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**WWFOR** seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, equality, peace and justice. It links and strengthens FOR members and chapters throughout Western Washington in promoting activities consistent with the national FOR statement of purpose. WWFOR helps members and chapters accomplish together what we could not accomplish alone.

## **WWFOR Spring Assembly 2026: Confronting Militarism at Home and Abroad:**

A recording is available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0OJyMKkbQg>

This article was written by David Lambert for Pacific Call, edited by Cindy Cole and John M Repp

Extra resources: <https://wwfor.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/ResourcesWWFOR2026SA.pdf>

The theme of this year's Spring Assembly was: "Confronting Militarism At Home and Abroad". The kickoff presenters were: Karl Riecken, DO, MA speaking on "Conscientious Objection at the Intersectionality of Medicine and War"; Oonaugh Foster-Bill who spoke on "Intuitive Activism/ Maintaining Perspective in Chaos"; and James Janko whose talk was entitled "Opposing Militarism by Addressing Climate Change and Honoring the Earth."

Dr. Karl Riecken made a comparison between the Nazi regime and the current U.S. military. He spoke about the physician's role in the military and the struggles he experienced while in the service as a physician and his ongoing study about the irony of helping soldiers get better so they could be ready to kill others in combat. He learned his conscience would not allow him to continue as a practicing physician in the military.

Oonaugh Foster-Bill's presentation dealt with her experience about the healing qualities of community singing and singing circles. She told of initially becoming aware of the powerful effects of music in 2020 on a trip to Minnesota and her experience with Doreen Day, an indigenous organizer. Oonaugh has been increasingly involved with this mode of healing and last year was involved in a "Fierce Nonviolence Pilgrimage" in Washington State. She reports these singing circles can be healing agents at the individual, community, and world levels. Oonaugh has organized weekly community singing outside the [Traditions Cafe](#) in Olympia, at the Tacoma Detention Center, and she has helped lead "Nuclear Reality" workshops to educate the public. She is a member of the Olympia singing resistance circle. She is planning and organizing a singing circle at [Ground Zero](#) this August.

James Janko's presentation was on climate change and militarism. He pointed out numerous statistics about the horrendous waste of fossil fuels used by the U.S. military. For example: the U.S. military spends about \$481 billion per year guarding the world's oil supply with a large cluster of its 800 bases in the world, particularly, those around the Persian Gulf. Another case: U.S. bombing of Iran in one day costs about \$1 Billion, which could provide daily food stamps for 41 million people and daily Medicaid benefits for the 61 million people, who may lose their coverage because of the Trump administration. Janko mentioned the book, [Not Too Late](#), by Rebecca Solnit and Thelma Young-Lutunatabua, which tells of many victories in the climate change struggle. He then gave a quote from Native American Leonard Peltier (a shortened version): "I don't know how to save the world. I only know that without compassion and respect for all the Earth and its inhabitants, none of us will survive." And he mentioned a poem, ["Remember", by Native American poet Jo Harjo](#).

There was a 20 minute small group discussion where event participants were able to share their perspective on what they had experienced thus far in the Spring Assembly.

Three poems by poet and WWFOR member Larry Kerschner, were read, one by David Lambert and two by Jean Gant Delastrada.

This was followed with Bruce Pruitt-Hamm introducing three current MYPF (Mike Yarrow Peace Fellowship) interns studying nonviolence.

Adesoye Taino presented her social justice project on "Equity In Healthcare." She shared her experience

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as a researcher, particularly exploring discrepancies in healthcare and wondering if black women are dying at greater rates than others. ([Black women die at three times the rate of white women in maternal care.](#)) There was some evidence that black women were not staying in the hospital as long as white women. Adesoye told of her “gap” year in Germany, following her high school graduation, as part of a youth exchange program, spending time in the Bundestag or German Congress, and now looking forward to attending Rutgers University this fall.

Arum Jung from South Carolina, presented her before and after survey on Human Rights Education (particularly looking at values, empathy, and awareness) which was given to high school youth from 14-18. She explored these student’s understanding of human rights and how their perspective might change once they completed a structured HR Education survey. She found that their understanding and depth was greater following the survey at the end of the research program. Arum will begin her university studies at Cornell this Fall.

Sneha Nandkeolyar shared her research with young folks, especially with girl’s experiences in business classes. She felt a need to assist and empower them in this area. She shared how she thinks this can be done on the website that she has developed, and is still developing. It is intended for teachers to learn how to create a classroom for K-5 age kids, including a toolkit and workshops. Sneha has started an Instagram account and is planning to work with parents to implement this equity program in their home.

