

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

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(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 outside 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 outside 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.