

Nuclear Hotseat #766 - TRANSCRIPT - Ann Wright, Col. (Ret.) - March 3, 2026

Libbe HaLevy: [00:00:00]

Iran, the United States is now at war with the country of Iran. Our country has killed

that country's supreme leader of more than three decades, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, as well as an approximated 40 top officials who might have been able to step into leadership roles. This is a story with daily updates and ramifications, the end result of which we cannot accurately predict.

But to get a sense of the severity of what has just been done, what it means, not just to Iran, but to the United States and the rest of the world as well. It takes a veteran of more than 29 years of active military service. Diplomatic service. A colonel who resigned her commission in response to President George w Bush's orders to invade Iraq in 2003, and who has become a veteran peace activist.

So when she [00:01:00] tells us.

Ann Wright: Those things will come back to haunt us. There's no way in the world I, people of the world are going to stand by and let these things go unchallenged and it will be tough for the us, uh, because there's gonna be payback and blowback

Libbe HaLevy: and then she gets specific. Well, when retired Colonel Ann Wright.

Analyzes the situation that has been created and is being created in Iran, and she holds back nothing from her thoughts as well as her vision of what we have just done. You sense that things have just gotten a whole lot worse in that awful, dangerous deadly. That we all share.

Nuclear Hotseat Theme: Nuclear Hotseat. What are those people thinking nuclear Hotseat. What have those boys been drinking? Nuclear Hotseat. The corium

is sinking. Our time to act is [00:02:00] shrinking, but the activists are linking.

It's the bomb.

Libbe HaLevy: Welcome to Nuclear Hotseat, the weekly international news magazine, keeping you up to date on all things nuclear from a different perspective. We are a show for people who know nothing about nuclear, who wanna know something, and people who know something, who would like to know just a little bit more.

Okay. My name is Libbe HaLevy I'm the producer and host as well as a survivor of the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island from just one mile away. So I know what can happen when those nuclear so-called experts get it wrong. This week a very timely talk with Anne Wright. She is a military veteran, a retired colonel with a 29 year military [00:03:00] career who resigned to protest the Iraq war, and she's been a steadfast anti-war activist ever since.

She does not hold back in her discussion of this war and touches on the nuclear implications of these current bombing runs. We will also have nuclear news from around the world. Alistair Burnett of the International Campaign to abolish nuclear weapons with the ICAN update and lots more honest and verified nuclear information.

All of it coming up in just a few moments. Today is Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026, and here is this week's nuclear news from a different perspective. As must be expected, the joint US and Israel bombing attacks on Iran on February 28 remain in the front of the news. Here's what happened. The Trump and Netanyahu administrations have [00:04:00] launched a massive attack on Iran using alleged Iranian nuclear weapons program as a partial justification.

This attack takes place despite claims that the nuclear program was quote obliterated during the Israeli and US attacks last June, and amidst repeated calls from President Donald Trump for a regime change in Iran, the president said the operation is quote, massive and ongoing. When he posted a video on social media pledging to use quote.

Overwhelming strength and devastating force. End quote, to destroy Iranian missiles and ensure it cannot develop a nuclear weapon. Which raises the question. Is that what they were doing? Some say yes, some say no. We'll have

insights from today's guest. In our featured interview reports indicate that Iran is responding to attacks by launching missile and drone strikes towards Israel.

This exchange on both parts has been widely [00:05:00] denounced by countries and organizations. Negotiations were ongoing to address Iran's nuclear program, and this dangerous escalation has undermined the prospects for success and risks, a broader war, further threatening civilian lives throughout the region.

Iran is not currently assessed by international agencies or even the United States to have an ongoing nuclear weapons program. As for a way forward, resurrecting the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, or negotiating a new agreement to reduce the risk of Iran developing nuclear weapons would be a positive step, but.

And this is a call that comes out from the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons. All countries must acknowledge that any country that relies on extinction level weapons in their security doctrines only makes the world less safe, and that nuclear deterrence is not a guarantee of peace. [00:06:00] It is a justification for having weapons that are a perpetual threat.

The practice of nuclear deterrence also incentivizes proliferation as countries that feel threatened by nuclear armed states see value in acquiring their own nuclear weapons. And as we will undoubtedly see, yet again, military action is not a viable or long-term solution to prevent nuclear proliferation.

This is where international treaties, such as the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the NPT and the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, TPNW, which have provisions for verifiable nuclear disarmament and non diversion of nuclear materials for weapons are essential and sustainable tools to prevent.

Nuclear proliferation. Now as we've been recording this episode, a new story has come in that the International Atomic Energy Agency has [00:07:00] confirmed Iran's claim that its underground Uranium enrichment facility in Naans has sustained some recent damage. But no radiological consequences were expected or have been noted thus far.

This supersedes the story that was put out yesterday when Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency said that the United States and Israel targeted the Naans Enrichment Facility, and IAEA Chief Rafael Grossi announced that up to that point, the agency had no indication that the nuclear facilities had been hit in Iran.

