Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence.

The Olympia FOR’s program airs several times every week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County’s cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV’s current schedule at www.tctv.net.

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 160 of our previous monthly interview programs and also many special programs) at the Olympia FOR’s website, www.olympiafor.org. Simply click the “TV programs” link, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website’s TV program listings also include links to documents summarizing the program in Word and/or .pdf format.

June 2017
“Confronting the New Nuclear Arms Race”

► Please invite more people to watch this interview and/or read this thorough summary at the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org.

► See many information sources at the end of this document.

NOTE: This summary includes some relevant information we did not have time to include during the one-hour TV interview.

For 30 years the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation’s TV series has explored a wide variety of issues related to peace, social and economic justice, the environment, and nonviolent social change. We especially provide opportunities for the public to hear voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

Our June 2017 TV program focuses on a crisis that Congress and Obama and Trump have been making much worse. But this crisis has been largely ignored by mainstream news media and the general public.

Decades after the Cold War ended, the U.S. is recklessly provoking a new nuclear arms race!

It’s bad enough that our government continues its dangerous intentions to use nuclear weapons. But now our government wants to replace our thousands of nuclear weapons with horribly expensive new ones. Some of these are designed to be more usable – more likely to actually begin a nuclear war. The rest of the world is outraged and is taking historically unprecedented action to stop this madness.

Our government keeps saying it cannot afford to provide health care or education or safe drinking water – and cannot afford to end homelessness or poverty. But it plans to SPEND MORE THAN ONE TRILLION DOLLARS on these new nuclear weapons!

Fortunately, people are organizing against that! People are organizing globally, nationwide, here in Washington State, and right here in Olympia.

Although the crisis is extremely serious, we can solve the problems:

► If we get the facts,
► If we devise smart strategies, and
► If we work hard.

Glen welcomed two guests who explored the problems and solutions during this one-hour interview:

- **Lilly Adams** is the Security Program Organizer for Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, WPSR. She already had a strong background in community organizing before joining WPSR’s staff. In the months I’ve been working with Lilly and the new coalition about nuclear weapons that she has been organizing, I have been very much impressed with how savvy and effective Lilly is.

- **Bruce Amundson, MD**, is President of WPSR’s Board of Directors. He is a Family Physician with a diverse medical career. His career includes practicing in rural areas, working with Russian doctors on nuclear issues, researching diseases caused by nuclear power, and also teaching in medical school.
The Cold War ended in about 1990. Some nuclear weapons were dismantled. Most Americans probably assume that the problems have been solved. But most Americans probably do not realize that the U.S. has continued in full readiness to launch nuclear weapons against Russia and other nations.

Lilly Adams summarized our current situation. She said we must make sure the public is more aware of the very serious threats that nuclear weapons are posing now. For example, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (published by a group of nuclear weapons experts) recently moved their Doomsday Clock to 2 ½ minutes before midnight, the closest since 1953.

Glen agreed that the public does not know. “Congress is asleep at the switch” and actually making things worse. Mainstream media have not been acting responsibly either,

“so it’s up to us” to publicize the realities and solve the problems. Bruce agreed that when the Cold War ended, Americans assumed that the problems had gone away, when really it went “subterranean.”

At this point in the interview we did not have time to add that American politicians and mainstream news media occasionally provoke fear about other countries that currently have nuclear weapons – and fear about countries that might possibly want them. But that is just fear-mongering. There is no thoughtful conversation in Congress, or in the media, or among the general public about nuclear weapons – and no public awareness that the U.S. has been leading each step of the nuclear arms race since the 1940s. Actually, the nuclear weapons problem is equally rooted in both political parties. Both parties have been promoting and funding horrible policies.

Longstanding U.S. policy for using nuclear weapons, including first-strike.

Dr. Bruce Amundson said that by signing a number of arms treaties we reduced our nuclear warheads from a peak of about 25,000-30,000 down to about 7,500 nuclear warheads. Only about 1,500 of those are currently ready to be used. But even that number of weapons, he said, “could destroy life on the planet multiple times over.” This is still horrible overkill. He called it “insane.”

Furthermore, the U.S. and Russia are still poised to launch our nuclear weapons at each other within about 10 or 20 minutes if there is “a perception of an attack.” We have been continuously living with “this immediate response capability for the past 40 years.”

Glen pointed out that the public does not realize that for decades the U.S. policies – and the weapons we have designed and built – are not so much intended to defensively react to an attack, but rather – are designed to launch a first nuclear strike against another nation – to actually aggressively begin a nuclear war. The U.S.’s “first-strike” nuclear weapons were designed to fly thousands of miles and hit targets with such pinpoint accuracy that they could destroy another nation’s missiles while those are still in their silos. We would not need that kind of accuracy – which is very expensive to engineer – if we merely wanted to retaliate defensively.

Bruce clarified the notion of “deterrence.” The theory of “deterrence” depends on two rational actors who would communicate to each other that they would retaliate defensively if attacked. But now with multiple nations having nuclear weapons – and with some nations unstable and not acting rationally – the “deterrence” theory is unworkable. For example, he said, “we have no ability to deter something between India and Pakistan.” The danger has increased “immeasurably” now, he said.

We did not have time during the interview to lay out this additional information:

Our current policy is “Launch on Attack” – or even perceived imminent attack. This is very dangerous.

Federal policies of surviving and winning nuclear war are unrealistic and reckless.

