

## **March 31, 2023**

### **Interview with Chris Wing**

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#### **Summary:**

The interview with Chris Wing delves into his journey in activism, focusing on peace, nuclear disarmament, and his tenure at the Ford Foundation. He reflects on the evolution of civil society's role in nuclear disarmament and the strategic challenges faced, emphasizing the importance of diverse and inclusive activism. Wing critiques historical approaches to disarmament, including a tendency to focus narrowly on issues like nuclear proliferation, and stresses the interconnectedness of domestic and international political dynamics. He remains skeptical about the likelihood of full nuclear disarmament without significant global shifts or dramatic events but highlights the critical need for adaptive strategies and ongoing civil society engagement. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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Transcript - English

**Michal Onderco:** Chris, thank you very much for doing this interview with me. I want to start with a very general question. How did you become interested in the topic of peace, security and nuclear weapons? And how did you get to your job at Ford Foundation, where you work?

**Chris Wing:** Yeah. Well, I was, I suppose I didn't start out as a peace activist, right, or disarmament activist. I was an activist pretty much from the time I went to college. And that was a time when I was acutely aware that the only people I knew personally who were fighting in Vietnam, or my brother and his friends whom I knew, at West Point, and who had gone to West Point and my friends from kindergarten, who, you know, I grew up in a very rural part of the country. And one of the choices that people had coming out of high school where I was, to go into the military. So it was basically either people who were getting through school by going into West Point, or people who had, and it was only men, it was only men who were being drafted, right. So, but I, you know, I really became a – so I was very aware of the war, it was a very personal thing, for me. It was not an easy thing. But I was to become a person who thought the war was, was not a good idea. But I was in an environment, and you know, there was a big, it was just a big discussion all the time. And I started to do some work around, you know, and [unclear] kind of stuff. And not a lot, but it's, you know, the sort of campus organizing that kind of thing, but I also always was, I was also very engaged in organizing on women's issues. And those both of those threads continued in my life for a while, I continued to work through a variety of circumstances, I ended up at the American Friends Service Committee, their national offices in Philadelphia, and what I was hired to do when I, when I went there was to work with building some community based women's employment programs in Appalachia and North Carolina. And AFSC, though at that time, and so I did that for about five years. And I had just, I had moved to Philly, from West Virginia, and had done strike support work there and was very engaged in issues there. So in Philadelphia, I was at, I spent about five years working with that project that was, you know, run out of – my part was in Philly – but the actual work was on the ground in Appalachia. And then AFSC, historically, was a was a peace organization. I mean, it's not the only thing it did, it had a very strong commitment to racial and gender. And by that time, to, you know, so by the time I was there to supporting LGBT people. So, but the peace, the peace work, there was a Peace Education Division and after doing the work in Appalachia, for four or five years, I felt that I was kind of at the end of what I was able to be useful for. And I was getting, you know, it was a dangerous moment in history. And the freeze was coming along. But also, and this is something that because I was at AFSC, which has a more international awareness and presence than many other peace organizations did. The position to be coordinator of the disarmament program came open and actually, I became a co-coordinator with a colleague, did that for four or five years, Bruce Richard, and Bruce, his roots were also in US peace movement. And he had worked with friends. He was a friend and he had worked with Quakers on these issues. So, he and I became co-coordinators of this program. And part of what I brought into that was my, you know, sort of, I would say, that US foreign policy and US domestic policy have two sides of the same coin. And I was very concerned about that to me, it looked like a largely white movement, the disarmament movement in the US. And that was kind of when I went into the job, one of my concerns was the question of how do you build a movement that is going to have a broader net, a broader base? I know I'm talking about a period that actually is before your three decades or so right? Because this was, this was before Star Wars, right at that time. But an example of the kind of thing that we did was that shortly after AFSC's approach, shortly after I started, my colleagues who were working in the Middle East, had been working with other people in AFSC, to set up a study tour to the Middle

East, for disarmament activists to help broaden the perspective that people in the disarmament movement had. And I think that AFSC staff may have been based in Ramallah, I can't remember for sure. Anyway, but then, also somebody in Philadelphia did work in Israel and Palestine. And it was an incredible, I mean, incredible thing. We went with a whole range of people, and we went to Damascus, we were in Israel in the West Bank and Syria. Anyway, so that was kind of a characteristic – a characteristic of AFSCs. The thing I was aware of coming in, though, was that because – the service committee also had offices on the West Coast and an office in Hawaii, as well as a project that worked on the Korean peninsula. And I was aware that, and Bruce and I thought that one of the ways the AFSC could contribute to the understanding that it was routed, that disarmament movements, understanding about US foreign and military policy, as well as kind of just who demographically was represented, was to work more directly with our West Coast offices, because it was a more diverse staff. They're a more Asian Pacific Island. So that was kind of the thrust of my work. And it was, I worked a lot with the staff there and started doing work on Palau, and on Micronesia, other parts of Micronesia, and we did a lot of work with people in the Philippines and Filipino Americans. And we did work with Korean Americans and so on, on our disarmament issues. But so it was our little piece, of broadening the base, [unclear]. Anyway, so toward the end of that, this actually is part of why I ended up doing this work, that is how I ended up doing this work, actually. Then, as I was doing that work, it just became very clear to me that the way that US foreign policy thought about the world, I mean, certainly as in the way it was written about in study, and I would argue now a lot of IR theory was really developed across the Atlantic, you know, and it was our collective understanding in the United States, of what the United States was about in the world. I mean, certainly the US was very active in the Pacific Rim, in Asia, but it wasn't sort of involved in – I didn't think there was an understanding that had been incorporated centrally into thinking. And then I went on maternity leave. And I read some books and I also started to worry about how we were going to support our family on two activists salaries. And so I decided actually, at that point, that I was going to go back to school, and at that point, I had a master's in city and regional planning, and a BA in psychology. I went to the, it was at the time it was the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, it was now it's a School of Public and International Affairs. And I did my degree there. The thing that I said to myself and said to others was that, you know, among other things, that if I was ever going to take my intellectual interest seriously, this was the time to do it. And, you know, I was 39, and I had a 12-year-old and a 2-year-old. And actually, school was easier in some ways. We didn't have a lot of money, but you know, that program pays tuition. So that was really very helpful. So I was, with the interest of national security, concentration when I was at Princeton. And as I was finishing, I learned, kind of, more in depth, I didn't much revise my assessment of the thinness of US thinking about the US role in the world. I had learned a lot about nukes, when I was doing the work at AFSC. And also, when I lived in Philadelphia, Three Mile Island happened, I mean, I just added a little kid, (I thought) “how the hell are we going to get out here out of here”, and I didn't believe anything they told us. So I was constitutionally inclined to be a critic, I guess. As I was finishing my dissertation, I got a call from somebody who said, Jeff Wiseman is leaving his job – one of my professors – and I think you should apply for it. I'm sure that they talked to him. And Ford had been trying to fill this position for a while, and they hadn't found the person they wanted. And also, I was at a point where I realized I was going to have to go to work. And I was a year away from finishing my dissertation, which was on the US role in Japan, post World War Two, which is a very interesting period. But anyway, three weeks later, they had an offer from Ford, and that was great. And so that's how I got there. When I was there, I pretty much thought of myself as a person who was working on

