

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

2014 Report of the Joint Media Project



Conducted by IPS-Inter Press Service
and Soka Gakkai International (SGI)
in cooperation with Media Network of
Global Cooperation Council



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This report is part of a project aimed at strengthening public awareness for a nuclear weapon free world. The Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay Buddhist association, and IPS-Inter Press Service news agency initiated the project in April 2009, with a view to help shed light on the menace of atomic weapons from the perspectives of civil society through the global media network of IPS and its partners affiliated with the Global Cooperation Council. The news articles, analysis and opinions in this report were published online between April 2013 and March 2014. These can be accessed freely on: www.ipsnews.net/news/projects/nuclear-weapons and www.nuclearabolition.info.

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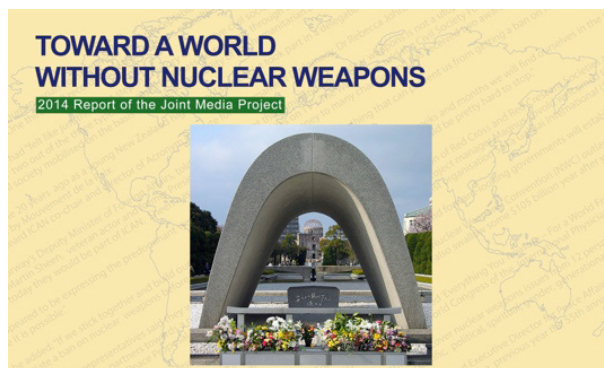
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MESSAGE FROM

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA*

The essays in this volume help to refocus our attention from the raging crises in the world to the ever impending global catastrophe of far greater proportions that could be caused by the use of nuclear weapons - either by design or accident and by nuclear weapon states or non state actors. With nine nuclear weapon armed states in the world possessing over 16000 nuclear warheads and with so much nuclear material freely available these dangers are all too credible.

There are overwhelming legal, humanitarian, economic and environmental reasons why nuclear weapons must be outlawed in the same way as the other two categories of weapons of mass destruction - biological and chemical weapons - have been banned by international conventions. The [Marshall Islands](#) - one of the smallest member states of the UN and a victim of nuclear tests - is suing the nine countries with [nuclear weapons](#) at the international court of justice at The Hague, arguing they have violated their legal obligation to disarm.

The prestigious Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports that the U.S. and Russia together hold about 93 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. Despite the rhetoric of President Obama's 2009 Prague speech a world without nuclear weapons is thus a nebulous prospect. Instead new controversies between the US and Russia such as over Ukraine have revived Cold War rivalries.

SIPRI also reports that the U.S. and Russia "have extensive modernization programs under way for their remaining nuclear de-



livery systems, warheads, and production facilities". The nuclear arsenals of the others are considerably smaller, but they are "either developing or deploying new weapons or have announced their intention to do so."

As a member of the Asian Pacific Leaders Network on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (APLN) I would like to refer to our Ho Chi Minh City Declaration of 13 October 2013 which noted with concern that the "Asia Pacific is the only region in the world where the number of nuclear weapons is growing". In this region, as in other regions, Cold War mindsets persist and deterrence theory is being clung to despite the enormous risks.

In an independent report four retired officials from Britain, Germany, Russia and the US - Desmond Browne, Wolfgang Ischinger, Igor Ivanov and Sam Nunn concluded:

"The blunt truth is that the security policies in the Euro-Atlantic region remain largely on Cold War autopilot: large strategic forces are ready to be launched in minutes; thousands of tactical nuclear weapons remain in Europe; a decades-old missile defence debate remains stuck in neutral and new security challenges associated with prompt strike forces, cyber security and space remain contentious and inadequately addressed." ↻

**Jayantha Dhanapala is a former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs 1988-2003; former Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the USA 1995-97 and to the UN Office in Geneva 1984-87; and currently President of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and Acting Chairman of SIPRI. ↻*

The global report 2013 on the financing of nuclear weapons producers titled “Don’t Bank on the Bomb” by ICAN and IKV PAX Christi finds 298 financial institutions involved significantly in the global financial infrastructure supporting the nuclear weapon industry. The report identifies 27 companies based in United States, the United Kingdom, France, India, the Netherlands and Germany involved in the production, maintenance, and modernization of nuclear weapons.

It is my personal conviction that civil society should begin a disinvestment campaign to bring down the nuclear weapon industry in the same way as the anti-apartheid disinvestment campaign undermined the apartheid regime in South Africa. The economic cost of building and maintaining nuclear weapons cannot be justified especially in times of global recession and austerity. For the US alone this cost is estimated at \$ 355 billion in the next decade.

The link between nuclear weapons and the environment issue especially climate change is also increasingly evident. Scientists have proved that a limited, regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan in which each side detonates 50 15 kiloton weapons could produce a quantity of black carbon which would self-loft to the stratosphere, where it would spread globally, producing a sudden drop in surface temperatures and intense heating

of the stratosphere. Calculations show that global ozone losses of 20%-50% over populated areas, levels unprecedented in human history, would accompany the coldest average surface temperatures in the last 1000 years. Summer enhancements in ultra-violet (UV) indices of 30% - 80% over mid-latitudes, will cause widespread damage to human health, agriculture, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Killing frosts would reduce growing seasons by 10 - 40 days per year for 5 years. Surface temperatures would be reduced for more than 25 years in the ocean and expanded sea ice.

The combined cooling and enhanced UV would put significant pressures on global food supplies and could trigger a global nuclear famine. This certain knowledge of the impact of 100 small nuclear weapons should be sufficient motivation for the elimination of more than 16,000 nuclear weapons that exist today.

