

# The Copy Exchange

## Citizens jam nuclear radio network

*When the air force began deploying radio relay towers in small towns it ran into unexpected opposition from local activists wielding facts, figures, expertise, and political influence.*

by Nancy Foster

**A** TERSE ANNOUNCEMENT in Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci's report to Congress last February signaled a Pentagon program in serious trouble: the Ground Wave Emergency Network, known as GWEN, would top off at 96 relay towers, "about 30 less than previously planned." The announcement came after Congress had slashed procurement funds for GWEN for the second consecutive year, telling the air force that the fiscal 1988 money was the last it would get for the controversial program.

GWEN seemed an unlikely target for cuts, since it appealed to the widespread assumption that improvements in military communications are inherently valuable. GWEN consists of a nationwide network of radio relay towers and communications terminals linking radars, which would signal attack; military command centers; and land-based nuclear forces. The equipment of the system, billed by some reports at \$600-\$733 million, is "hardened," or protected, against the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) created by a high-altitude nuclear burst which could disrupt many communications and electrical systems. In addition, it uses low-frequency radio waves which hug the ground and thus are not affected by the ionospheric disturbances such an explosion would generate.

In other words, GWEN is a communications system designed to operate during a nuclear war. Its curtailment represents a substantial victory for a grassroots protest movement that began in the winter of 1985 when residents of Amherst, Massachusetts, objected to air force plans to deploy a GWEN tower in their town. The prospect of these towers, each 299 feet tall and topped by a flashing strobe light, presented communities from Maine to California with an opportunity to confront the nuclear arms race in their own backyards.

GWEN IS A KEY component of the Pentagon's nuclear war-fighting strategy, outlined in stark detail in the Reagan administration's Defense Guidance for 1984-1988. This document, leaked to the press in 1982, calls for strategic forces capable of "supporting controlled nuclear counterattacks over a protracted period" and able to "prevail even under the condition of a prolonged war."

Public alarm about a strategy to fight a protracted nuclear war quickly led the administration to tone down its rhetoric. But preparations for fighting such a war have not abated. Previous strategies called for airborne command posts, which would take off at the first signal of a nuclear attack. But these planes would run out of fuel in three days, so the Pentagon is now deploying truck-mounted mobile command centers which would supposedly run longer. And it is deploying satellite-based sensors to monitor the devastation produced by successive nuclear strikes, so the generals who have presumably survived by flying around among the fireballs or by huddling inside lead-lined tractor trailers, roaming what is left of the nation's highways, would know where to aim the next nuclear salvos.

"Survivable and enduring" command, control, and communications systems are needed to provide "escalation control" in a prolonged nuclear war, in the words of Donald C. Latham, who was the Pentagon's chief of command, control, communications, and intelligence until July 1987.<sup>1</sup> The Defense Science Board, in a recently declassified 1979 report, addressed the problem of vulnerable communications systems by proposing redundancy: "We must provide [communications] facilities we expect to be destroyed. We know



Donald C. Latham was the Pentagon's chief advocate of communications systems that would survive a nuclear war. Courtesy Defense Department

that if we start out with only a few, we will likely wind up with none. If we start out with many, a few will remain."<sup>2</sup>

The Ground Wave Emergency Network lent itself readily to such proliferation. Each tall, slender tower—along with the guy wires that support it, the underground grid of copper wires that surround it, and several small accompanying structures—can be deployed on an 11-acre plot. Latham told Congress in 1985 that the key to GWEN's survivability lay in "proliferation [of these towers] in remote areas," so that a large number of towers would have to be destroyed in order to disable the system.<sup>3</sup> The towers have a "packet switching system, according to Latham, so that if "something in between gets blown up, you have paths to route around" the towers that have been destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

AT FIRST THE SYSTEM was assigned a modest, one time mission. Military communications specialist Bruce Blair of the Brookings Institution said in a recent interview that GWEN was originally envisioned as a backup to the telephone system, should the phones be disrupted by EMI from a high-altitude nuclear burst. Using GWEN, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) would call strategic bomber bases, ordering pilots to take to the air to survive an imminent nuclear attack.

Nancy Foster cofounded and directs the national GWEN Project in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Then the mission broadened, GWEN was to transmit warnings of imminent attack from radar sites to SAC and other command centers, and also to convey messages from command centers to land-based nuclear forces—missiles as well as bombers—ordering retaliatory strikes. But all this would take place before enemy warheads detonated on U.S. soil. According to Blair, these plans assumed the towers would be targeted and destroyed in the initial attack.

Before construction of GWEN got under way, however, nuclear war strategists assigned it a far more ambitious mission. GWEN was to be a "survivable" system which would provide communications "before, during, and after a nuclear attack."<sup>5</sup> Year after year, in testimony to congressional committees, Latham presented GWEN to Congress as an enduring communications system, intended to carry on a protracted war. The system's redundancy, Latham said in 1984, would allow GWEN to "survive for extended periods of time" in order to "support . . . force reconstitution and recovery operations after a nuclear attack."

How big the network was to be varied with the scenario, Blair said. If the system were directly attacked by submarine-launched ballistic missiles, it might take 600 towers for the

network to keep functioning. If attacked by more numerous and accurate land-based missiles, thousands of towers would be required. If the towers were not targeted directly, they might suffer only collateral damage and fewer would be needed. In 1983 Latham told Congress that the question was "How much survivability do you want to buy?" He suggested "some number more than 45 and less than 500." The following year Congress was told that GWEN would have 240 relay towers.

A February 17, 1986, *New York Times* article said GWEN had become "the focus of dispute among experts over whether it could survive the opening minutes of a nuclear war." Blair told the *Times* he saw "no persuasive rationale for trying to build a system for a long nuclear war because the bomber bases, missile fields, underground command posts and radar installations linked by the system were important and vulnerable targets and would be destroyed." Latham, on the other hand, "believed the system could survive and should be expanded . . . to help the United States direct nuclear weapons in a war that could last days, weeks or longer." In testimony before the defense subcommittee two months later, Latham again took issue with Blair's criticism, calling attention to GWEN's connections to airborne command posts and mobile command centers.