one side of the table now, but who had a lot on the other side of the table. And that's how I ended up with that kind of a job. I felt as though I had the big P for Princeton on my head, you know. I used to say, when I started funding, I would be a happy person, if when I went into the women's room, at a conference, there was more than one woman there. And it was a time when it was just starting and now it is better. So the very personal side of it for me. Part of what I remember thinking about when I was thinking about the AFSC work, and going into that work. I mean, it was a scary time, because it was a time of the ND it was all this stuff about missile placement, you know, what's going to be in Europe and all of that. And Reagan was president and a lot of concern about, you know, that actually we could lose it all. And my thought was, I could be in one part of Philadelphia, and my child, if you were in another part, he was like five or six or something. You know if a bomb hit was coming, I would not see him again. I would not be able to be there with him, when we both died. It was that very kind of visceral, visceral thing in a way. So it seemed like a worthy thing to do. Yeah.

**Michal Onderco:** So when you took over the portfolio from Geoff Wiseman, what was the state of that portfolio? What did you think about that portfolio when you took it over?

**Chris Wing:** It was actually, you know, I mean, we're going back a while so can I remember the details? I could see what he had been doing. And one of the themes that had come up in nuclear disarmament work was the notion of common security. And, one of the things that he had been doing with that portfolio was trying to engage a broader set of people, to sort of seed some additional thinking about that. And he was also funding scholars in the Asia Pacific region, for work around basically, basic IR kind of stuff. So in general, I thought it was it was a good, tight portfolio. And it made sense to me, and I didn't feel like a discontinuity now, I mean, one of the things, for at the time, Ford went out of the field after a little while. But at the time, there were MacArthur, W Alton Jones, Ford and Carnegie were the foundations that were capable of making substantial grants. And then Ploughshares was very active and did quite a lot of funding. So Ford, historically, had taken a particular approach toward broadening understanding of the issues. And I'd say, early on, I think she created the Aspen Strategy Group, for example, which was kind of oriented toward, you know, bipartisan, and I'm not sure if this is a correct characterization, but I'd say bipartisan, bringing in high-level officials and some academics, for discussion about these issues. And she did the seeding of research centers in a number of universities, that kind of thing. And so Ford, to the impatience of many activists, for its funding was often to large institutions, not exclusively, but that was certainly how it was perceived. And certainly one of the interests that I brought in was to see what we could be doing to support activist work more directly. My colleagues at Ford – Ford actually went through a few organizational changes shortly after I got there – but when I first started, my colleagues were also, in many cases, people who had some experience in movements or in activism. We had a good human rights program, there were programs around gender around women, there was LGBT work, there was a lot going on in the international realm, part of the service of the foundation that dealt with human rights was within the international setting. This is the kind of thing I would probably take out, but I had interviewed at MacArthur and at Ford and I had expected given what my experience had been outside the outside of philanthropy, that MacArthur would be a more you know, sort of progressive and activist place and that Ford seemed more, you know, just--

**Michal Onderco:** Conservative.

**Chris Wing:** Not conservative, just more institutionally inclined, perhaps. I was surprised when I met my colleagues, because they were the kinds of people that I hung out with, and that I would have been talking politics with, right. So that was wonderful. And it was a wonderful place to work because I just had really smart and interesting colleagues. So you know, you could feel that collectively we knew something about what was going on in many spheres of work on justice and good work on civil rights and good work on law. And you know, so it was an interesting place to be. And, I had only support for the kind of work... I mean, I had support from the director, from the management. I mean, partly, you know that there are a few... there's a word for them, now, what do they call them? Guardrails, or not guardrails, but there were a few lines you didn't cross. Again, we will edit this, for example, Ford didn't fund labor unions, anything related to labor, or organizing, that changed over time, but when I was there, I think that it was just not part of the conception of the world. And it was also a time when it was still a good time – I don't know if it's what it's like to be a program officer there now. Ford went through a bumpy period, which I think is better now. But basically, the thing that was interesting about Ford – and it made it a good place to be. And there were many problems – was that I would say they hired program officers who they thought knew more about the subject than management, or the board. So I mean, once they hired you, I felt trusted, right. And so I didn't feel like I had to defensively argue for why this was a good thing to do.

**Michal Onderco:** And you, as a Program Officer, did you change the Fords portfolio? Or did you decide to take it in a different direction?

**Chris Wing:** Yes and no. I mean, so when you're a program officer, you're thinking about the outside world, but you're also thinking about what's behind, you're thinking about the organization you're in. And I knew that Ford, I mean, that it was helpful for Ford, and most of the time, helpful for the field, to continue to support some research, to continue to engage elite institutions. And it's partly just about my own sense of how change happen. So there were some organizations, I just didn't worry about, because we had been funding them for a while. Also, there sort of was an ethic you don't come in as a new program officer and cut out everybody, you know, it's more of a transition thing. Which I agree with. Have you been in the Ford archives?

**Michal Onderco:** Yes.

**Chris Wing:** Okay. So have you looked at – because I don't have these things anymore, I lent them to someone who now has a very high level position in the Biden administration, but I haven't asked you for them back.

**Michal Onderco:** Yeah. So I've seen the nuclear portfolio for since the end of the Cold War.

**Chris Wing:** Okay, so some of this you have seen and some you haven't. I started in '95. So you've seen it. So did you see my cover memo? My strategy? My memo?

