

Welcoming statement by Anna Gyorgy, November 15, 2016

Greeting friends, to those in this room today and others who may follow this program through our website and Internet platforms. Many thanks to our sponsoring organizations, the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice, and the Special Collections and University Archives here at the University of Massachusetts library in Amherst. And to all those who are part of our program today.

We are here to mark the 36th anniversary of a very unique nonviolent demonstration for peace, for life, and the redirection of American foreign policy, undertaken by some 2000 women, mainly from the Northeast but not only. This anniversary offers us the opportunity to look back, and also forward.

We will look back this morning through song and the words of the Women's Pentagon Action Unity Statement, forged by women from many organizations who came together for a common purpose. The visuals we show today, the remembrances, are just a few examples of women's protest for life over death, for empathy and democracy over racism and sexist discrimination, and for conversion of the military machine, freeing resources needed to meet urgent social needs. And protect the planet from deadly pollution and irreversible warming. There is no time to waste.

This date is also special because it follows a bitter, hate-filled election. We experienced demagogery over democracy, but also a clear desire for change in the entrenched economic and cultural domination of our society. It's a dangerous time, as we face the institutionalization of right-wing forces with dramatic powers.

Today we offer a sampling of women's voices, offering insights and information to help us discuss and prepare for future work and action.

This is the first public event of our Women and Life on Earth Internet Project in the US. Launched here in August 1999, the website and information project developed mainly in Germany, and has now relocated to these shores. Thus we are not well known here, and are starting with a lot of background, information and contacts, but no real staff or budget -- yet!

We are related to the 1980 Pentagon Action through the involvement of some of us back then, and the continuation of the name and aspirations of the Women and Life on Earth network in the era of modern communications.

There are many struggles going on in this country, and we want to mention and support the solidarity actions being held across the country today in support of the Protectors of water and the sacred and historical lands of the Sioux nation at Standing Rock, North Dakota, against the planned oil pipeline.

Yes, there are wars at home, but we will not forget the desperate conflicts going on around the world, many of them with major US involvement; the network of a thousand military bases worldwide that support the control of this empire; and the need for another kind of foreign policy.

Our project is small, but our interests and aspirations are large, and today we look forward to sharing spirit and hope for the future, as well as information and important women's stories.