

What the Air Force Doesn't Want Us to Notice on Election Night. Test-launch Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

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*Much significance will happen at the end of Election Day, and a countdown will begin at 11:00 p.m. PDT on November 5th. While everyone's attention will be on who our next president will be, **the U.S. Air Force will test-launch an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile with a dummy hydrogen bomb on the tip from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The missile will cross the Pacific Ocean and 22 minutes later crash into the Marshall Islands. The U.S. Air Force does this several times a year. The launches are always at night while Americans are sleeping.***

This is what nightmares are made of – between 1946 and 1958 the U.S. detonated 67 nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands, and the result is that the Marshallese people have lost their pristine environment and face health problems. Our environment is threatened here as well. Not only did the indigenous Chumash people lose their sacred land to Vandenberg Air Force Base, but also America's Heartland presently has around 400 ICBMs stored in underground silos equipped with nuclear warheads that are ready to launch at a hair trigger's notice. Named "MinuteMen III," after Revolutionary War soldiers who could reload and shoot a gun in less than a minute, ICBMs not only put Americans at risk of accident, but they put all life on earth in danger.

ICBMs are not viable for national defense. They are a relic of a bygone era having been invented by Nazi Germany, and their presence only escalates the risk of nuclear accidents or conflicts. A single launch could lead to a nuclear exchange that would annihilate cities, contaminate the environment, and cause irreversible harm to our planet's ecosystem. Once an ICBM is launched, it cannot be recalled. I don't want a nuclear strike or accident to happen. We can change course now, and our first step is to decommission the ICBM program also because it is a staggering financial burden to maintain.

The U.S. plans to spend over \$1.2 trillion on nuclear modernization over the next 30 years, which means new, larger nuclear bombs and new, larger ICBMs called Sentinels that will need to be tested. This massive investment in outdated technology diverts critical funds away from humanitarian needs like healthcare, education, and healing climate change—issues that directly impact our quality of life, and our children's future.

I teach 4th and 5th graders Creative Writing. I adore children's imaginations, but when my students were given the assignment to write about something important to them, they wrote lines that broke my heart. This is a wake-up call for us adults to face the reality we have made for our children.

“Such a shame, a perfectly good planet, trashed.” Claire, age 9.

“What would you think about no nature in the world? No trees, no butterflies, no birds or bunnies at all! Most important of all, no people. There would be no technology, no schools, no history, no entertainment; everything we have worked for would be wasted. What would you think about a beautiful world that basically had nothing? I think I would absolutely hate it.” Brynn, age 9.

Other than destruction caused by industrial global warming and by war, which the children are all-too aware of, this child does not know what actually could turn nature and civilization to nothing in a matter of minutes; she doesn't know about “nuclear winter” or how vulnerable we are to a nuclear accident. Most people don't.

The claim is that nuclear weapons are deterrents, but it is diplomacy that creates alliances and peace. Nuclear weapons only provide the terrifying threat of annihilation, either by command or by accident. Nuclear weapons and ICBMs only make the world less safe and strip us of security.

As the warring ruling class seems to be pushing for nuclear brinkmanship, on this election night let us not be distracted. By decommissioning ICBMs, the U.S. could lead the world in reducing the nuclear threat and encourage other nations to do the same. For the sake of our health, environment, and the safety of future generations, it's time to scrap the ICBM program. We owe it to our children to invest in a future that prioritizes peace and sustainability over destruction.

As it is we the people who possess the right of self-determination, we must confront the material reality of our homeland and face what it will take to protect it. Do we have the courage to change our country for the better and ensure our futures? Yes we do, and now is the time to take action.

“Only we, the public, can force our representatives to reverse their abdication of the war powers that the Constitution gives exclusively to the Congress,” said Daniel Ellsberg, U.S. military analyst, economist, and author of “The Doomsday Machine.”

May we cancel this nightmare weapons program for once and for all and give our children the security that they deserve.

Tell Congress: Cancel Sentinel Missile Program—More Than 700 Scientists Agree: click [here](#).

Learn more about the dangers of ICBMS and get involved. See [this](#).

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Leah Yananton is a teacher, filmmaker and writer with attention on biosphere dynamics, human connection, indigenous stewardship, nuclear disarmament, and the peace economy.

Featured image: The US conducted 105 nuclear tests in the Pacific, mainly in the Marshall islands, between 1946 and 1962. Image: Wikipedia

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