**Michal Onderco:** No, I've only seen individual projects file. So for individual fund grants, but not your strategy.

**Chris Wing:** Well, everybody has such a document, every program officer. So you might want to look at those things. I mean, I don't know what they do now. Well, for starters, I wasn't hired to work on nuclear. And so that isn't the only thing that I did. It was a moment when I thought people were crazy, not just at Ford, but some people – not crazy, but you know, there was sort of a very positive sense of

what was happening in the world that I just thought was not justified. Certainly in the broader community of people who think about, you know, US foreign policy. There were some people who had influence who thought that nuclear issues were of declining importance. So that was before Iraq too. And I didn't think that, I had studied US nuclear doctrine, and Soviet nuclear doctrine. And I just believe these things went away, even if it was now Russia. And even if there had been all the interaction to allow that to happen at the end of the Cold War, so I kept nuclear. And it was also a time. So I said we'll continue to work on nuclear issues. And I can't remember what I said about what the emphasis of that would be, I did have as a concern that our funding helped to broaden the base of the disarmament work. And it was a time when there was growing attention, particularly a growing attention to regional conflict, intra- and interstate. Regional interstate, mostly, I guess, was what I would have been talking about. I thought that we needed collectively enough of what we actually knew. So I don't know if I talked about this in my in this memo, but, you know, one of the things that I was that I thought was important was to try to sort of pull together what we were learning, all this random stuff. So I made some grants, or at least one, probably more, that were about that. But also, I wouldn't have done this, if we didn't have such a, I mean, Ford had at the time, 10 or 12 regional offices, but we ended up doing funding in West Africa, with my colleagues in Nigeria, and that was a place of a lot of ongoing conflict. And I think probably I had started out thinking maybe Africa, but then also on the on the nuclear side, we didn't fund exclusively. Again, I don't know what I said in the memo, but this is sort of how it developed. So I had these areas, interstate regional conflict. Probably, I don't know how I described it, but nukes and then work on US defense budget and military spending. Because that's always been one of the routes to engage the broader public. It never works out as well as intellectually, you might think it would. But it's been important to keep that work alive. So that's what we did. It was laid out that way. And because Ford was also going through some changes, one of the really neat things was they set up a special fund for people that would support projects outside your regular budget, but with another colleague. So, on the nuke stuff it took several years to get it in place. I worked with my colleague in Beijing, because at that time, the only foundation was in Beijing, I think, and that by definition was institutionally oriented. I mean, we were under and around in China supporting, you know, grassroots activism on nuclear issues, which I don't know if it existed anyway. But you know, other people did do work on NGOs and stuff. And in West Africa.

**Michal Onderco:** Yes, if I may ask, so at that time you funded a lot of very different projects, you funded big institutions, you funded these things like the project for promoting nuclear Non-Proliferation based in Southampton. That was more diplomatic, but you also funded some of these more, sort of grassroots activist organizations like IPPNW and others. Was there any logic to the composition? Or was it basically funding different streams working towards the same goal.

**Chris Wing:** It was more the latter. I mean, yes, there was logic in every individual one. What was the third one you mentioned? Do you remember?

**Michal Onderco:** Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War?

**Chris Wing:** No, the one you mentioned after that.

**Michal Onderco:** Project for Promoting.

**Chris Wing:** PPNN. That was what I inherited. So I laid out these areas that I thought were important, and where I thought it was important to have civilian, non-governmental, non-private activity going on,

right? I mean, you try not to find organizations that are weak, unless for some reason you think this organization has real potential, and sometimes a grant from Ford, just a small grant, helps an organization because then they can say, Oh, well, we have Ford foundation money. But for the most part, from my point of view, I recommended grants to organizations that were led by people who I thought were really smart. And astute and politically and all of that. And were meeting and were expanding the base of what we understood to be work on international peace and security. We also just supported, I mean, there were some grantees, I can't remember who they are, but PPPN, who was one that, you know, the foundation had seemed to have made the commitment to for quite a while. Actually, eventually we stopped supporting it. I would say, it wasn't exactly movement-building because of who the participants were. It wasn't that there was any one group that I thought had the solution to anything. Because I don't believe that. But one of the things that we did, one of the things that I was very happy about was, we supported Rebecca Johnson, so I think we were the first big foundation to supported – I'm not positive, that might not be true – but we supported, we made a fairly early grant, fairly early in my tenure. I just thought the work they did was really good. And Rebecca was really smart. And I think it was helpful to them to have Ford's support. But then Rebecca, I would also hear from her about, before reaching critical will started, she talked to me about it. And so I got that organization on my agenda, and we've made an early grant to them. And those are kind of probably among the better examples of being able to take some very small steps that I think, really, I mean, these are brilliant women who are doing this work with organizing kinds of backgrounds, and also conceptually very strong and very, I mean, just very smart and very strategic. And so, you know, that's what I cared about.

**Michal Onderco:** If you were a funding officer today, would you fund ICAN, for example, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

**Chris Wing:** Yes, I know who it is. I'm thinking about it. Oh, yes. I probably would have. I think about strategy a lot. And I should say, just in the academic sense, we supported and I was really happy that we were able to support work at Princeton, that my principal Princeton colleagues were doing on abolition. Because it was something that endured out of my graduate education of just (unclear) abolition and, you know, I decided ultimately that I would die a happy person if we were just at minimal deterrent everywhere. And apparently, I'm not going to die a happy person in that regard. So yes, I would. And I think it's very important work. And I'm pausing because I'm separating, in this particular comment, I would say I'm separating my sense of what is most important for people in the US to be doing right now. I'm not sure that I know what that is. It's something I think about. And I think that in the US, I don't know about for you all, but in the US, I would say that our understanding of the politics of our country, not just in the last 10 years, but because in some ways, at least some of us were caught by surprise, about the strength of the right, it was very fascist, right. That you have to go back and think well, okay, how was I avoiding what was going on? Or, you know, how was this happening? And my attention was elsewhere? And, you know, a lot of the answers, you're just kind of implementing your own job. But yes, the other reason I pause is, you know, it really depends how much money do you have? Because you're always thinking if we fund this, what are we not funding? I probably would have and some of the things that went before it, also, but I probably would not instinctively have been drawn to the work on humanitarian, you know, nuclear issues as humanitarian issues, although I completely agree. And I think there were things that collectively, we've never figured out, you know, I mean, in one sense, it's irrational, I believe, to think even when, in fact, you could talk

about a bipartisan foreign policy. It's prettier. I think it's very hard to think of how you would dismantle the US commitment to nuclear forces.

**Michal Onderco:** Allow me to use this moment to ask you a very broad question that I usually ask at the beginning of the interview. How do you view the role of nuclear weapons in the world today?

**Chris Wing:** I think that they're the ways that big powers exert power. And I think that we have a very good criticism of the role of deterrence as an effective strategy. I mean, it's great if you're the United States or Russia, in a sense, because nobody deterred the US invasion of Iraq. And Russia's nuclear weapons deters US activity. I think that it's a way that big powers, that if we're talking about the five, I've never really wrapped my mind around the UK and France, I mean, I know historically why they have Arsenals but it's much more understandable – partly because I grew up in the United States – US is much more understandable. And Russia is much more understandable. And China. So there's that, and then I think the use of deterrence takes a different form for the regional powers that are the non-declared states.