It’s hard for Americans to recognize and deal with the facts that:

(1) The US began the scourge of nuclear weapons by unilaterally bombing civilian populations in Japan twice in August 1945.
(2) The US has threatened other nations many times with explicit threats of specific nuclear attacks (not only the USSR, but also East Germany, China, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Iran, and others). US presidents have threatened to use nuclear weapons in specific conflicts at least 16 times since Nagasaki. Pentagon policy calls for the use of nuclear weapons as the final card to play in a conventional war.

(3) During the Cold War the US escalated each round in the nuclear arms race.

(4) While the public assumes that our nuclear weapons are for defense in case of attack, the US has actually maintained a policy of beginning nuclear war with a first strike – and has developed and deployed nuclear weapons designed specifically to launch a first strike against other nations.

(5) Some of the so-called arms control treaties were not as peace-oriented as the government led us to believe. The government negotiated limits on those factors they were willing to limit in order to focus instead on the factors we wanted to escalate. For example, the U.S. was willing to sign a treaty limiting the number of missiles going up because we wanted to escalate the nuclear arms race by increasing the number of independently targeted warheads coming down from each of those missiles that went up.

(6) Since the Cold War ended, the US has continued to push for nuclear superiority, aggressively pushed for weapons to dominate space, and continued to violate international law and treaties.

The American people generally don’t know these things, but the rest of the world does. Our government doesn’t tell us, and our news media don’t tell us. But the rest of the world knows. This is the context in which the world watches what the US government says and does. We discussed this later in the interview.

### Many accidents and near-misses

Lilly said that – beyond the risk of an intended nuclear attack – there is a long, heavy history of many accidents and near-misses and misperceptions. She said more than 1,000 of these have been documented over the years. Beyond these that we know about, there are probably many more that have been classified and kept secret.

She said that several times the U.S. has dropped nuclear bombs upon the U.S. but they have not exploded. Glen mentioned one in North Carolina, in which 5 of the 6 safety switches snapped, and only the remaining 6th switch prevented North Carolina from being destroyed by an American nuclear bomb. Lilly agreed and said this had occurred in 1961. She said many nuclear weapons experts have said that it’s only by luck that none of these accidents have been devastating. Glen said, “The odds are going to catch up with us one of these days.”

Bruce said even beyond the technological problems, the most serious near-misses have occurred because humans in the U.S. and humans in the USSR or Russia have misperceived something erroneously as a full-scale attack coming in to their nation from the other side. He said that on 5 or 6 occasions people have – just in the nick of time – recognized that what seemed like an onslaught of nuclear weapons coming in were really a flock of geese or some other innocent error such as a computer error, and decided at the last minute not to launch missiles.

Glen said the government and news media cover these up. “The government does not want to tell us how hopelessly dysfunctional the government is.”

Lilly mentioned the more recent danger of cyber-attack. Secret entities somewhere in the world hacking into nuclear nations’ systems and trying extremely dangerous things. She said, “The National Nuclear Security Administration has reported getting millions of cyber attacks per day.” These are a huge threat of possible nuclear weapons accidents.

### More about First Strike. Dangers of using nuclear weapons. Massive destruction if they’re used.

Glen said that people have a vague awareness that nuclear weapons would cause horrible destruction if they were used. But people assume that we would use them only defensively – only retaliating against someone’s attack upon the U.S. But – as Bruce said a few minutes ago – the U.S. actually has a policy of launching nuclear weapons to begin a nuclear war – a “First-Strike” policy – and the U.S. has designed our weapons specifically and expensively to cause a “First-Strike.”

Now, in addition, Lilly has told us that another serious danger is the accidental use.

**BOTH OF THESE DANGERS** – deliberate first-strike and accident – are persisting decades after the Cold
War ended. I see these as **recklessly suicidal** – and **totally unnecessary**.

Lilly mentioned new legislation that would prevent a reckless “first strike.” We discussed that a few minutes later. Right now, she expressed concern about Trump’s glib comments about nuclear weapons, such as asking, “if we have nuclear weapons, why can’t we use them, or saying, we might as well bomb them, or “let it be an arms race.” Glen said Trump’s reckless statements “have freaked out people around the world.” Bruce agreed: “It should.” Glen said if the U.S. and Russia were to launch nuclear weapons at each other, “everybody else would get wiped out too.”

Bruce added, “Our nuclear weapons policy is bi-partisan and frozen.” He said, “Nobody is questioning how risky it is to sustain this policy of Mutually Assured Destruction.” He said it is very hard to get members of Congress to question this 50-year-old policy. “It’s a dangerous theology.”

Glen agreed that this is not sustainable. Every year there’s a little bit of risk that this will go wrong and we’ll blow up the world. Those risks are cumulative, and eventually the odds will catch up with us. We have been risking survival for 72 years.

**Washington State’s role in nuclear weapons since 1940s**

This international crisis is also a local issue:

- The Nagasaki bomb had its roots at Hanford in Eastern Washington – which is still horribly contaminated. Just a few days before we taped this program in early May 2017, a radioactive tunnel collapsed and endangered workers. Dangers have existed at Hanford for many years. Many years ago Glen produced and hosted a program about Hanford’s dangers, and one of our guests was a woman who had grown up downwind from Hanford. The U.S. government had **deliberately** released radiation from Hanford just to see what would happen to the people downwind. She was a “downwinder” who developed radiation-related health problems, as did many of her neighbors. Bruce said, “We know a lot about that.” Glen agreed that Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility is one of the main non-profit organizations that has been working on that issue for many years. Glen has hosted guests from WPSR on many of the Olympia FOR’s TV interview programs. Glen described the federal government’s persistent behavior as “criminally negligent.” Lilly said Hanford is the most contaminated site – and the largest environmental cleanup project – in the U.S.

