs

should be ousted from the country, and 88 percent said they oppose US plans to replace current bombs with the new B61-12.

**More info about the B61s is available at [nukewatchinfo.com](http://nukewatchinfo.com), or call or write for copies of these & more articles:**

“B61-Life-Extension-Program: Costs and Policy Considerations,” The Stimson Center, Aug. 14, 2016

“Wild Turkey with H-Bombs: Failed Coup Brings Calls for Denuclearization,” July 28, 2016

“Undeterred: Amid Terror Attacks in Europe, US H-bombs Still Deployed There,” June 17, 2016

“Nuclear Weapons Proliferation: Made in the USA,” May 27, 2015

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### Nukewatch

<[nukewatch1@lakeland.ws](mailto:nukewatch1@lakeland.ws)> 715-472-4185;  
<[www.nukewatchinfo.org](http://www.nukewatchinfo.org)>

\*For details on the US delegation:  
<https://buechel-atombombenfrei.jimdo.com/international/u-s-biographies-in-english-2017/>

<sup>1</sup>Hans Kristensen & Robert Norris, “US Nuclear Weapons, 2015,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March/April, 2015; Vol. 71, No. 2, pp. 107-119.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Kristensen & Matthew McKinzie, Fed. of Am. Scientists, Jan. 14, 2016, [https://fas.org/blogs/security/2016/01/b61-12\\_earth-penetration](https://fas.org/blogs/security/2016/01/b61-12_earth-penetration).

<sup>3</sup>*Business Insider*, July 28, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/this-bomb-may-be-the-most-dangerous-in-us-arsenal-2015-7>.

<sup>4</sup>Stimson Center, “B61 Life Extension Program: Cost & Policy Considerations,” August 14, 2016

<sup>5</sup>Barry Blechman & Russell Rumbaugh, “Bombs Away: The Case for Phasing Out US Tactical Nukes in Europe,” *Foreign Affairs*, Jul./Aug. 2014.

<sup>6</sup>Richard Sokolsky & Gordon Adams, *Foreign Affairs*, Feb. 9, 2016.

## “Prison Gang” Peace Delegation Joins International Call to Remove US Nukes from Germany

### Visit to Büchel Air Base Will Bring US Voice to German Campaign

For the first time in a long standing campaign to rid Germany of US H-bombs, a delegation of US peace activists will participate in protests at Büchel Air Base from July 12 to 18. Noteworthy among the 11 delegates are seven activists who have served a total of 36 years in US jails and prisons for protesting nuclear weapons in the United States.

On March 26, nuclear disarmament activists in Germany launched a 20-week-long series of nonviolent protests at Büchel, demanding the withdrawal of the 20 remaining US nuclear weapons deployed there. The actions continue through August 9, the anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan in 1945.

During the campaign’s “international week,” July 12 to 18, disarmament activists from Wisconsin, California, Washington-DC, Virginia, Minnesota, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Maryland will join a coalition of 50 German peace and justice organizations converging on the base. Activists from The Netherlands, France and Belgium will also join the international gathering.

The US delegation is particularly concerned that the United States is planning to produce a totally new hydrogen bomb — the so-called “B61-12” — to replace 20 B61s now at Büchel, and 160 others

still deployed in four other NATO countries — Holland (20), Italy (40), Belgium (20), and Turkey (50-90). This, at a time when the US and most NATO partners boycotted the UN negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

Under a NATO scheme called “nuclear sharing” the five countries still handle and train to use US Air Force B61-3s and -4s. The United States is the only government in the world that arms

other countries with its nuclear weapons. The five US allies claim that their joint nuclear war preparations do not violate the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Principle sections of the NPT prohibit nuclear weapons from being transferred to (Article 1) or accepted from (Article 2) other countries. The Cold War-era “nuclear sharing” began before ratification of the 1968 NPT, so the five states claim exemption from the treaty’s obligations.

“The world wants nuclear disarmament,” said US delegate

Bonnie Urfer, a long-time peace activist and former staffer with the nuclear watchdog group Nukewatch, in Wisconsin. “To waste billions replacing the B61s when they should be eliminated is criminal. It’s like sentencing innocent people to death, considering how many millions need immediate famine relief, emergency shelter, and drinking water,” Urfer said.

Although the planned replacement for the B61s is actually a new weapon — the B61-12 — the Pentagon calls the program “modernization” of the B61-4 in order to skirt other NPT prohibitions. The new device is being touted as the first ever “guided” nuclear bomb, mak-



**US laboratory workers handling a prototype version of the US Air Force’s B61, a modern H-bomb still deployed in Europe at six NATO bases in five countries.**

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