**Michal Onderco:** And do you think that nuclear weapons have a stabilizing or destabilizing effect on World Politics.

**Chris Wing:** Well, both probably. I mean, you're a scholar, you know. That's a question, one you can ask, I just don't think there's a simple answer to that. Because it partly is how do we understand world politics and so it's very when they get used and they destabilize you know, if they're used in South Asia, you're going to say, "Oh, my god it was so destabilizing." But I don't think Israel's arsenal is stabilizing in the region. And that's a region that engages Russia and the United States. So, you know, I don't know. I don't think you can answer it.

**Michal Onderco:** I have a second question, you mentioned that you were intrigued by this humanitarian frame to think about nuclear weapons. And, of course, as you also mentioned, the consequence of that humanitarian framing was sort of streamed into the concern about abolition. Do you think that abolition is something where the focus of civil society should be today? Or Should there be more focus on the, sort of, smaller piecemeal practical steps approaches?

**Chris Wing:** Well, I think you need both. And also, I remember writing a strategy called disarmament 2000. For AFSC, in –no abolition 2000, for AFSC. And I wrote it in, it would have been, you know, in 1988/'87. So it's another new idea. It's one that we've all been worried about for a long time. And that's one of those cases where I'd say, I bet some of the funding we supported, it didn't cause it, but it's really good to have the folks at Princeton having their mind wrapped around this, because you've got good allies, and you've got backup for what you said. I mean, these are the issues, right. I mean, I'm on the board and was chair of the board, I was acting chair of the board of the Arms Control Association here. And I, you know, I have a very particular, I wouldn't argue that what they do, what we do, is something everybody should do. I've always thought, since I started to think about funding and these issues and being able to support some stuff, that one of the things that's really important in the United States, because the US, oddly has been the most transparent country on Nuke stuff, we can learn a lot, that one of the most important things for a funder to do is to make sure that capacity remains in civil society, not a phrase I usually use, but I know you do so. But imagine if we didn't have all these people outside, who were organized, who had some ability to know what the government was doing around this stuff. So that's very important. So yes, it's really important that work goes on.

Would I argue that at any given moment, everybody should be? No, because, you know, Congress changes, it changes, not only has it changed in the last eight years, but it changes every four years, and you just don't know who you're going to have. And so if you have a legislative agenda, gets pulled out. I mean, it has to get redone. So anyway, I went to, actually it was ACA' national. Remember, the membership meeting, and the woman from Costa Rica, who I think might have been chairperson of the last –

**Michal Onderco:** Elaine Whyte

**Chris Wing:** So she was really good. I do think it's important, I think it's really important that that organized presence of so much of the world having said this, and in any understanding of the international legal order, they really are putting the screws on the nuclear powers. But of course, you know, the international order doesn't exactly follow the rules. So I think it's good that it's there. It's just that there's a lot that needs to be there. And that's not the only thing and that's if you're trying to do organizing, I was very critical of the freeze campaign in many ways, I have to tell you, but having something that people could do is brilliant. It would have to be a completely different forum now. And I think what was good about that approach was that you had a handle for engaging people. And it was also just a moment in history. People were scared, but you know, I had my doctor's appointment story about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I went in to see my internist. And the first thing he said to me is, "How scared should I be?" And, you know, there's a lot of kind of subterranean worry, just that we have so much that we worry about right at the moment. Anyway.

**Michal Onderco:** So you mentioned that when you started working at Ford, you found that people were sort of oddly optimistic about the world.

**Chris Wing:** Not necessarily at Ford, but in general, yes. Not about the world necessarily, but about the prospects for peace. And they would say to me the Soviet Union collapsed. And Russia in the United States, they're cooperating on nuclear, you know, and that's very true. I mean, we should never forget to cite the numbers from the 60s and 70s, and of warheads. And then there had been the Middle East accords. And no assassinations yet, I believe. So, and South Africa had overthrown apartheid. So it was a moment when people who were, you know, inclined to think that the world can change, were looking around and saying, "Oh, these things are headed in the right direction. But we've got all of this conflict going on more locally. And that's what we should be focused on."

**Michal Onderco:** So multiple people that I spoke to, would say that in the 90s, there was this feeling that nuclear is a problem that has been solved, that is sort of going in the right direction.

**Chris Wing:** And so the other thing was that the review conference had just happened in '95. I started Ford in '95. And so, it was a victory, what had happened. And so that was another thing that would be in the catalog of, "Oh, maybe we don't have to worry about this anymore, about nukes."

**Michal Onderco:** So what do you think went wrong?

**Chris Wing:** I think that was incorrect at the time. I mean, I just don't think that was a correct assessment. Because, you know, I haven't thought about it in these terms. And to get my dates, right, I would probably want to think about it separately from this discussion. But what else was going on? Well, so I mean, there were indications that might be going in the opposite direction, what was happening in Russia, economically and politically? What was happening in the United States

economically and politically? Who was resisting the changes in South Africa? What was the role of money in US elections? And where was the right wing putting it? Where were the Koch brothers? It's partly just people were optimistic, which is not a bad thing, but we're not looking for that. I mean, this would not be a good way to approach anything, right? You don't want to just focus... I mean, people have been working for Nuclear Disarmament for years, they were very happy.

**Michal Onderco:** Well, when I often ask this question, my interview is in a way of asking about what do they see as the biggest failure in the field since the Cold War? Especially because at the end of the Cold War, many people had a lot of hopes. So do you see anything that you could say, Well, this is the biggest failure of the field.

**Chris Wing:** It's like, it's kind of like asking, what would I do differently? Right, if I use \$50 million, over 10 years to spend? I don't think about things this way, I don't know how to say this, exactly. But, I mean, a reluctance to take on power dynamics. I mean, I don't think you can separate out one strand of political, social and political and cultural life. And say, if we had done this... what has happened is composed of many streets. I mean, I do think that it was a failing of many people who were working for what I would consider to be, you know, sort of good social ends in the US and I suspect elsewhere. Were not attentive, as attentive as required to political dynamics in their own country,

**Michal Onderco:** But do you think that, for example, the civil society in the US could have done something more to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament?

**Chris Wing:** I'm not sure that they could have I think there's a problem in the US and in other democratic countries that... I mean, I have long thought that the only way that we would get nuclear disarmament, significant nuclear disarmament was if a bomb is used. And I don't say that publicly. Because, God forbid, somebody would think it's a good idea that anybody would listen to me, but you know, I mean, I don't write and stuff like so. But I do think that realistically, what we understand, what I feel I know about how things change. There's a dramatic event, and the only dramatic event that could make it happen, I think, would be the difficulties.

**Michal Onderco:** If you look now at the war in Ukraine, people are very scared, very concerned. But if you look at, for example, the effect on public opinion in Europe, it makes people more appreciative is not particularly good word, but it makes them more for example, supportive of nuclear deterrence, it makes them for example, support withdrawal of the American nuclear weapons in Europe has stumbled, the hawkishness has increased. So it's not probably going in the direction that we would expect, given the fact that so many people are scared.

