

MANY THANKS TO UNA EBAY CHAPTER. I'm very happy to accept this award on behalf of WSLF Board and our supporters. WSLF's Board of Directors is a remarkable hands-on working group whose members share the organization's commitment to social transformation through nonviolence and democratic, non-hierarchical decision making. They provide a wealth of skills and expertise and actively participate in the organization's many activities.

[Referring to the slide show being projected behind me] Putting these photos together made me very proud of how we have been working steadily for many years to link issues of nuclear disarmament, peace, justice and environmental sustainability in an effort to build the broad, multi-issue progressive movement we'll need to effect meaningful social change.

Thank you all!

WSLF is a community; like a family – over all these years we've become good friends and a mutual support system

How did we get our name? Western States Legal Foundation got its start in 1982, providing legal representation for nonviolent activists arrested protesting construction of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. I was arrested there myself a number of times. Western States was formed to counter the right-wing Pacific Legal Foundation which was asserting that the nonviolent protesters had injured PG&E workers and was trying to force the arrestees to pay for law enforcement costs! We prevailed.

In the early 1980s, Western States, as part of the anti-nuclear movement in California, shifted its focus from Diablo Canyon to the Livermore National Laboratory – and from nuclear power to nuclear weapons.

WSLF's activities have evolved to encompass a broad range of research, advocacy and organizing. WSLF does extensive original research and analysis and produces in-depth issue briefs, as well as shorter fact sheets and guides. WSLF staff also write articles and chapters for books and other publications, and speak extensively at events in the Bay area, throughout the country and around the world. From WSLF's local work with the Peoples NonViolent Response Coalition and the New Priorities Campaign, to our national work with United for Peace and Justice, to our international work with the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons and Mayors for Peace, WSLF has been instrumental in raising the visibility and importance of nuclear disarmament as a central issue in the struggle against U.S. empire and global military-industrial complexes.

Why are nuclear weapons still important?

In January of this year, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* wrote to Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and members of the UN Security Council warning that the "Doomsday Clock" now stands at five minutes to midnight, primarily due to the twin existential threats posed by nuclear weapons and climate change.

2-1/2 decades after the end of the Cold War, over 16,000 nuclear weapons, most held by the US and Russia, pose an intolerable threat to humanity due to the ever-present potential for use – whether intentional, accidental or due to miscalculation. The ICRC has warned that “incalculable human suffering” will result from any use of nuclear weapons and that there could be no adequate humanitarian response.

Despite the 45 year old commitment enshrined in the NPT, there are no disarmament negotiations on the horizon. Over the past three years there has been a marked uptick in nuclear disarmament initiatives by governments not possessing nuclear weapons, both within and outside the UN, but the US has been “missing in action” at best, and dismissive or obstructive at worst.

Nuclear armed countries are spending over \$100 billion/year on nuclear weapons and related costs.

The US government is officially committed to modernizing its nuclear bombs and warheads; the submarines, missiles and aircraft that carry them; and the laboratories and plants that design, maintain and manufacture nuclear weapons. Russia’s nuclear weapons programs and policies closely mirror those of the US, and are also reflected in the other nuclear weapon possessing states.

The US is poised to spend more than \$1 trillion over the next 30 years to maintain and modernize the US nuclear arsenal and infrastructure to support it.

Every hour the US spends almost \$2 million on nuclear weapons. By 2030 it will be spending nearly \$4 million on nuclear weapons and missiles.

The University of California, where we’re meeting this evening, has managed the U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories at Livermore and Los Alamos since their inception, and today is part of a management team that includes Bechtel, Babcock and Wilcox, URS Corporation, and Battelle.

With conflicts raging around the world, and the post World War II order crumbling, we are now standing on the precipice of a new era of great power wars – the potential for wars among nations possessing nuclear weapons is growing.

What can we do?

We need to move from the irrational fear-based ideology of deterrence to the rational fear of an eventual nuclear weapon use, whether by accident or design, by some nuclear weapon possessing state that places the threatened use of nuclear weapons at the core of its national security policy. We also need to stimulate a rational hope that security can be redefined in humanitarian and ecologically sustainable terms that will lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons and dramatic demilitarization, freeing up tremendous resources desperately needed to address universal human needs.

To delegitimize nuclear deterrence as a step towards abolishing nuclear weapons, *our* task is to change the discourse – from the bottom up. Changing the discourse will require the courage not

only to “speak truth to power,” but also to speak truth to each other. When it comes right down to it, this, I believe is the only thing we *can* do. But it could not be more important.

In his August 6, 2014 Peace Declaration, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, President of Mayors for Peace, declared: “Each one of us will help determine the future of the human family. Please put yourself in the place of the hibakusha (A-bomb survivors). Imagine their experiences, including that day from the depths of hell, actually happening to you or someone in your family. To make sure the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki never happen a third time, let’s all communicate, think and act together with the hibakusha for a peaceful world without nuclear weapons and without war.”

How does WSLF keep going? We maintain a wicked sense of humor and try to have fun – at the best of times and the worst of times we play miniature golf together! We also depend on the financial support of hundreds of loyal individual donors. But we’re not only asking for money – we’re asking for jewelry! Our 5th Baubles to Bling all-jewelry benefit flea market will take place Dec. 13 and we’re collecting donated jewelry now. Please come by our table and pick up a flier.

Thank you!