The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) - the most widely subscribed to disarmament treaty - requires nuclear weapon states to disarm in terms of Article VI as interpreted by the 1995 Advisory Opinion of the ICJ. The next Review Conference of the NPT is scheduled for 2015 and with so many unfulfilled promises from the 2010 conference the prospects are bleak for the maintenance of this lynchpin of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. ♦

MESSAGE FROM
HIROTSUGU TERASAKI*

“Crying out in opposition to war and nuclear weapons is neither emotionalism nor self-pity. It is the highest expression of human reason based on an unflinching perception of the dignity of life,” stated Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

Driven by this belief, SGI - one of the world’s largest socially engaged Buddhist movements, launched the campaign “People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition” in 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of the historic antinuclear declaration made by second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda in 1957. This campaign aims to give expression to the views of ordinary citizens so that they can be heard and reflected in the international discourse on nuclear issues.

In an effort to raise public awareness, activate further discussion and introduce civil society perspectives on nuclear abolition, SGI and IPS-Inter Press Service launched a joint media project in April 2009.

The dedicated website “Toward a Nuclear Free World,” (www.nuclearabolition.info) has since received many insightful articles and commentaries from prominent leaders and concerned citizens around the world based on their shared desire to realize a nuclear free world.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all the conscientious citizens and civil society partners who have played an integral role in sustaining this project.



As part of our recent effort, on April 24 of this year, SGI organized an interfaith symposium in Washington D.C. to discuss the theme of humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Over 100 citizens, experts, peace activists and people from diverse faiths including Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions gathered and engaged in vibrant exchanges on the moral imperative for nuclear abolition.

At the end of the symposium, representatives of 14 faith groups issued a joint statement pledging increased activism by religious communities toward the abolition of nuclear

weapons. This message was broadly shared throughout the world thanks to IPS’ media coverage.

As a committed pacifist organization, SGI will continue to work together with like-minded citizens and partners around the world to strengthen grassroots efforts toward the shared goal of ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction.

As we draw closer to 2015, the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we strongly feel there is a need to re-activate the global momentum toward nuclear abolition. For this purpose, the SGI-IPS joint media project provides a useful platform and resource in raising people’s shared consciousness.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with IPS as we pursue our shared goal of advancing a culture of peace. And as a committed civil society organization, we are determined to increase our efforts toward realizing a nuclear free world. ◆

**Vice President, Soka Gakkai, Executive Director For Peace Affairs, Soka Gakkai International*

INTRODUCTION BY

RAMESH JAURA*

I am delighted to present this compilation of reports and analyses that IPS and its partners have written and widely disseminated between April 2013 and March 2014, as part of a joint media project with SGI, now in its sixth year.

This anthology focuses on discussions at the United Nations and outside the world body, particularly at two international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons - in March 2013 in Oslo, Norway, and in February 2014 in Nayarit, Mexico.

These sought to reinforce interest in the need for a nuke free world in the wake of the result-less 2010 NPT Review Conference and an indefinite postponement of the proposed international convention on creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East.

As global coordinator of the project since April 2009, I find great satisfaction that we have traversed a long way to raise public awareness of the need for a world free of nuclear weapons.

When we started publishing the first articles related to raising awareness about the need to usher in a world without nuclear weapons, we had to learn to walk up the path, which was new to most of us.

As we walked, our horizon widened. We realized that development, environment and human rights as well as gender equality - the focus of our coverage - are intertwined with the need to ban the bomb. Not only because nuclear weapons not only swallow



huge sums of money that are urgently needed for social and economic development, but also because nukes threaten to destroy structures that are conducive to sustainable global human development.

In the past five years, we have been often asked why we are focusing on a highly delicate political issue, which continues to face hurdles and would continue to do so - because the nuclear haves do not want to abandon what they have. In fact they provide an atomic umbrella to the nuclear have-nots.

Some of the nuclear have-nots are loathe to depending on such an umbrella because it obliges them to toe the line of the nuclear haves, thus standing in the way of exercising their sovereignty as sovereign states. They also argue that nukes bolster the strength of a foreign policy. Thus continues the vicious circle of cause and effect and effect and cause.

Against this backdrop, our joint project has come to occupy a pride of place in the world of media. In fact, on closer look it would appear that just as IPS started 50 years ago focusing on the issues of development, environment and human rights, today it is the only media organization which writes regularly about the need for nuclear disarmament and abolition of all nukes. And it does so not as an advocacy group but as a professional news organization. ♦

**Ramesh Jaura is Director General, IPS-Inter Press Service*

EXPLORING THE PATH TOWARDS A NUCLEAR-FREE WORLD

BY DAISAKU IKEDA* FROM TOKYO

This past February, the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons was held in Nayarit, Mexico, as a follow-up to the first such conference held last year in Oslo, Norway. The conclusion reached by this conference, on the basis of scientific research, was that “no State or international organisation has the capacity to address or provide the short and long term humanitarian assistance and protection needed in case of a nuclear weapon explosion.”

As this makes clear, almost 70 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, humanity remains defenceless in the face of the catastrophic effects that any use of nuclear weapons would inevitably produce.

Since May 2012, a succession of four joint statements warning of the dire humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons have been issued. These statements have drawn support from a growing number of states; the Nayarit conference was attended by the representatives of 146 countries.

In summing up the outcome of the conference, the Chair stressed the need for a legal framework outlawing these weapons, whose very existence is contrary to human dignity, stating that the time has come to initiate a diplomatic process to realise this goal. It is highly significant that three-quarters of the member states of the United Nations have expressed their shared desire for a world without nuclear weapons in this way.



Dr. Daisaku Ikeda. Credit: Seikyo Shimbun

Regrettably, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the nuclear-weapon states recognised under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), did not attend this meeting. What is needed most at this juncture is to find a common language shared by the countries signing these joint statements and the nuclear-weapon states.

The movement to focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has emerged against the backdrop of grassroots efforts by global civil society calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Crucially, this has included the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who have long raised their voices in the cry that no one must ever again experience the horror of nuclear war.

