

hugely expensive and they undermine rather than increase security. But by far the most important reason to oppose these weapons is that they are profoundly immoral.

Above all, the issue of nuclear weapons in our world is a deeply moral issue, and for the religious community to engage this issue is essential. For the religious community to ignore this issue is shameful.

I have long believed our country would become serious about providing leadership for the elimination of nuclear weapons in the world only when the churches, synagogues and mosques became serious about demanding such leadership.

The abolition of nuclear weapons is the most important issue of our time. I do not say this lightly. I know how many other important life-and-death issues there are in our world. I say it because nuclear weapons have the capacity to end all human life on our planet and most other forms of life. This puts them in a class by themselves.

Although I refer to nuclear weapons, I don't believe these are really weapons. They are instruments of mass annihilation. They incinerate, vaporize and destroy indiscriminately. They are instruments of portable holocaust. They destroy equally soldiers; the aged and the newly born; healthy and the infirm.

Nuclear weapons hold all creation hostage. In an instant they could destroy this city or any city. In minutes they could leave civilization—with all its great accomplishments—in ruins. These cruel and inhumane devices hold life itself in the balance.

There is no moral justification for nuclear weapons. None. As Gen. Lee Butler, a former commander in chief of the U.S. Strategic Command, has said: "We cannot at once keep sacred the miracle of existence and hold sacrosanct the capacity to destroy it."

That nuclear weapons are an absolute evil was the conclusion of the president of the International Court of Justice, Mohammed Bedjaoui, after the court was asked to rule on the illegality of these weapons.

I think it is a reasonable conclusion—the only conclusion a sane person could reach. I would add that our reliance on these evil instruments debases our humanity and insults our Creator.

Albert Einstein was once asked his opinion as to what weapons would be used in a third world war. He replied that he didn't know, but if there was a third world war, a fourth world war would probably be fought with sticks and stones. His response was perhaps overly optimistic.

Controlling and eliminating these weapons is a responsibility that falls to those of us now living. It is a responsibility we are currently failing to meet.

Ten years after the end of the Cold War, there are still some 36,000 nuclear weapons in the world, mostly in the arsenals of the U.S. and Russia. Some 5,000 of these weapons remain on hair-trigger alert, ready to be launched on warning and subject to accident or miscalculation.

Today arms controls is in crisis. The U.S. Senate recently failed to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the first treaty voted down by the Senate since the treaty of Versailles. Congress has also announced its intention to deploy a National Missile Defense "as soon as technologically feasible." This would abrogate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, a cornerstone of arms control. The Russian Duma has not yet ratified START II, which was signed in 1993.

Efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons are also in crisis. There is above all the issue of Russian "loose nukes." There is no assuredness that these weapons are under control. There is also the new nuclear arms race in South Asia. There is also

the issue of Israel possessing nuclear arms—with the implicit agreement of the Western nuclear weapons states—in their volatile region of the world.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty is also in crisis. This will become more prominent when the five-year review conference for the treaty is held this spring. Most non-nuclear weapons states believe that the nuclear weapons states have failed to meet their obligations for good faith negotiations to achieve nuclear disarmament. More than 180 states have met their obligations not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. The five nuclear weapons states, however, have failed to meet their obligations for good faith efforts to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

The U.S. government continues to consider nuclear weapons to be essential to its security. NATO has referred to nuclear weapons as a "cornerstone" of its security policy.

Russia recently proposed that the U.S. and Russia go beyond the START II agreement and reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals to 1,500 weapons each. The U.S. declined, saying it was only prepared to go down to 2,000 to 2,500 weapons each. Such is the insanity of our time.

Confronting this insanity are four efforts I will describe briefly.

The New Agenda Coalition is a group of middle-power states—including Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and South Africa—calling for an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapons states for the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. U.N. resolutions of the New Agenda Coalition have passed the General Assembly by large margins in 1998 and 1999, despite lobbying by the U.S., U.K. and France to oppose these resolutions.

A representative of the New Agenda Coalition recently stated at a meeting at the Carter Center: "A U.S. initiative today can achieve nuclear disarmament. It will require a self-denying ordinance, which accepts that the five nuclear weapons states will have no nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future. By 2005 the United States will already have lost the possibility of such an initiative." I agree with this assessment. The doors of opportunity, created a decade ago by the end of the Cold War, will not stay open much longer.

The Middle Powers Initiative is a coalition of eight prominent international non-governmental organizations that are supporting the role of middle power states in seeking the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Middle Powers Initiative recently collaborated with the Carter Center in bringing together representatives of the New Agenda Coalition with high-level US policymakers and representatives of civil society. It was an important dialogue. Jimmy Carter took a strong moral position on the issue of nuclear disarmament, and you should be hearing more from him in the near future.