**Chris Wing:** Well, so when you think about the United States, where people have never really felt those fears, because a combination of willful denial, but you know, this is still a country that has not had war. It's not been attacked, except internally. And so I think it's just not approximate. People do worry about it and get scared about that Russia might do something that leads to war. I think it's becoming a harder moment in the US. It's that we don't have kind of big public engagement on the question, but it's becoming a harder moment in the US to, I mean, I don't think Biden is as... you know, there's been a long effort to get him to declare no first use, ever. And he's kind of said it, but as I but I think kind of not. And there's pressure for build-up and all of that. So there certainly is sentiment that is kind of, well, you know, "Fuck that we're going to have a build-up, you know. So, the thing is that you can ask the same questions, a similar kind of question would be, "What can civil society do about climate

change?" You know, and there are lots of answers. And it may be working in some ways, but we have gone through decades of not doing much, collectively.

**Michal Onderco:** There is a number of funding officers that I speak to, and they tell me often, well, the total funding in the nuclear field in the US philanthropy is about \$40 million a year. And the total funding that, you know, only Gates Foundation spends about \$700 million a year. And so the argument that they say is, if we had this amount of money as the Gates Foundation spends on climate change, nuclear weapons would be long taken care of. In other words, the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament comes down to the lack of financial attention that is given by philanthropy to this issue. Do you agree with that view?

**Chris Wing:** No. I mean, I would have to think about it, I guess, but what strategies would they use?

**Michal Onderco:** They would fund a lot of civil society that would sort of raise awareness and lobby Congress and do things differently.

**Chris Wing:** See how successful we are at lobbying this Congress about not giving power? And I mean, really, they'd have to be investing in things they can't invest in. I mean, maybe it's true, I'll think about it, but to me it's not a problem. The people whose opinions can be changed, do not hold the power. And I don't know that funding more...I mean, when I started in Florida, I remember somebody said from outside the organization raising a question saying, the right-wing funds the Federalist Society, and it's doing these things, and it has this long-term look. And they created it, and they're making it happen. And why don't foundations do that on the other side of the political spectrum? And that's a legitimate question, I think. I mean, I think those foundations that are doing that funding were created to do that, right? And if you were asking me as an individual program officer, I would say, "Well, I'm sorry, that's not what I do." I have some grants, I can make recommendations for grants in a particular field. But, you know, there were a whole lot of NGOs and universities that would be very unhappy if all of a sudden, my portfolio were devoted to something else, you know, I mean, because what the more liberal foundations often do is, I mean, everybody tries to concentrate their funding, and they do in some areas, but, you know, things that we think are normal parts of civil society. If the funding were withdrawn from that would not be as strong. So I don't know.

**Michal Onderco:** So let me let me ask a question that I was keeping for later, but I'll ask it now. So I spoke to another person who was in charge of distributing money in the foundation, different foundations, so not Ford. And that person told me, in my 12 year tenure at this institution, I have distributed about \$70 million. And I don't think I made much of an impact. Is that a feeling that you ever felt at Ford?

**Chris Wing:** Well, I mean, I certainly felt it about specific grants. And sometimes you make a grant, because for reasons other than just the actual work that's going to be carried out. I probably wouldn't want to be quoted in public on that. But it's, you know, I mean, you're always taking into account, have we made a historic commitment? And we're not an organization that pulls the rug out. But you know, in a big foundation where you don't do kind of, you know, how the government talks about sunseting budget, that wasn't a notion necessarily. So, if you're new, you would at least keep funding somebody for a couple of years, and then, you know, be talking to them as it's happening. I think that what we did with grants was to keep some work going, that was important to keep going, not because of what their stated objectives necessarily were, because it collectively, I think, people or organizations applying for

money, feel obligated to have certain kinds of objectives. And the only real ones I think, are ones that are really strategic, and that you have strategic objectives, and it wouldn't be in the sense of, our goal is to pass the CTBT and, you know, X months, because, you just don't control all the variables, you know, so, but I think that foundations are not nearly as important certainly as foundations think. No, I used to say that in terms of work that I've been paid for, being a program officer is the most intellectually challenging work that I've done and the reason is that what you try to do is to understand the direction in which things are moving kind of try to get a sense, it's almost like trying to have some understanding of history. And in where you are in that flow of all these different strands of things that are changing, and then to see where the application of just a small amount of money might make some difference, right? So that's really all it is. I mean, so we did out of my program, probably \$50 million, over 10 years. And that did many different things. Some of it kept interactions going between really good Chinese physicists, and really good American physicists. That's worth doing, I think it was worth doing. Some of it raised up the work of smart, female strategic activists who went on to play an important role. So, I would want to know, what strategy somebody is suggesting. How is this going to play out?

**Michal Onderco:** And what was your definition of impact? Or when did you know that your project that you funded delivered impact?

**Chris Wing:** Well, you know, so I do have this kind of notion, right, that that impact isn't... Shortly after I left the philanthropy world, there became this obsession with theories of change. And I was going to say something vulgar, and I'm not going to, but it's with theories of change, philanthropists became obsessed with, you know, impact and how to measure it, and those are all really important questions, I think. I would describe it to people as: so just tell me what your strategy is, you know, what's your strategy? I have a strategy. I mean, part of my inclination, for example, I'm not gonna give you a simple answer. I'm sorry. I used to think this is also something I will take out just because it's not helpful to foundations, but I used to think if a really smart, conservative person came in and asked for a grant to do something to do, especially research, I would jump at it, because I think it's important to... I mean, there is one person that we funded at a conservative think tank, who's who still is engaged in the field and is still thinking about that, you know. The thing is that it's very tempting as approach, I think that foundations think that they understand problems better than the people who are working on them. Another one of my short hands was, you know, okay, find 40 really smart people, who are doing really good work. Let's get some support to them, because, who knows? I don't mean that I'm random. I mean, I think I'm quite strategic, because I know, we're not going to get anywhere without having engaged certain populations. And that's true in the US. You know, and it's true outside the US, I believe. I think some endeavors are more susceptible to a strategy where you can say we want to be able to see over time that the capacity of this land that supporting people to develop is producing healthy food for a large number of people without a great cost to the, you know. Those are measurable things. But on nuclear issues, I mean, if you really asked how can we change, and we do ask it, but you ask, "Okay, how are we going to get rid of nuclear weapons?" You have to look at all the dynamics that are feeding their acquisition, and that brings you to politics. It really does. I mean, it's not the only place it brings you. But you know, when the Freeze built support, I mean, the UN was doing stuff, right? So that was good. And it gave that work. And people have very conscious strategy, by the way about the NPT Review Conference. And it's consciously engaged as a strategy of engaging other powers to kind of, and that's, that was very good thinking, I think. I just think the Freeze's strategy stopped

working when it hit Congress. It wasn't the only thing. Reagan came out with Star Wars, you know, so, I mean, at AFSC, we made little dollar bills with a picture of Darth Vader on them, and that were part of our work on budget spending.

