Proposed Commentary
submitted to the *Las Vegas Review Journal* on Friday, August 3, 2012 by e-mail

   August 6 to 9 is a time to reflect on the impact of nuclear weapons on our lives because in 1945, the only two atomic bombs ever used in wartime were dropped by the United States on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Every year contemporary events color the view. Here are a few juxtapositions to contemplate in 2012.

   Since the United States continues to possess and upgrade its nuclear warheads, bombs and delivery systems, activism at the Nevada Test Site (NTS, now named the Nevada National Security Site) and other facilities in the nuclear weapons complex is vitally necessary. Despite receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and seeming to pledge to work to abolish nuclear weapons, President Obama has proposed the 2013 nuclear weapons budget be 66% higher than it was in 2000 even though there are fewer nukes in the arsenal. Those plans include quadrupling the size of plants at Los Alamos, Kansas City and Oak Ridge that produce the parts (radioactive and otherwise) for refurbishing and upgrading the US nuclear arsenal.

   Last Saturday, in a nod to the upcoming, devastating, atomic anniversaries, Sr. Megan Rice, SHCJ of Nevada Desert Experience (which has organized interfaith resistance to nuclear weapons and war since 1984) breached security at the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Sr. Megan, who along with two men dubbed themselves the "Transform Now! Plowshares," cut through several fences, poured blood on the building that houses the most highly-enriched, bomb-grade uranium in the world, and held banners saying "Swords into Plowshares. Spears into Pruning Hooks" and other slogans. Much alarm has been raised about the lack of alarm raised during their intrusion, but really, the alarm should be going off about the insecurity for the whole world created by nuclear weapons themselves. Transform Now--and all the other Plowshares actions--shows that nuclear weapons are inherently unsafe, not just that they aren't guarded well.

   Deadly covert actions and the ringing of Iran with overt US military assets is a far more existential threat to the world than any alleged Iranian nuclear weapons program. Iran is entitled to enrich uranium, and despite all the political pressure and rhetoric, there is shockingly scant evidence that they're working on nuclear weapons, even less to justify the sanctions and threats from Israel and the United States to strike Iranian sites. If the tables were turned, we would never tolerate so many foreign bases just off our shores like we're demanding Iran accept of ours. I'm scared of US and Israeli attack plans on Iran and decry the string of assassinations of Iranian scientists, widely attributed to Israeli operatives. What *chutzpah* it would be, if Israel were to attack Iran for an alleged nuclear program, while it refuses to admit to the fact that it possesses a sizable nuclear force already! This could be the gravest, most explosive, on-going hypocrisy in the world today because it undermines any nascent proto-trust which is the kernel out of which any successful negotiations could grow.

   In what I consider a major affront to the memories of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from August 6 to 9 in Las Vegas, the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) is holding the world's largest trade show and promotional convention for all things robotic. Deadly mistakes with militarized Predator and Reaper drones are widespread the more they are utilized. More dead family-members create more potential enemies. Fighters seem to rise and multiply from the dead whenever we attack a Taliban funeral party. And as drones are made smaller and more numerous, more innocent people will be hurt and killed. The meaning of the constitutional protection of due process and the importance of upholding rather than undermining international humanitarian law seem lost on our government and the arms manufacturers. They act as though wars exist to prove their destructive

creativity and boost their bottom lines instead of lamenting war as the most extreme form of human failure. The fear of being watched constantly is becoming less paranoia and all too real as weapons once pointing away will surely be turned on their original masters.

   The push for more robots that are independent of live, human control ("autonomous systems") is also very real and troubling. I wonder how much people working on these machines think about Schwarzenneger's fictional *Terminator,* as reality seems to mimic cinema. In May, 2011 the *Los Angeles Times* reported on meetings between Pentagon officials and weapons manufacturers for the development of a nuclear bomber that could be flown remotely and would have increasing amounts of autonomy. It seems like such a bad idea, giving anything the power to launch nuclear war since no thing and no one is error-free.

   The idea that technology can provide a cleaner and safer battlefield is seductive but has been proven a lie. From the catapult and crossbow, through the use of poison gas and airplanes in World War I, the atom bomb, helicopters and napalm in Vietnam to the "smart bombs" of the Gulf War, war has only grown deadlier. Technological advances may reduce the danger of casualties among military personnel in the short run, but with each advance the number of civilian deaths multiplies and every war of the past century has numbered more children than soldiers among its victims.

   May the legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remind us not turn to technology to save us from ourselves. Only we can do that.

Submitted 3 August 2012 to the Las Vegas Review Journal by

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