Well. Another day, another set of information, and turns out that Iran's initial report was accurate. More will be revealed every month. We bring you up to date on recent activities with the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons or ICAN from its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Here with this month's [00:08:00] update is Alistair Burnett.

Head of media for ICAN, along with his interview with Alicia Sanders Zakre, who is CAN's

advocacy coordinator. Note that this was recorded on Friday, February 27th, and some of the material may have been updated since then.

Alistair Burnett: Hello, this is Alistair Burnett at ICAN in Geneva with the latest from the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons.

Over the past month, president Trump and his administration have continued to cast a threatening shadow over the international scene. At time of recording, the US has deployed a massive military force within striking distance of Iran. At the same time, the Trump administration is engaged in talks with Iran here in Geneva, mediated by Oman, which suggests both would prefer to avoid a war if they can get what they want by negotiating.

For Iran, that means the end of sanctions that are crippling its economy and financial system while retaining the right to enrich uranium as permitted under the [00:09:00] Non-Proliferation treaty for the US. On paper, it seems to be about preventing Iran developing nuclear weapons. Although President Trump seems to also want an Iran that no longer has long range missiles or allies in the region, it is still unclear what Trump's aims are though, and many observers think Washington also wants to topple the Islamic Republic.

In the past few weeks, the Trump administration has also been trying to convince the world that China carried out a nuclear test explosion five years ago. China has denied it and the Independent monitoring body, the comprehensive test ban treaty organization says it's found no evidence of it. China has accused the US of fabricating the allegation to justify resuming its own nuclear testing, which Trump said last year he wants to do.

Most nuclear experts say this would be a strategic mistake by Washington because the US has done far more nuclear tests than any other country, more than 1000 to China's 45, so it has a much larger trove of data from which to [00:10:00] accurately model its nuclear weapons. This means that if the US did

restart testing something it hasn't done for 34 years, the Chinese and probably the Russians would follow suit and start to erode the US' current advantage.

Also in February, leaders from Europe and across the world met at the Munich Security Conference for the annual get together. The meeting was marked by open discussion by European leaders about increasing Europe's nuclear weapons capabilities, as well as its reliance on so-called deterrent against Russia, provided by French and or British arsenals, only one European leader spoke against this push.

Petra Sanchez, prime Minister of Spain. I a's head of policy, Alicia Sanders. Zachary was following events in Munich and told me what she made. Of all the nuclear rhetoric we heard,

Alicia Sanders-Zakre: we know that there were a lot of public and also private conversations around increasing the role of nuclear weapons on the European continent.

At the Munich Security Conference, really from kind of the [00:11:00] political elites in many European countries, from Germany to Sweden, of course France. And what I think was really absent was actually the views of the populations of those countries where we know there's wide majority support across many European countries for nuclear disarmament.

Joining the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, certainly not an appetite for the massive expenditure that would be required to increase European reliance on nuclear weapons.

Alistair Burnett: Some people have called all this talk about Europe, increasing its dependence on nuclear weapons proliferation, chatter.

These are countries most of whom, except for Britain and France, are non-nuclear weapon states under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Do you think it's anything more than just chatter,

Alicia Sanders-Zakre: proliferation and disarmament are linked in that whenever there is talk about proliferation, and this doesn't necessarily have to mean.

Developing an indigenous nuclear arsenal, but increasing in some way a country's [00:12:00] reliance on a nuclear arsenal. It means that that country thinks that is or is signaling that nuclear weapons are essential for their security.

And of course, when that is the message that's being put out into the world, it's harder for countries to pursue.

Disarmament, uh, because of this norm of, of the value of nuclear weapons. So I think those two go hand in hand. If countries with nuclear weapons take steps towards nuclear disarmament, they're also increasing the norm for non-proliferation.

Alistair Burnett: Now we heard one leader, only one make a speech at Munich against this push for greater reliance on nuclear weapons.

Pedro Sanchez, prime Minister of Spain, do you think. There's a chance that he was articulating publicly what others think privately, but didn't wanna have to say or didn't wanna say in public.

Alicia Sanders-Zakre: I mean, it's hard to say. I think certainly that Prime Minister Sanchez was representing more of the popular view, uh, of populations, as I mentioned, across the [00:13:00] European countries, in recognizing the costs and the risks of nuclear deterrence.

In a way that these other political leaders were, were not, and this is something that more diplomatic leaders should follow the lead of what their publics think about nuclear weapons instead of simply deciding what they think is, is, uh, important for security. It's actually what the whole country believes That should be public policy.

Alistair Burnett: Do you think there's an opportunity there for then for campaigners who want to push back against this proliferation rhetoric and these moves to, for proliferation in Europe, an opportunity for them from what the prime minister of the Spanish Prime Minister has been saying, an opportunity to take advantage of this.

Because he's, he's the first leader to really out against this and this. We've been waiting for this in a sense, for somebody to get up and say, no, we kind of, this is not the way to do it.

Alicia Sanders-Zakre: Absolutely. I mean, I think Prime Minister Sanchez is joining, of course, world leaders from around the world who have [00:14:00] endorsed the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in calling out the risks of nuclear deterrence.