On the other hand, the experience of being in possession of the “nuclear button” that would launch a devastating strike has steadily impressed on several generations of political leaders in the nuclear-weapon states the reality that nuclear weapons are unlike other armaments and cannot be considered militarily useful weapons. This has served as a restraint against their use.

In this sense, the two sides share a sentiment that can bridge the gulf between them - the desire never to witness or experience the catastrophic humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons. This can serve as the basis for a common language with which to explore the path towards a world without nuclear weapons. ☺

I have repeatedly called for a nuclear abolition summit to be held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki next year in 2015, the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of those cities. I hope that representatives of the nuclear-weapon states, the countries that have signed the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, as well as representatives of global civil society and, above all, youthful citizens from throughout the world, will gather in a world youth summit for nuclear abolition to adopt a declaration affirming their commitment to end dependence on nuclear weapons and bring the era of nuclear weapons to a close.

In this connection, I would like to offer some concrete proposals.

The first is for a nuclear weapons non-use agreement. One means of achieving this would be to place the catastrophic humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons use at the centre of the deliberations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Such an agreement would advance the implementation of Article VI of the NPT, under which the nuclear-weapon states have committed to pursuing nuclear disarmament in good faith.

Regions such as Northeast Asia and the Middle East, which are not currently covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones, could take advantage of a non-use agreement to declare themselves “nuclear weapon non-use zones,” as a preliminary step to becoming nuclear-weapon-free. It is my strong hope that Japan - which signed the most recent iteration of the joint statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons even while remaining under the nuclear umbrella of the United States - will reawaken to its responsibility as a country that has experienced atomic weapons attack. Japan should play a leading role in the establishment of such a non-use agreement and non-use zones.

In parallel with such efforts within the existing NPT regime, I would also call upon the international community to fully utilise the process now developing around the successive

joint statements to broadly enlist international public opinion and catalyse negotiations for the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

This could take the form of a treaty expressing the commitment, made in light of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, to the future relinquishment of reliance on these weapons as a means of achieving security, coupled with separate protocols defining concrete prohibition and verification regimes. Such an approach would mean that even if the entry into force of the separate protocols took time, the treaty would express the clear will of the international community that nuclear weapons have no place in our world.

This coming April 11-12, the Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative will convene in Hiroshima, attended by the foreign ministers of 12 states. From April 28, the NPT Review Conference preparatory committee will meet in New York. These are opportunities for global civil society to arouse international public opinion and to accelerate progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The work of building a world without nuclear weapons signifies more than just the elimination of these horrific weapons. Rather, it is a process by which the people themselves, through their own efforts, take on the challenge of realising a new era of peace and creative coexistence. This is the necessary precondition for a sustainable global society, a world in which all people - above all, the members of future generations - can live in the full enjoyment of their inherent dignity as human beings.

[IPS - March 29, 2014] ◆

**Daisaku Ikeda is a Japanese Buddhist philosopher and peace-builder and president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) grassroots Buddhist movement (www.sgi.org). The full text of his 2014 Peace Proposal is available at <http://www.sgi.org/sgi-president/proposals/peace/peace-proposal-2014.html>.*

NON-NUCLEAR UKRAINE HAUNTS SECURITY SUMMIT IN THE HAGUE

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

The two-day, much-ballyhooed Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in the Netherlands, which concluded Tuesday, was politically haunted by the upheaval in Ukraine - the former Soviet republic that renounced some 1,800 of its nuclear weapons in one of the world's most successful disarmament exercises back in 1994.

Still, it raised a question that has remained unanswered: Would Russian President Vladimir Putin have intervened militarily in Ukraine if it had continued to remain the world's third largest nuclear power, after the United States and Russia?

The only way in which the conflict would be different now - had Ukraine kept possession of its nuclear weapons after the collapse of the Soviet Union - "is that two nuclear-armed states would be testing each other's willingness to do the unthinkable in the midst of a political crisis," John Loretz, programme director of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), told IPS.

"The claim that deterrence works and that, therefore, Ukraine would be more secure with nuclear weapons, is facile and unsupported," he said.

In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal said it is impossible to know whether Putin would have been so quick to invade Crimea if Ukraine had nuclear weapons.



"But it's likely it would have at least given him more pause," the editorial said, arguing that Ukraine's fate "is likely to make the world's nuclear rogues, such as Iran and North Korea, even less likely to give up their nuclear facilities or weapons."

And several Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia and perhaps Egypt, are contemplating their nuclear options should Iran go nuclear.

"Ukraine's fate will only reinforce those who believe these countries can't trust American assurances," the

Journal said.

Refuting that argument, Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute, told IPS: "Let us presume that the Wall Street Journal's logic is correct."

It would then follow that a core premise of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, is adverse to the security interests of over 180 nations, which, pursuant to the treaty, have eschewed these horrific devices, he pointed out.

"A treaty that undermines the security interests of the vast majority of nations is not likely to survive for long," said Granoff, a senior adviser of the American Bar Association's Committee on Arms Control and National Security. ↻

The better question, he argued, is whether the world is better off with more states with nuclear weapons or whether eliminating them universally, as the same treaty also demands, is the better course.

“If nuclear weapons were universally banned and the associated fear and hostility they engender diminished, would we be more able to soberly identify our shared interests in a more secure world?” he asked.

Dr. Ian Anthony, director of the European Security Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), told IPS a secure nuclear future cannot be based on a total absence of risk, because that cannot be achieved.

He said it follows that global nuclear security is not a final state, something that can be achieved once, and for all time.

“The instruments needed to reduce nuclear security risk will have to be continuously adapted in line with changing political, economic and technological conditions,” he said.

Anthony also said the long-term sustainability of the nuclear security effort will ultimately depend on successful multi-lateralisation of the process.