Nonetheless in early 1986 the air force decided to reduce the number of relay towers from 240 to 127, assuring Congress that the reduction reflected a reassessment of the threat



Protesters hold a monthly vigil by the tall, thin GWEN tower that rises from the Iowa plains near Mechanicsville. Photo by Bob Campagna

from Soviet submarines and cruise missiles. Air force Col. William J. Foster, deputy director for space systems and C3I, told the defense subcommittee: "The beauty of GWEN is that you can add relay nodes as the threat increases," and in any case "the system would survive."

**BUT IT WAS CITIZEN** protest that finally reduced the network size to the 96 towers proposed by Carlucci and approved in September by the air force. In 1985 the air force began constructing the first major phase of the system, called the "thin line": 56 radio relay towers linking eight transmitting-receiving stations at warning sites and command centers and 30 receiving stations at bases for nuclear-armed bombers. Fifty-two of these towers are now built and operating, sending brief test signals several seconds every hour. The plots on which they stand have in most cases been leased from private landowners.

As soon as the air force plans became known, however, citizens began questioning them. The protest movement began when the air force sought to deploy a GWEN tower in Amherst in the winter of 1984-1985.

Amherst is represented in Congress by Republican Silvio Conte, ranking minority member of the key House Appropriations Committee. GWEN first came to his attention when Hampshire County commissioners enlisted his help in persuading the air force and the Defense Department to send representatives to a public hearing on GWEN in February 1985. A month later Amherst's Representative Town Meeting listened to arguments for and against the system and then by overwhelming voice vote opposed construction of GWEN "in Amherst or anywhere." The town meeting and county commissioners both requested congressional scrutiny of GWEN.

Vigorous protest against a tower proposed for Eugene, Oregon, brought GWEN to the attention of Oregon Republican Mark Hatfield, then chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. In 1986 Hatfield and Conte, working through their committees, slashed GWEN funding for fiscal 1987 by 66 percent, from \$97 million to \$33 million. Funding for the system had first been requested in fiscal 1982 with the expectation that annual requests would continue through 1991.

As protest spread, press reports and constituent mail from other parts of the country portrayed GWEN to Congress as a program in trouble. In 1987, led by Conte in Appropriations and Massachusetts Democrat Nicholas Mavroules in the House Armed Services Committee, Congress not only cut procurement funding again—this time by 30 percent for fiscal 1988, from \$52 million to \$36 million—but decreed that "with this amount the air force will complete procurement of relay nodes (towers) for the GWEN program."

**OPPONENTS OF GWEN** reject the notion that a GWEN network of any size could survive a protracted nuclear war. The Pentagon itself, they point out, lists command, control, and communications facilities as priority targets for Soviet missiles.\* If GWEN is so vital, more towers would simply attract more missiles. When GWEN is nevertheless presented as a survivable communications system, GWEN opponents believe the myth is perpetuated that a nuclear war could be kept under control. The protesters fear that leaders who are under this delusion may be more likely to let a nuclear war begin.

But in the public debate over GWEN, in contrast to testimony given before Congress, air force and Pentagon representatives ignore, obfuscate, or deny GWEN's role in fighting a protracted nuclear war. Franklin Miller, director of the Pentagon's Office of Strategic Forces Policy, told Hampshire County commissioners in April 1985: "We do not seek to fight a protracted nuclear war." But at the same hearing, Miller made much of the policy of "flexible response," quoting Caspar Weinberger's claim that the Soviets have the capability of "prolonging an initial strike by subsequent strikes" or "we must plan to deal with that, too." While the Pentagon indeed may not seek to fight a protracted nuclear war, it is apparently preparing to fight one.

## GWEN "thin-line" sites

**Alabama**  
Grady  
Hackleburg  
**Arizona**  
Flagstaff  
(Navajo Army Depot)

**Arkansas**  
Fayetteville

**California**  
Bakersfield  
Biggs\*  
Fenner  
Roseville

**Colorado**  
Aurora (Lowry AFB Annex)  
Pueblo  
Pueblo Army Depot  
Denver (Rocky Flats)

**Georgia**  
Macon  
Savannah Beach

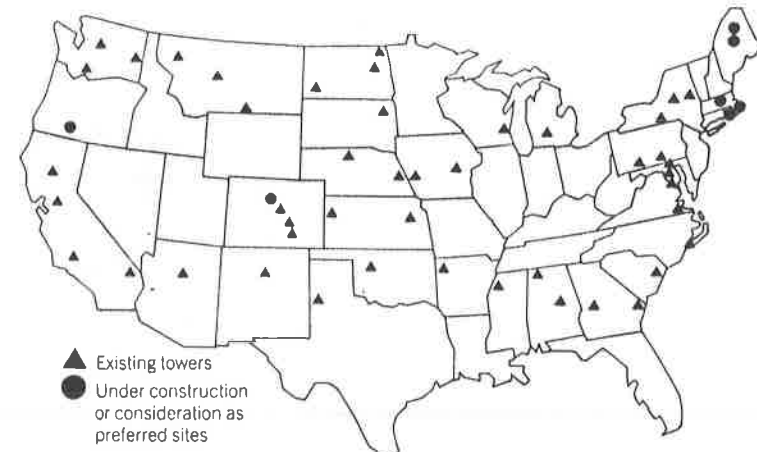
**Iowa**  
Glenwood/Pacific Junction  
Mechanicsville\*

