Peace and Social Justice Groups Call for Diversion of Military Spending to Human Needs in the U.S.

*by **Scott Willis**, published on **WAER**, March 3, 2022*
(Press clippings from a sibling group with much overlap)

Activists protest war and military spending in front of the federal building.

About a dozen activists from religious, peace, and justice groups marked the occasion of the Christian holy day of Ash Wednesday to promote diplomacy and non-violence between Russia and Ukraine. They also called for the diversion of military spending to address housing, hunger, and education needs in the U.S.

The gathering greeted parishioners attending Ash Wednesday services at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, then moved to the federal building, where they burned contracts of various weapons manufacturers…

> *"…General Electric Company, contract with the U.S. government $4.4 billion. We hereby burn this contract and divert funds for housing for all Americans."*

Jack Gilroy is events coordinator for local chapter Pax Christi Upstate, which supports the need to proclaim the non-violence teachings of Christ. He's also with Peace Action and Veterans for Peace in the Southern Tier.

> *"We're trying to bring attention not only to the federal government that this is an unbelievable waste, but also to the churches who we believe have a strong reason to take a moral and ethical stance. And, we're not hearing that from them,"*

Gilroy said.

> *"I've seen a fair number of people in the streets here in Syracuse who are homeless, yet we're spending money on hellfire missiles made by Lockheed Martin, which receives $79 billion every year from the federal government."*

Lockheed Martin has a presence here, of course, with a facility in Salina. The activists gathered at the federal building to urge Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand to transform what they call the use of funds for killing to funds for living, such as the environment, health care, education, and addressing poverty and disease. John Amidon says studies show how the U.S. is perpetuating a war mentality with its more than $700 billion dollar budget.

> *"The United States is involved, in one way or another, 85 conflicts right now in the world. Sometimes it's as advisors. Sometimes it's training troops. Sometimes it's supplying arms. But we are fueling conflicts all over the world in one fashion or another,"*

Amidon said.

Protestors gather outide the Federal Building in Syracuse NY protesting the United States Military Industrial Complex. Mar. 2, 2022, Syracuse, NY. (Photo by Max Mimaroglu)

Jack Gilroy says that includes the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

> *"We are here for sure to recognize the terrible leadership of Vladimir Putin. But we're also here to remind people that if we had spent much of our funds that we spent on weapon making for diplomacy and improving conditions in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, etc., then we wouldn't be here today with a crazed individual who has us on the precipice of possible atomic use."*

The activists also denounced the ongoing use of military drones, which they say has cost innocent lives in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq.

***Featured Image:** Protestors gather outide the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse NY protesting the United States Military Industrial Complex. Mar. 2, 2022, Syracuse, NY. (Photo by Max Mimaroglu)*

Scott Willis covers politics, local government, transportation, and arts and culture for WAER. He came to Syracuse from Detroit in 2001, where he began his career in radio as an intern and freelance reporter. Scott is honored and privileged to bring the day's news and in-depth feature reporting to WAER's dedicated and generous listeners. You can find him on twitter @swillisWAER and email him at srwillis@syr.edu.

Organizations calling For an End to US Drone Attacks

by **Jackie Gillis**, published on the **Binghamton Homepage**, December 28, 2021

BINGHAMTON, NY – Organizations from around Upstate New York are working together to call for a congressional investigation into Twenty years of USA killing of Middle East Civilians.

Veterans for Peace, Peace Action of Broome, Upstate Drone Action, and more met outside the Federal Building, where Senator Chuck Schumer office is located.

These organizations are calling upon Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and President Biden to end sanctions, unfreeze funds of Afghanistan Banks to prevent death and starvation in Afghanistan.

Peace Action Board Member, Jack Gilroy, tells the story about what happened to the Ahamdi family several months ago.

> *"They were slaughtered by Lockheed Martin Missiles made just*

> *fifteen point three miles away from Disney World in Orlando Florida, fired from a reaper drone made by the company known as, General Atomics, which is just eighty-three miles away from Disneyland in California," he said.*

He followed that with saying this was one of thousands of U.S. drone attacks that have killed and terrorized people in the Middle East over the past twenty years.

Gilroy stated that two weeks ago the release of hidden Pentagon Files by the New York Times documented thousands of innocent civilians were killed by precision weapons.

He added that Daniel Hale, a killer drone analyst, has been arrested for getting the truth out there about what the New York Times reported on.

Gilroy and other speakers at the protest are asking the Biden release Hale, end the Pentagon cover-up, and provide reparations to the Ahmadi family.

Digging for Peace- Resisting Nuclear Weapons

*by **Brian Terrell**, published on **Countercurrents**, November 18, 2021*

On Wednesday, October 20, I joined "*Vrede Scheppen*," "*Create Peace*," about 25 peace activists from the Netherlands, Germany and Austria at the airbase at Volkel, Netherlands, making a plea for an end to nuclear weapons. This base is home to two Dutch F16 fighter wings and the United States Air Force 703rd Munitions Support Squadron. In violation of international and

Dutch law and part of a "*sharing agreement*," the U.S. Air Force maintains 15-20 B61 nuclear bombs there and in violation of the same laws, the Dutch military stands ready for the order to deliver those bombs.

Besides our small multinational protest, on that same day the Dutch and U.S. militaries at Volkel were participating in another international collaboration, this one for a different purpose than ours, the annual NATO exercise "*Steadfast Noon*," literally a rehearsal for the extinction of humanity.

As we gathered at a wayside near the base with F16 fighters roaring over us, a few of the local police watched from a distance. We greeted old and new friends, sang, prayed, shared food and distributed pink shovels and conspired to dig our way into the base, onto the runway and disrupt the practice. Hardly a clandestine plot, this "*digging for peace*" was organized openly and local authorities were informed. Our purpose was get into the base, "*to advocate that the old nuclear bombs be removed and the CO2 emissions of the armed forces be counted in the climate targets and to protest against the arrival of new nuclear bombs*," but our expectation was to be stopped while trying.