And there are other leaders, you know, within the political sphere, not necessarily the, the presidents or prime ministers of, of most European countries, although there are some other Europeans that. Have joined the the TPNW, but there are also, uh, mayors, the leaders of major capitals across Europe, from Paris to Berlin to other major cities that have called on their country to join the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

So I think while Prime Minister Sanchez might be alone within the NATO block, he certainly has a lot of other political allies, both within Europe and outside of it.

Alistair Burnett: That was Alicia Sanders. Zachary, and this is Alistair Burnett ending this news Roundup for Nuclear Hotseat.

Libbe HaLevy: Now here's this week's featured interview.

Alistair Burnett: As

Libbe HaLevy: you've been hearing, the United States in conjunction with its Ally, Israel has launched war against Iran with bombing attacks. There is no [00:15:00] stated justification for it, no tipping point that has been identified. No approval from the US Congress, not even an attempt by our current president to gain their approval. He just went ahead and did it.

One of the issues floating in the background of this is Iran's alleged nearly achieved enrichment of uranium to weapons grade level of 80% to 90%. But is that what they have done? What is the likelihood that they have and what are the military implications of this drastic rapid escalation in the attacks against Iran?

There are many voices being raised in opposition to this war from nations. And from individuals. This is especially true within the peace and anti-nuclear communities with every activist group weighing in with its own statement against what the US has already done and it seems are committed to continuing [00:16:00] to do.

But what is the context for these current bombing attacks, if any? How can we understand how bad the things are that have already been done, and what possible consequences may there be even as we watch the tensions grow in other Middle East countries to learn more? I spoke with Anne Wright. She is a retired US Army colonel and former diplomat with 29 years of service.

She resigned in 2003 in protest when George W. Bush announced the start of the Iraqi War. An outspoken peace activist for more than two decades, Wright advocates against nuclear weapons, US militarism and drone warfare. Notably working with groups like Veterans for Peace and Code Pink. She has been arrested for protests at nuclear test sites.

I spoke with retired Colonel Anne [00:17:00] Wright on March 1st, 2026, about our current situation with Iran. Anne Wright, it's so good of you to make time to be with us today on Nuclear Hotseat.

Ann Wright: My pleasure. Thank you.

Libbe HaLevy: What is your background in the military?

Ann Wright: Well, I was in the US military for 29 years, 16 on active duty, and 13 in the reserves, and the time that I was in on active duty.

Was with the Special Operations Center in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I was an instructor for the School of International Studies and taught things such as the law of land warfare. Who would've known there is a law about how you're supposed to conduct war, doesn't seem like the United States, and I knew it.

Then when, when I was teaching the 82nd Airborne and Special Forces, it was like. Nobody wanted to listen to this stuff. And indeed we see that, uh, for, uh, the, the military conflicts that we have started and [00:18:00] been involved in. The law of land warfare is pretty well thrown out the window. I also was a part of the political military affairs.

Part of the military, which is kind of like a state department in a way. It deals with all sorts of political issues in the places where, uh, US military folks are. And I was assigned in Panama at the US Southern Command. And that command had jurisdiction, so to speak, uh, for US military through Central America and South America.

And this was during the 1980s when the US was up to its eyeballs in the murder of citizens in Honduras and El Salvador, uh, and all over the, in Nicaragua. Uh, with the funding of the contra. So that is a part of my background. You know, you always wonder when you should resign from the government, and I did resign from the government when I got into the State Department over the Iraq War.

[00:19:00] But looking back on it, I should have resigned from the military back in the days that I was in the Southern Command in Pan.

Libbe HaLevy: You state that you were on active duty for 15, maybe almost 16 years, and then 13 on reserves, but it's also referred to that you were in the foreign service. Does foreign service refer to your time as a reservist?

Ann Wright: I did have two careers. One was the military and then the second one was as a state department, a US diplomat. And some of the time that I was a diplomat, I was in the reserves for the military. I didn't get totally outta the military because. Crassly, I wanted to have a retirement. I mean, that's one of the reasons that people go into federal service, whether it's the military or the State Department or the US Department of Agriculture.

It's that in the past there's been, if you can hang in there for 20 to 30 years, you have a pretty secure retirement. [00:20:00] And that was one of the reasons that I joined the military is that when I. Was old and gray like I am now. Uh, I wanted to make sure that I had a secure retirement so I could do things that I wanted to do, and so I held my nose to a lot of the policies that the eight different presidential administrations had that I.

Was in the government during those eight presidential administration starting with, uh, Lyndon Johnson, you know, back during the Vietnam War and then going all the way up through George Bush II when I resigned in March of 2003 in opposition to the US War on Iraq 23 years ago.

Libbe HaLevy: Was there a particular moment, a particular straw that broke the camel's back, that made you decide that, now this is when I'm going to step out of the government.

Ann Wright: Yes, it was the decision of the Bush administration to invade and [00:21:00] occupy an oil rich Arab Muslim country that had done nothing to the United States, and the rationale that they had weapons of mass destruction, which we knew was untrue because the A EIA. Inspectors had already said those things were were destroyed years and years and years ago.