Abolition 2000 is a global network of more than 1,400 diverse civil society organizations from 91 countries on six continents. The primary goal of Abolition 2000 is a negotiated treaty calling for the phased elimination of nuclear weapons within a timebound framework. One of the current efforts of Abolition 2000 is to expand its network to over 2000 organizations by the time of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference this spring. You can find out more about Abolition 2000 on the web at www.wagingpeace.org.

A final effort I will discuss is the establishment of a U.S. campaign for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has hosted a series of meetings with key U.S. leaders in the area of nuclear disarmament. These include former military, political and diplomatic leaders, among

them Gen. Butler, Sen. Alan Cranston, and Ambassador Jonathan Dean.

I believe we have worked out a good plan for a Campaign to Alert America, but we currently lack the resources to push this campaign ahead at the level that it requires. We are doing the best we can, but we are not doing enough. We need your help, and the help of religious groups all over this country.

I will conclude with five steps that the leaders of the nuclear weapons states could take now to end the nuclear threat to humanity. These are steps that we must demand of our political leaders. These are steps that we must help our political leaders to have the vision to see and the courage to act upon.

Commerce good faith negotiations to achieve a Nuclear Weapons Convention requiring the phased elimination of nuclear weapons, with provisions for effective verification and enforcement.

De-alert all nuclear weapons and de-couple all nuclear warheads from their delivery vehicles.

Declare policies of No First Use of nuclear weapons against other nuclear weapons states and policies of No Use against non-nuclear weapons states.

Ratify the comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and reaffirm commitments to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Reallocate resources from the tens of billions of dollars currently being spent for maintaining nuclear arsenals to improving human health, education and welfare throughout the world.

The future is in our hands. I urge you to join hands and take a strong moral stand for humanity and for all Creation. We do it for the children, for each other, and for the future. The effort to abolish nuclear weapons is an effort to protect the miracle that we all share, the miracle of life.

Each of us is a source of hope. Will you turn to the persons next to you, and tell them, "You give me hope," and express to them your commitment to accept your share of responsibility for saving humanity and our beautiful planet.

Together we will change the world!

A TRIBUTE TO ELINOR GUGGENHEIMER

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great admiration for Elinor Guggenheimer, a remarkable human being and community leader who this year receives the Maggie Kuhn Award from Presbyterian Senior Services.

A woman of boundless compassion, great intelligence, and exceptional ability, Ms. Guggenheimer has touched countless lives in the New York area through a variety of professional and civic activities, while also promoting the cause of equality and social justice throughout the Nation.

Ms. Guggenheimer has always been a pioneer, recognizing the unique needs of young people and the elderly years before these causes attracted broad popular support. She founded the Day Care Council of New York in 1948 and the Day Care and Child Development Council of America in 1958, drawing attention to our shared responsibility to nurture children. And she founded the Council of Senior Centers and Services in 1979, establishing

a true intergenerational commitment to senior citizens.

Ms. Guggenheimer was also a pioneer in her own life—demonstrating through her personal example that women had the same capacity for leadership as men. She was the first woman to serve on the New York City Planning Commission—one of many posts, including Consumer Affairs Commissioner, from which she helped temper the sometimes harsh character of New York with a gentle spirit and a true love for her neighbors.

Ms. Guggenheimer's commitment to equal opportunity is equally evident in her founding of several influential women's organizations, including the New York Women's Forum, the National Women's Forum, and International Women's Forum, and the New York Women's Agenda.

Like so many others, I feel personally indebted to Elinor Guggenheimer for all she has done to improve our nation and celebrate our most cherished ideals. I am proud to join in recognizing Ms. Guggenheimer and confident that her works will remain an inspiration for many years to come.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you to urge all of my colleagues to vote to raise the minimum wage to \$6.15 over a 2-year period.

The cost of living on Long Island is extremely high. Long Islanders are burdened by high property taxes, high State taxes, and extremely high housing prices. Currently, the median price for a house on the Island is approximately \$200,000. In addition, Long Island has the highest electric rates in the United States.

Unfortunately, when all of these factors are combined, many people, who have lived on Long Island all their lives and are now raising their families there, can no longer afford to live on the Island.

These people are our child care workers, our home health workers, our nursing aides and other service workers, and many are single mothers. These workers who are vital to our communities are making minimum wage or slightly above. By raising the level of the minimum wage in 2 years, we can help give these Long Islanders a chance and keep them and their families in our communities.