Some states with complex nuclear fuel cycles did not participate in the Nuclear Security Summit. At some point, these states will have to be engaged with and included, he added.

The Hague summit was aimed at preventing non-state actors and terrorists from getting their hands on nuclear weapons or nuclear materials.

The summit was the third in a series, the first being held in Washington DC in 2010, and the second in Seoul, South Korea, in 2012.

On the comparison with Ukraine, Granoff told IPS, “The myopia of the Wall Street Journal’s perspective distorts empirically definable threats which can be ignored no longer, amongst them, surely is the ongoing threat of a use of a nuclear weapon by accident, design or madness.”

He asked: “Would we not be better able to cooperate on the existential threats challenging every citizen of Russia, US, UK, China, India, Israel, Pakistan, France, North Korea and the Ukraine, such as stabilising the climate, protecting the rain forests and the health of the oceans, as well as the critically important global threats such as pandemic diseases, cyber security, terrorism, and financial markets?”

Loretz told IPS there is no proof that deterrence works, only that it has not yet failed. Anyone who believes that deterrence cannot fail - that it will work 100 percent of the time - is living in a fantasy world.

“One need only recall the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, where plain dumb luck had far more to do with averting catastrophe than any rational decision making - of which there was precious little,” he said.

As more states acquire nuclear weapons, he pointed out, “we simply come closer to the day when deterrence fails and nuclear weapons are used. Most countries came to this unavoidable conclusion decades ago, which is why we have the NPT and are so anxious to maintain its integrity until we can rid the world of nuclear weapons entirely.”

Loretz said the recent humanitarian initiative emerging from the 2013 Oslo and 2014 Nayarit conferences (on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons) is based on an understanding that nuclear weapons themselves are the problem, regardless of who possesses them, and that the only sure way to prevent their use is to delegitimise and eliminate them. ☺

“This humanitarian perspective trumps all claims for the political utility of nuclear weapons, which always boils down to a gamble that threatening to use them will cause an adversary to back down,” he declared.

In the current crisis, he argued, that really would be a game of Russian roulette that no one should be playing. “Let’s assume, for the sake of argument, that Ukraine had kept its strategic nuclear weapons that remained behind when the Soviet Union broke apart,” Loretz said.

“Would that have made the longstanding differences in the region any less intractable? Would Russia be any less inclined to flex its muscles in a region where it has major political and economic ambitions? Would Ukraine’s relationship with Europe, particularly the NATO states, have been any less complicated or provocative to Russia?”

“No, no, and no,” he declared. [IPS - March 26, 2014] ◆

Photo on page 14: U.S. President Barack Obama speaks at the Nuclear Security Summit 2014, with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte (far left). Credit: Dave de Vaal/cc by 2.0

Declaration of the NSS

The Nuclear Security Summit, attended by 58 world leaders, adopted a declaration and approved new agreements:

- reducing the amount of dangerous nuclear material in the world that terrorists could use to make a nuclear weapon (highly enriched uranium and plutonium);
- improving the security of radioactive material (including low-enriched uranium) that can be used to make a "dirty bomb";
- improving the international exchange of information and international cooperation.

PARLIAMENTS WANT A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD

BY JAMSHED BARUAH FROM GENEVA

More than 163 parliaments from around the world, constituting the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), have adopted a landmark resolution urging parliaments to “work with their governments on eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines” and to “urge their governments to start negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or package of agreements to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world”.

The resolution, *Toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments*, adopted on March 20 also implores parliaments to “use all available tools including committees to monitor national implementation of disarmament commitments, including by scrutinising legislation, budgets and progress reports” and promote and commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on September 26.

The resolution, adopted after 12 months of consultations and negotiations, further asks parliaments to work together with their governments and civil society to build momentum for a constructive Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2015, ratify and implement existing non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and agreements, including the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Convention on Nuclear Terrorism, IAEA nuclear safeguards agreements and the Action Plan from the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and strengthen existing nuclear-weapon-free zones as well as support their expansion and the establishment of new zones, especially a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.



The Resolution also welcomes the first conference in Oslo (Norway) and the second in Narayit (Mexico) on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and the emergence of other multilateral approaches and initiatives including the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. It also encourages parliamentarians to engage in multi-party networks like Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

(PNND) in order to support effective parliamentary action.

Alyn Ware, PNND’s Global Coordinator says in a web posted statement: “This resolution demonstrates the growing understanding by parliamentarians that their responsibilities extend beyond those of their political parties and national positions to a shared obligation to the global common good and the security of future generations. Parliamentarians from non-nuclear countries, nuclear-armed countries and countries under extended nuclear deterrence doctrines came together to challenge governments to emerge from behind their complacency or cloaks of nuclear deterrence, and to act resolutely to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.”

The issue of nuclear weapons was chosen by the IPU, from among a number of key security issues, as its focus for peace and security for 2013-2014, due to the importance of this topic for human survival. ➡

Destructive effects

“On-going efforts by a few States to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them threaten regional and global peace and security,” said Blaine Calkins from Canada, one of the co-rapporteurs of IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security which facilitated the drafting, deliberations and adoption of the resolution.

PNND Co-President Saber Chowdhury from Bangladesh, who also served as the President of the IPU Standing Committee for the past four years, introduced the resolution by quoting the historic conclusion of the International Court of Justice that “the destructive effects of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in time or space”.

“Parliamentary action worldwide should aim to eliminate the concept of *nuclear deterrence* once and for all,” said Yolanda Ferrer from Cuba, the other co-rapporteur of the IPU Standing Committee. “It encourages the perpetual possession of nuclear weapons and justifies the use of huge sums to modernize nuclear arsenals, funds that could be invested to solve the most pressing problems facing the world’s population, such as hunger, poverty and unhealthy living conditions.”

