

As I hiked a lush gorge and air from smoke-hazed skies stung my lungs, I contemplated what I want to share about my upcoming trip. You see, I will be traveling with ten others from the United States to peace camps in the Netherlands and Germany to protest the nuclear weapons that our government illegally and immorally deploys there. Our trip will span the anniversaries of the United States' nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the past few months, I've felt a deep despair for the world that I haven't felt in a long time – actually, not since I was in my teens and the threat of nuclear annihilation was on all of our minds as the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' Doomsday clock was set at 3 minutes to nuclear midnight.

Today, that clock is set at 90 seconds to midnight. Dark times, indeed, made darker by the interconnected crisis of climate catastrophe.

When my dear friend, Susan Crane, told me about the peace camp gatherings in the Netherlands and Germany and about the amazing work that Dutch and German communities are doing to oppose the United States' deployment of nuclear weapons in their countries and to make clear the connection between militarism and the climate crisis, I felt hope in the darkness of despair.

As I noticed this spark of hope, I reflected on how the despair I held in my younger years was transformed into action as I learned of everyday people coming together, forming community, doing acts of civil disobedience, and praying together. As a teenager, I joined a global movement of physicians, scientists, mothers and grandmothers, fathers, youths, clergy, workers, plowshares activists and the Nuclear Freeze campaign, to raise a clear NO to nuclear weapons, which threaten us all.

So, I took this new spark to my community, the Ithaca Catholic Worker, and shared my desire to join my voice with the chorus of people gathering in the Netherlands and Germany calling for an end to nuclear weapons. As a United States' citizen whose tax dollars help fund our rampantly out-of-control military spending, it is my duty to say no to nuclear weapons and to try to make clear the connection between militarism and the climate crisis.

Currently, the United States maintains over 700 military bases around the world. And in its push for full-spectrum dominance through land, sea, air and space, it is the single largest institutional source of greenhouse gas emissions in the world, according to Brown University's Costs of War Project. The United States has committed \$1 trillion to upgrade our arsenal of nuclear weapons. And our government is going full speed ahead with building of a whole new fleet of Trident submarines.

Moreover, the United States has nuclear weapons deployed at five European airbases, deploying between 15 and 20 B61 hydrogen bombs at each of those bases in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Turkey in clear violation of articles 1 and 2 of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. With our tax dollars, our government is in the process of replacing these weapons of massdestruction with a new generation of nuclear bombs. The F-35 and F-16 fighter-bombers deployed at those bases emit over 10 tons of CO2 per flight hour practicing bombing the world with thesenew, even "better" nuclear bombs.

So, with the full support of my community and family, I am headed to Germany and the Netherlands in a small act of hope – hope for a better world for my grandchildren and all children of the world. May we hold each other in our moments of despair and support each other in finding hope through action. Together, we can transform the world.

I will keep you updated on my journey, so stay tuned.

In gratitude and hope,

Ellen Grady