Dr. Edwin Carlos, Ph.D., and professor of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership within the Department of School Psychology at Seattle University, was an MYPF intern in 2015-2016. He gave an informative presentation on U.S. military’s historical involvement in the Philippines and the active push by many to cut aid and get the U.S. military out of that country. He mentioned the [Bayan USA](#) movement to get the U.S. military out of that country, displaying a slide announcing the “Get Out of Philippines! U.S. Out of Everywhere!” He reported that the U.S. has supplied over \$1 Billion since 2015 in military equipment to the Philippines. Edwin also mentioned the U.S. military involvement violates the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines and its national sovereignty.

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## Reconciliation, Not Revenge

by John M Repp

Maoz Inon’s parents were killed on October 7, 2023 when Hamas attacked their kibbutz in Israel. Hamas burned down their house while they were still inside. That kibbutz was very close to Gaza. Maoz was emotionally devastated, as were his three sisters and a brother. However, while in mourning, the family agreed that they did not want the violence to continue and decided they wanted to work **for reconciliation** between the Israelis and the Palestinians, **not revenge** against Palestinians. There is enough violence and grief in the region.

A few days after his parents were killed, Maoz was contacted by Aziz Abu Sara, a Palestinian. Aziz wanted to express his condolences on the death of Maoz’s parents. The two had met once before briefly. Both were in the travel business, for people who wanted to visit the ancient sites in the holy land, especially Jerusalem, with sacred places for three religions.

Aziz himself was ten years old when his older brother died after being tortured in an Israeli prison. That brother was accused of throwing rocks at Israelis. Aziz himself threw rocks several times when he got older. His older brother had been like a parent to him in his early years, and Aziz was very angry when that older brother died.

However, when Aziz became eighteen years old, he realized his anger was not helping him. He broke through the emotional trap of anger when taking Hebrew with a teacher that treated him well.

After Maoz was contacted by Aziz, the two **started working together for reconciliation between their two peoples**. They made an appearance on [a TED talk event in 2024](#). More recently, they wrote a book together entitled [The Future is Peace: A Shared Journey Across the Holy Land](#) (New York: Crown, 2026) which was just published. They also appeared with Jon Stewart on The Daily Show and [that interview is worth a watch](#). [Democracy Now](#) featured the two during one their reports. [Forbes magazine also wrote an article about the two peacemakers](#). That article was written before the book came out.

We need to remind ourselves of the big picture and historical context of the conflict between Israel and Palestinians. I did a computer search in which I asked the question: how much of the land of current state of Israel was purchased and how much was taken in war through the course of the almost century that the Zionist project has been working in the Middle East. Here are results of that search:

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**“As of 1948, Jews privately purchased roughly 7% to 9% of the land that became the state of Israel. The majority of the territory (over 70-80%) was state land passed from the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate, which subsequently came under Israeli control, with Arab-owned land decreasing significantly through 1948 war actions.”**

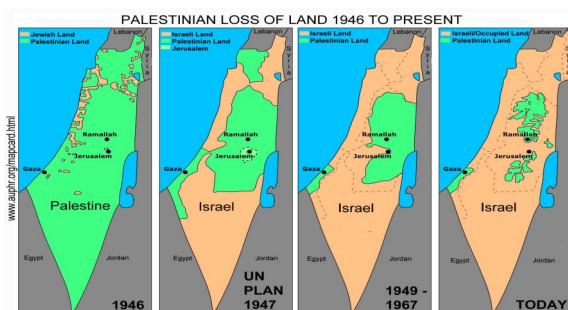
The two main issues for the Palestinians are (1) the right of return for the refugees after their ancestors were expelled in 1948 and 1967 and (2) the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Palestinians want equal rights to the Israelis in a single state or a confederate state.

Peacemakers are usually dismissed as dreamers and thought to be naïve. But Aziz and Moaz think of themselves as **realists**. They know that bombs will not bring justice or peace and walls will not protect people. Walls separate people. War does not bring security for either side.

They do not agree on every issue. The last pope, Pope Francis, told Aziz and Moaz that there will always be disagreement and conflict whenever there are humans present. Even within a family or a group of friends, there will be disagreements and conflict. He said only in a cemetery would there be no conflict.



Above is a picture of Pope Leo XIV with Aziz and Maoz. As travel guides, they developed what they call **“the dual-narrative tour”** where the tourist hears a Palestinian version of what the site means and then an Israeli version. Their book is laid out the same way, Maoz writes and Aziz writes as they take of a journey across the holy land, from the Kibbutz Nir Am, to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth and other places.



