Nuclear Abolition Strategy Slide Show Narration

1. Welcome to this presentation about how we can abolish nuclear weapons. (click) It’s called “Warheads to Windmills” following the lead of a wonderful recently-published study. My name is Peter Bergel. In the mid 1980s I was one of founders of the American Peace Test, which brought tens of thousands to the Nevada Test Site over a number of years in a campaign to halt the testing of nuclear weapons. Explosive nuclear weapons testing ended when Congress stopped funding it in 1992. (click)
2. This is a picture of the cover of “Warheads to Windmills.” It is a study conducted by Tim Wallis and Vicki Elson of Nuclear Ban US the results of which will be explained in this presentation. In the last slide, you will see how to access it. (click)
3. Our survival as a planet depends on drastically curbing greenhouse gas emissions. (click)
4. Our survival also depends on completely eliminating the danger of nuclear weapons. (click)
5. By fortunate coincidence, the resources currently being wasted on nuclear weapons are just about what we need to address the climate crisis. (click)
6. We all know the threat posed by climate change. (click)
   1. Nuclear weapons are the other current existential threat to life on earth. (click)
7. (Wait a beat, then click) What sense would it make to save the world from global warming only to see it blown up by accident or insane design? (click)
8. (Wait a beat, then click) The possible use of nuclear weapons is also a climate issue. (Click)
   1. Soot blasted into the upper atmosphere by a full-scale nuclear exchange would lower global temperatures by up to 7 degrees C. With climate change, we know we want to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees C – 2 at the most. Imagine what 7 degrees the other way would mean: among other disasters, the collapse of agriculture as we know it today, leading to widespread famine and death for our species and most others. (click)
9. (Turn on pointer) Now let’s look at what we have to do to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees. This is where we are now in terms of total greenhouse gas emissions (point to 5742). And we want to be at net zero by 2050 (point). That means that we have to accomplish about half of the drop in the next ten years (point to 3092). How much will that cost, that is, how much would a Green New Deal cost? (click)
10. If we do all these things (point to left column), it will cost us about $3 trillion over the next 10 years. That’s a staggering sum and, as you know, we’re already strapped in many areas. But…. (click)
11. If we look at what our government is proposing to spend on nuclear weapons over the next 30 years, (point to 3776) it comes to even more than that. Now, we can’t not continue to spend on nuclear clean up (point), so when we subtract that amount (point), you can see that we are just a bit above our Green New Deal cost estimate. Therefore… (click)
12. If we decide not to build new nuclear weapons and begin zeroing out our current arsenal, we can just about pay for a Green New Deal from the savings. That’s wonderful – a global two-fer - saving us from both the leading existential threats to our planet. (click)
13. But wait, there’s more! It gets even better. (click)
14. A Green New Deal will require a lot of technical innovations such as these: (9 clicks a beat apart)
15. This will require not only a big chunk of money, but also a lot of personnel with what’s called STEM training. That means Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. (click) Where do you think we can find them? (click)
16. Turns out there are lots of them working on nuclear weapons. (click)
    1. The civilians working directly with nuclear weapons at the Trident submarine bases, air bases and ballistic missile bases number 27,000, (click)
    2. Then there are 42,000 employees at nuclear weapons facilities like Los Alamos, Savannah River, Pantex and Y-12, (click)
    3. And there are a whopping 70,000 employees working for nuclear weapons contractors like Boeing and Lockheed Martin, (click)
    4. For a total of 139,000 people with the kind of training we need for the Green New Deal. (click)
17. I want to touch for a moment on the subject of inequality and injustice. A whole lot could be said about that subject in connection with nuclear weapons, but I will just mention three points: (click)
    1. Most of us have no say about either nuclear weapons or energy policy. As Americans we may like to think of ourselves a nuclear “haves,” but in reality, since we have no control over them – and would be victims of them, were they used - we are really nuclear “have nots” and should make common cause with the rest of the world’s nuclear have nots. (click)
    2. Both affect the poor and people of color more than the rest of us. (click)
    3. Both enrich the already rich at the expense of everyone else. (click)
18. So here are the conclusions we can draw from what I have said so far: (click)
    1. 1. N-weapons must be stopped for the same reasons that climate change must be stopped. That is, because they pose a threat to all life on Earth. (click)
    2. 2. A GND needs the money **and brain power** currently being wasted on n-weapons, and nuclear weapons need to be abolished to halt that waste. (click)
    3. 3. Therefore, combining the efforts to address climate change and n-weapons makes a lot of sense. (click)
19. So what the world needs now, (click) is a movement in the U.S. to abolish nuclear weapons that’s as strong and determined as the movement to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. (click)
20. There are some criteria that movement needs to fulfill. Such as:
    1. It has to be able to draw broad participation. We have shown twice before – in the 1950s and in the 1980s – that this issue can do that. (click)
    2. The issue has to be straightforward and easy for people to understand. That’s why I like the simplicity of abolition. Everyone over the age of about 2 understands what “no” means. (click)
    3. As we have learned so often in the past, successful movements must include both education and action components. (click)
    4. This time around we won’t be able to depend primarily on fear to draw people into the movement. It worked before, but now there are so many things that scare people that I believe their threshold for dread may have been exceeded and we may have to find other ways to attract them. (click)
    5. It is always essential to work with other survival and justice movements if we want to increase our chances for success. (click)
21. That brings me to the proposal I want to offer you today. There are 3 parts to it:
    1. Pledge to read “Warheads to Windmills.” It’s available both as a physical booklet and online as a free PDF. (The URL for the PDF is coming up at the end of the presentation in just a moment.) (click)
    2. Once you have read “Warheads to Windmills,” form a study group to discuss and share ideas about it. Call together your friends and associates to join your study group. (click)
    3. Then, turn your study group into an action cell to tackle one of a menu of possible actions, or develop an action of your own. For our movement to succeed, we will need to do all these things, and more. But remember, we don’t all have to do all the things that need to be done, nor do all of us have to focus on just one tactic or menu item. This movement can self-organize from the grassroots up rather than being directed by a single group at the top. Indeed, doing that serves to protect us from opposition interference. (click)
22. Here is a sampling of the menu of possible actions: (click)
    1. Recruit. And when I say recruit, I don’t just mean getting more people into your group, though I certainly do mean that too, but also recruit celebrities, opinion leaders, decision makers, local movers and shakers and so on – whomever you have contacts with. (click)
    2. Challenge those who support nuclear weapons and fossil fuels. Suggest that they examine the issue more deeply, help them to understand the options and consequences, focus on their love for their families and friends. (click)
    3. Seek opportunities for intersectional networking. If you have a good connection with another issue group, find the common ground and work with them for the common good. Examples are groups working for racial justice, groups working to defend democracy or groups working for budget reform. Discuss and understand the cross connections in your study group. (click)
    4. Undermine nuclear weapon profitability. Find ways to deprive the nuclear weapons complex of money. Boycotts; divesting investment funds from churches, unions and cities; and weakening public support for government funding are all examples of this. By the way, there is more information about divesting available online and from Code Pink and World Beyond War. (click)
    5. Lobby at local, state and national levels. This is always important as part of what we do, though it should never be ALL that we do. A number of cities and a few states have now passed Back from the Brink resolutions calling for an end to nuclear weapons. Maybe you want to do that in your city or state. (click)
    6. Undermine pillars of support. Pillars of support for nuclear weapons are things like belief in deterrence, the belief that nuclear weapons make us more secure, greed, jobs claims and acquiescence to authority. Brainstorm more in your discussion group and ask yourselves how you can undermine one or more of the pillars you identify. (click)
    7. Isolate nuclear weapons manufacturers. Shame them for threatening us all. Consider whether treason is a suitable word to apply to them. Harass their boards of directors. Promote disinvestment in the nuclear weapons industry. (click)
    8. Create and use needed resources, especially videos. Short 3-5 minute videos are very popular and effective organizing tools and can be easily disseminated through social media.
    9. Learn what others are doing in other states, other communities and other organizations and copy or adapt what has worked for them. (click)
    10. Work to improve relations with Russia and China so we can solve these problems jointly. When we have built the movement we need in this country, we will have to work with other nuclear nations to abolish the weapons, so establishing better relations now can begin to build international trust and set the stage for that. (click)
    11. And of course, support candidates – at all government levels - who care about survival by volunteering and donating. (click)
23. And now I have a question for you. Did I capture your attention? (click)
    1. If I did, would you be willing to read “Warheads to Windmills?” (click)
    2. And would be willing to organize or attend a discussion about W2W after you’ve read it? (click)
    3. And do you think you would be willing to integrate work to convert from nuclear weapons to a GND into what you’re currently doing? In a moment I will show you where you can find a more detailed version of this proposal to help you do that. (Click)
24. Thank you so much for your time and consideration today. (click) And here are the links to “Warheads to Windmills” and the draft strategy I just mentioned. If you’re seeing this presentation on your computer, just click on the links. If you’re watching it in an environment where you can’t just click, you may want to take a photo of the screen with your phone so you can visit these links later.