“Parliamentarians can play a key role in moving governments to implement their shared commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons,” said Calkins. “Among other things, they can: hold governments to account and ensure compliance with commitments and responsibilities under the NPT; convince governments to accept new commitments, mechanisms and responsibilities as

required; and, mobilize public opinion and civil society to demand faster and deeper action.”

The IPU published in cooperation with PNND a Handbook in 2012 that comprehensively outlines good policies and practices that can be pursued to complement governmental efforts in non-proliferation and disarmament, said Calkins. “It is precisely by pursuing such work and partnering with governments and civil society that parliamentarians can ensure that the aspiration of a world free of nuclear weapons will finally be realized.”

PNND and the Swiss Foreign Ministry co-hosted a parliamentary roundtable at the IPU Assembly following the adoption of the resolution, to discuss the humanitarian imperative and the cooperative security framework for a nuclear weapon free world.

The roundtable focused on effective actions parliamentarians could take in their parliaments, using examples of exemplary practice from the Handbook, as well as actions they could take in regional bodies such as the Parliamentary Assemblies for NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It also focused on key priorities from the IPU resolution on which parliamentarians and the IPU should follow-up, particularly the start of negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention - possibly by a like-minded group or through a UN resolution - and the renunciation of nuclear deterrence including through an increased focus on cooperative security mechanisms and approaches as the best alternative. [IDN-InDepthNews - March 21, 2014] ♦

TOWARDS A NUKE-FREE SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL SOCIETY

BY RAMESH JAURA FROM BERLIN

Describing the disorientation and anarchy in the aftermath of First World War in 1919, the Irish poet W. B. Yeats wrote in his renowned poem *The Second Coming*: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, / The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned; / The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity.” At a time when, despite the absence of a global war, things appear to be falling apart again, the Buddhist philosopher and educator Daisaku Ikeda does not despair and, in fact, shows the way to “value creation for global change

To celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) - a Tokyo-based lay Buddhist movement linking more than 12 million people around the world - he has offered “thoughts on how we can redirect the currents of the twenty-first century toward greater hope, solidarity and peace in order to construct a sustainable global society, one in which the dignity of each individual shines with its inherent brilliance”.

In his Peace Proposal 2014, published on January 26, Ikeda offers specific suggestions focusing on three key areas critical to creating a sustainable global society: education for global citizenship; strengthening resilience in regions such as Asia and Africa by establishing regional cooperative mechanisms to reduce damage from extreme weather and disasters; and prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.

Ikeda writes: “In light of the increasing incidence of (natural) disasters and extreme weather events in recent years (as well as severe humanitarian crises caused by international and domestic conflicts), there has been growing stress on the importance of enhancing the resilience of human societies - preparing for threats, managing crises and facilitating recovery.”

And this means: Realizing a hopeful future, rooted in people's natural desire to work together toward common goals and to sense progress toward those goals in a tangible way. Ikeda sees this as “an integral aspect of humankind's shared project to create the future -- a project in which anyone anywhere can participate and which lays the solid foundations for a sustainable global society”.

Ikeda regards education for global citizenship with a particular focus on young people crucial for a sustainable global society. With an eye on the summit scheduled to take place in September 2015 to adopt a new set of global development goals, widely referred to as sustainable development goals (SDGs). Ikeda urges that targets related to education be included among these: specifically, to achieve universal access to primary and secondary education, to eliminate gender disparity at all levels and to promote education for global citizenship.

An educational program for global citizenship, the SGI President says, should deepen understanding of the challenges facing humankind; it should identify the early signs of impending global problems in local phenomena, empowering people to take action; and it should foster the spirit of empathy and coexistence with an awareness that actions that profit one's own country might have a negative impact or be perceived as a threat by other countries.

Another area that in his view should be a focus of the SDGs along with education is empowering youth. He suggests three guidelines to be included in establishing the SDGs: for all states to strive to secure decent work for all; for young people to be able to actively participate in solving the problems facing society and the world; and for the expansion of youth exchanges to foster friendship and solidarity transcending national borders. ➔

Youth exchanges, in particular, help nurture friendship and ties that serve as a bulwark against the collective psychologies of hatred and prejudice. As such, the SGI President is of the view that their inclusion in the SDGs would be of great significance.

Regional cooperation for resilience

Ikeda's Peace Proposal 2014 also suggests the establishment of regional cooperative mechanisms to reduce damage from extreme weather and disasters, strengthening resilience in regions such as Asia and Africa. These would function alongside global measures developed under the UNFCCC, he says.

He calls for treating disaster preparedness, disaster relief and post-disaster recovery as an integrated process, and urges neighbouring countries to establish a system of cooperation for responding to disasters. "Through such sustained efforts to cooperate in strengthening resilience and recovery assistance, the spirit of mutual help and support can become the shared culture of the region," says an official synopsis of Ikeda's Peace Proposal 2014.

Ikeda suggests that the pioneering initiative for such regional cooperation be taken in Asia, a region that has been severely impacted by disasters. A successful model here will inspire collaboration in other regions, he adds. A foundation for this already exists in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which has a framework for discussing better cooperation. He calls on countries in the region to establish an Asia recovery resilience agreement, a framework drawing from the experience of the ARF.

The SGI President further recommends efforts to strengthen resilience through sister-city exchanges and cooperation, which provide an important basis for creating spaces of peaceful coexistence throughout the region. Currently, there are 354 sister-city agreements between Japan and China, 151 between Japan and South Korea and 149 between China and South Korea. Further, the Japan-China-South Korea Trilateral Local Government

Conference has taken place annually since 1999 to further promote this kind of interaction.

Ikeda strongly proposes a Japan-China-South Korea summit to be held at the earliest to initiate dialogue toward this kind of cooperation, including cooperation on environmental problems. "The 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, should serve as an impetus for further talks to explore the modalities of concretizing such cooperation," says Ikeda.

