

Your Honor,

As a 27-year veteran of the CIA - where I served as a political analyst on Middle Eastern affairs - I know what it's like to move in circles of privilege and power, where people seem not overly concerned with the human cost of strategic decisions - decisions that can involve the lives and deaths of thousands, or even millions, of people.

I can tell you from personal experience that when our government makes a strategic decision to use kinetic force in another country, the LAST thing on their minds is what they call collateral damage — that's the term they use for the innocent bystanders — men, women, children & the unborn — that are slaughtered as a consequence of our policies.

Neither are they concerned with the long-term consequences that follow, such as the uranium poisoning that continues to cause deformities in babies born in Fallujah and other Iraqi cities.

Similarly, very few Americans are aware that “jellyfish babies” — babies born with no spinal cord and without bones continue to be born to women in the Marshall Islands as a direct result of decades of US nuclear weapons testing on those islands.

So why did I join these seven other people in lying down on the pavement in front of Kitsap-Bangor Naval Base on the August 2015 anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

It's because I'm all too aware of what it means to be a US government employee - you're working hard to do a job to the best of your ability, but sometimes you're unaware that you might be contributing to something that works against your country's national security — bringing it closer to war and pulling it away from a diplomatic solution that could lead to peace.

Sometimes you find yourself involved in things that work against human life — whether we're talking about the lives of the Iraqis, the Marshalese, Afghans, Yemenis, or even the lives of our fellow Americans here at home - Americans who now fear a backlash from the enemies we've made after decades of US wars in the Middle East (and let us remember that ISIS did not exist before the US war in Iraq).

Your Honor, you may be wondering why my colleagues and I didn't just sleep in on that August morning like normal retired people - or why we didn't go shopping like most good Americans, or watch reality TV or something on Fox news.

It is because, Your Honor, we strongly believe that it is important to remind the American people about the consequences of the US choice to continue building up even more nuclear weapons - to the tune of \$1 trillion dollars.

We came to represent those who could not be there - we understand that many people need to support their families, and many have no choice but to work at the naval base. I want to be clear that we stand against Trident and not against those who are caught up in the system due to their many obligations. As you may know, we hosted security personnel from the base for coffee and coffee cake the day before our action. We consider them to be part of our community and we welcome them to visit us again for more exchanges in the future.

We chose to take the dramatic action of sprinkling ashes over one another as a reminder of the ashes that remain from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings — a reminder of what destruction the Earth could reap through the use - or even the threat of use - of these terrible weapons.

Your Honor, I leave you with a quote from Rob Shetterly, an artist who paints portraits of courageous American truth-tellers and dissident patriots:

“Dissent is the prerequisite of democracy. It’s what keeps us honest as a country.”

Thank you, Your Honor.