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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

BY JOHN LAFORGE

22.04.2024

Fifty Protest Nuclear Weapons Production in Kansas City



The so-called “Kansas City National Security Campus” is the nuclear weapons production site run by Honeywell in Kansas City, Missouri. On April 15 Tax Day, ten people (not pictured) were arrested in a protest against expansion of the weapons complex (in background in photo), which makes parts for the new 50-kiloton B61-12, like the facsimile held by some of the protesters. Photo by John LaForge.

Fifty anti-war activists from eight states converged on the giant nuclear weapons plant in Kansas City, Missouri Monday, April 15, Tax Day, in a protest against the ongoing production of WMD, and against plans to expand the site — which would double its current size.

During the early morning demonstration, three people were handcuffed and arrested for entering the construction site (which is being readied for the factory’s expansion) and placing “CRIME SCENE” tape around a giant earth-moving vehicle. Another seven people were

arrested after walking through the main gate toward the Honeywell, Inc. complex. All ten were later released with trespass citations ordering them to appear in court June 3.

The 1.5-million sq-ft Kansas City facility procures and produces over 80% of the (non-nuclear) mechanical and electronic parts that make up U.S. nuclear weapons. The parts include firing and arming systems, radars and guidance systems, foams, adhesives, reservoirs for tritium, etc.

Known as “Kansas City National Nuclear Security Campus,” an academic euphemism used to disguise the complex’s purpose, its website says the complex “plays an integral part of weapon modernization from concept through design, production, delivery and lifecycle management.”

Every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal is made up of materials that are procured, engineered or assembled at the site, operated by Honeywell, Inc. under contract to the National Nuclear Security Administration. The factory was called “Kansas City Plant” from 1949 until 2014, when the new \$750 million facility replaced its forerunner.

“The US has embarked on the largest and most expensive nuclear build-out ever,” according to the December *Scientific American*. This is the 30-year-long, \$1.7 trillion nuclear weapons and infrastructure replacement program launched in September 2014 by then President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. The *New York Times* reported then, “The administration has told the Pentagon to plan for 12 new [nuclear-armed] missile submarines, up to 100 new [nuclear-armed] bombers and 400 [nuclear-armed] land-based missiles, either new or refurbished.” Honeywell in Kansas City makes weapons for all this nuclear madness.

“I’m protesting because nuclear weapons are illegal,” said Charles Carney, a protest organizer from Kansas City, KS. “And it’s a moral outrage that we are ramping up our death-dealing poison machine, when we should be spending the money on healthcare for our most vulnerable citizens.”

As if weapons giant Honeywell needs corporate welfare, State Rep. Chris Brown, a Kansas City Republican, has authored a bill offering an exemption from sales taxes on all materials needed to expand the weapons complex. According to the *Kansas City Star*, Brown’s proposal won bipartisan support from Kansas City-area lawmakers and the Missouri House gave initial approval to the tax give-away on a voice vote last week. The *Star* report noted that since moving to the new location in 2014, “the facility has grown from 2,400 employees to more than 7,000.”

Ann Suellentrop, a national board member for the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Physicians for Social Responsibility from Kansas City, and member of Kansas City Peace Works which

helped organize Monday's protest action, told the *Star*, "We're going the wrong way. We're manufacturing our doom."

John LaForge is a Co-director of Nukewatch, a peace and environmental justice group in Wisconsin, and edits its newsletter.

APRIL 19, 2024