- The Trident nuclear submarine base in Kitsap County, Washington – 60 miles north of Olympia – 20 miles west of Seattle – is the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons. Bruce showed this image comparing Trident missiles to the explosive power of the bomb the U.S. exploded in Hiroshima. Each Trident submarine has the equivalent destructive power of 5,820 Hiroshima-sized bombs:

In the early 1980s Washington State’s U.S. Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson succeeded in making Bangor in Kitsap County the U.S.’s West Coast port for Trident nuclear submarines. That is the third largest concentration of nuclear weapons in the world. Eight of
the U.S.’s Trident submarines are based here. The U.S. has a total of 14 Trident submarines. One submarine has the power to eliminate any nuclear nation and its entire population. This is bizarre. And the U.S. is planning to replace these with an entirely new nuclear submarine and missile system that would persist for decades.

**Non-Proliferation Treaty**

Glen said that over the years he has produced and hosted many TV programs about nuclear weapons for this series for the Olympia FOR. He said that in every program he felt compelled to mention the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty because it is so important, and because the American people are largely unaware of it, and because our U.S. government has been consistently violating it since 1970.

In 1969 the nations of the world took action to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to additional nations. They passed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which went into effect in 1970. The NPT is a great bargain between the non-nuclear nations, which agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons and the nations that did have nuclear weapons, which agreed to start planning to get rid of theirs. This bold bargain went into effect in 1970. Now Trump has said that some other nations should get nukes.

Lilly and Bruce agreed with Glen’s summary. Lilly added that the NPT was renewed indefinitely in 1995, because “the world agreed that this is absolutely a treaty that we want to live by.” However, disarmament efforts have slowed down in recent years. She said, “The U.S. is not just maintaining our nuclear weapons but actually rebuilding them.” She said the U.S. is building new delivery systems and new types of warheads. This violates the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Bruce said that NPT’s Article 6 demanded that the nuclear-armed states move toward disarmament, but “they have systematically ignored that.” Glen provided the exact wording: “All countries agree to pursue negotiations in good faith to end the nuclear arms race and to achieve nuclear disarmament under international control.” Bruce said that the non-nuclear nations are resisting the nuclear nations’ failure to abide by the treaty. (We talked about this a bit later in the interview.)

Also, Lilly said the U.S. is actually starting a new nuclear arms race. When the U.S. commits to spending $1 TRILLION to rebuild our entire nuclear arsenal, this prompts other nations to feel that they have to respond with more nuclear weapons of their own.

Glen pointed out that this dynamic is exactly one of the main ways that wars have broken out historically. World War I was a very notable example, because nations saw each other arming and increased their own arming, and provoked fears and hostilities that led to World War I. Bruce added that during the Cold War the U.S. and USSR each wanted to escalate to gain superiority, and now we are provoking that again. Glen said that each of the nuclear weapons technological advances was made by the U.S., and then the USSR tried to catch up.

**What current geopolitical factors are provoking nuclear weapons now?**

The world is experiencing some geopolitical crises now that are making nuclear war more likely. Bruce summarized a few of these geopolitical crises related to nuclear weapons. He said that after the public started to ignore the problems, three things made this hot again:

1. Relations between the U.S. and Russia have seriously broken down. This has completely stalled our joint progress toward reducing nuclear weapons. Glen said that this has been going on for several years, so it is not based on current news about Trump, etc. Bruce agreed. He said this has gone on throughout the entire Obama Administration.

2. North Korea has built nuclear weapons. The international climate is highly inflammatory with threats instead of any real diplomacy or negotiations. North Korea has only minimal capability of doing anything to the U.S.

3. Some nuclear-armed states are unstable. The clearest example of this is India and Pakistan. Both have been fighting continuously for many years, and both have nuclear weapons, and both have threatened to actually use their nuclear weapons if they felt sufficiently threatened. The rest of the world has no real control over those nations.

The world made progress with Iran, but some American politicians want to roll back that success.

Now the U.S. has a president who lacks understanding of nuclear policy and is very impulsive and psychologically unstable. This additional factor has worsened what Bruce called a “very toxic stew” and has made the rest of the world pay more attention to nuclear weapons’ dangers.

Glen agreed that besides being ignorant, Trump does not recognize how ignorant he is. He thinks he can simply rely on his gut instincts, even though he seems psychiatrically
disabled and has poor impulse control. “This is the worst possible combination.”

Bruce said these factors are why it is so much more important now than ever for Congress to pass a “No First-Use” bill that would take away the president’s unilateral power to begin a nuclear war. Congress would have to take explicit action before a president could launch nuclear weapons. Lilly added that “no president – regardless of party or temperament” – should have this power. Glen agreed that this has been a problem for 72 years. (We discussed this a few minutes later.)

Bruce summarized a few of the dynamics at the presidential and congressional levels that have led the U.S. government to decide to completely rebuild our nation’s entire nuclear arsenal. He said that Obama was exercising good-faith efforts to negotiate with Russia to reduce nuclear weapons. The START II (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, part II) provided for modest reductions. But in order to get Congress (especially Republican members of Congress) to support START II, Obama committed to “modernizing” (actually rebuilding all) of the U.S.’s nuclear weapons. So in order to reduce nuclear weapons modestly, Obama agreed to what amounts to starting a new nuclear arms race! Bruce said this massive rebuilding is “unnecessary” and “militarily indefensible” and “immoral.” Also, he said, “We can’t afford it.”