As our shovels pierced the sod along the fence that was the first line of defense for some of the most deadly weapons on earth, we looked over our shoulders expecting any moment to have our good work interrupted by a warning, at least, if not by arrest. To our surprise, the police only passively looked on as we dug. Our apprehension turned to elation as it became clear that no one was going to stop us. We began to dig in earnest.

US anti-assassin drone activist Brian Terrell with Dutch colleagues tunneling under a fence at a Dutch air force base where US nuclear weapons are available for Dutch pilots to drop on the world!!!!

On the inside of the fence more police gathered along with a squad of soldiers but except for a carefully restrained dog snarling and pulling on a leash, none of them seemed upset by the scene they were witnessing. Our hole soon became a tunnel and it was not until eight of us, one at a time, crawled through under the fence and climbed up the other side that we were addressed by the authorities. A soldier spoke to me in Dutch and then in English, asking "do you understand that you are under arrest?"

Days before, home on our farm in Iowa, I had dug up our crop of sweet potatoes, enough to feed us through the winter and it was with similar satisfaction that I pulled myself out of the hole I had helped dig and approached the runway, so close to the bombs and the planes that could bring death to millions. At this time and place, nuclear destruction was not an abstraction, nor was our resistance to it. Coming up from that hole felt like coming up out of the grave.

"*The Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary arrested eight people Wednesday afternoon when they entered unauthorized military grounds*," it was reported in the local news. "*We already suspected that a number of people would try to get on the premises. They made a hole under the fence, and once at the airport we stopped them. They didn't resist. It all went*

off peacefully," said a police spokesperson.

The prosecutors interrogating us later seemed incredulous as we were that not one of the police or military ever warned that we might be trespassing or tried to stop us in the commission of what they interpreted as our crime. I was the only foreigner arrested along with seven others, ranging in age from their 20s to their 80s. Saved for last, I tried to redirect the questions asked by my interrogators about my previous involvement in such protest in other countries to the real crime, the B61 nuclear warheads that my government is hiding in plain sight in Volkel. I refused to answer questions about the several visas to Afghanistan in my passport, not fearful for myself, but recognizing at that moment the enormity of my privilege as a white man carrying a U.S. passport. After being shuttled for five hours or so between the base and the local police station, we were all released with a warning that criminal charges are pending.

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After many such protests in many places, I never experienced so relaxed a response from the authorities as we were met with at Volkel. No one in uniform expressed anger or even mild impatience with us and our antics. At bases that house nuclear weapons in the United States, signs on the fences carry warnings of lethal force. Even touching such a fence can trigger an armed response. Break-ins like ours on October 20 when they happen in the U.S. almost always merit prosecution and sometimes years in prison. On several occasions, I have spent up to six months in U.S. prisons for even attempting to enter a military base through its public main gate with a petition.

Whether the level of security at a facility with nuclear weapons is as casual as it is at Volkel or the very highest, as at the fortress-like Y-12 facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where in 2012, three Christian pacifists gained access to the

world’s largest depot of plutonium, such actions prove that the concept of nuclear security is a myth. Far from keeping a nation secure, the weapons themselves need more protection than any nation can give them. There is no safety in nuclear weapons.

The context of our protest, “*Steadfast Noon*,” is explained in classical double-speak in a brief NATO press release on October 18: “*The exercise is a routine, recurring training activity and it is not linked to any current world events*,” but at the same time it cites the Allied Heads of State and Government, who at the NATO Summit in June, declared that “*given the deteriorating security environment in Europe, a credible and united nuclear Alliance is essential*.”

Along with the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, and Germany also have bases housing U.S. nuclear weapons under similar sharing agreements. These nuclear sharings are not agreements between the various civilian governments, but between the U.S. military and the militaries of those countries. Officially, these agreements are secrets kept even from the parliaments of the sharing states. These secrets are poorly kept, but the effect is that these five nations have nuclear bombs without the oversight or consent of their elected governments or their people. By foisting weapons of mass destruction on nations that don’t want them, the United States undermines the democracies of its own purported allies, just as its nuclear posture undermines democracy at home. Far from protecting the host countries from aggression, “*given the deteriorating security environment in Europe*,” the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons makes those bases potential targets for preemptive first strikes.

Along with the U.S., the five countries “*sharing*” U.S. nuclear bombs are signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition to provisions that call for keeping nuclear weapons technology from spreading to other nations that all six governments violate, the United States also ignores

Article VI of the treaty, which requires "*all Parties undertake to pursue good-faith negotiations on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race, to nuclear disarmament, and to general and complete disarmament*."

Far from making good faith measures for general and complete disarmament, the United States is pursuing a trillion dollar program of modernizing and "*life extension*" of its ageing nuclear arsenal. As a part of this program, the B61 free-fall bombs currently at Volkel and the other nuclear sharing bases in Europe are scheduled over the next months to be replaced with a new model, the B61-12, with steerable tail fins intended to make them much more precise and deployable. The new bombs also have a facility with which the explosive force can be set from 1 to 50 kilotons, more than three times the power of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

"*More precise and deployable*" is another way of saying more likely to be used, and with these new, more flexible weapons on hand, U.S. war planners are thinking up more ways to use them. In a June, 2019, report by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, "*Nuclear Operations*," it is suggested that "*using nuclear weapons could create conditions for decisive results and the restoration of strategic stability…Specifically, the use of a nuclear weapon will fundamentally change the scope of a battle and create conditions that affect how commanders will prevail in conflict.*" If the doctrine of mutually assured destruction, the knowledge that the devastation wrought by a nuclear exchange would leave no winner, would be total and horrible beyond imagination is what helped prevent a nuclear war over the last decades, then the growing delusion among U.S. war planners that a nuclear war can be won puts the world at unprecedented peril.

