

## Looking Back On 2003

Posted by

Friday, 09 January 2004 11:30 - Last Updated Friday, 09 January 2004 11:30

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[Nuclear Age Peace Foundation](#) : The turning of the year is a good time to look back and recall some of the momentous events and trends of 2003. We witnessed the greatest uprising of people ever in the history of the world in protest to war. In cities large and small across the planet, ordinary people took to the streets to try to stop a US-led war against Iraq. In the end, we didn't succeed, but our effort marked the opening of a new era of global protest against war and violence.

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From: David Krieger <dkrieger@napf.org>

Subject: Looking Back o-n 2003

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### LOOKING BACK o n 2003

By David Krieger

The turning of the year is a good time to look back and recall some of the momentous events and trends of 2003.

We witnessed the greatest uprising of people ever in the history of the world in protest to war. In cities large and small across the planet, ordinary people took to the streets to try to stop a US-led war against Iraq. In the end, we didn't succeed, but our effort marked the opening of a new era of global protest against war and violence.

We witnessed poets across the globe rise up and generate more than 13,000 poems in opposition to a war against Iraq.

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We witnessed the government of the United States ignore the people of the world, the poets and the United Nations Security Council and initiate an illegal war against Iraq in violation of the UN Charter, a war that has thus far resulted in the deaths of some 8,000 to 10,000 Iraqi civilians, some 475 US troops and unknown numbers of Iraqi troops.

We witnessed the increase of deadly attacks against US and other troops and international relief workers in Iraq after the president declared an end to major hostilities on May 1st aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln.

We witnessed US leaders make claims of the imminent threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, but after massive searches no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq as of the end of the year.

We witnessed North Korea withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, declare itself a nuclear weapon state and offer to give up its nuclear arsenal and ambitions if the United States would agree to a non-aggression pact. At year's end, despite six nation talks, the US and North Korea continue to threaten each other without coming closer to agreement.

We witnessed Iran deny it had a nuclear weapons program and allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency greater leeway for inspections, and we witnessed Libya admit that it had a nuclear weapons program and allow inspectors of the IAEA to verify that it had ceased. At the same time, the US government made plans for building a new facility to create some 500 plutonium pits each year for new nuclear weapons.

We witnessed US government leaders press for and the US Congress support research on more usable nuclear weapons, mini-nukes and "bunker-busters," and the allocation of funds for shortening of the time necessary to resume nuclear testing. We witnessed the United States move toward deployment of missile defenses and pressure other states to join in this program.

We witnessed assassination attempts on Pakistani leader Pervez Musharraf. The death of Musharraf would open the door for nuclear weapons to fall into the hands of Islamic extremists, which almost certainly would lead to war, possibly nuclear war, with India or the United States.

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We witnessed the United States stand nearly alone in opposing major nuclear disarmament resolutions in the United Nations. In one vote on bringing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force, the US cast the only vote against the resolution while 173 countries voted in favor. In a resolution put forward by Japan on the Path to the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, only the US and India opposed the resolution.

We witnessed the capture of Saddam Hussein, a pathetic fallen dictator, and the ongoing international trial of another fallen dictator, Slobodan Milosevic. At the same time, we witnessed the United States government take extraordinary steps to oppose the newly formed International Criminal Court, which has the support of nearly all major US allies.

We witnessed the world spend nearly a trillion dollars on war and preparations for war, including the United States spending more than \$1.1 billion per day on its military, while more than a billion people lived in utter poverty on less than \$1 per day.

But despite the wars and preparations for war, the breakdown of international law and the global inequities, we witnessed a resurgence of hope that ultimately people power can and will prevail over imperialism; that peace can and will prevail over the obscene spectacle of war and its preparations; and that human security and dignity can and will prevail over the current state of global inequities. In 2004, there will again be an opportunity for the people of the world to unite in support of peace, international law and the rights of children and people everywhere to have their basic needs fulfilled and to live with dignity.

David Krieger is president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation  
(<http://www.wagingpeace.org>/[www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)).

"Peace is the only battle worth waging."

--- Albert Camus

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"We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history,

a time when humanity must choose its future."

--- The Earth Charter

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