**Kansas**  
Goodland  
Topeka

**Maine**  
Herseytown\*  
Penobscot\*

**Maryland**  
Hagerstown\*  
Crownsville\*  
Waldorf\*

**Massachusetts**  
Barre Falls\*  
Acushnet\*



▲ Existing towers  
● Under construction or consideration as preferred sites

**Michigan**  
Onondaga\*  
**Mississippi**  
Alligator Township

**Montana**  
Billings  
Great Falls  
Ronan\*

**Nebraska**  
Ainsworth  
Omaha (SAC)  
**New Jersey**  
Egg Harbor

**New Mexico**  
Albuquerque  
(Kirtland AFB)

**New York**  
Elmira\*  
Hudson Falls\*  
Remson

**North Carolina**  
Beaufort\*

**North Dakota**  
Devils Lake  
Edinburg  
Medora

**Oklahoma**  
Canton  
**Oregon**  
Klamath Falls\*  
Seneca

**Pennsylvania**  
Harbor Creek\*  
Gettysburg\*  
Hawk Run

**Rhode Island**  
Little Compton\*

**South Carolina**  
Kensington

**South Dakota**  
Clark

**Texas**  
Summerfield  
**Virginia**  
Driver

**Washington**  
Appleton  
Spokane  
Wenatchee

**Wisconsin**  
Mequon\*

\*Sites where there has been organized opposition

## GWEN and the governor

GWEN became an issue in the presidential campaign when former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, in the August 1 issue of *Time*, wrote that Michael Dukakis's criticism of the system suggested that the Massachusetts governor believed "the way to deter war is to be unprepared to respond."

The air force has considered half a dozen Massachusetts sites for GWEN towers but still has not begun constructing any in the state where citizen opposition to the system first arose. Responding to local concerns, Dukakis wrote two letters to the air force in 1986 and 1987, which Schlesinger cited in his attack. Excerpts of the letters follow.

October 29, 1986: "I strongly urge you to carefully consider the fact that both Barre and Amherst Town Meetings voted earlier in the year to reject any participation by their respective communities as hosts for the GWEN program."

"While the site currently under consideration at the Barre Falls Dam Site within the Ware Watershed Reservation has not officially been selected by the Air Force, I am strongly opposed to any installation of a GWEN tower in this location at any time. . . . The inground installation of the large network of copper wiring necessary for this project will cause unacceptable discharge of copper leachate. The location of this site within a wetland area only 1000 feet from the Ware River presents a real threat of the introduction of copper, a highly toxic element, into this water supply and aquatic ecosystem."

"I believe that it is critical that the EIS [environmental impact statement] include a requirement which provides communities under consideration as potential GWEN sites with specific infor-

mation about the purposes of GWEN as have been described repeatedly in official documents and in Air Force and Department of Defense testimony before Congress. . . . Since GWEN is to be used during a nuclear attack, the EIS should address the environmental consequences on host communities which would be likely targets of nuclear destruction by the attacker. . . .

"Nuclear war can neither be won nor survived and . . . the only effective defense against the horrors of nuclear weapons is insuring that they are never used."

August 28, 1987: "Apart from addressing . . . environmental concerns, I want to restate my opposition to GWEN based on its excessive cost. At a time when this nation is facing a record budget deficit, I believe it is inappropriate to spend \$1 billion in federal funds for a temporary communications system. . . . I cannot stress enough the need for the Air Force to work closely with state and local officials in the Commonwealth to ensure that all concerns are fully addressed and that all federal and state regulations are adhered to."

On September 1, after Schlesinger's open letter to Dukakis appeared in *Time* and after plans for GWEN were cut back, the Dukakis campaign issued a statement calling the modification of the system "a step in the right direction." According to the statement as reported by Fred Kaplan in the September 5 issue of the *Boston Globe*, as president, Dukakis would "review the air force's revised proposal for GWEN to determine whether it now meets legitimate national security requirements in a cost-effective way." □

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Asked at that hearing about the "force reconstitution and recovery operations" which GWEN is supposed to support, Miller defined them as the U.S. effort to "regather its bomber forces and other nuclear forces which might not have been used" in order to "respond not only to initial Soviet attacks but to follow-on Soviet attacks and to subsequent Soviet attacks." Yet in December of that year, Miller told a GWEN hearing in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, that "nobody is trying to plan for protracted nuclear war." He insisted to the *New York Times* two months later that GWEN "is important for the first 35 minutes of an attack."

Instead of talking about nuclear war fighting, in community hearings Pentagon and air force spokesmen hearken back to the original justification for GWEN as a system that would survive an initial burst of EMP. The air force claims that GWEN "will remove any possibility that the Soviets could believe that, due to the electromagnetic pulse generated by a high altitude nuclear burst, a few weapons or even a single weapon either could prevent attack warning messages from reaching the President or impede his ability to order retaliation."<sup>9</sup>

But GWEN opponents challenge the notion that the system is needed to fill a gap in deterrence. They point out that the effects of EMP are highly uncertain and have not been observed in the atmosphere since above-ground nuclear testing stopped 25 years ago. Since the Soviets cannot be certain that EMP would black out communications completely, they could not be sure that a preliminary burst would prevent retaliation by U.S. land-based forces. Even if it did, GWEN opponents say, U.S. nuclear-armed submarines could still retaliate. The submarine force is not connected to GWEN and indeed does not need outside assistance to launch missiles which could rain down upon the Soviet Union the destructive force of 34,000 Hiroshima bombs.

Commercial telephone networks are rapidly shifting to fiber optics, which are resistant to EMP, to improve service to civilian as well as military customers. Furthermore, the U.S. military has other communications hardened against EMP: Jam Resistant Secure Communications connected to Defense Satellite Communications Systems III, the Survivable Low Frequency Communication System, and, under development, the satellite system known as MILSTAR. The military's anxiety about the vulnerability of satellite communications could be assuaged, GWEN opponents believe, by negotiating a treaty banning antisatellite weapons. This would be less costly than deploying redundant hardware.

**THE MOVES TO CUT** funding were assuredly helped by pressure on Congress to find ways to cut the military budget. They may also have been aided by disagreements within the Pentagon about the proper role of GWEN. But there is no question that grassroots protest caused Congress to take a second look at GWEN.

Amherst's No-GWEN Alliance became a model for public education and protest in other communities. Out of this local action emerged the nationwide GWEN Project which aimed to alert communities about air force plans for locating GWEN towers, to encourage protest against the towers and against the nuclear war-fighting strategy they serve, and to induce Congress to stop funding GWEN.