NATO boasts of "*Steadfast Noon*," betraying the arrogant conviction of the Allied Heads of State and Government that despite a "*deteriorating security environment,*" through annual displays of brute force and profligate waste of fossil fuel,

the darkness can be held at bay forever and the exploiters of the earth and its people will bask in the everlasting light of noon. The scholars at *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* who have kept a "Doomsday Clock" since 1947, propose instead that the planet is actually closer to midnight, the hypothetical global catastrophe. *The Bulletin's* Clock is now at 100 seconds before midnight and humanity is closer to its destruction than ever before, because "*the dangerous rivalry and hostility among the superpowers increases the likelihood of nuclear blunder… Climate change just compounds the crisis.*"

It was a pleasure and honor to dig with my European friends at Volkel in October, as it was to be at Buechel, the German nuclear sharing base in July. My first trip overseas was in 1983, joining with millions of Europeans in the streets protesting the deployment of Pershing II nuclear missiles, starting an insufficient but dramatic reduction of nuclear weapons that is tragically being reversed today. The new B61-12 bombs slated for Volkel and Buechel, like the B61s and Pershings, before them, are made and paid for in the United States and as U.S. citizens, we are responsible to be in solidarity with those in Europe who are resisting them.

I returned home to Iowa to find a letter waiting for me from the Kansas City Municipal Court, ordering me to appear on February 18th to answer to a charge of trespass last May at the National Security Campus there, where the nonnuclear parts of the new improved B61-12 bombs and the rest of the U.S. nuclear arsenal are produced. My conviction for cutting a fence at Buechel in 2019 is under appeal in a German court. I wait expectantly for a royal invitation to offer my defense to similar charges in the courts of the Netherlands.

Brian Terrell is a peace activist based in Maloy, Iowa

Unveiling of Rob Shetterly's Portrait of Daniel Hale

Peace Action and Veterans for Peace of Broome County NY held a very nice event for our heroic killer drone whistleblower, Daniel Hale, at Cornell, an Ivy League university in Ithaca NY, on Armistice Day, November 11, 2021.

After a year of planning, the solidarity group of Peace Action of Broome County NY and Veterans for Peace of Broome County joined forces to have a heart, soul, and mind-touching event to celebrate seventeen American truth-tellers. Artist Rob Shetterly's portraits (over 250 to date) o*f Americans Who Tell the Truth* is a traveling art museum.
Broome County (NY) Peace Action and Broome County Veterans for Peace Chapter 90 showed the seventeen portraits (each 37 x31 inches) for weeks at Broome County Public Library, then at Maine-Endwell High School, and for the whole month of November at Cornell's College of Human Ecology. Sixteen of the portraits were selected by vote after an intense study of all *Americans Who Tell the Truth* easily found at www.americanswhotellthetruth.org.
Members of Chapter 90 of Veterans for Peace and Broome County Peace Action, Maine-Endwell HighSchool librarian and students, Cornell Human Ecology faculty, and some students studied Shetterly's portraits and text and voted for sixteen individuals

to show. Veterans for Peace of Broome County and Peace Action Broome County added Daniel Hale to the group selection.
On Armistice Day, 2021, artist Rob Shetterly spoke with passion about his selection of truth-tellers to paint from Sojourners Truth to his most recent subject, Daniel Hale. Hale is now in federal prison for telling the truth about the United States assassination program, a remote execution project labeled as a war on terror. The portrait of Daniel Hale, resting on a large easel, was the focus of our event at Cornell. Daniel's portrait was unveiled during the well-attended ceremony in the small gallery of Martha Van Rensselaer Hall.

Veterans for Peace and Peace Action of Broome County, NY encourage other national chapters of our organizations to make the effort to get a selection of Shetterly's truth-teller portraits of *Americans Who Tell the Truth* into public libraries and schools.

For more information about how to do this, contact Rob Shetterly at americanswhotellthetruth.org or write Jack Gilroy at jgilroy1955@gmail.org to learn how our upstate New York solidarity team organized our two-month exhibit.

Anti Nuke Activism in the Netherlands

*By **Ann Wright** and **Brian Terrell**, published on Ann's FB Page*

The great peace and anti-assassin drone activist Brian Terrell is back on the farm in Iowa after three weeks in the Netherlands and Germany. This is a brief report on his trip to bring attention to US nuclear weapons in the Netherlands and assassin drone connections in Germany:

In Brian's words:

> *"My first stop was Amsterdam and the Dutch Air Force base at Volkel- along with 7 Dutch friends, we were able to successfully dig a tunnel under the fence and go into the base where a US Air Force squadron keeps a stash of B61 nuclear missiles for Dutch F16s to 'deliver' destruction to perceived enemies under a NATO 'nuclear sharing' agreement. Held by military and civilian police for 5 hours, we were released and expect charges to be filed.*
>
> *In Germany, gave talks on banning killer drones and nuclear disarmament at the Catholic Worker communities in Dortmund and Hamburg and Elsa Rassback organized appearances in Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne. This is a pivotal time, as the question of whether or not to arm the German drone fleet is a big issue for the new coalition of parties that will govern Germany for the near future. The German peace movement is also petitioning the coalition parties on the issues of nuclear sharing with the US and Germany's failure to ratify and abide by the The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.*

Brian wrote:

> *“Our digging took place during the NATO exercise, “Steadfast Noon” (a strange name for the annual rehearsal for the end of the world!) and we are pretty sure that we caused the runway to be closed, making the world safer for an hour or so, anyway. It was great fun, lots of young people, singing, laughter when we realized that we were actually going to make it inside! .*
>
> *I never saw police or soldiers so chill anywhere-I think that they were amused. In the US we might have been shot or jailed for years. I think that it was important for one US citizen to be in the group and I am glad that I was there. I am hoping to be invited back to the Netherlands for a trial.*
>
> *We were held for 5 hours, I was interrogated about the number of Afghan visas in my passport, “Do you want to talk about why you visited Afghanistan so many times?” I was asked. No, I did not. The issue dropped there. Privilege of being a white man with a US passport, someone else might have disappeared.”*

Media accounts of the action:

> *“The Royal Military Police has arrested eight activists who had penetrated into the military airport of Volkel on Wednesday afternoon. The eight had gained access by digging a hole under the fence surrounding the military airport, reported the military police after reports by DTV News.*

According to a spokesman for the military police, the action was peaceful.