But Colin Powell, my boss is Secretary of State and Dick Cheney and President Bush maintained all the way even to that infamous. A briefing they gave at the UN Security Council in February of 2003, that there are weapons of mass destruct for the safety and security of the United States and the world.

We have to invade and occupy and kill as many Iraqis as we can. So that's when I said, well, you're gonna have to do it without me, 'cause I'm not about to go along with that one. You know, there are plenty of other things that other people resigned on earlier and I didn't. But this one, there were three of [00:22:00] us.

Only three of us that resigned from the federal government initially. Later on. Other people, thank goodness, uh. Said that, I can't put up with this. I'm outta here too. But initially there was just three of us and all in the State Department who resigned in opposition to the US War on Iraq.

Libbe HaLevy: Were you able to stand against any of the government's policies before you stepped down and left the military, or did you have to wait completely until you left in order to become engaged in peace activities?

Ann Wright: Being engaged in peace activities while you're on active duty with the government is not one of the things that will get you promoted. Uh, and in fact, you have to be careful. I mean, you are getting paid by the government to represent the policies of whomever. Uh. The people of the United States elect and you know, there are elections that the person that you may feel is very unqualified, [00:23:00] but they get elected, so you have to go along with their policies.

Although there are ways within the system that you can get away from the policies that you don't wanna. Anything to do with, and you're not ready to resign, but you wanna work on something else that you can feel proud of. So that's the way a lot of people survive in the federal government, is moving away from programs that they don't like and think are wrong.

Now, under the Trump administration, with the elimination of so many agencies, and the slashing and burning of the numbers of people in those agencies makes it much, much more difficult, I think because. There aren't many jobs out there if you resign because the market has been flooded with all these people that have been sent away from the government with years and years of experience.

So it's a challenge. And before I resigned, I sent a letter of. What they call a descent channel cable, uh, which [00:24:00] is an opportunity within the State Department that you can go around the chain of command with whatever issue it is that you think needs to have more attention, and that the bureaucracy itself is not listening to your point of view.

So you can send a, uh. Cable of dissent directly to the Secretary of State, and supposedly it's out without retaliation or retribution. It's just between you and the Secretary of State. But of course, we know that that doesn't happen. A lot of people are gonna find out that you are dissenting from something and can.

Make your life miserable if they want to. Well, before I resigned, I went ahead and sent this cable of dissent, airing my views on what I thought. This was gonna be a terrible, terrible foreign policy decision. It was gonna be a. Horrible for people getting killed, lots of people getting killed. And, uh, it was going to be horrible for, you know, the image of the United States.

So I [00:25:00] put all of this into a big cable and sent it off from, I was the deputy ambassador in Mongolia at the time, not one of the centers of US foreign policy. Uh, but uh, that's where I was. And so I sent off my cable of descent and we know that. There were other cables of descent that went in and we know 20 years later there have been plenty cables of descent that have been in for the US complicity in the genocide of ga.

So not that it, not that these cables actually, uh. Make any difference it seems to the administrations, because none of these policies have been changed because people within the system are telling them, you know, this is crazy and this is not gonna work out. Uh, we are overwhelmed by the people that stay in the system that say, oh, that's just fine.

It'll be fine. We can go ahead and kill as many people as we want, and nothing's going to happen to the United States. Well, we saw in nine 11. There are a few things that [00:26:00] other countries and other people can do to the United States, but in general, the US gets away with whatever it wants to do as we're seeing with the abduction and kidnapping of the president of Venezuela on, on January 3rd of this year, and then just two days ago where the Trump administration and the Israeli government started a massive, massive.

BOMBING campaign on the country of Iran and killing 40 of their top leaders in, in an assassination by bombs. Just a pure and simple assassination with the Trump administration, senior people crowing about it, about how good we were, we killed them all. Well, those things will come back to haunt us.

There's no way in the world I, people of the world are going to stand by and let, uh, these things go unchallenged and it will be tough for, for the us, uh, because there's gonna be [00:27:00] payback and blow back.

Libbe HaLevy: When you left the military, did you just get blasted out of the cannon and you became a front rank?

Ravel? Rousing as you refer to yourself, felon for peace?

Ann Wright: No, I mean, I had been in the government ever since I graduated from college, so my whole life had been either working in the military and being in other countries and in the Netherlands and Germany and Greece and Panama. Or with the Diplomatic Corps, I was in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan, and then Mongolia.

So I knew people that were dissenting from their government's policies. Around the world, but I didn't know anybody in the United States because I had spent so little time here, and as a government employee, I was not at that point particularly interested in finding these groups of dissenters [00:28:00] in the us.

So when I finally resigned from the government. I was wondering what I was gonna do. I didn't make any plans at all. I just knew that I needed to get out of the government and away from these suicidal policies that the Bush administration was doing. It was about a year later that I finally started getting, well.

I got a few speaking engagements, uh, pretty quickly after I resigned, but I didn't really run into any organizations that I felt that I. Wanted to spend time with until, um, it was, uh, quite interesting that the Democratic National Convention of 2004 was in Boston and it the same time Veterans for Peace was having its national convention there.