Glen pointed out that saying the U.S. claim that it is “modernizing” our nuclear weapons is a very deceptive euphemism. The peace movement is not against modernity or progress. We oppose the U.S. provoking a new nuclear arms race. He said this would “unhinge a lot of other countries and non-nuclear actors who will feel threatened.” Bruce said the U.S. is provoking “especially Russia and China” to upgrade their own nuclear weapons. Lilly said we can already see those effects happening.

Glen said the U.S. has already been threatening Russia by expanding NATO right up to Russia’s borders and positioning U.S. missile launchers and other military weapons right up to Russia’s borders. The U.S. has been encircling China with Obama’s so-called “pivot to Asia,” which is really aggressive toward China. Provoking other nations is “madness and suicidal.”

Lilly said that the public does not know about the new nuclear arms race. Congress has not sufficiently debated and voted. “It’s all happening behind closed doors.” Glen agreed and said, “Congress members don’t want to be perceived as ‘soft on defense,’ even though no defense is possible from nuclear weapons. So Congress simply goes along with more Pentagonism.

Bruce mentioned that the proposed “rebuild” would rebuild all three legs of the U.S.’s nuclear “triad” – 400 land-based InterContinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), an entirely new and expensive fleet of more than 100 fantastically expensive stealth bombing planes carrying nuclear bombs, and sea-launched nuclear missiles (entirely replacing all of our Trident submarines).

He said all of this would cost about $1 TRILLION. Glen said that on top of that amount, fantastically huge cost overruns would certainly occur but are not counted in this estimate. It is common practice for the Pentagon and weapons manufacturers to convince Congress to buy new weapons systems at projected costs, and then keep adding and adding and adding to the costs after Congress has committed to those weapons systems. “Once they have money sunk into a project, they don’t want to stop it,” so they just keep throwing more of our tax dollars into it. Glen called it “a bait-and-switch scam.”

Bruce agreed that the dynamics of the military-industrial-congressional complex “is almost unstoppable” because military spending is designed to put money into nearly every congressional district. Glen agreed and said that the prime contractor for one of the big weapons systems (perhaps the B-1 bomber) arranged to sub-contract and sub-contract and sub-sub-contract and sub-sub-sub-contract into every one of the U.S.’s 435 congressional districts in order to “buy” the support of Congress members who otherwise would have better sense than to build that stupid, unnecessary airplane. “It’s a scam!”

The $1 trillion figure is the total cost over several decades. But even for 10 years the cost would be $400 billion. Lilly said, “It’s helpful to put this money into context,” so we can understand better uses for this money instead of buying all new nuclear weapons. She said that $400 billion in the next 10 years breaks down to “$4.6 million spent every single hour for the next 10 years.” [Glen’s note: After we taped this interview I did the math, and Lilly was correct.]
This might be a useful figure to tell people when we do outreach.] She said we have many real needs for this money, including health, education, the environment, etc.

Glen agreed. The government keeps telling us that we can’t afford to adequately fund health, education, the environment, or other worthwhile needs. The money really exists, but the government keeps wasting it on military violence instead of meeting our real needs. When we reach out to the public, let’s engage people in thinking about what better purposes we could be spending the money on instead of provoking a new nuclear arms race.

A new overall national policy about nuclear weapons will be released by late 2017

Lilly said that the Trump administration is working on a new formal document – a new Nuclear Posture Review – which will be released by the end of 2017. This will reflect Trump Administration’s policies regarding nuclear weapons. The U.S.’s current Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is one that Obama had released in 2010. Obama’s NPR aligned with his vision for a world without nuclear weapons.

The Nuclear Posture Review explains how the president sees nuclear weapons fitting into our national defense strategies, etc., so the NPR guides our nation’s policies regarding nuclear weapons. We know that Trump has been making ignorant, reckless and provocative statements about foreign policy and nuclear weapons during his campaign and since his inauguration, so this could add to that pattern. There is great concern that Trump’s new NPR will embrace nuclear weapons rather than move toward nuclear disarmament. Therefore, some House members are asking other House members to sign a letter calling upon Trump to create continue the longstanding officially stated desire to reduce nuclear weapons and prevent other nations from getting them. Also, let’s seriously consider how to better use our tax dollars.

Non-nuclear nations are organizing for a worldwide ban on nuclear weapons, possibly soon.

Glen said that Congress, our nation’s mainstream media, and the American people in general are pretty clueless about the hard realities we have been discussing, but the rest of the world has been paying attention for many years and is increasingly outraged.

Bruce highlighted the growing international movement to ban nuclear weapons altogether. He said the rest of the world sees very clearly – and is deeply upset – that the nuclear nations are not abiding by our treaty obligations. If nuclear war were to break out, the non-nuclear nations are at risk along with the nuclear nations! Therefore, some of the more thoughtful nations have been working over the past 6-8 years to build momentum to address this crisis. They want to ban nuclear weapons altogether, just like the world community has banned other kinds of horrible weapons of mass destruction (biological and chemical weapons, landmines, etc.). He said this conversation has grown over the past 3 or 4 years. International meetings have been held to work on a nuclear weapons ban.

These meetings led to the creation of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a coalition of more than 400 organizations based in approximately 80 nations joining together to work for an international treaty to ban nuclear weapons altogether.

Bruce said all of the nations that do have nuclear weapons have refused to participate, with only one exception. Only North Korea is joining those efforts in seeking to ban all nuclear weapons.

He said more than 130 nations are likely to sign on to such a ban, and this super-majority of the world’s nations would put huge pressure on the handful of nuclear nations. It would be untenable for the U.S. to build an entirely new and upgraded nuclear arsenal when the rest of the world has gone on record demanding an absolute ban on all nuclear weapons. Bruce said, “It would be politically and ethically awkward for the nuclear-armed states.”