The Amherst-based GWEN Project benefited from extensive research on GWEN conducted by the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. IPS and the Center for Defense Information, also in Washington, shared expertise in analyzing military policy and provided speakers at hearings on GWEN. Other major peace organizations helped in lobbying and in alerting potential activists.

The campaign against GWEN struck a responsive chord in places as diverse as rural Mechanicsville, Iowa, where a protester's sign at the GWEN relay tower read "GWEN will tell dead people they are dead," to Little Compton, Rhode Island, where 500 of the town's 3,100 residents turned out for a public hearing on GWEN in July 1987. Little Compton activists mobilized the governor, the state legislature, and the entire Rhode Island congressional delegation to protest air force plans to construct a tower in the tranquil coastal town.

Altogether the GWEN Project has helped mobilize protest against GWEN in some 35 communities in 14 states (see map). In 19 locales, elected officials have been persuaded by GWEN opponents to sponsor public forums where both sides of the issue were presented. Local officials are encouraged to invite Defense Department as well as air force representatives so that military strategy can be discussed.

In addition to the Rhode Island legislature, 13 municipalities have voted their objections to being considered as sites for GWEN towers. Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts wrote to the Air Force in 1986 and 1987 expressing concerns about the environmental impact of the towers, calling for more adequate information to local communities, and objecting to GWEN's role in nuclear war-fighting strategy (see sidebar). In six cases the Air Force has been forced to look for alternative sites.

Still, opponents have not prevented construction of the current "thin-line" phase of GWEN. In the early stages of thin-line construction the air force faced no opposition simply because the communities where towers were being built knew nothing of what was going on. When they found out, citizens and public officials at some sites accepted the military judgment on GWEN's value and dismissed protest as misguided or unpatriotic.

Even where opposition was strong it could not necessarily stop construction of a tower. The federal government is not required to abide by local land-use or zoning ordinances. A vote against GWEN by town meeting, city council, or referendum serves important educational and political purposes but is not binding on the federal government.

Site searches have not yet begun for the next 40 towers which are slated to bring the total to 96. The final phase, for which contracts are being let, also calls for more transmitting-receiving stations.

Despite obstacles, the protest against GWEN attained a momentum which eventually attracted the notice of the national media, called attention to the Pentagon's controversial nuclear war-fighting strategy, and accomplished a goal that often eludes peace activists: limiting a specific military program.

**OTHER FACTORS BESIDES** persistent hard work over three years and the responsiveness of key elected officials have helped the campaign against GWEN:

- *The air force antagonized citizens and elected officials.* Despite a July 1982 executive order requiring federal agencies to "communicate with state and local elected officials as early in the program planning cycle as is reasonably feasible," communities often did not hear about GWEN towers until construction had begun or in some cases was already complete—and then only from journalists or activists in other communities. When the public forums began, the air force at first refused to share the platform with GWEN critics. Air force and Defense Department officials cancelled their appearances at the first public hearing in Amherst when they learned that William Arkin, director of the Nuclear Weapons Research Project at IPS and a critic of GWEN, had also been invited to speak. In October 1985 the air force insisted that its meeting with city officials of Mequon, Wisconsin, take place in secret.

The air force also failed to disclose fully and honestly GWEN's role in nuclear war, often describing GWEN merely as an emergency communications system. After public protest began, in April 1985, the air force published a revised version of its environmental assessment, from which all mention of nuclear war had been deleted. The air force paid dearly for such tactics: the press joined citizens and public officials in expressing indignation. At the instigation of Senator Hatfield and the Senate Appropriations Committee, language was attached to the 1986 defense appropriations bill directing the air force to cooperate with communities to allow for "full and complete public review."

The air force now notifies state and local officials at each step of the search process, and air force and Defense Department officials now appear with GWEN critics. Current information sheets and the environmental impact statement on the final phase acknowledge that GWEN will operate in the event of nuclear attack, although they still fail to own up to its role in fighting a nuclear war.

- *The environmental movement heightened public sensitivity to intrusions upon the hometown landscape.* The prospect of a 299-foot tower, topped by a flashing light, has in itself sounded alarms.

The environmental assessment stated that tower sites would "comply with surrounding land use and zoning restrictions," but when push came to shove the air force quickly rediscovered the doctrine of federal supremacy: such compliance is not, in fact, required of federal agencies. The air force failure to prepare a full environmental impact statement on the initial phase of GWEN backfired. The No-GWEN Alliance of Lane County, Oregon, and the Lane County commissioners filed suit, calling on the air force to address the environmental impact on a community that would be targeted in a nuclear war. The federal courts eventually ruled against the plaintiffs but that suit, along with more traditional environmental complaints raised at other potential sites, induced the air force to prepare an environmental impact statement on the final phase of GWEN.

The statement that emerged in 1987 sidestepped the issue of nuclear war but recognized the possibility of more familiar environmental problems. The statement outlined stricter environmental criteria and more thorough site-selection procedures for relay towers in the final phase of GWEN.

The Conservation Law Foundation of New England and the attorney general of Rhode Island then took the air force to court, seeking application of these siting procedures to thin-line towers still to be built in New England. Although a federal judge declined to stop construction already under way at two tower sites in Maine, he found the air force in likely violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and ordered court review before construction can proceed on the three remaining sites in New England. As a result, the air force has reopened its site search for two of these towers, applying the new procedures.

- *Public attention was directed to Pentagon budgets inflated at the expense of programs designed to meet community needs.* Amherst cited the administration's call for over \$300 billion for the fiscal 1986 military budget while seeking "severe cuts in domestic programs such as general revenue sharing, student loans, subsidized housing for the elderly and for low income families, child nutrition, Medicaid reimbursements, subsidies for mass transit and other programs of direct and immediate benefit to the residents of Amherst." Iowa protesters championed "farms, not arms." GWEN towers, at \$1.5 million apiece, were ready symbols of misuse of public resources.