And I had run into a group of veterans in Santa Barbara, California one Sunday out on the beach in Santa Barbara. I came upon this display of crosses on the beach and. I went over to the tent where the, [00:29:00] the organizers were and said, you know what, what is this? Well, this is for those who've been killed in Iraq and.

We are veterans for peace and we think this Iraq war is terrible and we are here to have a visual display of the numbers of people that we, the US are killing. And I went, well, I'm a veteran and I also resigned from the government in opposition to this war and this big, old, tall, lanky guy. Lane Anderson gave me a big hug and said, well, you're one of us.

You're a veteran for peace. Yeah, so I started tracking what VFP was doing and then went to Boston and went to that convention, which was really, really quite remarkable. All the speakers that they had, including Dan Ellsberg and list of people whose names I knew, but I'd never met any of them. Howard Zinn is another one.

You know the untold history of the United States. [00:30:00] Cynthia Enlow, who had written a lot about women in the military. So I met lots and lots of people there and got lots of speaking invitations from that. You know, you've gotta come out to our, our chapter out in the, you know, in the West Coast and. Wherever.

And then following that was the Republican National Convention, and I had run into these two women that were in pink outfits and Boston, and they called themselves Code Pink Women for Peace and. I thought, well, well, and they said, you ought to come to New York because we're really gonna have some wild actions there.

We are going to really go after Bush and the Iraq War. So I thought, well, why not? So I went to New York and hung out with code Pink as they did some really crazy things, including all these women putting pink slips on, and that's all they had on pink slips and lining. Like Fifth Avenue for like [00:31:00] 30 blocks and with signs that said, give Bush the pink slip people, international visitors, they were wondering what in the world is this and what is the pink slip?

You know, not realizing that was the vernacular of us of firing someone. So I was very impressed with how code pink rallied people. That they were solidly against all wars. And so I started working with Code Pink and over the years, uh, going to events that both VFP Vets for Peace and Code Pink had, and uh, gradually, you know, speaking out to the extent that, you know, here's an army colonel, here's a former diplomat speaking out against all of these government policies.

So I started becoming. Reasonably well known for my views and my willingness to speak out.

Libbe HaLevy: We'll continue with this week's featured interview with retired Colonel Anne Wright in just a moment, but first, [00:32:00] it's horrible to say, but here we go again. Another day, another war, another escalation of nuclear fears.

Is the US really at risk from Iran's nuclear program, or did we jump the gun bombs blazing, propelling us into an ever increasing nightmare that will never be able to escape? At this moment, no way to know for certain where this current situation will lead, except that more will be revealed and as it is.

You'll learn about it on Nuclear Hotseat. Nuclear Hotseat is the longest running program that focuses exclusively on nuclear issues now in its 15th year as a podcast, and 10th year as a broadcast over Pacifica. We have a long history of scooping mainstream media on nuclear issues, giving context and continuity to local, national, and international stories.

From that all important different perspective. We [00:33:00] also work behind the scenes providing links and introductions between activists, researchers, and reporters. So the honest nuclear story gets out far beyond just this show. That's why you can count on Nuclear Hotseat to provide you with verifiable fresh information and an unrelenting stand against nukes every week, no matter how bad the news, we try to make it understandable and accessible.

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If you have Zelle, you can send money directly to info@nuclearhote.com. Don't wait. Do it now. Go to NuclearHotseat.com to donate and know that whatever you can do to help, I am deeply grateful that you're listening and that you care. Now back to this week's featured interview with retired Colonel Anne Wright.

So often nuclear development, the enrichment of uranium by Iran and the fear that they're going to come up with a bomb and attack the United States has been used as justification for bombing, for invasion, for a wide range of [00:35:00] actions that have been taken against that country. How aware were you during all of this of the nuclear aspect?

Ann Wright: Well as, uh, you know, as a diplomat and in the military, uh, you do have quite a good education. You, you are very well aware of these political issues. I, myself, did not work on nuclear issues. I had worked on various kinds of plans when I was at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where the United States has a plan for.

Every eventuality. And that's, that's the truth. They have shelves of plans that can just be pulled off the shelf and updated and there you have a war plan. But I was not involved in any of the nuclear issues. When I was assigned to the US Embassy in Mongolia, one of the issues was keeping track of nuclear testing that the Chinese were doing because Mongolia's right next to China.

So we [00:36:00] did have some scientists that came, us scientists that came through Mongolia to put in various, uh, instrumentation to track whether or not the Chinese were. Exploding things, but that's about the closest I ever came to anything while I was in the government. But joining the peace groups, of course, that's been one of the hot button issues forever for peace groups, and lots of very, very important work that's being done by groups all over the country and trying to track what's going on in their communities with the development of new types or new testing for nuclear weapons and in particular.

Kansas City that is, I think now has two new industrial sites for the production of uranium pits in Tennessee. So there's been, you know, a lot of work within the peace community, you know, and when you talk about countries that are alleged to be working on nuclear weapons or [00:37:00] actually have worked on 'em and have gotten them, I've been to two of those places.