For a world free of nuclear weapons

The SGI President argues: "Natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunami are characterized by the fact that, while it may be possible to lessen their impact, it is impossible to prevent their occurrence. This is in sharp contrast to the threat posed by nuclear weapons, whose use would wreak devastation on an even greater scale than that of natural disasters but which can be prevented and even eliminated through the clear exercise of political will by the world's governments."

In light of this, Ikeda regards the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons backbone of a sustainable global society. He argues that the Final Document of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Norway, in March 2013 have helped encourage efforts by a growing number of governments to place the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons at the centre of all discussions of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Since May 2012, these governments have repeatedly issued Joint Statements on this topic, and the fourth such statement, issued in October 2013, was signed by the governments of 125 states, including Japan and several other states under the nuclear umbrella of nuclear-weapon states. ☞

Ikeda stresses the shared recognition that nuclear weapons fundamentally differ from other weapons, that they exist on the far side of a line which must not be crossed, and that it is unacceptable to inflict their catastrophic humanitarian consequences on any human being. This recognition, he says, holds the key to transcending the very idea that nuclear weapons can be used to realize national security objectives.

The SGI President reiterates his call for a nuclear abolition summit to be held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015, the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of those cities. He hopes in particular that representatives of the countries that signed the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, as well as representatives of global civil society and, above all, youthful citizens from throughout the world, will gather in a world youth summit for nuclear abolition to adopt a declaration affirming their commitment to bringing the era of nuclear weapons to an end.

Parallel with this, he makes two concrete proposals. The first is for a nuclear weapons non-use agreement. This, in his view, would be a natural outcome of placing the catastrophic humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons use at the centre of the deliberations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, and it would be a means of advancing the implementation of Article VI of the NPT under which the nuclear-weapon states have committed to pursuing nuclear disarmament in good faith.

Ikeda argues that the establishment of a non-use agreement, in which the nuclear-weapon states pledge, as an obligation rooted in the core spirit of the NPT, not to use nuclear weapons against states parties to the treaty, would bring an enhanced sense of physical and psychological security to states that have relied on the nuclear umbrella of their allies, opening the way to security arrangements that are not dependent on nuclear weapons. His second specific proposal is to utilize the process that is developing around the Joint Statements on the human

itarian impact of nuclear weapons use to broadly enlist international public opinion and catalyse negotiations for the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

“It is important that we remember that even a non-use agreement is only a beachhead toward our ultimate goal - the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons. That goal will only be realized through accelerated efforts propelled by the united voices of global civil society.”

The SGI President points out that the world has “moved from an era in which the danger arose from the existence of conflict to one that is made dangerous by the continued existence of nuclear weapons”. He adds: “The intense confrontation of the Cold War provoked a sense of crisis, giving rise to a stance of mutual deterrence in which the two sides threatened each other with nuclear arsenals of unimaginable destructive capability.”

“In contrast, today it is the continued existence of nuclear weapons in itself that gives rise to insecurity, pushing new states to acquire nuclear weapons while leaving existing nuclear-weapon states convinced of the impossibility of relinquishing these arms.”

Yet another sound argument for doing away with nuclear weapons is that global economic crisis that began six years ago has eroded the fiscal standing of virtually every national government. And yet the global cost of maintaining these increasingly inutile weapons is an astonishing US\$100 billion a year.

Subsequently, more and more people are coming to see nuclear weapons as a burden weighing down national finances rather than an asset that enhances national prestige. “In light of all these factors,” says Ikeda, “the motivation of the nuclear-weapon states to take proactive steps to reduce the threat posed by the continued existence of these weapons should increase.” [IDN-InDepthNews - March 19, 2014]◆

THREE CONFERENCES TO FOCUS ON NUKE-FREE WORLD

BY JAMSHED BARUAH FROM BERLIN

As tension mounts in relations between the U.S. and Russia on Ukraine amid apprehensions of a nuclear fallout, three international conferences scheduled for April 2014 have acquired added significance in promoting efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The first in the series is a meeting of foreign ministers on April 11-12 in Hiroshima, nearly two months after the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Mexico. It will be followed by an inter-faith conference organised by the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI) on April 24 in Washington. From April 28 to May 9 the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will hold its third session at the United Nations in New York.

The PrepCom is purported to prepare for the Review Conference in terms of assessing the implementation of each article of the NPT and facilitating discussion among States with a view to making recommendations to the Review Conference. The NPT, which entered into force in 1970 and was extended indefinitely in 1995, requires that review conferences be held every five years. The Treaty is regarded as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

NPDI

Promoting a world without nuclear weapons is also the objective of the Hiroshima ministerial meeting, which is part of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), backed by a coalition of states with Japan and Australia taking the lead. The coalition came into being in an effort to help implement the Fi-



nal Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, adopted by consensus.

Composed of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, the NPDI has issued a series of declarations concerning the pace of NPT negotiations and the need to swiftly move on both non-proliferation and disarmament.

At its ministerial meeting in the Hague in April 2013, the NPDI resolved to "actively contribute to the work of the PrepCom including by submitting, for further elaboration by all State Parties, working papers on reducing the role of nuclear weapons, non-strategic nuclear weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT), the wider application of safeguards, nuclear weapons-free zones and export controls as well as an update of last year's working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education".

The resolution added: "We also firmly believe that universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are essential steps to achieve nuclear disarmament. We welcome the ratification of the Treaty this year by Brunei Darussalam and Chad, bringing the total of ratifications to 159... We appeal urgently to all countries that have not yet become Parties, in particular to the remaining eight States listed in Annex II of the Treaty, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay." ➡

Further: "The Nuclear Weapon States have a particular responsibility to encourage ratification of the CTBT and we call on them to take the initiative in this regard. Pending the entry into force

of the Treaty, we call upon all States to refrain from nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions.”

