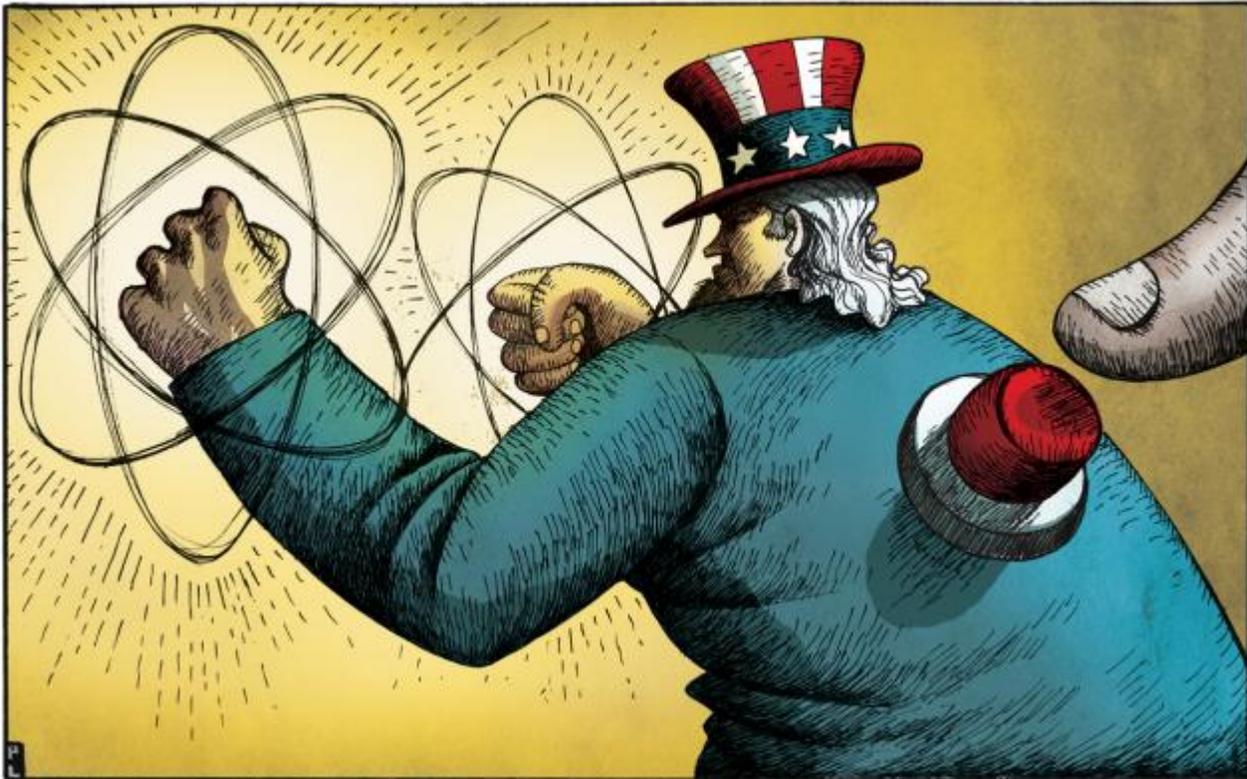


A thank you to peace advocates

NCR Staff | Sep. 13, 2010



We continue to remember fondly the clarity with which former Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen spoke out against nuclear weapons and the U.S. system of nuclear deterrence. It was in 1981 that Hunthausen termed the Trident nuclear submarine base in Bangor, Wash., "the Auschwitz of Puget Sound." These days the protests of these weapons by our church's prelates have become more muted and nuanced. That said, we welcome and commend Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., Bishop Robert W. Finn's timely statement questioning the wisdom of a new \$673 million (\$1.2 billion over 20 years) nuclear weapons plant, which was dedicated Sept. 8 in Kansas City (see story [here](#) [1]).

It is nothing less than outrageous that when our nation's leaders are attempting to renegotiate a new global nuclear proliferation treaty, pressuring other nations (especially sworn enemies Iran and North Korea) from expanding their nuclear weapons programs, we move forward updating our own nuclear weapons systems even as we hide plans to build a new generation of nuclear weapons from the general public.

Given the direct threats to humanity that nuclear weapons pose, the tinderbox nature of the world today, the overwhelming size of our nuclear weapons system, and the misappropriation of limited resources updating these weapons' force, we commend those brave protesters — many of them Catholic Workers — who are raising unpopular but relevant moral issues. A number of men and women have modeled nonviolent resistance by standing up to bulldozers and have gotten arrested to make their messages heard.

The head of the office of human rights for the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese read Finn's statement as dignitaries were arriving for a plant groundbreaking ceremony and protesters were being arrested Sept. 8. The new nuclear weapons manufacturing plant replaces an aging plant and will make nonnuclear parts for U.S. nuclear weapons.

Up until Finn issued his statement Sept. 2, the only other local official voice opposing the building of the plant was that of Kansas City Councilmember Ed Ford ? who, alone on the 12-member city council, consistently voted against the building and funding of the plant. Given local public apathy to the issues involved, an official focus only on the jobs being stimulated by the project, and the media's seeming indifference to the wider social and moral issues at hand, Finn's statement stands out as a major moment of leadership.

We echo the plea contained in the last paragraph of Finn's statement, which reads: ?Let us make a decision for all of humanity: that one day this facility may be transformed from a producer of weapons into a producer of goods that benefit all mankind. We look forward to the day when Isaiah the prophet declared, ?They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.? ?

Thank you, peace advocates ? whether you wear jeans and sweatshirts, or a pectoral cross upon your chest.

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