Glen said a major organizing meeting occurred at the United Nations in October 2016, and another significant meeting occurred at the United Nations in late March 2017. These are mentioned in news items posted at the “Nuclear Weapons” part of Olympia FOR’s website, www.olympiafor.org

Bruce said that this is happening through the UN’s General Assembly, the body of all member nations, and it can happen there because powerful nuclear nations do not have a veto there (only in the Security Council).

Glen mentioned that the Olympia FOR’s previous TV programs about nuclear weapons have addressed additional aspects of the crisis and other kinds of positive actions that people have been taking. Formal, official action has been occurring at the international level, even if the American people don’t know about it. For example, in 1996 the World Court (International Court of Justice) ruled that the threat of using nuclear weapons is illegal under international law. (This is analogous to a robbery being “armed robbery” if using a gun was threatened, even if the gun was not actually fired.) The nuclear nations have ignored this international
Bruce said part of the rationale for the International Court of Justice’s decision is that nuclear weapons threaten the lives of noncombatants. This is indefensible by both legal and moral standards, he said.

A few minutes before, Bruce had pointed out that international treaties through the United Nations and/or other bodies have outlawed several kinds of “weapons of mass destruction.”

**Glen held a visual image and read the dates when those were banned:**

1972: Biological weapons were banned under the Biological Weapons Convention.

1993: Chemical weapons were banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

1997: Land mines were banned under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

2008: Cluster munitions were banned under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

**When will nuclear weapons also be banned by treaty?**

These historical precedents prove that the world community can indeed ban horrible “Weapons of Mass Destruction” – WMDs. How many of us remember “WMDs”? We need to take the next step in this sequence and ban nuclear weapons entirely. Glen said, “This is not some wild dream.”

We have banned other WMDs. We must ban nuclear weapons too through a worldwide treaty.

Bruce said that – while we have banned other WMDs – we have left the most dangerous WMDs out of this sequence of banning other kinds of WMDs.

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**Now we must rebuild a public movement to push Congress to change U.S. nuclear policy. SANE Act, Representative Lieu’s bill, etc.**

Several pieces of legislation have been introduced in Congress to solve some of the problems we’ve been discussing. Lilly said that our U.S. House and Senate members say they do not hear from their constituents regarding nuclear weapons. She urges you to contact them even if you are not an expert!

Since 1945 – for 72 years – the president has had the sole discretion – the absolute unilateral power – to decide when to launch nuclear weapons. This has been a serious problem for 72 years. But now the crisis is extreme, because the one person with this absolute power and his finger on the button is Trump, who seems seriously mentally ill with reckless egotism and almost no impulse control. Congress could fix this.

Lilly mentioned an important new bill to reduce the likelihood of a First Strike. She said the “Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act” would take the president’s finger off the button to prevent a First Strike unless Congress explicitly authorizes it. It does not prohibit First Strike altogether, but only adds this sensible restraint. The U.S. Congress says that only Congress can declare a war. Starting a nuclear war would be the very worst kind of war, so First Strike should not be allowed unless Congress authorizes it. She said the bill was introduced in 2016 and again in 2017. This year’s name is the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017. This year it has gained more support from the public and from Congress, with 32 co-sponsors in the House (including 1 Republican) and 7 in the Senate.

Glen said Rep. Ted Lieu is the prime sponsor of this bill in the House (H.R. 669), and Sen. Ted Markey is the prime sponsor of the Senate bill (S. 200). Glen said the support for this bill increased in 2017 probably because the person in the White House is psychiatrically unstable and has poor impulse control. The bill’s supporters have gotten about half a million signatures on federal legislation that would eliminate the president’s unilateral authority to launch a nuclear weapon. Let’s urge our U.S. Senators and House members to support H.R. 669 and S. 200.

The SANE Act will be introduced by Senators Blumenauer and Markey. Lilly said this legislation would reduce deployed warheads in various parts of our nuclear arsenal from 1550 to 1000. It would cut land-based missiles from 400 to no more than 150, restrict new Columbia Trident submarines to 8 from the proposed 12, cancel the new nuclear
cruise missile (the “Long Range Stand-Off” = LRSO), and delay the new bomber wing until 2025.

A different Senate bill – “The Nuclear Cruise Missile Reconsideration Act of 2017” – highlights the irresponsible spending for the proposed new “Long-Range Standoff Cruise Missile” system. It would cost between $20 billion and $30 billion. The Pentagon says it would have “a use beyond deterrence.” In other words, this would be an aggressive weapon designed to start a war.

To SUPPORT the GOOD legislation, let’s contact Congress and reach out to the public through letters to editors and actions by non-profit organizations.

Let’s also OPPOSE the BAD legislation, such as the $1 TRILLION that Congress, Obama and Trump want to spend to rebuild all of the U.S.’s nuclear weapons systems.

For this second purpose, Lilly introduced a 1-minute video before we watched it. WPSR created this 1-minute video as a TV ad. It uses the classic short video (the “daisy ad”) that Johnson used against Goldwater during the 1964 presidential campaign, and it urges viewers now to tell Congress NOT to build new nuclear weapons. We showed the video during the program. Although the Cold War is over, the danger of nuclear war is very much a serious risk now, so people should urge Congress to stop funding. Also, you can watch it through this link: www.psr.org/chapters/washington/peace-nuclear-weapons

**Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) does excellent work! Why do doctors care about nuclear weapons?**

In order to become more effective in opposing bad public policy and supporting good public policy, people create non-profit organizations so we can work together to pool our knowledge and our energies.