‘Three Preventions’ and ‘Three Reductions’

The importance of the Hiroshima ministerial conference was underlined by Japan’s Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in a speech at the Nagasaki University on January 20, 2014. Kishida was born in Hiroshima, the first city to have been victimized by the first nuclear bomb ever deployed.

Kishida said, ‘Three Preventions’ and ‘Three Reductions’ were the centerpiece of Japan’s “basic thinking towards a world free of nuclear weapons”. The former are: “(1) prevention of the emergence of new nuclear weapon states, (2) prevention of the proliferation of nuclear-weapons-related materials and technologies, and (3) prevention of nuclear terrorism.” The constitute: “(1) reduction of the number of nuclear weapons, (2) reduction of the role of nuclear weapons, and (3) reduction of the incentive for possession of nuclear weapons.”

Interfaith conference

Implementation of such measures calls for active participation of the global civil society, says SGI President Daisaku Ikeda. “Where there is an absence of international political leadership, civil society should step in to fill the gap, providing the energy and vision needed to move the world in a new and better direction.”

“I believe that we need a paradigm shift, a recognition that the essence of leadership is found in ordinary individuals - whoever and wherever they may be - standing up and fulfilling the role that is theirs alone to play,” he adds.

Ikeda writes in his 2013 Peace Proposal: “It is necessary to challenge the underlying inhumanity of the idea that the needs of states can justify the sacrifice of untold numbers of human lives and disruption of the global ecology. At the same time, we feel that nuclear weapons serve as a prism through which to bring

into sharper focus ecological integrity, economic development and human rights - issues that our contemporary world cannot afford to ignore. This in turn helps us identify the elements that will shape the contours of a new, sustainable society, one in which all people can live in dignity.”

Against this backdrop, an interfaith conference, initiated by SGI in Washington - the seat of the U.S. Administration and Congress - is of great importance.

Third PrepCom

Of crucial significance is the third PrepCom for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Hiroshima and Nagasaki will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings in 2015. This and the G8 Summit in 2016 would, according to SGI President Ikeda, be an appropriate opportunity for an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world, which in his view should include the additional participation of representatives of the UN and non-G8 states in possession of nuclear weapons, as well as members of the five existing NWFZs - Antarctic Treaty, Latin American NWFZ (Tlatelolco Treaty), South Pacific NWFZ (Rarotonga Treaty), Southeast Asia NWFZ (Bangkok treaty), and African NWFZ (Pelindaba Treaty) - and other states which have taken a lead in calling for nuclear abolition.

Addressing the opening of the 2014 session of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament (CD) on January 21 in Geneva. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that there has been no breakthrough yet. “The pervasive cycle of pessimism in this body must still be overcome or else the CD will be overtaken by events,” he said. ☺

Sharing his thoughts on a possible way forward, the UN chief said that while the CD continues to seek the path towards renewed disarmament negotiations, it is important that it develop treaty frameworks and proposals through structured discussions. “Laying such a foundation for future negotiations would be a concrete first step towards revalidating the relevance of the Confer-

ence,” he noted, adding that he hopes the body can make good progress before this spring’s third preparatory meeting for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The vital significance of the third PrepCom is underlined by the fact that Egypt decided to withdraw from the second session in April 2013, in protest against “the continued failure of the conference” to implement a 1995 resolution to establish a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East. Egypt’s Foreign Affairs ministry highlighted that the decision to postpone a conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East violated the decision made in the 2010 NPT conference to hold the conference in 2012. The ministry added that this “may affect the credibility of the NPT system”.

The conference was originally scheduled to take place in 2012, but was postponed by the four sponsors, the UN, the United States, Russia and Britain because not all states in the region - Israel above all - has not agreed to attend.

In its statement the ministry accused “some of the parties to the NPT, as well as some non-state parties” of hindering the establishment of the conference. It added that Egypt has sought the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone since the launch of the initiative at the United Nations in 1974. It called on the member states of the treaty, the UN, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the international community to uphold their responsibility in implementing resolutions.

[IDN-InDepthNews - March 15, 2014] ◆

*Image on page 23: A former South Dakota intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) site, now a Cold War Museum
Credit: london.usembassy.gov*

U.S.-RUSSIA BICKERING MAY TRIGGER NUCLEAR FALLOUT

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

The U.S.-Russian confrontation over Ukraine, which is threatening to undermine current bilateral talks on North Korea, Iran, Syria and Palestine, is also in danger of triggering a nuclear fallout.

Secretary of State John Kerry told U.S. legislators early this week that if the dispute results in punitive sanctions against Russia, things could “get ugly fast” and go “in multiple directions.”

Perhaps one such direction could lead to a nuclear impasse between the two big powers.

According to a state agency news report from Moscow, Russia has threatened to stop honouring its arms treaty commitments, and more importantly, to block U.S. military inspections of nuclear weapons, if Washington decides to suspend military cooperation with Moscow.

These mostly bilateral treaties between the United States and Russia include the 1994 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the 2010 new START, the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty and the 1970 international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

A nuclear tug-of-war between the two big powers is tinged in irony because post-Soviet Ukraine undertook one of the world’s most successful nuclear disarmament programmes when it agreed to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

Dr. Rebecca E. Johnson, executive director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament and Diplomacy, told IPS, “Clearly the situation between Ukraine and Russia is deeply worrying.



“Without going into the politics of the situation on the ground, as I don’t have the kind of regional expertise for that, this is not a place for issuing nuclear threats or scoring nuclear points,” she said.

“I’ve been disgusted to see some British and French representatives try to use Ukraine’s crisis to justify retaining nuclear weapons in perpetuity.”

Russia is not directly threatening to attack Ukraine with nuclear weapons, and no one believes it would be useful for the United States and countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to threaten Russia with a nuclear attack, no matter what they do, said Johnson.