**Michal Onderco:** But, so there are people who basically say, "Well, you know, Reagan did all these things. But he also did the INF and he almost abolished nuclear weapons in Reykjavik. And at the end of the day, things were not so bad." But when I speak to many other people, they would say, "Well, if I look at things, especially in the last 20 years, they see much less success," because the US nuclear arsenal is being modernized at an enormous cost. There are new options being developed the funding to for example, influence Congress and defund the submarine launch cruise missiles have failed.

**Chris Wing:** You said the funding for...

**Michal Onderco:** Well, the push to defund...

**Chris Wing:** ...to defund has failed. So civil society effort has failed.

**Michal Onderco:** So my question is, has it become more recently more difficult? Why is it that that people have this feeling in recent years that really success is not possible in this field for civil society?

**Chris Wing:** Well, I think it's because of... I know the United States reasonably well. I can't talk about other countries. Here, you know, we have a pretty insane Congress and that has been the case. It would be important to ask the question about the Obama years. I mean, I remember when the Norwegians gave him the Nobel Prize. Yes. Before he did, before something. I mean, he had just started, right. And I guess, because he said something about abolition, right?

**Michal Onderco:** Well he had the speech in Prague.

**Chris Wing:** Yes. And I thought this is not helpful. You know, it's not helpful in American culture, to have some other country annoy our president on an issue, that's important. You know, I mean, sorry, but it was not a good idea. So I don't really feel that I understand, well, the reasons that more didn't happen. That's the question and it can be asked. But I was at one point traveling to a number of countries that had not yet signed the CTBT when people thought that it was a possibility in the US and people I talked to would would ask, you know, is Obama going to sign it? Or, you know, are they gonna push it through? And I said, "You know, frankly, it depends on the opinion about health care of some right wing senators in Mississippi," you know, I mean, that is the reality right? You can't accomplish things if you have an empowered opposition and in the anti war movement in the US it became too costly to politicians, right? It just was too costly and that's I believe, why they got out Vietnam in you know, much too late. So I guess the question would be, why was there not... I think you have to be more specific in the question. And I think people have to be more specific when they ask these questions. So, you might want to say, what could have been done differently during the Obama years when presumably there was a receptive administration, in the first part, with congressional support. Now, the reality is all the other power, went into passing the Affordable Care Act, I mean that's really where the capital was spent, I would say in the administration. And so I don't know if they would have had the bandwidth to do something else. But so what might be worth asking, "What were the people focused on during that time, the people who sort of understood themselves as being advocates of nuclear disarmament?"

**Michal Onderco:** So I want to ask something more about your time at Ford. And I particularly want to ask about, how do you see the position of Ford within the field of philanthropic funding, especially vis-a-vis the other funders, as you mentioned, MacArthur, W. Alton Jones, they left afterwards.

**Chris Wing:** The role of Ford?

**Michal Onderco:** Was there something that made Ford distinctive in that field? Or was it only the fact that you were the biggest that made you distinct?

**Chris Wing:** Oh, yes, I think there was, but you know, we talk to each other, right? Have you talked to George Perkovich?

**Michal Onderco:** Yes.

**Chris Wing:** So George and I talked a lot. I also talked especially with George until Walton Jones. So we started the peace and security funders group, right? And that was, you know, kind of an effort to have foundations talk, which is important and useful. And I would talk with Kenneth Benedict at MacArthur periodically. The thing I would often tell grantees is that you can't really speak about foundations as one kind of organization because as one, the program officer, but behind them they have the incentives of the institution are different, right? So there were some things that I could fund that other people couldn't and some things other people could fund that I couldn't, or that, you know, that I thought would be problematic for us. And so I'm not sure that people on the outside would have had a distinctive view of Florida's distinctive... I think other people's external view would have been similar to what mine was going in. I was talking to one of the other program officer at another foundation when I got hired, the first time we met, we were having dinner and he said, "Do they know who they've hired?" Oh, that's an interesting question. But, I got to fund overseas because I had colleagues overseas, and I never would have done that if we didn't have offices. So I had a set of relationships that other foundations didn't have. But a lot of the relationships overlap. But nobody would have looked at my my funding as laser focused, in a sense that I mean, W. Alton Jones was more focused, in a way, because they were a different kind of player. They didn't have a broader set of concerns. I think that personally, I had the strongest commitment to engaging with people who weren't white upper middle class or white, highly educated professionals. I think that I had more of that instinct and desire, because I mean, that was my problem with the Freeze, you know, and that it seemed to be such a white movement. And just for some reason, you know, growing up in a completely white part of the country, it's something that I don't know.

**Michal Onderco:** Is that... because...

**Chris Wing:** I don't think people would look and say that that was what distinguished... I felt that I knew what I was doing, and that it was worthwhile, but I'm not sure it would have seemed distinctive, particularly, except that I, you know, I mean, I did a lot in West Africa. But, you know, there was a whole community of people who worked only on interstate conflict, and I would know those people through that piece of work. But the nuclear side of all of this, it was really I don't I haven't broken down how much of the funding of my program actually went to nuclear as opposed to... because we were also doing this work on budgets. And we worked with a colleague, who's in the governance unit to set it up you know.

**Michal Onderco:** One of the trends in the philanthropic funding when it comes to nuclear these days, is to fund work that sort of looks at nuclear weapons as a social issue. So there is the funding to address, for example, the environmental consequences of nuclear testing, that works on different sorts of issues that are related to social justice. And I have spoken to some of the grant officers who used to work in these big foundations in the past. And they would say that they see this as a very dangerous trend. And they see this as a sort of diversion from what the real issue is, which is the big strategic questions. Now, from your reaction? I see that you disagree with that?

**Chris Wing:** Well, yes, I mean, because the question is, how do you build... I mean, I wouldn't. I'm not trying to suggest that people are doing this instrumentally, right? But what a big issue in organizing around nuclear issues is, how do you engage people in a way that's real, in their lives? So I don't know if it's a really effective organizing strategy. Do you have a sense? I mean, have you been looking at this work?

**Michal Onderco:** Not written? I don't have a sense on that.

**Chris Wing:** I don't have a sense of it, either. It seems to me, it comes from a model that says, if we can get everybody who has or has had a stake nuclear issues engaged, then change will happen, but that really is missing many parts, that model. And the thing is that it's hard for people to be engaged if there's not a convincing route to creating the actual change. Are you doing research on your own on this? I mean, I know you're doing the oral histories.

