

NUKEWATCH

PATHFINDER

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News & Information on Nuclear Weapons, Power, Waste & Nonviolent Resistance

42 Arrested at DU Weapons Co. Headquarters in Nonviolent Direct Action

EDINA, Minnesota – Forty-two war resisters were arrested at the corporate headquarters of Alliant Techsystems (ATK) on Monday October 24, in a nonviolent direct action against the company's production of indiscriminate weapons. These include Trident II rocket motors and over 19 million depleted uranium munitions. ATK is the largest supplier of small-caliber munitions to the U.S. military, and it is currently modernizing the munitions facility to reach a production capacity of 1.5 billion bullets annually by March 2006.

Edina police officers corralled several dozen people in the company parking lot after they walked onto ATK property. Those arrested were issued citations alleging trespass in violation of a new Edina city trespass ordinance and then released. The petty-misdemeanor citation carries a possible \$200 fine.

Organized by AlliantAction and Nukewatch, the gathering — dubbed “UN Day at ATK - Rejoining the World Community” — celebrated United Nations Day, Oct. 24, the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Charter outlawing wars of aggression.

The United Nations Subcommittee on Human Rights has twice condemned “depleted” uranium weapons calling any use of them a violation of humanitarian law. Millions of the armor-piercing uranium shells have been manufactured and sold to the Pentagon by Alliant Techsystems. Hundreds of tons of DU munitions, made of the radioactive and toxic heavy metal uranium-238, have been used in U.S. bombardments of



Photo by Tom Bottolene

On Oct. 24, United Nations Day, the 50th anniversary of the UN Charter, five activists were able to walk past police and reach the entrance. (L to R) Signe Martell (standing), Esther Ouray, Marlys Webber, Greg Klave and Joel Kilgour being arrested by a Hennepin County Sheriff's Deputy.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo. The consequent radioactive contamination has raised health and environmental concerns around the world.

Arrestment dates have been set in January for the 42 arrested. However the charges may not stick. A motion to dismiss will be heard Dec. 12 in Edina just before a trial of 12 resisters who were ticketed at Alliant July 13. The motion by attorney Ken Gleason, on behalf of David Harris and Nukewatch staffers John LaForge and Bonnie Urfer, argues that the new city ordinance is invalid under the Minnesota state constitution. If the motion prevails, identical charges against the UN Day 42 and another group (below) will either be voided or reissued as an alleged state trespass violation.

At a Nov. 16 trial, Hennepin County District Judge Bruce Hartigan tipped his hat to the anti-war defendants and then abruptly recused himself. Hartigan was faced with six line crossers from the Chicago-based Christian Peacemaker Teams.* Judge Hartigan explained in chambers that his former wife had been arrested at the Pentagon and at Alliant, that as an attorney he had defended his wife in court and that two of his children had been arrested protesting at Alliant. Hartigan explained that in a bench trial he acts as the judge and the jury, but he couldn't be fair to the State because, “I know I'll find the defendants not guilty.” The trial was rescheduled for January.

*** As we go to press, four CPT volunteers are being held hostage in Iraq and their abductors have threatened to kill them if all Iraqi prisoners are not released.**