**Earth's Greatest Enemy** is a film from Abby Martin showing that the US military-industrial complex is **the biggest institutional user of fossil fuels and has been fighting for years to secure cheap oil for the US economy**. The film brings together two issues that threaten our very existence: **militarism and destruction of our natural environment**. Here is the official trailer. [Earth's Greatest Enemy - A New Film by Abby Martin \[OFFICIAL TEASER\]](https://earthsgreatestenemy.com/)

My wife and I went to a showing in Mt. Vernon, WA. It was well attended. It was a powerful experience. The people who organized the showing were Mt. Vernon anti-war activists. They paid \$400 to rent the film. The film makers spent \$100,000 to make it and have been **denied opportunities to distribute the film by the mainstream distributor companies, so must do it themselves**.

It showed once here in Bellingham. They do have a **website** : <https://earthsgreatestenemy.com/> where you can donate or arrange a showing. Here is a [Real News Network interview](#) with Abby Martin.

Bringing together these two issues i.e. militarism-war and climate change is a big step in the right direction.

In an interview, Abby said she had been frustrated when, the Democratic Party after Obama was elected, decided to **“look forward.”** By taking this approach, they in effect ignored all the crimes committed by the Bush Administration. Bush and his administration were not held accountable for all the lies used to justify the invasion of Iraq, as well as the war crimes committed in Iraq.

We cannot make the same mistake after the Trump administration leaves office. Sooner or later, Trump will be out of power. We need to hold him, his family, and his collaborators accountable. They have committed crimes against international law i.e. the bombing of Iran and the bombing of boats in the Caribbean , crimes against our Constitution, and many of our laws. Since Trump loves money so much, he and his grifter family, and all the sycophants, must be forced to return all the money they have made in the gifts they have been engaged in since coming to power.

Abby Martin is a powerful voice. [She thinks the U.S. empire is over](#). It is 250 years old and its shelf life is over. A combination of Brave New World and Idiocracy. We need to block the arteries of empire. We need to act collectively to bring about a better society for our kids and for the natural world we all need to be healthy.

## The Revolution In America in 1776 Opened An Asylum for Mankind and Started a Movement for Democracy by John M Repp

**“Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe...O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.” Thomas Paine, 1776**

This is a quote from [Common Sense](#), a 47 page pamphlet issued in January 1776. The phrase tells us that at that time many colonists in America saw the new world as a place where refugees and asylum-seekers from around the world were welcome, and where they could live **in freedom**.

[Common Sense](#) became an instant best seller. The author did not sign the document. It would have been a death sentence for him because he advocated independence from Great Britain as a solution to the problems in the colonies, especially the issue of taxation without representation.

From [1765-1775, the American colonists](#) mounted three major nonviolent resistance campaigns against British rule, against the Stamp Acts of 1765, the Townsend Acts of 1767, and the Coercive Acts of 1774, resulting in *de facto* independence by 1775. A shooting war began at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. Then on July 4, 1776, 250 years ago this coming July, the Declaration of Independence was signed with the famous words:

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....**

These were powerful words, written by men [who as children had lived near native American societies and were welcomed as children into their wigwams and given their favorite fruits](#). They learned about a **dramatically different set of values** than was common in British or European society. Native American society was much more egalitarian than European feudal society, and much more democratic. We know that the Iroquois Confederacy was the model for federalism, self-government, and liberty that influenced the founders writing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

**We in the United States of America have not lived up to the ideals expressed in the language of the Declaration.** For centuries, before and after the Declaration, **we were a settler state**, meaning we took land from the native Americans and, if they resisted, we made war on them. While many of the founders

owned slaves, they would write that all men were created equal, indicating they did not see slaves as real human beings.

But the Declaration was **the first instance of a nation declaring its independence from a colonial, imperialist power in the modern era**. The American example inspired several centuries of anti-imperialist movements. Then, with the Spanish-American war, the USA started extra-continental conquests and became itself an imperial power.

One way we tried to advance our democracy was the expansion of voting rights. At first, voting was limited to a small group of white male landowners. After that, there were many political struggles to expand voting rights, struggles that were eventually successful. One of the more well known was the large number of nonviolent demonstrations from 1913 to 1919 for woman's suffrage. Closer to our time, the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1968 used a variety of nonviolent methods, including bus boycotts, demonstrations, and marches to win the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to make sure black people had the right to vote in the old Confederacy.

Now, [there is an effort by the Trump Administration](#), facing a defeat in the upcoming November elections, to weaken the representation of minority people in cities in the south by [gerrymandering](#). Trump's efforts were possible because of the activist and itself corrupt Supreme Court in decisions like [Citizens United which made political bribery legal](#). However recently, [there was a law passed in Hawaii prohibiting corporations who operate in their state from spending money on elections](#). Fourteen other states are considering such a law.