> *“We knew about the demonstration,” he said. “We already suspected that a number of people would try to get on the premises. They made a hole under the fence, and once at the airport we stopped them. They didn’t resist. It all went off peacefully.”*

Nuclear weapons

They were activists from Peace Creation who came to demonstrate against nuclear weapons. The activists fear that a new generation of nuclear bombs will come to the Netherlands next year. The action was organized at the head of the runway. This "*to advocate that the old nuclear bombs be removed and the CO2 emissions of the armed forces be counted in the climate targets and to protest against the arrival of new nuclear bombs*."

Fifteen to twenty American B61 atomic bombs have been stored at Volkel Air Force Base since the early 1960s. The Zembla broadcast Target Volkel (2019) shows how the Netherlands has not enforced a veto on the deployment of American nuclear weapons from the airbase. At the moment it is decided to carry out a nuclear attack, Dutch pilots must drop the bombs.

The broadcast also shows that the 15 to 20 American free-fall bombs are outdated and will soon be replaced. The new model, the B61-12, will have steerable tail fins and will therefore be much more precise and deployable. The bombs also have a facility with which the explosive force can be set from 1 to 50 kilotons. That is more than three times the power of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

The House of Representatives is not informed about the modernization of the B61. The government will not even confirm that there are atomic bombs in the Netherlands: that is a state secret. Yet Zembla discovered in old parliamentary archives that the then Minister of Defense acknowledged as early as 1960 that the Netherlands was home to American atomic bombs.

They also disagree with the deployment of F-16s and other aircraft, which, according to the protesters, "*emit tons of CO2*."

***Featured Image:** US anti-assassin drone activist Brian Terrell*

with Dutch colleagues tunneling under a fence at a Dutch air force base where US nuclear weapons are available for Dutch pilots to drop on the world!!!!

Ann Wright is a retired US Army Reserve Colonel and a former US diplomat who resigned in 2003 in opposition to the weapons of mass destruction lies of the Bush administration for the invasion and occupation of Iraq. She is the co-author of **"Dissent: Voices of Conscience."**

Brian Terrell is a longtime activist and lives on a Catholic Worker Farm in Maloy, Iowa. Brian is a founding member of the **Ban Killer Drones Network.** He has traveled to Afghanistan several times and been arrested numerous times in civil resistance actions opposing drone warfare.

Upstate Drone Action Has a Visit in Senator Schumer's Office Then Heads to the Base

UpstateDroneAction.org Syracuse Report Back:

Photos will be posted on our website & the video will be released shortly.

Demanding Justice for the Amadhi Family and Daniel Hale and an End to Drone Warfare

Six Upstate Drone Action members witnessed today against

weaponized drones at NYS Senator Chuck Schumer's office in Syracuse, in concert with Ban Killer Drones' (BKD) call for actions at Congress member's offices and drone bases around the country.

Mark Carver at the Mic with Ann Tiffany

We spread out ten pictures of the Amadhi family members who were murdered just two months ago, along a low wall outside the building, and held a brief press conference. Eddie Rodriguez videotaped as four of us read a Statement that included BKD's five demands. (video to be released soon). Ed Kinane read the final statement questioning if the MQ-9 drone strike that killed the Ahmadi family originated from Hancock Airbase in Syracuse. Pilots are trained to maintain and execute drone strikes in Afghanistan with MQ-9 Reaper drones from Hancock AFB. Ed also spoke of our call for the pardon and release of drone pilot whistleblower, Daniel Hale, who is serving a four year sentence in prison for releasing "*The Drone Papers*" to The Intercept.

Ann Tiffany, Mark Carver, Ed Kinane, John Amidon, Emily Cone

Mary Anne Grady Flores arranged to have Sen. Chuck Schumer's Deputy Regional Director, Emily Cone, attend the press conference and meet with us after to discuss our concerns. We met for 45 minutes at a table in the plaza.

Our group then drove to Hancock Base where three of us walked up to the guardhouse with four pictures of the murdered children clipped to a length of cedar siding and a sign, " *Who killed these children*." We were met by two guards, who closed the gate as usual. John read an anti-drone statement that was specific to the base and mentioned Daniel Hale. "*We, members of the* ***Upstate Drone Action Coalition*** *and* ***Ban Killer Drones*** *come today to ask if pilots trained or deployed here participated in the killing of the Ahmadi family members.*" The guards seemed more open to John's personal sharing as a veteran and our feelings about the injustice of all the

Ann Tiffany with

photos of the Ahmadi family.

drone murders.

- Ann Tiffany
- Ed Kinane
- Mary Anne Grady Flores
- John Amidon
- Eddie Rodriguez
- Mark Scibilia-Carver

Read at the main gate at Hancock AFB, E. Syracuse, NY:

Greetings, We're from the Upstate Drone Action Coalition. We come in peace to read a short statement. The Ahmadi family – three adults and seven children – were killed in Kabul, Afghanistan, on August 29th, 2021, just two months ago, by an MQ9 Reaper drone.

For over a decade – right here at this base, the 174th Attack Wing of Hancock AFB – Airforce members train MQ-9 Reaper drone pilots for aerial drone strikes in Afghanistan.

We, members of the Upstate Drone Action Coalition and Ban Killer Drones come today to ask if pilots trained or deployed here participated in the killing of the Ahmadi family members.

We're here to give notice to everyone in the chain of command, including the Hancock drone pilots, as they bear responsibility and may yet be held accountable for murders such as these.

We are calling for the immediate release and pardon of drone pilot whistleblower, DANIEL HALE, now serving nearly four years in federal prison.

Mr. Hale's crime: He had the courage to admit the truth in "*the Drone Papers*," that within a 5 month period, 90% of drone victims were innocent.

