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Struggling to find the energy to resist

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NCR Today

The New York Times has another editorial about massive production problems, delayed deliveries and cost overruns, this time in the F-35 and F-22 fighter airplanes.

It's discouraging. I've been protesting military spending for a long time. The best demonstrations I helped plan and organize were in the '80s at the then-world headquarters of General Dynamics in St. Louis. We vigiled every Monday at noon for about four years. To mark some big military contracts and other appropriate days, we did street theater, a couple of 48-hour vigils at Thanksgiving, a children's party the Monday after Christmas, solemn prayers on Good Friday, and we risked arrest on the day of the corporate annual meeting.

One time, we decided it would be good to talk to all the other people who worked in the 16-floor building in which GD rented seven floors. We would deliver homemade coffee cake and cookies to all the offices in order to encourage conversation at coffee breaks. A hundred people signed up for particular offices and baked goodies, and showed up at staggered times. By noon, the security forces were checking building entrants for muffins, and the participants were engaging in guerrilla bread fare.

I'm remembering because the good humor of our actions gave us energy. We educated ourselves and a lot of other people about weapons procurement, the military budget and foreign arms sales. But we didn't stop the weapons. Now I'm trying to call up that energy again.

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