In fact, it was seven years ago. This time a group of us from Code Pink Women for Peace, a group of 20 were in Iran, and we talked with the Iranian government officials, including the foreign minister at the time, and he, as all of the officials have said, we are not developing nuclear weapons. I mean, it is on record for.

Decades. The Iranians say we're not developing, we are enriching stuff, but it's not for bombs. But of course, the US government is always, always after that saying they have to be lying and therefore, as we've seen just this week, we're gonna take 'em out. And, uh, there have been other, you know, when, when Obama was in, at least he was able to get a treaty signed.

And then Trump on his first day back, first day in power, threw that [00:38:00] one out the window. Still the Iranians, even in the four years of Biden, were not making a bomb. But anyway, they've now gotten plastered. The massive

bombing and the, the execution, the assassination of the top leadership of the country where the US just with impunity says, we don't care what you say.

We're gonna go ahead and kill you all and blow up your cities and blow up your airports and RA have devastation. Like apocalyptic there. And one other place that I've been is North Korea. A group called Women Cross the DMZ back in 2015, particularly Korean American woman, Christine on worked for two years to be able to get the North Korean government to allow a group of 30 international women, including two Nobel Peace laureates come to North Korea.

To talk with North Korean women and others [00:39:00] about the effects of the Korean War, which was 70 years before. So it took a lot of negotiation. It took a lot of work to get the agreement of the North Koreans because they essentially were saying, why should we do this? I mean, your government, we had 15 women from the United States out of the 30.

The reason that we've exploded. Nuclear weapons is because that's the one way to keep you from attacking us. And as we've seen for Iran, that's, that's for sure. Uh, but we did go to North Korea. We did not go to any of the nuclear facilities. Uh, we talked with women and men about the lingering effects of the war.

70 years before, that was one of the most brutal wars in three years, more US people were killed in the Korean War than in the Vietnam War, and there were three and a half million Koreans, north and South Koreans that were [00:40:00] killed during that three years. So we went there and then we were allowed to go across the DMZ in a bus and then had a conference in the, the Seoul, South Korea city hall with 250 South Korean women.

They told us about the lingering effects of that Korean War and you know, until the US essentially divided the Korean Peninsula, it was one Korea and the sisters in South Korea told us the same story that their sisters in North Korea. I told them about the lingering effects of that war. So over the years we've been tangentially working on nuclear issues.

And then we do have, you know, an annual peace walk that's out in Nevada where the Sacred Peace walk from. The city of Las Vegas and the Atomic Museum all the way out to the test center. [00:41:00] And while we are on that March when we go by Creech Drone Base, we always have protests there because that's where many of the pilots of the assassin drones that would've been used in Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and now in Iran, that's where these young men and women are trained.

Libbe HaLevy: You have extensive and very specific experience dealing with peace issues. Looking at what is still in the process of coming down in Iran, the bombings, the killing of their leader, the fact that we are not backing away from it. What, from your perspective do you see as the ramifications of it and where it might be going?

Ann Wright: Well, it's going nowhere good. That's for sure. The Iranians, uh, still have apparently quite a large number of missiles. They are able to reach [00:42:00] areas in the Middle East with those missiles, so you never know what, how much. And I shouldn't even start with them. I should start with the United States and Israel.

They have an unlimited amount of ordinance between ballistic missiles, tomahawk missiles, bombers, jet aircraft, drones. They have an unlimited amount of ordinance that can kill as many people as they want, and it looks like they're on a path to do that. What the red line for them is where it's enough. To satisfy the blood thirst that seems like is in definitely the Israeli government after their genocide of Gaza, where over 70,000 Palestinians have been killed and hundreds of thousands wounded.

And then the United States. Where we have given the weaponry for Israel to kill the Palestinians. And then now we are joining with the Israelis again in the [00:43:00] second attack on Iran in the in, in six months. So I think the question is how far does the US and Israel plan to go? I think the Iranians are going to.

Keep up the challenge to this brutal massacre of their people and destruction of their cities and facilities as long as they can, I don't think they're gonna stop because they have no incentive to. So unfortunately, I think this will go on until Trump and Netanyahu say, okay, we've killed enough people.

They've gotten the message. I mean, everybody had gotten the message before that if the US and Israel decide to do this bombing, it's gonna be horrific

Libbe HaLevy: if you would be called on from your experience as a diplomat and your ethical, immoral stance in the world, if you would be. Put in the middle of this right now and [00:44:00] told Ann, come up with a policy.

What can we do to unravel this? And you have the power to have at least a substantial influence. What would you want to do? What would you want to say?

Ann Wright: Well, I would want to say to President Trump and his, uh, core team that you have endangered the United States. Iran did not have nuclear weapons, and you knew it, but you were doing this because you could, and this must stop and.

For President Trump. I think this will be a determining factor in the midterm elections, and you're not running again for president, at least as it stands now, but I think you've torpedoed your own party's chance for reelection because the people of America are fed up with this here. You come in as the peace president and all you do is start wars and assassinate people and kidnap people, so.