We demand the immediate cessation of 174th's role in that drone assassination campaign. We further demand an end to the U.S. drone assassination program from all other military bases here and abroad.

###

Fall 2021 Shut Down Creech and National Solidarity Actions

*Document assembled by **Nick Mottern** of **Ban Killer Drones***

From September 26 to October 2, 2021, about 30 protesters from 12 states gathered in the desert outside Creech AFB killer drone control center north of Las Vegas, NV to engage in calls to conscience and a blockade intended to end the U.S. killer drone program at Creech and worldwide. These Shut Down Creech (SDC) actions have been held over the last 12 years at what is viewed as the foremost center for U.S. drone killing and the training of drone operators.

From September 16 to Oct. 2, members of the Ban Killer Drones network in eight cities and towns held actions in solidarity with those at Creech. This is the first time that such coordinated solidarity actions have been held.

Here are reports on all these events.

SHUT DOWN CREECH

2021 SDC was a very unusual, important event not only because of the effectiveness of the vigils and blockades at the drone base, but because the SDC group, for the first time, carried their action into nearby, downtown Las Vegas and because, faced with a COVID-related disagreement, they were willing to

undertake an extended process of respectful conversation to come to a place of agreement that enabled them to carry forward with unified, powerful action. It is also the first time that SDC, inspired by Veterans For Peace, handed out donuts to drivers headed toward the base.

Attached is a highly detailed, extremely educational report on 2021 SDC by Eleanor Levine, one of the chief organizers.

In addition, here is a link to another outstanding report on the event by Veterans For Peace, which includes a large, inspiring file of photos on the event. Of particular interest in this report is the special effort that was made to reach out to drone operators.

https://www.veteransforpeace.org/pressroom/news/2021/10/06/report-shut-down-creech-2021

And, here is a report that appeared in the *Las Vegas Sun,* which also includes a photo file.

Read the full article

Shut Down Creech SOLIDARITY EVENTS

Niagara Falls, NY

On September 16th, protesters connected with the Western New York Peace Center and Veterans For Peace protested the killing of 10 members of the Ahmadi family in Kabul on August 29, 2021, at the Niagara Falls Air National Guard base, the home of the 107th Attack Wing, the killer drone control unit.

Here is a press report and a Facebook recording of the action:

> https://www.wbfo.org/2021-09-17/peace-activists-protest-at-niagara-falls-air-base-over-afghanistan-drone-attacks
>
> https://www.facebook.com/137596229648417/posts/6097183917022922/?d=n

Tucson, AZ

An SDC solidarity vigil was held on Sept. 21st at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, AZ. In the background is the Arizona Air National Gard headquarters and killer drone command modules. MQ-9 Reaper killer drones are controlled by the 214th Attack Group ("Black Sheep"), 162nd Wing, of the Arizona Air National Guard., located at Davis-Monthan.

On July 20, 2021, Kim Mathews participated in a demonstration at Davis-Monthan in support of drone whistle-blower Daniel Hale. (Below)

Hastings on Hudson, NY

Members of the peace and justice group Concerned Families of Westchester, in Westchester County, NY, handed out these two-sided flyers on September 25th, at its weekly vigil in the downtown of Hastings on Hudson.

Ten Reasons To Ban Killer Drones

On August 29th, a US drone fired a missile in Kabul that killed a suspected ISIS "terrorist" and nine members of his family. Weeks later, the Pentagon stated that the killing was "a tragic mistake."

As U.S. citizens whose tax dollars went into buying the drone that made that attack, and the missile it fired, the blood of Zemari Ahmadi and his three children, Zamir, 20, Faisal, 16, and Farzad, 10; Ahmadi's cousin Naser, 30; the children of Ahmadi's brother Romal: Arwin, 7, Benyamin, 6, and Hayat, 2; and two 3-year-old girls, Malika and Somaya is on our hands.

"Mistake" or not, we know from documents released to the

media by drone whistle-blower Daniel Hale that some 90 percent of those killed in US drone attacks in Afghanistan were civilians. (See other side of leaflet.)

Over the last decade, drones have become the preferred US weapon of war. US soldiers are at little risk, and the US population and Congress give the Pentagon a blank check to fight four, five, six wars as long as US casualties low.

Today, in Nevada, Syracuse, NY, and at other drone operating bases across the USA, protests are demanding an end to the use of assassination drones by the Pentagon. Here in Hastings, we join them.

* * *

Concerned Families of Westchester September 25, 2021

"Serving our community since 2001"
For more information email fbrodhead@aol.com

Pardon Daniel Hale, Drone Whistle Blower

We ask President Biden to pardon Daniel Hale. Daniel Hale pled guilty to one count of "retention and transmission of national defense information" in violation of the Espionage Act on March 31, 2021. On July 27th 2021, he was sentenced to almost four years in prison.

Daniel Hale is not a spy, a threat to society, or a bad faith actor. His revelations were not a threat to national security.

While the courts have ruled that a defendant's motive in a case related to the Espionage Act is irrelevant, we recognize that Hale's motive was only to provide the American people with information about government misconduct. We believe that rather than harm our country, Hale's revelations actually enhanced our democracy by providing critical information about what our government

has been doing in our name. We also believe that Hale's revelations help push our government to reassess its drone program in light of its violations of US and international law.

In a letter Daniel wrote to his judge explaining why he did what he did, Daniel said "The answer came to me, that to stop the cycle of violence, I ought to sacrifice my own life and not that of another person. So I contacted an investigative reporter with whom I had an established prior relationship and told him that I had something the American people needed to know."

Daniel being sent to prison sets a terrible example for freedom of speech and sends a message that the American public does not have a right to know about government misconduct. For the right to free speech, and for the enhancement of our democracy, please consider pardoning Daniel Hale.

For more info – www.standwithdanielhale.org.

Syracuse, NY

Members of Upstate Drone Action spent the afternoon of Sunday, September 26th at the Westcott Street Cultural Fair in Syracuse, handing out literature and carrying posters addressing the U.S. drone program in dsolidarity with Shut Down Creech and Stand with Daniel Hale.