For 55 years, one of the leading organizations opposing nuclear weapons has been Physicians for Social Responsibility, PSR, www.psr.org. Here in Washington State we have Washington PSR, www.wpsr.org. Bruce has been a very active member of PSR and WPSR for decades. Now he is the President of WPSR’s Board.

Bruce said doctors know there is no treatment – no reasonable response – for nuclear war. The only thing that makes sense medically is prevention! Some East Coastphysicians created PSR as a way to say we must prevent nuclear war, not pretend that we can simply plan to survive it by “duck-and-cover” or evacuating cities.

The WPSR affiliate in Washington State has worked on this statewide since the early 1980s. After the Cold War ended, WPSR has persisted. No other statewide organization was rising to the occasion to revive the movement to oppose nuclear weapons, but this has always been the primary mission of PSR and WPSR.

Nuclear weapons require a vast and complicated network that includes mining uranium, designing nuclear weapons, building nuclear weapons, designing and building the submarines and land-based missiles and airplanes carrying nuclear bombs, and dealing with the wastes, and many other steps. People are resisting these various activities in a variety of places throughout the nation.

**WPSR’s new Washington Coalition to Stop the New Nuclear Arms Race**

Bruce said WPSR members recently increased their organizing efforts and created a growing statewide coalition – the Washington Coalition to Stop the New Nuclear Arms Race – as part of their strategic plan to reduce and abolish nuclear weapons. This new statewide coalition is organizing vigorously statewide to put pressure on WA’s 2 U.S. senators and 10 U.S. House members.

Bruce said WPSR is working on two serious threats to the human community: climate change and nuclear weapons. He said that Lilly is the primary organizer of WPSR’s new statewide effort, the Washington Coalition to Stop the New Nuclear Arms Race. It intends to push our U.S. House and Senate members very hard to convince them that nuclear weapons are not acceptable.

Glen said he has have worked against nuclear weapons for more than 40 years. For a number of months he has participated in every one of the new coalition’s monthly meetings. He is delighted that so many experts on nuclear weapons – people and organizations he has known and respected for many years – are already members of the coalition. And Glen expressed special delight with Lilly’s knowledge of the issues and her savvy skills as an organizer.

Glen said he vigorously supports the Washington Coalition to Stop the New Nuclear Arms Race. He arranged for the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation to join the coalition and for the Olympia FOR to start a new committee to work on nuclear weapons. Anyone can contact the coalition through lilly@wpsr.org or www.wpsr.org or (206) 547-2630.
Lilly said the coalition began in the fall of 2016 and grew very quickly to more than 20 member organizations as of May 11, 2017, when we taped this interview. Member organizations include those grounded in peace, the environment, neighborhoods, faith communities, social justice, labor, and so forth. These are located in various parts of the state. The coalition is working to include members from each of Washington State’s ten congressional districts, so we’ll have people who can interact directly with their respective members of Congress.

Olympia FOR’s nuclear weapons committee could organize a Congressional Subcommittee to arrange for meetings and larger mobilizations to urge Representative Denny Heck and Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell to make the decisions that we want. The coalition is focusing especially on stopping the waste of $1 trillion to rebuild all of our nuclear weapons. Decisions and budgets about nuclear weapons are made by Congress and the Executive Branch. WPSR’s new statewide coalition is organizing to urge both of Washington State’s U.S. Senators and each of our ten U.S. House members to work against nuclear weapons. We are organizing face-to-face meetings with each of these twelve persons and also with their staff members. We are mobilizing their constituents to contact them and emphasize how important it is that we stop this new nuclear arms race.

We’re also educating the public through writing letters to editors, organizing local events, and so forth. We are also working continuously to build the coalition and include more people. Glen said that – because mainstream media “don’t have enough sense or enough gumption to generate their own articles,” we can provide our own letters to the editor and opinion pieces in order to make nuclear weapons a hot issue.

Lilly said that this issue can seem so big that people might not know how to get involved, but we really are urging more people to join the coalition – and other anti-nuclear organizations – so they can find specific ways to connect and help. Glen urged people who live elsewhere and are watching this through our website to find their own local or statewide organization, or even start your own local group. A good starting point is www.psr.org

We can work with – and use resources from – many other organizations. See the list at end of this thorough summary of what our guests said during the interview. We are posting this summary – with the list of resources at the end – in both Word and .pdf formats on the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org.

Olympia FOR belongs to WPSR’s statewide coalition. Olympia FOR’s new committee is working to abolish nuclear weapons. Please contact us.

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation joined WPSR’s new coalition in early 2017 and created a new committee to work locally toward abolishing nuclear weapons. Olympia FOR’s nuclear weapons committee had our first meeting on May 4. We’ll hold our second meeting on **Wednesday June 7** at 7:00 pm at Traditions Café, 5th & Water, in downtown Olympia. To connect with the Olympia FOR’s nuclear weapons committee, contact me at (360) 491-9093 or nuclearweapons@olympiafor.org

We already have a lot of information posted at the "Nuclear Weapons" part of Olympia FOR’s website, www.olympiafor.org

We will reach out to the general public to inform and engage them. We need everyone’s help to reach out to various constituencies, community groups, and so forth – and also to apply grassroots pressure on our members of Congress.

Glen expressed appreciation for Lilly’s participation in Olympia’s first two meetings. Lilly expressed appreciation for the energy at our first meeting and looks forward to our second meeting.
Some of our local people will remember the effective grassroots organizing in Olympia that occurred in 1982 with the Thurston County Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. A year-long campaign succeeded in winning a landslide of more than 62% of the vote in a county-wide ballot initiative calling for an immediate, absolute stop – a “freeze” – in the production, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons. This kind of action occurred all across the nation when people reacted in horror to President Ronald Reagan’s reckless escalation of the nuclear arms race and his glib willingness to start a nuclear war.