If we ever had a voice that could get to President Trump and one of the [00:45:00] voices that did get to him for a while, Marjorie Taylor Green, with whom I disagree on so many things, but she was after him about these endless wars. Her voice is now out. Lindsey Graham has always been a war hawk. So trying to find someone, and it might be some young pretty.

Social influencer who finally gets fed up, fed up with what Trump is doing and starts going after him. As we see on truth social, he really watches who's talking to him about things. And it may be something as crazy as some 25-year-old young woman who says something to him that will make him stop.

Libbe HaLevy: About six months ago, we had Dr.

Gordon Edwards, who's the head of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, and he's a physicist, and he was talking about uranium enrichment and the fact that while the Trump administration [00:46:00] has been saying we've gotta stop them before they get to 90% enrichment or 80% enrichment, Dr. Edwards made the point that.

It would be a clunkier bomb, but you could make a bomb with much less enrichment than those levels. In fact, he traced it all the way down to the 12 to 20% enrichment that would be necessary to run small modular nuclear reactors or so-called advanced reactors or whatever acronym or name they're giving to it these days, to disguise exactly what they are, which is non-existent, but very.

Remunerative for the companies that are trying to make them, given that Iran might already have, if not top level weapons grade, it's a small bomb. We can drop it from a plane or put it on a missile, but they would have the ability to make some kind of nuclear weapon. Is that something you believe that they might now pursue [00:47:00] in light of our current aggression against them, or would they be backing off from it?

Ann Wright: I don't think they would. I mean, they all along have said We're not making nuclear weapons. We delore the use of nuclear weapons. And I think they have a different morality than the United States does. I think they mean what they say that they would not use a nuclear weapon, uh, on anybody else. In contrast to what the United States has done and in contrast to what the US has done in a non-nuclear environment, I trust the Iranians much more than I trust our own government on what they're, they're saying.

And while they undoubtedly are very perturbed and angry at, at what has happened, I think they have a much longer spiritual and moral base. Uh, that they work from the Iranian people have been around for what, 3000 years and there's part of their cultural and spiritual heritage that comes through with this.

And, uh, the US uh, our cultural heritage seems to be war. [00:48:00] So I am much more fearful of what the United States would do, and I do not believe at all that the Iranians are en enriching for a nuclear weapon, nor would take this opportunity after they've had the hell blown out of them to do that in in retaliation to the United States.

I just don't think morally and ethically that they would go down that path.

Libbe HaLevy: There have of course been a wide range of statements from anti-nuclear groups, from peace groups, from women's groups against this war. So there are a lot of voices. What do you think we. Might do or we need to do to pull ourselves together so that instead of scattered voices all saying pretty much the same thing, we can be unified and stronger and have more power as a force and as a unified movement against the war by extension [00:49:00] against nukes.

Ann Wright: Well, I mean, the organizations are there, they're already working. They're having massive demonstrations in New York and Washington. Even out here in the middle of the Pacific, Hawaii where I live, we had, um, pretty major demonstration on the afternoon that we got word that the, well, the Israelis in the US had attacked Iran and then today.

Interestingly enough, on the first Monday of every month, we have a protest in front of the state capitol, and that's on nuclear issues because seven years ago, an employee of Hawaii pushed the wrong button and the siren, the nuclear siren saying, take cover, take cover, and uh, nuclear missile is heading for Hawaii.

And of course, that just caused great chaos and turmoil and it was a false alarm. Thank goodness. But we, every month we remember that by taking our signs

out in front of the state capitol and are there as the siren rings again [00:50:00] every Monday. And then we acknowledge what's going on in the world. So today, not only did we have stop nuclear weapons, but we also had stop the war on Iraq, uh, return.

The Venezuelan president, uh, don't bomb Cuba. I mean, the list is long as you go down the line with everybody holding up their signs, but it just shows that in communities all over the country, people are outraged. They're out on the streets. And then we have to push our congressional delegations to stand up against Trump and his gang.

And then we've gotta find that key to who has Trump's ear and see if we can't get something into his ear saying, you're really losing your whole base and it'll take somebody that's part of the manga movement. He doesn't really wanna listen to us. In fact, he tore down the. Antiwar tent that had been in front of the White House for 45 years.

Court proceedings had given that [00:51:00] that was the only thing that you could have in front of the White House, and it was 45 years. And in one afternoon he sent the Secret Service out to destroy it. And while we have a court action against him, it just shows what. You know, one person had gone up to him to say, did you ever focus on that tent?

It has all sorts of stuff that you don't like for your administration, and they just sent the goons out to knock down the tent and take the people away. They had three people who do a 24 hour vigil. The most dedicated people you've ever seen in your life, no matter if it's snowing, raining, they're always there.

And it gives the tourists that come into the United States. Whether they're international tourists or tourists from the United States to see that standing in front of the White House, and it doesn't matter who's in the White House, that 10 has always been there with the issues and placards and handing out literature, and you know, being a place where people can talk about what the United States is doing.[00:52:00]

Libbe HaLevy: Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you'd like to add at this time?