Judy Bello, manager of the Upstate website, said: *"It was a beautiful afternoon and we handed out hundreds of flyers to receptive festival participants*."

Here is a video of the event by Upstate member John Amidon.

Here are links to flyers used at the event:

UDA Trifold (This has info on Hancock Drone Base & UDA)

Shutdown Creech 2021 (Ban Killer Drones ref to recent murders in Kabul)

Upstate Drone Action conducts protests at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base outside Syracuse and the aforementioned Niagara Falls Air National Guard base. Hancock Field is home to the 174th Attack Wing, which controls MQ-9 Reaper killer drones and is also involved in training killer drone operators, assisting the 49th Attack Wing of the U.S. Air Force, based at Holloman AFB, New Mexico.

Kaneohe, HI

On Monday, September 27th, World Can't Wait (WCW) and Veterans For Peace joined with other justice and peace groups to protest drone attacks at the gate of the Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station. Carolyn Hadfield, of WCW, reports:

"We had less than a dozen people (at the base gate), but there were lots of motorists leaving the base after their shifts. Not surprisingly, there wasn't much support but a few showed very enthusiastic support and one woman came back to thank us saying that it was impossible to say anything opposing drones with anyone she knows and asked how to get involved…Following is a brief summary of what's happening here.

"Six Reaper drones will be based at Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station (KBay) as part of the U.S. military restructuring for war with China. The Reaper was designed specifically to give the military and the CIA a "hunter-killer" drone capable of flying long distances. It was a Reaper Drone that killed 10 civilians in Kabul on August 29. Two have now arrived, are at KBay, and will be part of a month-long Reaper exercise. World Can't Wait Hawai`i has joined with other local peace and justice groups to oppose the increasing militarization of Hawai`i and the use of militarized drones."

Ithaca, NY Day of Atonement Events

Submitted by ***Mary Anne Grady Flores***
video by ***Heriberto Rodriguez***

10-7-21 ITHACA, NY – FAITH COMMUNITIES PROCESSION

A DAY OF ATONEMENT – 20 -YEARS OF WAR ON AFGHANISTAN & SUPPOSED "WAR ON TERROR." CALLING ON FAITH LEADERS TO END SILENCE ON US DRONES, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND WAR.

Members of Ithaca's Catholic Worker and other people from Ithaca faith communities & welcome the Ithaca community at large as we gather at DeWitt /Sean Greenwood Park to observe October 7, 2021, as a Day of Atonement, for the US – 20-year war against Afghanistan and the so-called "War on Terror,"

Today, we join communities supporting the work of the new organization Ban Killer Drones. ORG, from across the country. Communities are going to different cathedrals and houses of worship, calling on our faith leaders to end their silence about US endless wars and drone strikes. From Des Moines, IA, Greensburg, PA, New Haven, CT, Syracuse, NY, NYC, NY, Long Island, NY, Binghamton, NY, Broom Co., NY., Ithaca, NY, Brattleboro, VT, Portland, OR, St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC, and other cities and towns around the country.

We'll now hear from Holly Gump reading our statement:

> **Statement Day of Atonement** – 20 years of War on Afghanistan 10-7-21
>
> On October 7, 2001, the United States began a 20 year-long

war against Afghanistan and initiated the so-called "***War on Terror***."

As members of Ithaca faith communities, we are observing October 7, 2021 as a Day of Atonement, a day to repent for the silence of our places of worship concerning the war crimes of our government and military in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere around the world. More than 1 million people were killed in these wars and 9 million refugees displaced from their homelands. Over 20 years of war the US has spent more than $21 Trillion on militarization, surveillance, and repression.

Emblematic of those war crimes is the August 29th U.S. revenge drone attack in Kabul that killed ten civilians, seven of whom were children.

As U.S. citizens whose tax dollars paid for the MQ-9 Reaper drone that made that attack and paid for the missile it fired, we bear responsibility for this tragedy and seek to prevent its repetition.

The names of the Ahmadi family victims are: Esmarai, (40)

Zeman Ahmadi and his three children, Zameer (20), Faisal (16), Farsad (10). Ahmadi's cousin Naser, (30). The children of Ahmadi's brother Romal: Arwin (7), Benyamin (6), and Ayat (2), Malika (3), and Somaya (2).

Today, October 7th, 2021, we gather to call for a REAL end to the 20 years of terror against the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

In our view this means:

-A ban on weaponized drones

-An end to "over the horizon" drone strikes anywhere in the world

-A rejection of the military build-up and threats of war with China, supporting dialog instead.

-A call for our religious leaders to speak out clearly and urgently for peace, including the abolition of nuclear weapons and reduction in the military budget

We urge religious leaders to share these points with their communities of worship and others to share with groups in the Ithaca Community at large.

AT ST. JOHNS EPICOPAL CHURCH: WE CALL ON THE FAITH LEADERS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST US WARS.

"Silence in the face of Evil is Evil itself: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to Speak is to Speak. Not to Act is to Act."

3 – **Footnotes about the US Military & Wars**

A – The US military is the biggest cause of the

Climate Crisis, being the # 1 user carbon in the world, emitting more CO2 than many countries, over decades, causing massive climate disruption, desertification, super storms, sea level rise, and mass extinction of species.

B – This, in-turn, causes massive migration of millions of refugees looking to find shelter, food, jobs, and safety.

C – The US Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq alone caused 9 million refugees and internally displaced people.

"Silence in the face of Evil is Evil itself!"

D – US Drone strikes have killed over 6,000 people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, and elsewhere. US Military Generals admit that for every 1 drone victim, 10 more people look at the US as the terrorists. The "Drone Papers" revealed by drone whistle blower, Daniel Hale, shows that 90 % of victims are bystanders, unintended

victims, such as the Ahmadi family whose photos we hold here today.

"Silence in the face of Evil is Evil itself."

AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: WE CALL ON THE FAITH LEADERS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST US WARS.