Also, some local folks will remember that in 2005 Olympia area people organized “Beyond Hiroshima” events and succeeded in getting the Olympia City Council to unanimously pass an anti-nuclear resolution in February 2005 as part of a nationwide organizing effort of city mayors as part of a nationwide campaign by Mayors for Peace and the US Conference of Mayors’ 2020 vision campaign.

We shared insights for organizing about nuclear weapons. Examples:
1. Let's use many different kinds of reasons and opportunities to organize against nuclear weapons.
2. Besides providing facts, let's also address moral factors.
3. Let's address the psychological barriers that make it hard for people to hear the facts.

Glen enthusiastically encouraged people to think of the many different angles and strategies for generating public support for organizing against nuclear weapons. These include the dangers, the costs and better uses for our tax money, the health aspects (including the health dangers of mining uranium and building the weapons even if they are never used), the potential for local governments to act, and the moral angle.

Many people oppose nuclear weapons for religious or spiritual reasons. The late Catholic priest Richard McSorley stated flatly, “It’s a sin to build nuclear weapons.” Father McSorley also wrote:

“The taproot of violence in our society today is our intent to use nuclear weapons. Once we have agreed to that, all other evil is minor in comparison. Until we squarely face the questions of our consent to use nuclear weapons, any hope of large scale improvement of public morality is doomed to failure. Even the possession of weapons which cannot be morally used is wrong. They are a threat to peace and might even be the cause of nuclear war. The nuclear weapons of Communists may destroy our bodies, but the intent to use nuclear weapons destroys our souls.”

Glen said Americans worry about crime and violence. But our government sets a bad example with nuclear weapons as a fatal flaw in our society. People absorb this violent attitude subconsciously. Our whole society would be more safe and civilized if we were to abolish nuclear weapons.

Lilly agreed. She said, “This is a universal issue because everyone would be affected if nuclear weapons were ever used. They are so inherently inhumane – so inherently indiscriminate.” Glen agreed and affirmed what Bruce had said a few minutes before regarding other nations worldwide organizing to hold the nuclear nations accountable because a nuclear war would kill not only Russians and Americans but also people in other nations worldwide. Likewise, Glen said Americans need to recognize that, “no matter where you live, stuff in your community is not being funded because the money is going into [nuclear weapons].”

Bruce agreed that “the moral card might be one of the most powerful cards we can play.” He said, “There is not a single moral or ethical system that justifies destroying large numbers of noncombatants under the guise of self-preservation or defense.” He said that in the 1980s much of the resistance to nuclear weapons came from the religious community. In the 1980s Seattle’s Catholic Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen called the Trident nuclear submarine base “the Auschwitz of Puget Sound.” Archbishop Hunthausen refused to pay federal income tax because of this.

Now the anti-nuclear movement is working again to activate individual congregations and the larger religious organizational bodies to strongly oppose nuclear weapons. Bruce said it’s very hard for a member of Congress to defend nuclear weapons based on any moral standard.

We did not have time to mention this next point during the interview, but it is worth reading about here:

People have condemned nuclear weapons ever since the US dropped two atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945. A few years ago the Olympia FOR organized a local speaking engagement by historian Lawrence Wittner. He had researched and documented the effectiveness of public opposition to nuclear weapons over the years for his book titled, Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement. His research proved that when people protested in a variety of nonviolent ways, we made progress in limiting nuclear weapons, but when the public failed to speak out and act boldly, nuclear weapons increased.

We must work for nuclear disarmament. I recommend the non-profit organizations we are listing on the Olympia FOR’s
We did not have time for this next point either during the interview, but it is worth reading about here:

Many of the issues that politically progressive people work on – climate, racism, nuclear weapons, death penalty, etc. – have emotional complexities that we must address, in addition to educating the public about the facts. Some of those emotional complexities include psychological barriers that make it hard for people to pay attention to the serious issues and make it hard for people to absorb the frightening information.

When we organize about nuclear weapons (or the other heavy, scary topics mentioned in the paragraph above), we can make more progress by recognizing the fears and other psychological barriers that make people avoid learning about these issues. Instead of simply pushing facts upon people, let’s also devise smart strategies to deal with fears and other psychological barriers, so people will be able to hear and absorb the facts, and then take positive actions to deal with them.

**Nuclear weapons are extremely expensive. We have better uses for the money.**

We did not have time during the interview to go into detail about the costs, but we can mention this now.

In addition to the extremely serious dangers of using nuclear weapons, those weapons already have been injuring and killing people in the U.S. and worldwide because their enormous cost wastes our tax dollars that decent people want to use for better purposes that could fund health care, end poverty, restore healthy environments, and save lives in many ways. (Also, people die from the radiation that results from mining and processing uranium and building the weapons.)

Nuclear weapons waste money that we should use for better purposes. When we discuss rebuilding the entire nuclear arsenal, let’s engage people in thinking about the better purposes for which we could be spending our tax dollars. This insight leads us to see how we could reach out to many different kinds of people – many constituencies – many non-profit organizations – many parts of state and local government – that are suffering because nuclear weapons waste money that they need.

A good source of information about this is the National Priorities Project: [www.NationalPriorities.org](http://www.NationalPriorities.org)

People are concerned about wasteful government spending and getting the most value for our tax dollars.