- *The nuclear freeze movement of the early 1980s heightened awareness of the dangers of the nuclear arms race and of the importance of grassroots activism.* The ordinary citizen's voice is far more readily heard in the local than the national arena. It may be no accident that all the formal votes against the towers have come from New England, where citizens are especially accustomed to having their say. But there is also an accelerating move nationwide on the part of local governments to register their views and develop their own initiatives on a range of military and foreign policy issues once believed to lie exclusively in the domain of the federal government. The protest against GWEN has reflected and strengthened that trend. □

1. *Washington Post*, Nov. 10, 1982, cited in *Nuclear Warfighting Quotations by Reagan Administration Officials and Supporters* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information, 1983).

2. *New York Times*, June 4, 1982, cited in *Nuclear Warfighting Quotations*.

3. U.S. Senate, *Hearings before the Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee on DoD Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1984*, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (March 1983), pp. 2492-93, 2499.

4. Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Enduring Strategic Communications, Command and Control* (Washington, D.C.: Defense Department, Oct. 1979), p. 4.

5. U.S. Senate, *Hearings before the Armed Services Committee on DoD Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1984*, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (Feb. 1983), p. 4646.

6. U.S. House of Representatives, *Hearings before the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee on DoD Appropriations for 1986*, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (April 1985), part 4, p. 540.

7. Air Force Systems Command, Electronics Systems Division, *Environmental Assessment for the Ground Wave Emergency Network (GWEN)* (umbrella document) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Air Force, Sept. 1982), pp. 2, 6.

8. U.S. Defense Department, *Soviet Military Power 1984* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 11.

9. U.S. Air Force Electronic Systems Division, Office of Public Affairs, "Ground Wave Emergency Network Final Operational Capability Fact Sheet," attached to Sept. 9, 1986, notice of scoping meeting for GWEN environmental impact statement.



# "MAKE THE ECONOMY SCREAM!"

Sherri Yeager

The irony of the US trade war on Nicaragua is tragic. "We finally have a government that cares about its people and about ending hunger and disease and illiteracy," says Nicaraguan union official Marvin Cortez Estrada. "But now, because of the war and the embargo, there is no medicine or equipment and people die of curable diseases. There are no books to teach people to read and the contras kill doctors and teachers."

Before the 1979 revolution, Nicaragua was 95% dependent on US trade. The embargo means that farmers and manufacturers lack spare parts for old machinery, roads are seriously damaged, the free health care system badly needs more medical supplies, and educational programs are crippled by a shortage of pens, paper and textbooks. Nicaragua has become a land of "no hay" — there isn't any. Scarcity is an epidemic. "It's a miracle of Nicaraguans' ingenuity that anything is left running," says Cortez.

This combination of punitive economic measures and what one contra commander called a "war of vandalism and terror" has been tried before. In 1970, only days after the election of socialist Salvador Allende in Chile, President Richard Nixon ordered CIA Director Richard Helms to "make the economy scream." The result was the CIA-orchestrated military coup in September 1973. Since then, 15 years of iron-fisted dictatorship have reigned in Chile lending credence to the effectiveness of economic sabotage.

## A good risk, says World Bank

Before Reagan took office, the World Bank issued a favorable assessment of Nicaragua's potential for economic recovery, recommending that it receive international loans at low interest rates. In 1980 Congress approved President Carter's request for \$75 million in economic aid to Nicaragua (with the proviso that the Sandinistas not export "subversion").

The Reagan administration wasted no time in beginning its two-pronged war against Nicaragua. Contingency plans for a CIA-directed covert war were given the go-ahead.

And the US pulled the economic plug. Two days after his inauguration, Reagan suspended the remaining \$15 million in economic assistance. The unofficial embargo had begun.

From 1981 to 1983, the administration did everything in its power to reduce trade between the US and Nicaragua and to deprive Nicaragua of foreign economic assistance. Export/Import Bank credits, used

*"We finally have a government that cares about its people and about ending hunger and disease and illiteracy. But because of the war and the embargo, people die of curable diseases and the contras kill doctors and teachers."*

to purchase essential products from the United States, were terminated. Nicaragua's sugar quota was reduced, then cut off altogether.

In 1981, the administration suspended a \$10 million loan used by Nicaragua to buy wheat, then abolished bilateral aid — including \$11 million for health, education, and rural development programs. The rationale for the aid cutoff was an unsubstantiated State Department claim that the Sandinistas were exporting arms to Salvadoran guerrillas.

In response, Nicaragua attempted to increase its trade with other countries and sought loans from multilateral development banks. The Reagan administration made intense efforts to block those loans.

Until 1982, Nicaragua had a good reputation with both the World Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB), having designed some of the most successful projects ever funded. But in 1982, under US pressure, the World Bank first froze all of Nicaragua's loan applications, then stopped lending altogether. At the same time, the US began exercising its veto power over the IDB Trust Fund. The US cast the sole negative vote on every Nicaraguan loan application — vetoing, among other proposals, credit programs for farmers and a road improvement project designed to double the amount of marketable agricultural products.

Because the United States did not have veto power over IDB's higher interest loans, the administration resorted to economic blackmail: It threatened to withhold its substantial financial contributions unless IDB blocked Nicaraguan loan requests. Nicaragua is the only Latin American country that has not received IDB loans since then.

US actions in blocking the World Bank and IDB loans violated the development banks' charters, which specify that economic considerations should determine loan approval, not political ideology.

## International condemnation

The official US trade embargo received almost universal international condemnation from the beginning. Every major US ally in Latin America and Western Europe criticized it. Many refused to join, including Spain, Canada, France, West Germany, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Mexico, Venezuela, Austria, Denmark, and Norway.

The embargo violates the charters of the Organization of American States, the United Nations, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the US and Nicaragua. It also makes a mockery of the Central American Peace Plan, which vows that the five countries in the region will "jointly request extraordinary economic support from the international community" and encourage "agreements which will speed up development in order to create more egalitarian societies which are free from poverty."