"Silence in the face of Evil is Evil itself."

E – US military gave left-over equipment to US city Police Departments, like we saw used on the streets of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, and in Ferguson, to be used on people of color, and at to police at border communities.

Police Departments have many retired military personnel in their ranks repeating tactics used in their training for war, treating US civilians here as enemy combatant.

F – The US military budget uses almost 60 percent of total government expenditures, which steals from the needs of communities, especially from people of color who are left without basic human needs, like jobs, housing, health care.

- "Silence in the face of Evil is Evil itself."

G – Veterans and drone pilots have some of the highest suicide rates in the country and some of the worst medical care, being prescribed pills to mask their deep pain and moral injury.

From Eleanor Levine of Code Pink, San Fransisco:

"Over 20 years, the U.S. has spent more than $21 Trillion on militarization, surveillance, and repression – all in the name of security.

These investments have shown us that the U.S. has the capacity and political will to invest in our biggest priorities.

But the COVID-19 pandemic, the January 6 Capitol insurrection, wildfires raging in the West, super storms in the South & on the East Coast, and even the fall of Afghanistan have shown us that these investments cannot buy us safety. The next 20 years present an opportunity to reconsider where we need to re-invest for a better future."

AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

Neil Golder reads from **Dan Berrigan's Statement at Catonsville**, MD draft board action during the Vietnam War. (Gender has been changed "*men*" to "*people*," and From '*Christian*' to '*People of Faith & Conscience*'.)

> The time is past when good People can remain silent, when obedience can segregate people from public risk, when the poor can die without defense.
>
> We ask our fellow people of faith and conscience to consider in their hearts a question which has tortured us, night and day, since the war began. How many must die before our voices are heard, how many must be tortured, dislocated, starved, maddened? How long must the world's resources be raped in the service of legalized murder? When, at what point, will you say no to this war? We have chosen to say, with the gift of our liberty, if necessary our lives: the violence stops here, the death stops here, the suppression of the truth stops here, this war stops here. We wish also to place in question, by this act, all suppositions about normal times, about longings for an untroubled life in a somnolent church, about a neat time-table of ecclesiastical renewal which in respect to the needs of people, amounts to another form of time serving.

Beth Harris – speaks on the **"War on Terror"** against Palestinians since 1948, and against Haitians since 1804.

Clare Grady– shares the **KBP7 Statement on Nuclear Disarmament**

from the KingsBayPlowshares7.org website, and about the Catholic Church's deafening silence concerning nuclear weapons and war.

Thank you all for coming. Please share this message with your communities of faith and conscience.

Planned Day of Atonement Actions

DES MOINES, IA

The Des Moines (IA) Catholic Work and the Des Moines chapter of Veterans for Peace are calling on people to join them on the steps in front of St. Ambrose Cathedral for an hour-long vigil starting at 11 a.m. in solidarity with the national "Call to Action: A Day of Atonement" at places of worship.

Information: Frank Cordaro – Des Moines Catholic Worker – (515) 490-2490

GREENSBURG, PA

Pax Christi Greensburg will hold a vigil beginning at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 7, 2021 on the sidewalk in front of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, 310 North Main St, Greensburg, PA.

Pax Christi members will then enter the Greensburg Cathedral on their knees for the 11:45 a.m. daily Mass during which it is expected to hear prayed by the celebrant

The Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence

https://auscp.org/initiatives/gospel-non-violence/

Peace witnesses of all or no faith tradition – and not just Pax Christi Catholics – are invited to the vigil, bearing appropriate signs such as photos of the recent drone killing of 10 members of the Ahmadi family in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Information: Fr. Bernard Survil, Priest of the Diocese of Greensburg, (ret.)

Ph 724-523-0291 bsurvil@uscatholicpriests.us

NEW HAVEN, CT

Stephen V. Kobasa and Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice will remember the cost of the continuing violence in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East and Africa by placing the September stone on the Memorial Cairn at the intersection of Broadway, Elm and Park Streets in New Haven on Thursday, October 7 at 6 pm. Each stone in the cairn represents one month that has passed since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began. On each stone is a record of the deaths, civilian and military, reported during that month.

SYRACUSE, NY

On Oct. 7, Paul Welch, Director of Social Justice for the Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, has arranged for people to gather at 11:30 a.m. at Columbus Circle in front of the Cathedral, where three speakers will address drones, war and nuclear weapons. At 12:15 pm, they will walk a block to Plymouth United Methodist Church in Christ to discuss racism and islamophobia. In conclusion, they will visit an Episcopal church to talk about ways in which military activity adds to

the climate emergency.

Information: Paul Welch – (315) 256-8613

NEW YORK CITY, NY

On Oct. 7th, at 11 a.m., members of Pax Christi New York City will hand out leaflets (see below) at St. Patrick's Cathedral. At noon they will join the march commemorating the start of the Afghanistan war, organized by the War Resisters League, starting at noon at the New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street and continuing across 42nd Street to the Times Square Recruiting Station until 1:30 p.m. https://nycwarresistersdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/afghanistan2021_call-to-action.pdf

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LONG ISLAND, NY

On Oct. 9th, at their weekly North Country vigil, Long Island peace activists will hold a "Fly Kites not Drones" action in solidarity with the 10/7 actions.

BINGHAMTON, NY

A Binghamton Veterans For Peace and Peace Action team will hold an event at three local places of worship on October 7 starting at 11 a.m.: St. Patrick's Church, 9 Leroy St.; then to Tabernacle United Methodist Church on 83 Main St.; and on to Temple Concord on 9 Riverside Drive. Participants will hold photos of the Ahmadi family and signs encouraging religious leaders to openly oppose the "Over the Horizon" drone attack plan and fear-mongering by the media, arms industry and U.S. government against China.

BROOME COUNTY, NY

Jim Clune, President of Broome County Peace Action, has written an opinion article in the Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin ending with a call to be at local churches on 10/7.