**Many sources of information exist!**

An amazing number of high quality non-profit organizations have been working for many years to abolish nuclear weapons. Listed below are a few good starting points.

**During this interview we have featured:**

**Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) at the national level:**

1111 14th St, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC, 20005
(202) 667-4260
[www.psr.org](http://www.psr.org)

**Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) at the Washington State level** has done amazingly good work in opposing nuclear weapons, opposing the contamination at Hanford in Eastern Washington, and working on other important issues.

4500 9th Ave NE Suite 300, Seattle WA 98105
(206) 547-2630
[www.wpsr.org](http://www.wpsr.org) Especially see this website’s “RESOURCES” section.
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War is PSR’s international network.  
www.ippnw.org

I also highly recommend these great organizations:

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists:  www.thebulletin.org  This was founded in 1945 by University of Chicago scientists who had worked on the Manhattan Project and were deeply concerned about the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear war.  In 1947 the Bulletin introduced its clock to convey the perils posed by nuclear weapons.  The “Doomsday Clock” evoked both the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero).

Disarm Now Plowshares:  http://disarminowplowshares.wordpress.com  These persons have been taking courageous, nonviolent actions against nuclear weapons facilities.

Friends Committee on National Legislation is a highly credible, respected and effective nationwide Quaker-based lobby focusing on Congress and educating the public.  www fcnl.org  (202) 547-6000 Toll-free: (800) 630-1330

Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action: Since 1977 this non-profit organization’s members, supporters, property and house immediately next door to the Trident nuclear submarine base at Bangor in Kitsap County WA has been educating the public and taking courageous nonviolent actions to resist nuclear weapons.  www.gzcenter.org  (360) 930-8697

National Priorities Project has been educating the public about the trade-offs in the federal budget about what we could accomplish if we did not waste money on military spending.  www NationalPriorities.org

Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) works nonviolently to stop nuclear weapons work at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.  www.orepa.org

Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation works in several ways.  I summarized much information and posted relevant links at the “Nuclear Weapons” part of  www.olympiafor.org.  Also, please contact Olympia FOR’s new committee works to abolish nuclear weapons at nuclearweapons@olympiafor.org  or (360) 491-9093

Peace Action is the organization resulting from the merger decades ago of the anti-nuclear organization SANE and the 1980s Freeze Campaign.  www.peace-action.org

Puget Sound Nuclear Weapon Free Zone:  www.psnukefree.org

Washington Coalition to Stop the New Nuclear Arms Race is the name of WPSR’s coalition, which we featured during this TV interview.  Contact this through  www.wpsr.org  (206) 547-2630  lilly@wpsr.org

Western States Legal Foundation, 510-839-5877  www.wslfweb.org

Also, you can watch a number of the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation’s previous TV programs about nuclear weapons.  I’ve been producing and hosting the Olympia FOR’s TV series for 30 years.  Every few years we bring our viewers up-to-date about nuclear weapons.  You can watch 5 of these programs through the Olympia FOR’s website.  Visit  www.olympiafor.org,  click the “TV Programs” link, and scroll down to these programs and click on the title of any program you want to watch and/or click any Word or .pdf documents to read a summary of that program:

July 2015  “The U.S. Is Risking Nuclear War with Russia over Ukraine”
Closing encouragement from Glen

Glen thanked Lilly Adams and Dr. Bruce Amundson for being our guests for this interview.

During this interview, Lilly and Bruce have urged our viewers to understand that – even after the Cold War – nuclear weapons need our urgent attention and strong action. Indeed, this has been a recurring theme for each of the TV programs about nuclear weapons that I have produced and hosted for several decades.

This seems like the familiar metaphor of the frog in a bucket of water that is slowly heating up. Instead of recognizing the danger and jumping out, the frog simply cooks to death. Nuclear weapons have been with us for 72 years – and throughout that time, the U.S. has been incrementally leading each step in the nuclear arms race.

When the Cold War ended, people thought the dangers were reducing, but the problems have been increasing in recent years without Congress or the news media or the public noticing that the dangers have been becoming incrementally more serious, like the frog in the constantly heating water.

Every day there is a small chance of accident or miscalculation that could destroy the world.

The likelihood on any given day is small, but the danger is cumulative.

Since 1945 – continuously for 72 years – the cumulative danger has become large.

Eventually the odds will catch up with us, and we’ll destroy the world – unless “we the people” take responsibility for what the government does and stop the madness.

The danger of deliberate use or accident or miscalculation will continue until we abolish nuclear weapons altogether.

The US is the only nation to have actually used nuclear weapons against another nation.

The US has more of them than any other nation.

The US has led the advances in the nuclear arms race. Other nations have tried to catch up.

To possess first-strike nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert means we still threaten to use them. This is illegal under international law.

The US has been violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty continuously since 1970. This too is illegal under international law.

The US sets a terrible example to set for other nations. The US has absolutely no moral authority to tell other nations that we can have nuclear weapons by they can’t.

The US has the moral responsibility to take the lead, but the US keeps failing to do that.

Both political parties have caused the problems and are making the problems worse right now.

Recently Congress and Obama and Trump have been planning to spend $1 TRILLION to build all new nuclear weapons and continue provoking an arms race throughout most of this new century.

Nuclear weapons can destroy most life on earth.

It makes no sense to waste billions of dollars on something that is too dangerous to be used.

The U.S. government and the military-industrial complex are pushing us toward suicide.

“We the people” must organize and stop the madness – and prevent this suicide!

Please help!
You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence by contacting the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation at (360) 491-9093 or www.olympiafor.org

We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.
We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.
The world needs you! You can help!