US attempts to justify its actions rarely stand up to scrutiny. While the Reagan administration was accusing Nicaragua of dependence on the Soviet Union, the State Department rated Nicaragua's level of dependence as "moderate," on the order of India's or Argentina's. The administration claimed that the Nicaraguan private sector

was oppressed, yet the embargo's effect on the large capitalist class is strong.

*The Reagan administration wasted no time in beginning its two-pronged war against Nicaragua. Contingency plans for a CIA-directed covert war were given the go-ahead. And the US pulled the economic plug.*

In the early years of the revolution, before the trade embargo and the war began to take their toll, the Sandinistas made great strides toward rebuilding the economy and improving the quality of life: They achieved self-sufficiency in food production, decreased illiteracy from 50% to 18%, eradicated polio, drastically reduced infant mortality rates, granted land parcels to 60% of rural families, and continually provided incentives to the private sector. Now, however, the economy is strained to the breaking point — the cumulative damage from US aggression is more than \$12 billion.

I once lived in a home in Estelí, Nicaragua with a host family who ate in shifts because there were not enough plates for everyone. These are the people who bear the brunt of the US trade embargo, and these are the people who go unmentioned by the US media.

They are poor people who ask with pride, "How do you like our revolution?" They are tired of war and tired of living in a crippled economy, and they want to know, "Why does your President Reagan attack our country?"

*(Sherri Yeager is a NICA grad and wrote this article for the San Francisco Bay Guardian. It has been condensed for publication here.)*

## Pastors For Peace

On August 2, a passenger boat carrying over 200 people, including a ten-member religious delegation from the US, was ambushed by contras along the Río Escondido. Two passengers were killed and 27 wounded; one of the latter was the leader of the delegation, Rev. Lucius Walker of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization.

The next day Walker held a press conference in Managua and stated: "We are outraged that this act of terrorism by our government, using our resources, delivers death to the people of Nicaragua and attacks our delegation, who are innocent emissaries of peace. . . . Reagan is guilty of murder."

His organization's response, Walker continued, would be the Pastors for Peace Convoy. The purpose of the Convoy will be not only to deliver much-needed materials and vehicles to Nicaragua, but also to publicize the importance of supporting the peace process.

The Convoy will depart from northern cities on November 28th, meet in Texas on December 10, and continue to Nicaragua in order to be in Managua for Christmas. Pastors for Peace is seeking your support. To get involved, contact them at 7301 Curtis, Detroit, Mich. 48221; phone (313) 861-2630.

## Trade For Peace raided

For two years, Trade For Peace (TFP) in Madison, Wis. has challenged the legal embargo of Nicaraguan goods, by selling coffee, stamps, and art works from Nicaragua. It was only a matter of time before the Feds came around, and on August 30th it happened. Customs agents raided the organization and confiscated \$500 worth of goods and TFP's business records. The local US Attorney will decide if prosecution is warranted.

In March of this year, TFP received a warning from the same US Attorney advising them to cease their violation of the embargo. The organization did suspend operation at that time, but when the embargo was renewed in May, TFP resumed sales of Nicaraguan goods.

The organization's focus has been on public education and political activity, as well as the civil disobedience involved in carrying the Nicaraguan goods for sale. These activities are all still needed, along with the defense of TFP. They say, "If we are prosecuted, the trade embargo itself will be on trial."

They obviously need support. To contribute to their ongoing public education and political action, make checks to Trade for Peace, Inc. To contribute to their legal defense, make checks to WCCN Legal Defense Fund. Send all contributions to TFP, Box 3190, Madison, Wis. 53704-0190.

## 28,000 dead

The US/contra war on Nicaragua has resulted in 28,000 deaths and 26,500 other victims (wounded or kidnapped) over the past seven and a half years, according to the Ministry of Defense. Direct and indirect damages from the war total over \$12 billion dollars.

## Barricada subs

As of September 22, Barricada Internacional is being printed in the US. The Barricada Internacional Support Committee is seeking 1000 new subscriptions to make the endeavor self-sustaining. They are also looking for organizations, book stores, and individuals who will accept bulk orders. A subscription costs \$30 a year. For a sub or info, write B.I. Support Committee, Box 20928, Oakland, Cal. 94620; phone (415) 654-0104.

## US makes contingency plans

While the Reagan regime keeps trying to push military aid for the contras, it's also readying contingency plans. It has aired a proposal to repatriate contras to the US — that is, to override the existing immigration law to allow contra troops to come here. Not only are the contras badly defeated militarily, but on October 4, Honduras asked the UN to create a peace-keeping force to patrol its borders with Nicaragua and El Salvador and keep guerrillas from those countries out of Honduras.

# Fourth Annual International Days of Protest Against War Toys

Friday, November 25 & Saturday, November 26, 1988

War toys sales have been increasing steadily since 1982. Despite a decline in sales from a record high of 19% in 1985, they still take up a 10% share of the toy market. The most alarming trend is the increase in sales of toy guns, despite continual tragedies and near tragedies involving children and teens playing war games with realistic toy weapons. GI Joe is now being promoted not only here but also in foreign countries as an international hero. And while Coleco is no longer producing its Rambo line, there are always new lines of action figures from "Inhumanoids" to "Thundercats." Each is promoted with its own storyline on a violent cartoon which serves as a thirtiety minute commercial. These cartoons average 50 acts of violence an hour.

Characters like GI Joe and Rambo are being sold as heroes and role models for children. They make war and killing exciting to kids. Their characters often portray racial and sexual stereotypes promoting hatred in our society. Many of the "evil" characters are portrayed as having disabilities while the good guys are able bodied, further promoting stereotypes.

Parents and educators know firsthand of the problems that arise from children playing with war toys. Children often mimic the play they see on television, therefore eliminating the creativity and cooperation needed in children's play. They become more aggressive in their behavior and it increases the chance they will resort to violent behavior later.

Violence in our society is at an all-time high, according to FBI statistics. Increasingly teenagers are killing, being killed and committing suicide. Police deal daily with the question of whether a gun is real or not, sometimes with tragic outcomes. It is important for our society to work against this violence. Eliminating war toys and violent cartoons from our children's lives is a good place to start. Allowing them to have war toys and watch these cartoons implicitly supports violence and war as solutions to problems.