ITHACA, NY

Members of the Ithaca Catholic Worker are sponsoring a multi-denominational event:

A Day of Atonement, the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the War on Terror,

Thursday, October 7th at 10:30 a.m. in DeWitt / Sean Greenwood Park for a short procession with Buddhist drumming, and for an

11 a.m. press conference. We are joining other witnesses nationwide observing the Day of Atonement.

We will mourn the suffering and loss of life caused by the 20-year occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by the U. S. and call on the faith communities to end the silence on U.S. endless wars.

We also oppose the continuation of war-making by the weaponized drone program, “Over the Horizon” used anywhere in the world, the increased emphasis on militaristic solutions for conflict with China, and the nuclear weapons build-up. War is still not the answer.

Contact: Mary Anne Grady Flores gradyflores08@gmail.com

BRATTLEBORO, VT

On Sunday, October 10, zool Zulkowitz will vigil at a Congregational church with a banner: “Tax Dollars for Kids Daycare, Not for Killer Drones”

PORTLAND, OR

Peace and Justice Works rally on Friday, October 8th.

20 Years Later, the Afghan War
is Not Really Over
Friday, October 8, 2021 5:00 – 6 PM
at the Weekly Friday Rally for Peace and Justice
Pioneer Courthouse Square, SW Yamhill and Broadway
please mask up and stay distanced for safety

On Friday, October 8, Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity group will mark the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the US war on Afghanistan with a specially themed Friday Rally for Peace and Justice at 5 PM. Titled “20 Years Later, the Afghan War is Not Really Over,” the event will call attention to the ongoing US presence near and announced intentions to continue warfare in Afghanistan with an “over the horizon” military force. As usual the rally will last until about 5:20 PM followed by a short march around downtown Portland. PJW asks participants to wear masks and stay distanced for COVID safety.

PAX CHRISTI NEW YORK CITY – ST. PATRICK’S CATHEDRAL FLYER

A Day of Atonement for the War in Afghanistan

October 7th, 2021

On August 26th, as the U.S. was withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, along with some Afghan allies, a suicide bomb detonated, killing 13 U.S. soldiers and nearly 100 Afghans,

while wounding an additional 200 Afghan civilians. Within hours, our proudly Catholic President Biden proclaimed, “We will not forgive. We will not forget. We will hunt you down and make you pay.”

The very next day, a U.S. drone responded. The U.S. military claimed precision targeting of two ISIS-K terrorists, but witnesses on the ground reported seeing wounded children and women, as well as three dead—one man, one boy, and one woman. Then, two days later, another U.S. drone killed a family of 10, including seven young children. The father of the family worked for a California-based humanitarian organization. All were hoping for a visa to escape Afghanistan. In short, they were innocent allies, not enemies.

These incidents make it clear that warfare, especially drone warfare, is neither precise nor just. Religious leaders of many faiths, including the Catholic faith, have stated firmly that drones not only dehumanize warfare, they breed trauma among ordinary civilians and new enemies eager to retaliate with deadly force. The sanitized distancing between the attacker and the attacked actually increases the likelihood of more war.1 Such assaults totally violate such Christian teachings as, “Love your enemies” and “Forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven times.” They deny human dignity and the right to due process before sentencing. Even some military officers have admitted the high percentage of unintended, innocent victims of drone attacks.2

Instead of resorting to more and more bloodshed, we choose to heed the words of Pope Francis:

“I ask everyone to continue to assist those in need, and to pray that dialogue and solidarity may lead to the establishment of peaceful and fraternal coexistence, and offer hope for the future of the country [Afghanistan].” He added that “in historical moments like this we cannot remain indifferent.” For Christians it is a duty to respond.

Pope Francis reasoned, “I appeal to everyone to intensify prayer and practice fasting: prayer and fasting, prayer and penance. Now is the time to do it.”

He continued emphatically, “I’m serious: Intensify prayer and practice fasting, asking the Lord for mercy and forgiveness.”3

It is for these reasons that we have been called to observe this day as A Day of Atonement. Please join us., and please share with others.

1https://www.interfaithdronenetwork.org/images/docs/PCI%20on%20drones.pdf

2https://www.commondreams.org/views/2021/09/07/no-longest-war-us-history-not-over

3https://catholicleader.com.au/news/pope-francis-calls-for-prayer-fasting-for-afghanistan/

Also see additional background reading:

https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2021/09/01/just-war-revenge-against-terrorists-aghanistan-241322

https://bankillerdrones.org/why-a-ban/

https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2021/08/push-to-ban-killer-robots-gets-a-boost-from-the-vatican-and-the-pope/

https://providencemag.com/2020/10/pope-francis-and-the-problem-of-war-in-fratelli-tutti/

And sign the petition to Ban Killer Drones here:

https://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6180

This leaflet prepared for Pax Christi New York State,

https://www.facebook.com/Pax-Christi-New-York-State-100663832260872

We Gotta Stand with Daniel Hall, Drone Warfare Truth-Teller

On Saturday, July 17, 2021, activists representing many organizations, including the Ban Killer Drones campaign and Peace Action New York State, held a press conference in support of the whistleblower Daniel Hale, who revealed information about the U.S. drone warfare program.

Daniel Hale served in the Air Force as an intelligence analyst. His task was to identify targets for the US drone assassination program. Troubled by what he did and saw, after leaving the Air Force in 2013, Hale provided documents about the drone program to the media. In 2019, four years after the documents were published, the Trump administration had him arrested and charged under the 1917 Espionage Act. He is being held in prison in Alexandria, VA, and will be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison on July 27, 2021.

Incomplete reports about US drone attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen alone found 16,901 people killed and 3,922 wounded. The use of drones is spreading. Drone attacks have been carried out by at least 12 nations, primarily by the USA, but also by other governments, including France, Israel, Turkey, and the UK.

"Some people call me a whistleblower or a patriot, but I was simply concerned with speaking the truth." – Daniel Hale

Video by Wilton Vought

To learn more about Daniel Hale’s case and how you can support him, go to standwithdanielhale.org.