In talking to the Long Island Housing Partnership, an organization that helps low-income families buy homes, I learned that a two-parent family, in which both parents are making the current minimum wage, cannot qualify to buy new affordable housing that will be built in East Patchogue, Long Island. This hard-working family's income is too low to qualify. This family cannot even afford to rent an apartment at this rate.

Let's give Long Island families a fighting chance. Vote to raise the minimum wage in two increments.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, we are here because America needs a raise. For too long, many Americans have been working too hard for too little. They work more and more but take home less and less. This isn't the American way.

In America an honest day's work deserves an honest day's pay. That's what the minimum wage is all about.

Today, pay is not keeping pace with expenses. The work day is still 8 hours. Workers still punch the clock 5 days a week. The same work still needs to get done. And the same job is done—but at the end of the week, when it's time to go through the bills, the pay check doesn't go as far as it used to.

The Traficant-Martinez substitute that we will have a chance to vote on later today, will help working families' wages go farther. The substitute will increase the minimum wage by 1 dollar over 2 years. In two incremental steps it will raise the total wage to \$6.15. This modest increase will provide a higher standard of living for 12 million low-income working families.

Many of us do not realize the face of today's minimum wage worker. When we last increased the minimum wage, we found that nearly 60 percent of workers who benefited were women and 71 percent of those who were lifted up by the wage increase were adults.

In my district in Rhode Island, it is families like the O'Neill family who could use an increase in the minimum wage. The O'Neill family is headed by a single mother with three children who works fulltime as a child care worker. Despite her hard work, Ms. O'Neill barely makes ends meet.

Her weekly salary barely covers the rent, food, utilities, clothing, and a student loan that was taken out so that Ms. O'Neill could learn emergency medical training and become a better day care worker.

The Traficant-Martinez substitute will help families like the O'Neills. It may not help them to have a new car or a 2-week vacation, but it will help them to make ends meet.

Again, the Traficant-Martinez substitute is the only way to bring a wage increase to deserving families without delay and I urge my colleagues to support it.

HONORING JUDGE JOE BROWN

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Judge Joe Brown of Memphis.

Judge Brown has served as a distinguished jurist and community leader, and has demonstrated the law to millions of Americans via his television program. He is a nationally recognized figure with a reputation for outspoken and hands-on problem solving with urban

youth. He is also well-known for his innovative sentencing policies in addition to leading the re-opening of the case against James Earl Ray in the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A graduate of UCLA, Judge Brown became the first African American prosecutor in Memphis. Currently, he unselfishly spends a large portion of his weekends in the toughest neighborhoods in Memphis, following up on probationers and helping teens stay out of trouble.

Judge Brown has displayed exemplary dedication not only to the law, but also to the youth in Memphis and across the nation. His accomplishments have earned him a place among our nation's finest as the newest member of the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity International. Congratulations to Judge Brown.

A BILL TO REPEAL SECTION 809, WHICH TAXES POLICYHOLDER DIVIDENDS OF MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES, AND TO REPEAL SECTION 815, WHICH APPLIES TO POLICYHOLDERS SURPLUS ACCOUNTS

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague from Massachusetts, Mr. NEAL, together with a number of other colleagues, in introducing our bill, "The Life Insurance Tax Simplification Act of 2000." The bill repeals two sections of the Internal Revenue Code which no longer serve valid tax policies goals.

This Congress has taken a major step forward in rewriting the regulatory structure of the financial services industry in the United States. This realignment is already having a positive impact on the way life insurance companies serve their customers, conduct their operations and merge their businesses to achieve greater market efficiencies. Unfortunately, the tax code contains several provisions which no longer represent valid tax policy goals, and in fact are carry-overs from the old tax and regulatory regimes that separated the life insurance industry from the rest of the financial world and differentiated between the stock and mutual segments of the life insurance industry. Today, the lines of competition are not between the stock and mutual segments of the life insurance industry. Rather, life insurers must compete in an aggressive, fast moving global financial services marketplace contrary to the premises underlying these old, outmoded tax rules.

In 1984 Congress enacted Section 809, which imposed an additional tax on mutual life insurers to guarantee that stock life insurers would not be competitively disadvantaged by what was then thought to be the dominant segment of the industry. Section 809 operates by taxing some of the dividends that mutual life insurers pay to their policyholders. When Section 809 was enacted, mutual life insurers held more than half the assets of U.S. life insurance companies. It is estimated that within a few years, life insurers operating as mutual companies are expected to constitute less than ten percent of the industry.

Section 809 has not been a significant component of the substantial taxes paid by the life