**Michal Onderco:** Yes.

**Chris Wing:** Are you writing about this stuff as well?

**Michal Onderco:** Yes, so when I'm finished with the oral histories I will write a little bit on this. And I've also done some archival research, but only in the archives of the Ford Foundation, and Rockefeller Brothers funds.

**Chris Wing:** Okay. Yes, but I don't mean, just in foundation terms. I mean, in terms of movements.

**Michal Onderco:** I guess. So I'm in this oral history project. I will look at the civil society more broadly. So I also look at the community organizers and people who are really grassroots workers.

**Chris Wing:** Yes. Have you talked to Bruce Richard? I mean, of course, I have a long list of saying: have you talked to this person? Have you talked to Pam Solo? Oh, you're not necessarily going back as far as the freeze though?

**Michal Onderco:** No, I'm looking at the post Cold War period.

**Chris Wing:** And so post cold war and the thing that coincides with that is the NPT Review Conference to some extent.

**Michal Onderco:** I've done some work on NPT in the past.

**Chris Wing:** Yeah, I saw something.

**Michal Onderco:** I'm also not only looking at the US, but I'm sort of trying to look at the other parts of the world as well.

**Chris Wing:** Yes. So I always love it when you look at a map of what's going to happen if we have war and it's really all happening in the Northern Hemisphere, the people in the North. Okay, so I want to

just tell you something that might not occur to you. I always had reservations about the extent to which the problem got defined in terms of proliferation among activists, because I think it's a logical view to take if you're not in one of the big nuclear powers, right? Which is partly saying that people in Europe and in Latin America don't have the same in to the issues. But I think it became a way of framing the problem in the US. And, you know, when Ford supported some of the organizations that did it, but I don't think I would have said we shouldn't have supported them. But I don't think it's the root for civil society. Because, you know, there were the inequity issues, among other things, you know, but it implies that we can manage the problem and the problem is other people getting nukes? No, that's not the problem. The problem is, who has them and how many and what they plan to do with them. I don't personally feel threatened by India's nuclear weapons in the short term, you know, or Pakistan's. I think it could be a disaster for that region, but I don't think it's going to... unless it leads to more war, which is possible, but I'm not sure. Anyway. So I just think that – I interesting that I didn't come to this when you were asking some of your questions – but I've been thinking about this lately. That I think that took things off course, for a while. I mean, somebody needed to be working on it. But it didn't need to become such an obsession.

**Michal Onderco:** Some of my interviewees said that the whole obsession with nuclear safety and security during Obama years, that this was also diversion. And some of the interviewees actually say that it was purposefully designed to sort of keep people off the ball on nuclear disarmament.

**Chris Wing:** Well, I don't know. I mean, I think to say that if you're talking about civil society, you'd have to be saying about... that was after my time, happily. And I can tell you sometimes about grants I did not make, because I thought, you know, I am not worried about Iraqi WMD. You know, I really don't want to support stuff that's figuring out how to make it easier for the United States to invade Iraq. But, I did think it was a diversion. And well, it depends. I mean, it depends partly, it's a longer conversation. Yes, I thought it was the wrong track. Because it's not that it's bad to secure them. But you know, God, Graham Allison, I wanted to say, "Really?" you know, I mean, because very few years, there's something that is the new biggest threat to humanity. Really? It wasn't the biggest threat to humanity. Nuclear terrorism was not the biggest threat. Electing a president who knows nothing, who had control of US nuclear arsenal, might be a threat to humanity.

**Michal Onderco:** So I didn't speak to Graham Allison, but I spoke to someone else at Harvard two weeks ago, that someone told me, it's a very nice and lofty idea to try to push for nuclear disarmament. But it's really hard to do. And if you're a person who is faced with things that are really hard to do, it's not illegitimate to try to focus your attention on things, which are going to be maybe less lofty, but have a higher chance of success. In other words, if you know that, for example, investing \$30 million in securing nuclear waste materials in Central Asia is going to make it more difficult for terrorists to do that. It's not an illegitimate path to pursue. If you choose that over being a campaigner for nuclear abolition.

**Chris Wing:** Well, I think many things can be reasonable choices over supporting somebody. I'm not saying that campaigning for nuclear disarmament is an effective strategy at the moment. I don't know that it is. I can tell you how I think I might have reacted, if that had come to me as a program officer, you know that we want to make sure that there's good support to the researchers in South Asia, who, you know, might be able to affect the government at the times' awareness and knowledge about the risk of nuclear diversion. I might say that's a good thing. I would have. But if I had been approached to

support organizations that were trying to get the US government to put its focus on this to the extent it did, and I have many friends who were involved in it, but you know, that's not civil society. That's a government's problem. I mean, that's what the government does, I think. And if it wasn't aware of it, then that's maybe a problem. But it seems to me this was very much in the US interest, right? I mean, people who accept and support the role of nuclear weapons in US policy would find this a useful thing to do. And I don't think funders need to be supporting things that are in the self-interest of people in the US government. I mean, it's not a bad thing to do. They could spend that, but it's not the solution to the real nuclear risk. But I'm not sure that campaigning for nuclear disarmament is. And I think that what I fear of nuclear revolution is either that, um...

**Michal Onderco:** So what is then fruitful in 2020?

**Chris Wing:** I guess it's something I'm worried about. I told you I'm thinking about "Okay, I probably need to jump back in." I don't think we know. I mean, I don't know. The thing is that the politics of the United States right now do not naturally create space for this issue, right? And those of us who are concerned that such space should ever exist, or that it does exist again, can't ignore some of some other issues that are coming up. And so I do think it's a very big question to people who care about nuclear issues. We have a Congress, at the moment, that publicly and unabashedly lies in there, you know, I mean, daily in their fucking committee. Jim Jordan runs, like four or five committees in Congress, you know, I mean, it's just insane. I don't think that we have lost to fascism, but you know, I don't know if when you were young, you used to have these thoughts, this probably wasn't something that you talked about, but I remember, "How did Germany become fascist?" Because didn't people see what was going on? And I know, it's what, you know, all of the news media says, and that's not what I'm trying to mimic. But yes, there's a real battle being waged. And if it's not taken up, then you know, we might be okay. But it might not. And then a question for an academic is what happens when all the big nuclear arsenals are controlled by people who are anti-democratic. So we have the prospect of, you know, not just Putin and not just X but somebody in the United States. The only positive thing about Trump is that he's so preoccupied with himself that he isn't really into war. Unless it somehow makes him better, improves his own luck in life.