Ann Wright: Well, if people have an opportunity to do traveling, you know, going to Japan and going to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and seeing the museums there and talking with, uh, Japanese and others who have suffered under these nuclear weapons, and we will be having a tribunal in November of this.

In South Korea, and this is to honor the people of South Korea that happened to be in Japan when those bombs went off, there were a lot of international people and a lot of South Koreans who had been brought there as workers. They too suffered, but it's not really been well acknowledged. So we'll be having a tribunal there to, you know, alert the world, that it's not just where you drop the bomb because there's always other people that are around that.

Maybe some of your own countrymen and women. [00:53:00]

Libbe HaLevy: That was actually where I met you the first time. It was at the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons hearings that ICAN had put together for New York, I believe, a year ago. And we were both in the audience for the session on the Korean hibachi, which was the first time I had ever heard of them.

And I think a lot of people, this was new information to them.

Ann Wright: It certainly was. Yeah. Uh, I think all of us were kind of stunned, like, how did this go on for. At that point, you know, in almost 70 years that we really didn't focus on the fact that there were others. Other nationalities that were in those two cities when the bombs were dropped, but now we are focusing on them and we hope that people will tune into the tribunal that we'll be having and we'll be publicizing it.

And then again, if people have a chance to do traveling, to go to Japan and actually see these spots where horrific, horrific bombs were dropped on innocent people, it's [00:54:00] really worth the effort.

Libbe HaLevy: Right. You are the holder of a wealth of information, a deep heart, a kind spirit, and a ferocious willingness to be a felon on behalf of peace.

I, that's one of my favorite phrases ever. I'm grateful that you were able to make the time for us today on such short notice and for being my guest this week on Nuclear Hot Seed.

Ann Wright: And it's a pleasure to be with you. Thank you so much, Libby. Keep up the good work

Libbe HaLevy: Retired Veteran Army Colonel Ann Wright, who is now an active anti-war activist, working with Code Pink and Veterans for Peace.

And we will have links up to some of her recently published articles on our website, Nuclear Hotseat.com. Under this episode number 7 66. With the talk that we shared about uranium enrichment levels necessary to build a bomb, [00:55:00] now would be an appropriate time to revisit a Nuclear Hotseat interview with Dr.

Gordon Edwards. He's a physicist and the head of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility. Last July, we had a lengthy discussion on enrichment levels necessary to make an atomic bomb, and it does not require the 80 to 90% that is commonly excited. His response was a real eyeopener, and I'm going to link to this episode on our website, Nuclear Hotseat.com.

Under this episode number 7 66

Activist Shoutout : activist activists. Shout out. Shout out. Shout out.

Libbe HaLevy: Between the ongoing problems with Iran and the upcoming nuclear anniversary alley of Fukushima, three Mile Island and Chernobyl, there are a lot of great seminars, zooms streaming offerings of all [00:56:00] kinds coming up. I love to let people know about these in time to actually participate, but I've got a problem.

Usually the information reaches me less than one week before it happens. Meaning it's too late to get it on Nuclear Hotseat in the hope that it will inspire people to sign up and listen. This goes out to any of the groups and individuals putting together online events that would belong in the activist shout out section.

Get that information to me three weeks in advance, seminars, speeches, events, protests, even if you haven't finalized your schedule or your participants, get what you have to me so that I can be part of helping to build awareness of what you're doing and your reach. Send that information. To info@nuclearhotseat.com, this has been Nuclear Hotseat for Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026.

If you'd like to get Nuclear Hotseat delivered via [00:57:00] email every week. We make it easy for you. Yeah, sure. You can sign up on your favorite podcast channel, or what's better for us is if you go to Nuclear Hotseat.com, you'll find a yellow opt inbox there, which you can fill in with your first name and an email address.

That way you will get one email every week, just one that will have a link to that week's show as soon as it posts, and a short description of its content. That way you don't have to futz around with anything. You've got each week's show as soon as it's ready. Now you can help us with our future shows as well, because if you have a story lead, a hot tip, or a suggestion of someone to interview, send that to me in an email at info@nuclearhotseat.com.

And remember, if you can go to Nuclear Hotseat and donate. Thank you. Any amount that you can donate will help us out [00:58:00] and we really always appreciate your support. This episode of Nuclear Hotseat is copyright 2026 libi Halevy and Nuclear Hotseat. All rights reserved, but fair use allowed as long as you cite the program website names of any guests whose comments you use and me.

For now, this is Libbe HaLevy of Nuclear Hotseat, reminding you that as a statement by Nobel Prize winners, faith healers, and experts reads, without clear and sustained efforts from world leaders to prevent nuclear war, there can be no doubt that our luck will finally run out. There you have it, your weekly nuclear wake up call.

So whatever you do, don't go back to sleep because we are all in the Nuclear Hotseat.

Nuclear Hotseat Theme: Nuclear Hotseat. What are those [00:59:00] people thinking? Nuclear Hotseat. What have those been drinking? Nuclear Hotseat. The is. Sinking. Our time to act is shrinking, but the activists are linking

Nuclear Hotseat. It's the bomb.