There are other ways besides the expansion of voting rights to measure how much progress we have made in advancing democracy. We now have **international organizations that try to measure things like freedom of the press, life expectancy, the wealth gap, and happiness**. Sadly, during the last 50 years we have experienced losses in press freedom, shorter life expectancy, and less happiness.

[Reporters Without Borders](#) has established [a measurement of press freedom](#). USA was 48th in 2019 and 64th in 2026. [Life expectancy is the best measure of the health of a population](#). In 2023, our life expectancy was 79.3 years. Japan's was 84.7. We have slipped in our position relative to the other prosperous countries. [The Gini coefficient](#) is a measure of the gap between the rich and poor. The gap has been widening here and that has caused many problems. There is [a correlation between wealth gap and the happiness and health](#) of the people in a country. There is a [World Happiness chart](#). [Finland is the happiest country in the world. The United States is 23rd.](#)

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis (1856–1941) is believed to have said: **“We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both”**. The quote was published in the newspaper *Labor* in 1933. The quote puts the finger on the same struggle we are facing today, a struggle against money and power concentrated in the hands of a few.

Paradoxically, the recent speech by the current king of England, Charles III reminded us that, with the Magna Carta (1215) there should be **limits to power**. In a democracy, **power must be subject to the rule of law**, something the current Trump administration avoids. J. Michael Luttig, the distinguished Constitutional scholar, wrote in May 2026 that because of the Trump administration the rule of law has ended in our country and we face the worst Constitutional crisis in our history.

The rule of law is how in an democracy the game of life is played. Imagine a game where there were no norms and rules. It would be chaos: a stage we are approaching as the rich and powerful, aided by the Trump Administration, try to grab more money, power,

and try to steal elections. The corruption of the Trump family is shocking. Trump acts like the “mad King George III” against whom our Founders rebelled.

As we approach our celebration of 250 years as a nation, we need to start planning for and working for the real resurgence of democracy. We need to **get big money out of our politics and reform the Supreme Court**. We must **tax the wealthy and tax, regulate, and break up the near-monopolistic corporations**. We must **rebuild the labor movement** by outlawing strike replacements.

Then, we can finally pass as legislation what FDR called the Second Bill of Rights: the right to a useful and remunerative job, enough income for adequate food, clothing and recreation, the right of farmers and businesspeople to trade without fear of unfair competition or monopolies, the right to a decent home, adequate medical care and better health, protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment, and the right to a good education. Only then can we keep our democracy.



The picture above was painted a generation after the actual event. It shows the presentation of the Declaration of Independence to the second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, the date we use to celebrate the origin of our country..

## **It's Time for Congress to End Presidential Sole Authority to Launch Nuclear Weapons**

by John M Repp (what I said to an aide to Rick Larsen at a meeting with her in his Bellingham office along with other anti-nuclear activists on April 21, 2026)

Under the current policy in our country, not by law but by customary practice, the sitting president, as commander-in-chief, has sole authority to order the use of a nuclear weapon. Even worse is the policy of first use, which means the president has the power to use nuclear weapons not just in retaliation but any time he feels the interests of the nation are threatened.

The current president, Donald Trump has recently threatened Iran, with the words: "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again." I think this president is incompetent and dangerous. Iran did not and does not threaten us, yet he started a war of aggression against Iran.

In his first term, the Guardian reported that the White House Chief of Staff General John Kelly said that he had to restrain Trump from using a nuclear weapon against North Korea.

For some good news, Congressman Ted Lieu (D-CA) has introduced HR 669 Restricting the First Use of Nuclear Weapons. We would like Congressman Rick Larsen to sign on the HR 669.

A no first use policy would decrease global tensions, increase geopolitical stability, and save taxpayers money.

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To Representative Rick Larsen, (a letter delivered to Rick Larsen on April 21, 2026 )

**Your support of the NPT(Non-proliferation Treaty) is more critical now than ever.** The latest analysis by Olamide Samuel in Bulletin of Atomic Scientists points to the need for increased diplomacy and less military action before everything spirals out of control. According to Samuel,

"The Trump administration's Iran policy since June teaches a terrible lesson about nuclear proliferation: If Iran-style threshold nuclear latency does not protect against attack, if international safeguards do not shield declared nuclear facilities, and if coercion remains the answer even when diplomacy is attempted, some states may begin to conclude that only actual weaponization, not restraint, is what purchases security. That would be disastrous for the NPT system, but it is precisely the conclusion the present approach risks encouraging

among some non-nuclear-weapon states."