**Michal Onderco:** Well, I mean, diversionary theory of war is very popular in political science. I have two last questions for you. My first question is, where do you see the civil society in the nuclear field to go in the next 15 to 50 years? And some people find it very difficult to answer that question. So the easier version of that question is: do you think there will be nuclear weapons around in 50 years?

**Chris Wing:** Yeah, I do. I don't. Well, no, I don't actually, I don't think anything about 50 years. If somebody had been paying attention to Eastern Europe, and what was going on in the Soviet Union, within civil society, they might have been able to predict that something like Russia's collapse. Soviet collapse was going to happen. But at a minimum, what that means is that probably the people who, well, probably people who are in positions of power and should be worried about this probably aren't looking at the right thing. You know, I mean, they're looking at what the intelligence says about the state of the Russians, you know. I think it hinges on, as I said - if a bomb is used, I think there's a chance that people will pull together and governments will come under a lot of pressure and so on. But, if we kind of continue to muddle along with climate disasters, and you know, which, for many populations in the US, for example, are going to probably result in just I mean, internal problems, but also, migration is going to be a real issue. Parts of the world will not be inhabitable. So, there's going to be a lot of

pressure that tends toward fascism. And so I don't know the answer. I mean, I don't think it's an answerable question. But you can probably tell, I don't tend to think in those ways I believe the big social movements have created change, when the pain has been in people's individual lives, and they have remained mobilized to change that. So the labor movement, civil rights movement in the US, the women's movement, those things were, I mean, those were things that affected people's daily lives and their family's well-being. But nuclear stuff is not that kind of a thing. The war in Vietnam, people's children were getting killed, and were getting drafted and all that. So I just think it's legitimate to ask the question, but I don't think it has much meaning actually. It has to be answered with some kind of broader statement about where the change that's going on in the big nuclear power countries, you know. I mean, China is not at the moment undergoing a revolution, and Russia is up in the air. So...

**Michal Onderco:** So the question that I always ask at the end is; I'm asking respondents to imagine a world without nuclear weapons, so disarmed world. How does security in such a world look? Do you think it's a world where security and the concept of deterrence, for example, makes no sense anymore? Because the relationship between states have changed the degree that the idea of deterrence makes no sense? Or is it more of a world where deterrence is provided by sort of new technologies, or you know, conventional weapons, so sanctions, cyber and these sort of issues?

**Chris Wing:** Well, it would have to be a world where international law was strengthened, right? So that people had confidence in the ability of inspections and international law gets against (violators) [off record] But anyway, my worry, when I used to be part of abolition was about the conventional power. And it may be easier, because, you know, you either do or don't have nuclear weapons to limit them. I mean, I'm kind of fond of the notion of deterrence, you know. So United States, Russia, China want to have 150, China used to be okay with me. I mean, from my point of view, because they really have just a deterrence. It's another question that's hard to answer, because you have to make some assumptions about what the world was like, as you were in your question, to get to that point. So I think that we would want to understand the capabilities of emerging technologies. I mean, we can see that a devastating war can be fought without using nuclear weapons. Why Putin thinks that it's a good idea to move anything into Belarus, it's a mystery to me. So it really what it really has to do – and I think you implied this – but it has to do with what's happened in the relations between nations, unless it is because of a bomb being used. And then probably the arrangements will seem more tentative, but perhaps could be solidified over time. So I have trouble imagining life in 50 years. And, you know, I'm one of those people who really worries about the world that my children and possibly their children, if they have them, will be growing up in. I tend not to say, “Oh, it used to be easier. And now it's gotten complicated.” I mean, I'm sure everything feels like it's all going to hell, a lot of the time. My mother died right after 9/11. And I think partly, she thought, “I don't understand what's happening anymore. I'm out of here, you know.” So, maybe it's also partly that, but just, 50 years seems like a long time, but it's not that long. I mean, I do worry about what's going to happen with all these weapons and who has control over them. And that's something I might be obsessing about if I decide to obsess again, but if we get to that point, so many things will have changed because of climate change, anyway, and how the responses to it have happened. That, I'm much more of a “we make the path by walking” person, you know. One of your questions was about good grantees? And I don't really have an answer to that. But one thing that I really care about, is that organizations, you know, do have strategies, but that they're always watching to see what's happening, you know, and always assessing, and are flexible, and able to change on the ground. Because, you know, I can pretty be pretty sure that nobody who

was funding on nuclear issues in the 1990s, and probably the 2000s, and maybe the 2001s. I mean, people, I don't think we're worrying about a fascist threat in the United States. And you know, it's hard to predict anything at the moment. But it's always hard.

**Michal Onderco:** But the fascist threat in the US also doesn't sound to me like a thing for a nuclear portfolio, right?

**Chris Wing:** Oh, what you can do about it? I mean, because what a fascist threat in the United States means no effective civil society. I mean, I drive an old car, I'm glad that nobody can trace me when I'm in it. I mean, I'm a little obsessive about, you know, security. I don't trust them. And if they're in power, then it'll be like Germany eventually. And not necessarily militarized. But you know, people like me are not welcome in that society. And all the activists and all my friends are considered the enemy. I'm already the enemy.

**Michal Onderco:** Are you?

**Chris Wing:** Well, I mean, people don't know it. I mean, when people get into camps, they make all kinds of assumptions and assume that... I mean, I was in the post office the other day, there was a guy who had a t-shirt on that said, "A boy who has a pussy is like an angel without wings." Now, that was a pretty provocative t-shirt to wear, right? And he obviously thought that people who think that way, I think, are really at a minimum out of their minds. And yes, but I have no question. I mean, we're painted as the... I mean, we're not the people who are the painters are still the minority. But it's like a third of the country. So to your question about will fascism matter? Well, it's an important question, like who's in charge? And what do they think about use of them? So maybe we should be educating the fascists about the nuclear threat? Do not quote me.

**Michal Onderco:** Well, I mean, I think the big question is whether, you know, the rules of deterrence apply to people, like, you know, well, you call them by the shorter fascists. So do they apply to Putin and Xi and, and Donald Trump, and people like him? And I think there is a sizable group of academics who would say, as despicable these people are, they still understand the basic grammar of deterrence. So they know...

**Chris Wing:** Yes, and self-interest, I suppose what deterrence is. So if you're talking globally, yes. Or if you're talking at the state level, right? I mean, it may be that a world run by fascist states where they're the only ones holding nuclear weapons would be in some sense, stable. That assumes that they remain stable, and I'm not sure that it's a stable system, but this question of, kind of, control over nuclear use is really important. It's probably one of the places, if I were funding, I would be interested in finding people who would basically explain to everybody in the United States, you know what happens? Yes. Anyway, so. Well, I'd love to hear what you end up doing.

**Michal Onderco:** Thank you very much for your time. I'm going to stop the recording.