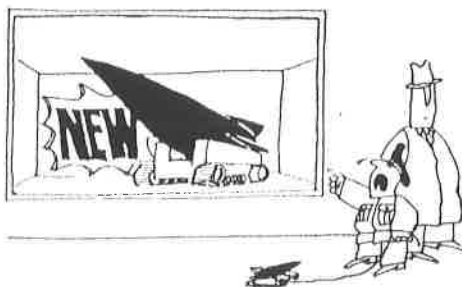
GI Joe is the leading war toy. GI Joe cartoons feature 84 acts of violence per hour. In spite of all the violence, Joes never die, giving children an unrealistic idea of what war really is. The GI Joe line features action figures that sell for a few dollars to weapons and vehicles for as much as \$200. The Stop War Toys Campaign has taken GI Joe on as a focus for our campaign. A message to Hasbro that continuing to sell young children weapons of destruction and violent cartoons is a message to toy manufacturers everywhere.

No society interested in attaining peace and justice can allow such a militarization of the young to go unchallenged. Any vision of a future without war and killing is impossible if the young have been raised to be passive consumers of violence and militarism in toys, cartoons and popular culture.

## VALUES THROUGH TOYS

Every time we purchase a toy, we communicate our adult values to the children who receive these toys. Through play, children imitate our values. Do we want children to assume that war has value to us by letting them play with war toys? Do we want them to think that disputes and differences are best settled by force or that the world is divided up into good guys and bad guys?

Children do need to learn how to deal with aggression, but there are more constructive ways to do this than through war toys. Fear, anger and feelings of low esteem are often at the root of aggressive behavior, behavior that is encouraged by playing with war toys and watching violent TV shows. The home and school should be places where children can build their self-esteem. Their environment should encourage communication, cooperation and the development of creative ways to solve conflicts.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

War Resisters League has initiated a campaign against war toys and cartoons, its first focus being on Rambo toys and now focusing on GI Joe.

- 1) Write Hasbro, Inc., 1027 Newport Ave., Pawtucket, RI 02862, protesting GI Joe, Transformers, and all their war toys.
- 2) Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, and encourage friends and family to refrain from buying toys that encourage violence.
- 3) Write or arrange a meeting with your local toy stores. Ask them not to carry war toys. Leaflet outside to educate customers, or go inside and place informative anti-war stickers on military toys.
- 4) Hold a vigil, put on an alternative toy fair, do street theater, or hold a public meeting about war toys.
- 5) Write or protest at your local television stations which produce and air Rambo, GI Joe, Transformers, Laser Tag and other violent cartoons.
- 6) Reproduce this leaflet (or order more copies from WRL/NE: \$8/100, \$30/500) and distribute it to your school, daycare center, union, place of worship, or organization.
- 7) Send \$4 (plus \$2 postage) to New England War Resisters League for a "Stop War Toys Campaign" packet which includes organizing ideas, alternatives and background and publicity materials.

## KILLERS IN YOUR TOYBOX

"When children watch an adult behave violently, they are likely to imitate the behavior seen. Watching violent television shows and movies can make children behave more violently with peers, according to some studies. The effects of modeling what is seen on television and in engaging in aggressive fantasy play of one's own creation can be quite different. The more realistic the toys and activities, the more alike to modeling and imitation the play becomes. Thus, playing with a realistic-looking sub-machine gun is different in psychological value than pretending trolls live under the bridge."

— Deirdre V. Lovecky, Ph.D.  
from *Violence and Children's Play*

"Those of us who fought in Vietnam have a stake in this fight against war toys. It is always the sons of veterans that end up going to the next war. Those who profited from our sacrifices are making a profit now and preparing our kids for another war."

— Dave Cline  
NJ Vietnam Veterans  
Against the War

"This repeated teaching of seeing your opponent as someone despicably evil who can only be dealt with through combat is very harmful. The research of cartoon violence and violent toys is quite clear. These programs and their violent war toys are teaching children to be more violent and desensitizing them to the real horrors of war and military combat.

The cartoon and violent toy studies show that these materials cause children to hit, kick, choke, push and hold down other children. They have found increases in selfishness, anxiety, and the hurtling of animals. Sharing and school performance have been found to decrease."

— Dr. Thomas Radecki, M.D.,  
psychiatrist  
Chair of National Coalition on  
Television Violence

"We are living in the most violent country in the world in terms of murders within the family, rape, wife abuse and child abuse.

We have one of the two largest stocks of nuclear weapons and are developing others that will be more fiendish still — and more difficult to control.

Our government has been intruding ruthlessly and illegally in the affairs of other nations sometimes trying to overthrow their governments and murder their officials because it dislikes their politics.

Are we doing everything to reverse these alarming trends? Quite the contrary. We are allowing our children to watch endless violence on television which we now know as a scientific fact has a progressively brutalizing effect.

We are buying for our children even more elaborate war toys — machine guns, death ray guns, tanks, war making robots and space ships. We can see from the way they play that these stimulate hostile, brutal feelings even in very young children, which will gradually erode their capacities for tenderness and sympathy.

It's time we realize that we are storing up terrible trouble for ourselves, our children and grandchildren in the future. But we can save our families, our country and our world if we will face our problems and reverse our downward spiral."

— Dr. Benjamin Spock, Pediatrician

Return to: War Resisters League/New England,  
Box 1093, Norwich, CT 06360. (508) 774-3417,  
(203) 889-5337 or (203) 455-9621.

- ☐ Send \_\_\_\_\_ "Stop War Toys Campaign" packets. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_. \$4 per packet plus \$2 postage (for multiple orders add 50¢ postage for each additional packet).
- ☐ Send \_\_\_\_\_ copies of this flyer. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Send \_\_\_\_\_ posters (two different designs available). Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ : \$6 each. Send \_\_\_\_\_ postcards. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ : 75¢, 5/\$2.50.
- ☐ Put me on your mailing list. Enclosed is a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# A PETITION AGAINST WAR TOYS

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION OF WAR TOYS ARE HARMING CHILDREN. THESE TOYS DESENSITIZE THEM TO THE REAL HORRORS OF VIOLENCE AND WARS.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO MARKET TOYS THAT PROMOTE CREATIVITY AND COOPERATIVE PLAY.

	NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE/ZIP/PHONE
	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
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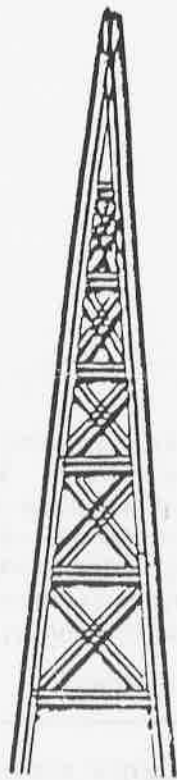
EACH FEBRUARY WE SUBMIT THIS PETITION AT THE INTERNATIONAL TOY FAIR IN N.Y.C. REMEMBER TO MAKE COPIES OF THIS BLANK PETITION BEFORE HAVING IT SIGNED. SEND COPIES OF SIGNED PETITIONS TO REACH US BY FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> OF EACH YEAR. PRESENT ORIGINAL PETITIONS TO YOUR LOCAL TOY STORE MANAGER OR A WAR TOY MANUFACTURER. SEND COPIES OF PETITIONS TO WAR TOYS CAMPAIGN, BOX 1093, NORWICH, CT 06360.

In the fall of 1985 the US Air force built a 300-foot radio tower on 15.5 acres of prime Iowa farm land. A component of the Ground Wave Emergency Network (GWEN) this tower is meant to be used after electromagnetic pulse and radioactivity black out conventional communications in the first minutes of a nuclear exchange. GWEN will allow the government to keep fighting World War Three after most of us are dead.

Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup>

NOON VIGIL ~ GWEN TOWER

2 miles east of Mechanicsville on Highway 30

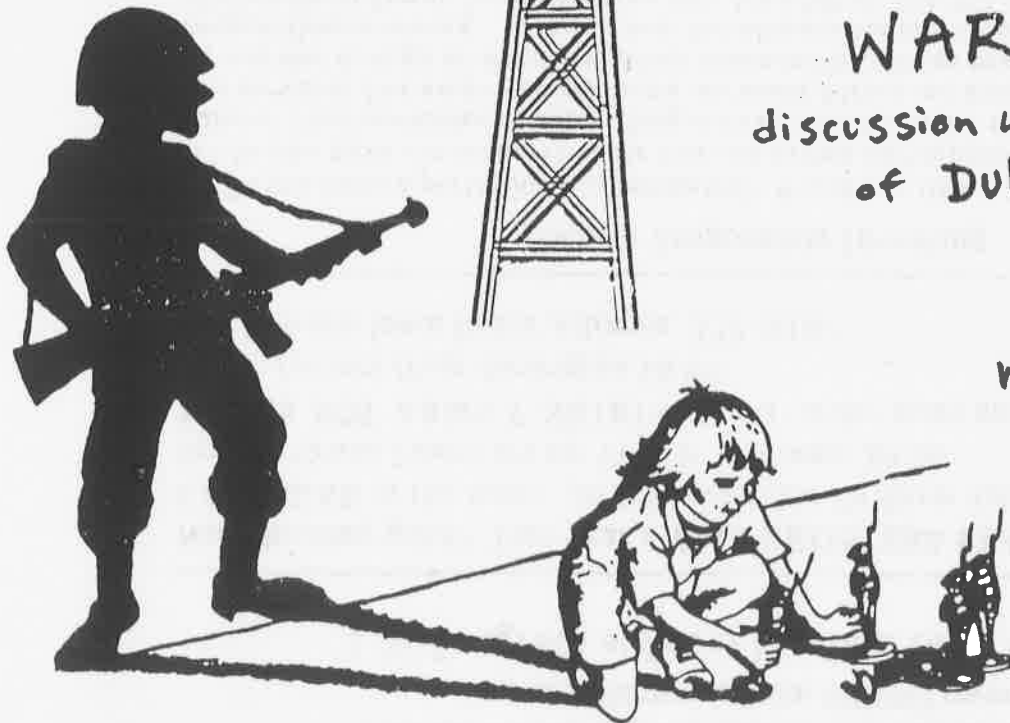


1:30 PROGRAM:  
at Doc & Jo's cafe

WAR TOYS

discussion with Deborah Lazar  
of Dubuque WAND

what worked last year  
what plans this year?  
why is this  
issue important?



# The Copy Exchange

Inside: Reprint of Bulletin of Atomic Scientists article about GWEN towers;  
information of the Stop War Toys campaign; and more.

**VIGIL NOON SATURDAY NOVEMBER 19th**

at the Mechanicsville GWEN Tower

1:30 Program at Doc & Jo's Cafe: Stop War Toys

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Need holiday gifts? This year's **WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE PEACE CALENDAR** is the best! *365 Reasons Not To Have Another War*, text by Grace Paley; art by Vera B. Williams, \$9.00.

**FARMS NOT ARMS T-SHIRTS**, \$8.00 (order sizes and colors now).

Book, *Letters from Nicaragua*, \$8.00.

Call Eastern Iowa Peace Alliance, 337-5187.

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## Socially Responsible Investing

Do you have a portfolio of investments? Would you like to find out what investing is? Do you have concerns whether you can invest and support your principles and values? Find investments supporting a clean environment, delivery of safe products and services, fair employee relations, no South Africa, no weapons manufacture, and no nuclear energy or weapons. Aline Autenreith coaches people in socially responsible investing. To reach her: Investment Management & Research, Inc., 150 East Court Street, Suite 203, Iowa City, Iowa 52240 319-354-7113.

**THE COPY EXCHANGE**  
1133 Howell, Iowa City, IA 52240

Nov 1988