Shifts in policy and capability among key global players make it clear that the NPT remains a cornerstone of international security. Without strong leadership and advocacy from members of Congress, the risk of nuclear proliferation will only grow, threatening both regional and global stability.

Realizing that the US nuclear umbrella is fraying amid escalations in the Middle East and worsening relationships with Russia, China, and North Korea, Japan is discussing an amendment to its constitution regarding three non-nuclear principles: *to not possess, produce, or allow the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japanese territory or territorial waters*. With growing uncertainty over US security guarantees under President Trump, Tokyo's political establishment is revisiting their practicalities. While nuclear latency is holding in Seoul, polling in South Korea supports development of indigenous nuclear weaponization (75%). Both allies have enriched stockpiles and the necessary delivery systems.

Other countries recognized as latent nuclear states - technologically capable, a "screwdriver's turn" of atomic weaponization - include Taiwan, Canada, Germany, Netherlands and Brazil, all capable of developing nuclear weapons within a period of months.

The 11th Review Conference of the NPT begins on April 27 in New York City, so the Middle East war and its possible devastating nuclear weapon consequences are bound to come up. This is all timely stuff and your support of the NPT, and cosponsoring - along with 56 Democratic colleagues- Rep. James McGovern's bill, H.Res 317, Urging the United States to lead the world back from the brink of nuclear war and halt and reverse the nuclear arms race, is critical.

Thank you ahead of time for standing up for diplomacy and non-proliferation.

Your leadership is crucial in shaping a safer future for all.

Sincerely,

Gene Marx, Bellingham

Veterans for Peace, chapter 111



**LETTERS TO THE EDITORS OF A  
MAINSTREAM PAPER (published or not)**

Letter ran the week of April 29, 2026 on nuclear weapons: <https://www.cascadiadaily.com/2026/apr/28/letters-week-of-april-29-2026-landback-rights-in-comp-plan-jail-management-and-mylar-balloons/>

Rant: The U.S. and Russia have 90% of the world's nuclear weapon inventory: USA 5,044; Russia 5,500. The other seven nuclear-armed countries have 1,731 (UK, France, China, India, Israel, Pakistan, North Korea). Rave: Fifty years ago, the world inventory had over 50,000 nuclear weapons. International cooperation got the tally down to the current 12,231 stockpile. Ah, for the good old days.

Rant: Trump plans to spend over \$1.7 trillion in the next 10 years on nuclear weapons. Rave: Democrats, MAGA and independents are speaking back. Thank our two Sens. Maria Cantwell, Patty Murray and Rep. Rick Larsen for their questions and work. Keep the pressure on.

Rant: The U.S. president has the sole, unchecked authority over the decision to launch a nuclear weapon, without needing to consult anyone else. Rave: Searching for a rave.

Rant: All nine nuclear-armed nations refuse to call for the abolition of nuclear weapons and will not sign on the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Rave: Over 95 other countries have signed to support this treaty.

Rant: Hundreds of nuclear weapons in our arsenal are constantly kept on hair-trigger alert. Rave: See the entry above where our president has sole power to launch weapons. Once launched, they cannot be called back or re-targeted. The rave is that we can speak out.

Rant: Investors in Boeing, Lockheed, and General Dynamics stock stand to make a ton of money. Can't find a rave.

Let's remember the true victims of past nuclear war/accidents: residents and descendants of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Chernobyl.

Bet they would support our speaking out.

**Barbara Sardarov  
Bellingham**

**Letters to the Editor, Cascadia Daily News, week of April 15, 2026**

**Editor,**

More than half of our federal taxes go to the military, which, by the way, has never passed an audit. A \$1.5 trillion military base budget for October 2026–27 is an unprecedented handout to tech oligarchs and war profiteers. In addition, Congress is being asked to fund a supplemental \$200 billion for the war in Iran.

The Trump administration is siphoning historic amounts of wealth away from everyday families. The president himself admitted this past week that we can't afford basic investments like day care or Medicare. In addition, Trump is asking for \$53.9 billion for the Department of Energy in FY 2027; \$32.8 billion is for the semi-autonomous nuclear weapons agency, the National Nuclear Security Administration. The proposal includes plutonium "pit" bomb core production to the tune of \$4.9 billion. Plutonium pits are the essential "triggers" for modern nuclear weapons. The U.S. is now in a race to build up the nuclear arsenal.

Somehow, we need to convey to our government that these expenditures will not keep us safer. Our taxes need to help with basic needs, not enrich a few.

**Cindy Cole      Bellingham**





Thanks to David Horsey