

Count the nuclear weapons money In favour of a better use

New York, May 10-16, 2018



A public action in New York during the 2018 United Nations High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament

Introduction

During the next ten years about 1 trillion dollars will be spent globally for maintaining, modernizing and upgrading the nuclear arsenals in the nine nuclear countries. This wastes tax-payers' money on weapons systems which put civilization at risk.

The danger of a nuclear war caused by growing tensions, unforeseen conflicts, irrational decisions or technical accidents is increasing. Those making the weapons and their delivery systems have a vested interest in keeping this risk high, in order to justify the exorbitant nuclear weapons budgets. They are operating in direct opposition to the needs of people and the planet. *Count the Nuclear Weapons Money* will highlight this irresponsible wastage, and what the funds could instead be directed toward.

Goal

Count the Nuclear Weapons Money will physically demonstrate the colossal nuclear weapons budget, and relate this directly to important human, social and ecologic issues that could instead be funded with some, or all, of this money.

Action

The amount of 1 trillion dollars will be publicly counted by hand, note by note. As it is impossible to do this with one trillion 1-dollar-notes (it would take about 19,000 years) we will count one million notes each of \$1 million value. The counting process will then take 7 days and nights. Each day will focus on one or two areas of economic, social or environmental need for which the money could better be spent.

As these issues are represented in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015, we will highlight the SDGs, and how a global reduction in nuclear weapons spending could assist in the implementation of SDGs.

As this action is being undertaken in the USA, we will also highlight how nuclear weapons spending in the USA negatively impacts on federal budgets in areas of social need, and impacts on local communities.

Spending on nuclear weapons is a theft from people

The \$100 billion spent annually on nuclear weapons is a theft from the tax-payers of the USA and other nuclear-armed States, and from the people of the world.

In 1953, USA President General Dwight David Eisenhower noted that:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

His words are particularly true of nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction, the use of which would indiscriminately kill civilians, wipe out cities, and possibly end civilization as we know it.

Nuclear weapon States have an obligation to cut nuclear weapons spending

Under the non-Proliferation Treaty (Article VI) , the nuclear armed States are obliged to end the nuclear arms race and negotiate to achieve global nuclear disarmament. Under the UN Charter (Article 26), the Security Council (which includes the main nuclear armed States) has an obligation to develop a plan for disarmament in order to release resources for economic and social need. Count the Nuclear Weapons Money is an action to encourage the nuclear-armed States to implement these obligations.

Where and when

The project shall be realized in front of the UN Headquarters and in other public places in New York during the High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament which takes place 14 to 16 May 2018. To get early attention of the media and the attending heads of states and governments the action shall already start 4 days before the conference begins. As such, the nuclear money will be counted from 10 to 16 May 2018.

The money will be counted into a glass/Perspex container by consecutive teams of two people each hour. On one (or more) of the days we plan for *Count the Nuclear Weapons Money* transparent container would be next to the knotted gun statue in the UN courtyard just inside the security which would give great visuals and maximum exposure to those visiting the UN (staff, governments, NGOs and tourists).

For some days the container for counting the money will be put on a flat-deck truck and taken to different locations in New York, representing programs of social and economic need that are not being met due to low budgets, whilst billions are being wasted on nuclear weapons.

Who counts?

The counting teams are a mix of all ages, nations and social levels: celebrities, activists, politicians, UN officials, diplomats, artists, refugees, school kids, representatives of the different SDGs and just normal citizens.

Included in the counting teams will be Laureates of the Nobel prize and Right Livelihood Award ('Alternative Nobel Peace Prize').

A counting team always consists of two persons. One counts the notes, the other one prepares the money piles, controls and communicates the sums and allocates the counted money to the SDGs for which it should be spent. Every 10 minutes (\$1billion counted) they change their roles, and each hour the team will be replaced by another team.

Note design by an artist

The notes would be designed by an appropriate artist. The front design could express the current purpose of the money, which is to serve nuclear armament and to enable the murdering of millions/billions of people. The reverse side could depict areas in which this money could instead be directed, especially those represented by the SDGs.

If the artist signs some of the notes by hand they could then be sold to art collectors. Instead of selling signed notes, it is also possible to sell the original artwork (which would be larger than the printed notes themselves) plus a limited number of full-size signed prints.

The notes and/or the original artwork could be sold with a social/humanitarian benefit. With the amount of one million 1-million-dollar-notes a huge art installation can be made and shown on a public space or in a museum.

Worldwide attention

To get attention worldwide we will create a live stream video so that anyone anywhere can follow the counting process, see what the money instead could be used for and give their own comments. We also plan to employ a public relations company to ensure maximum global media coverage.

Input into the UN High Level Conference

We will also have representatives registered for the UN High Level Conference, participating in the deliberations, submitting proposals on reducing nuclear weapons spending, and building support from like-minded governments and non-governmental organisations.

Parliamentary action

PNND will use its international network of parliamentarians to take simultaneous action in parliaments around the world to highlight the action, support the UN High-Level Conference, promote key nuclear disarmament proposals at the conference, call for cuts in nuclear weapons budgets and adopt nuclear divestment policies.

Budget and staffing

To succeed, the project will require funding for staffing, media promotion and logistics. This includes staff to secure celebrities to be on the counting teams.

Project coordination

The project was initiated by Holger Güssefeld (creative adviser). It will be created and conducted by the Global Security Institute (GSI), World Future Council (WFC), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and UNFOLD ZERO. These organisations have considerable expertise in organizing high-level United Nations and parliamentary events, as well as successful public actions such as the *Tank of Bread* (at the Rio+20 Summit) and the *#3DnukeMissile* (various locations).

Contacts:

Holger Güssefeld: +49 170 526 0593. holger.guessefeld@worldfuturecouncil.org

Alyn Ware: +420 773 638 867. alyn@pnnd.org

Jonathan Granoff: +1 484 620-4967. JonathanGranoff@gmail.com

Rob van Riet. +44 7707 362-503. rob.vanriet@worldfuturecouncil.org

Count the Nuclear Weapons Money brought to you by:



GLOBAL
SECURITY
INSTITUTE

www.gs institute.org



www.pnnd.org



www.unfoldzero.org



www.worldfuturecouncil.org