MxCC Holds Peace & Justice Conference

by Dortha Cool Willett's

On Saturday, Nov. 18, people from Connecticut, Maine and Massachusetts attended a Conference for Peace and Justice at Middlesex Community College in Middletown.

The purpose of the conference was three-fold: to oppose the building of nuclear weapons and Trump's threatening of other countries with nuclear war; to demand the building of infrastructure and fostering clean energy solutions to reduce climate change; and to get help from other communities to unite against violence in Hartford.

Speakers also appealed for opposition to President Trump's discretionary spending budget request for FY 2018 of $1.1 trillion with 59 percent — $679 billion — dedicated to military spending (See pie graph), urged American citizens to call on congress to stop the wars in which the U.S. is currently involved, promoted conversion of industrial production to peaceful endeavors; and demanded total national dedication to reducing climate change.

This issue will report on the address of Bruce Gagnon, Secretary/Coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, a 2006 recipient of the Dr. Benjamin Spock Peacemaker Award, and a Vietnam veteran. Reports on the addresses of the other two speakers will be made at a later date.

Gagnon said the Global Network's newsletter was established 25 years ago to create an international movement to oppose the expansion of the arms race into space, and to educate Americans about how nuclear weapons in space have become so dominant in military strategy today.

Gagnon described the functioning of the role of space satellites in military strategy: "As military satellites orbit the Earth, they talk to "downlink stations" located around the planet. Those downlink stations relay the signals from the satellites back and forth in space and back to the U.S. in "real time."

"Peace groups throughout the world," said Gagnon. "are protesting their countries' being used as part of the U.S. 'Starwars' program." These groups are the core membership of the Global Network program.

Gagnon reported that the Pentagon has long been saying that, with this space technology, "they will be able to control and dominate not

Continued on page 7
only space, but also the Earth below, because everything the Pentagon does today is filtered through space technology.

"Ground troops drive Humvees with small computers in them, Navy ships and aircraft are hooked up to satellites and then to space technology itself. In fact, in 2003, when the U.S. launched its initial attack into Iraq, 70 percent of the weapons used were directed by space technology."

"Over the years, Russia and China," Gagnon revealed, "have gone to the United Nations, saying 'Let's close the door to the barn before the horse gets out.' For 20-some years, Russia and China have been proposing a treaty to ban all weapons in space. When the vote comes up at the United Nations General Assembly, added Gagnon, 'everybody votes in favor of the new treaty except the U.S. and Israel.'

So, there is no new treaty. The U.S. has held the same position during the administrations of Bush, Obama and Trump: 'There is no problem, therefore there is no need for a treaty banning weapons in space.'

Gagnon asserted that the Pentagon and the weapons corporations say that "Star wars" will be the largest industrial project in the history of the planet. And, they say they have come up with a dedicated funding source to pay for it. In a Space News editorial dated 1999, they said, "We've found our dedicated funding source."

That source, Gagnon, discloses, is the entitlement programs — social security, medicaid, and what's left of the welfare program. The military industrial complex has targeted social programs for defunding in order pay for Pentagon military expenses.

Gagnon asserted that "truth is an increasingly hard thing to find anymore from our corporate controlled politicians and our corporate dominated media. Truth in our culture today doesn't really exist anymore."

One truth that we rarely hear about today is that the Pentagon has the largest carbon blueprint of any institution on the Earth. With more than 800 military bases around the world today, Gagnon affirmed that the "U.S. military is the top contributor to climate change. Few if any people in the country we have become, and offer a transformational vision of another direction."

"America has essentially lost its soul," Gagnon said, "with our communities' continued involvement in endless war in order to create jobs for our neighbors. We've got to stand against this, tell the truth about what kind of country we have become, and offer a transformational vision of another direction."

Gagnon proposed that, "in order to effectively deal with global warming, we need a massive and immediate redirecting of our industrial fossil fuel society. Where will the money come from to undertake such an enormous effort?"

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One truth that we rarely hear about today is that the Pentagon has the largest carbon footprint of any institution on the Earth. With more than 800 military bases around the world today, Gagnon affirmed that the "U.S. military is the top contributor to climate change. Few if any environmental groups working on climate change ever mention the military connection. Why not?"

Currently, the U.S. budget for the military is about $680 billion a year. However, many key military spending items are not included in that baseline budget, stated Gagnon. "A few of are them: the Department of Energy nuclear weapons program: $20 billion; Homeland Security: $50 billion; the now-militarized NASA budget; the secret Pentagon budget — the "black budget" — at least 20-40 billion a year. Congress is not even allowed to know how much it is or what it is used for. These are not counted.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, commonly called SIPRI, reviews the largest military spenders around the world. In 2016, the total spent by the U.S. and its allies adds up to 50 percent of the world total for military spending. China spends 13 percent, and Russia spent 4.1 percent of the

on China and Russia (the 'red team') with a decapitation attack with U.S. missiles (blowing up their ICBM launch sites.)

But, in this computer war game, Gagnon details, not all of their missiles are destroyed. Russia and China, in this war game, hen in this space command war game, Russia and China launch their remaining retaliatory capability. At that point, the missile defense shield picks off these Russian and Chinese nukes. The U.S. sword of decapitation, first plunges into the heart of Russia and China, then to meet a retaliatory response, the U.S. missile shield picks off their counterattack, giving the U.S. a successful first strike attack.

Missile defense systems are thus provocative and destabilizing, making nuclear war more likely. They used to be illegal under the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between Russia and the U.S. When George W. Bush became president, one of the first things he did was to withdraw the U.S. from the ABM Treaty; immediately, missile research, development, testing and deployment took off and have been on steroids ever since.

During Obama's time in office, recounted Gagnon, "he dramatically escalated the deployment of our missile defense system, particularly on Navy destroyers. Russia and China have been saying for years, at every opportuni-

Homegrown Terror: Benedict Arnold and the Burning of New London

In September 1781, Connecticut native Benedict Arnold and a force of 1,600 British soldiers and loyalists took Fort Griswold and burnt New London to the ground. The brutality of the invasion galvanized the new nation, and "Remember New London!" would become a rallying cry for troops under General Lafayette. On Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. in the Hubbard Room at Russell Library, Eric D. Lehman, author of "Terror: Benedict Arnold and the Burning of New London," will chronicle the plot against Arnold and highlight this key transformation in Arnold—the point where he went from betraying his comrades to massacring his neighbors and destroying their homes. His talk will also touch on the connections Arnold had with Middletown during the war, both before and after his betrayal.

Lehman teaches literature and creative writing at the University of Bridgeport. In addition to his contributions to numerous newspapers, journals, and magazines, Lehman is a Finalist. He will have copies of Connecticut Book Award Homegrown Terror for sale and inscription.

This program, which is free and open to the public, is sponsored by the Middlesex County Historical Society. Russell Library is located at 123 Broad St., Middletown. For more information, call 860-346-0746 or visit www.