

Kings Bay Plowshares 7 -

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Backgrounder

kingsbayplowshares7.org

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Proactive civil resistance: Seven Catholic peace activists entered the Kings Bay Trident Submarine Base in Georgia last April to perform an act of symbolic disarmament. They used hammers to follow the prophecy of Isaiah "to beat swords into plowshares" and poured blood to make holy what was evil in a sacramental action. Kings Bay is homeport to six ballistic missile Trident submarines, each of which deploy twenty Trident missiles carrying four or more warheads of at least 100 kilotons. The Hiroshima bomb was 14 kilotons. Each submarine thus has the destructive power of at least 500 Hiroshima bombs. The Plowshares 7 face up to 25 years in federal prison. This is the latest of 100 plowshares actions around the world since 1980. (See more history at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2016.1145904>)

Nuclear omnicide: Nuclear war has nearly occurred 20-30 times since WWII (D. Ellsberg, 2017, *The Doomsday Machine*). With missiles on hair trigger launch on warning, omnicide is one panicky misstep away. Today's nuclear command centers in the U.S. and abroad can be hacked.

Legal defense: Last August, defense lawyers submitted a motion to dismiss all charges on four points. First, any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is illegal under US law and disarming illegal weapons cannot be illegal. Second, international law, integral to US law, also makes the use or threat of use of these weapons illegal. Third, the nonviolent sacramental actions of the charged individuals are a consequence of their Catholic convictions that nuclear weapons are immoral and illegal. In prosecuting them so severely the government is violating RFRA (see below). Finally, our president has threatened the use of nuclear weapons. This illegal conduct has not been prosecuted, so prosecuting those protesting nuclear weapons is selective justice.

Defendant statements: Each in their own way, the KBP7 are asserting (paraphrasing): *What we are charged with is petty compared to nuclear annihilation. Yes, we went to Kings Bay in the night and cut through the fence. We were called into the darkness, to bring truth into the light and to expose what is hidden. Full individual statements and the formal Indictment can be found at:* <https://www.kingsbayplowshares7.org/>

RFRA: Defendant motivations are deeply religious and believe prosecution against them should be dismissed. They have filed a Religious Freedom Restoration Act in federal court. RFRA requires the government to prove a compelling state interest if it restricts a person's free exercise of religious beliefs. In explanation of this position, see <https://www.kingsbayplowshares7.org/rfra-evidentiary-hearing/>

Supporting Declarations: [full versions at <https://www.kingsbayplowshares7.org/impact/>]

Four testimonials on behalf of the defendants illuminate their convictions and rights before the law:

Prof. of Law Francis A. Boyle on the relevance of international law and laws of war to U.S. nuclear deterrence policies.

As the author of *The Criminality of Deterrence* (2002) and is an expert on the intransgressable rules of international humanitarian law (the United Nations Charter), he recommends dismissal of all charges. **Retired Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton** speaks to the depth of faith of the Kings Bay Seven, why their actions are consistent with the Catholic peace tradition, and why civil resistance to evil is important to society's survival. **Retired Navy Captain Thomas Rogers** speaks to why nuclear weapons are illegal and cause indiscriminate civilian and environmental havoc. Inexplicably, Trident submarines now carry more missiles than during the Cold War.

Jeffrey Carter, the Executive Director of the Physicians for Social Responsibility and an attorney explains why a meaningful medical response to any nuclear war is impossible and why in 2015 the American Medical Association (and many international counterparts) called for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide.

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