Ukraine, which was once armed with the third largest nuclear arsenal after the United States and Russia, and possessed more nukes than France, Britain and China, dismantled and shipped its weapons to Russia for destruction beginning in 1994.

Dr. Ira Helfand, co-president of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), said Ukraine is commendable in being one of the few states to have given up its nuclear weapons peacefully, and the people of Ukraine should not have to fear nuclear weapons ravaging their country. ☺

Vitaly I. Churkin (left), Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in Ukraine on Mar. 13, 2014.

Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

“Any war involves a terrible and lasting human toll, risks spreading and harming people’s health in the region and beyond,” he warned.

In a statement, IPPNW said it underscores the absolute imperative to avoid the possibility of use of nuclear weapons. “This danger exists with any armed conflict involving nuclear armed states or alliances, which could escalate in uncontrollable, unintended and unforeseeable ways,” it warned.

Dr Tilman A. Ruff, co-chair, International Steering Group and Australian Board member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, told IPS the current agreements (e.g. START, New START and INF) are probably most important in that they demonstrate that verified reductions and elimination of whole classes of nuclear weapons are feasible, and hopefully reduce the risk of nuclear war between Russia and the United States.

However, continuing massive nuclear arsenals on both sides; the retention of almost 1,800 nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert missiles, ready to be launched within minutes; the aggressive eastward expansion of NATO, contrary to what Russian leaders were promised; and the rapid escalation of tension over recent events in Ukraine demonstrate the Cold War has not been firmly laid to rest.

“Any confrontation between nuclear-armed states runs the risk of escalating to the use of nuclear weapons, whether by inadvertence, accident, or bad decision-making,” said Dr Ruff, who is also an associate professor at the Nossal Institute for Global Health, School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne.

He said currently all the nuclear-armed states are massively investing in keeping and modernising their nuclear arsenals, and show no serious commitment to disarm, as they are legally bound to do. As long as nuclear weapons exist and are deployed, and

policies countenance their possible use, the danger they will be used is real and present.

“The dangerous and unstable situation in Ukraine highlights this starkly, and should dispel any notion that nuclear danger ended 20 years ago with apparent end of the Cold War,” he said. Dr Johnson told IPS Russian and U.S. nuclear weapons in the region are demonstrably not contributing to deterrence.

“If anything, their presence complicates the current dangers, with the attendant risks of crisis instability and potential military or nuclear escalation or miscalculations, though I’d hope no one would be mad enough to actually use them,” she said.

Politicians that want to keep French or British nuclear weapons need to stop making arguments that undermine the NPT and encourage proliferators, she pointed out.

“It is extraordinarily irresponsible to jump on the bandwagon of this dangerous regional crisis and make Ukrainians feel that they were wrong to rid their newly independent country of nuclear weapons in 1992 and join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states,” Johnson said.

It is clearly unacceptable for states armed with nuclear weapons to threaten non-nuclear nations, but this cannot be turned into a rationale either for risking nuclear war between Russia and NATO or for the non-nuclear countries to pull out of the NPT and start arming themselves with nuclear arsenals of their own, she noted.

As brought to the forefront through the recent Oslo and Nayarit conferences on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons need to be stigmatised, banned and eliminated, she added. “Only by removing these weapons of mass destruction from all countries’ arsenals will we be able to fairly address the security needs and aspirations of all peoples - whether in non-nuclear or nuclear-armed countries,” she added. [IPS - March 14, 2014] ♦

NATO AND RUSSIA CAUGHT IN NEW NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

BY JULIO GODOY* FROM BERLIN

The U.S. government is unofficially accusing Russia of violating the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, by flight testing two-stage ground-based cruise missile RS-26.

Although the U.S. government has not officially commented on the alleged Russian violation of the INF, which prohibits both countries to producing, testing and deploying ballistic and cruise missiles, and land-based missiles of medium (1,000 to 5,500 kilometres) and short (500 to 1,000 kilometres) range, high ranking members of the government in Washington have been leaking information to U.S. media, in a moment of particular tense relations with Moscow.

In 1987, after years of negotiations, both the NATO and the then Soviet Union agreed to destroy and to stop production of all missiles and related weapons, for instance the U.S. Pershing Ib and Pershing II and the BGM-109G Gryphon arsenals. Moscow, on its part, eliminated the whole SS missile series, including the SSC-X-4, in 1987 its most modern, land-based cruise missile with a nuclear warhead.

According to a report by the New York Times, the tested missile RS-26 aims at filling “the gap left in the missile potential of Russia as a result of the limitation of INF.” The newspaper also indicated that mid-January, the acting Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller informed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) of the U.S. data.

U.S. military experts, such as Dan Blumenthal and Mark Stokes of the American Enterprise Institute, say that the main Russian problem with the INF is that China is not bound



by it and continues to build up its own Intermediate-Range forces. In a comment for the Washington Post, Blumenthal and Stokes wrote that “Moscow has already threatened to pull out if China does not sign the treaty.”

If the U.S. reports are true, the Russian tests would confirm what numerous peace and anti-nuclear weapons activists have been warning about since several years, that the NATO and Russia are engaged in a

new nuclear arms race, despite all the bilateral talk about disarmament.

For the NATO has also been “filling the gaps” of its nuclear capability, in particular with the ongoing plan to “modernise” its arsenal of B61 nuclear weapons, stationed all over Western Europe. Additionally, practically all nuclear states, including India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan have at one time or other in recent years improved their arsenal on middle range rockets and nuclear weapons.

The formidable B61 arsenal stationed in Europe is a remnant of the Cold War. The actual number of such weapons of mass destruction is a top military secret, but some 20 of these are reported to be deployed in Germany, in the military basis near the village of Buechel, in the southwest of the country. Another undetermined number, up to 200 such weapons, are deployed in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey, all members of the NATO. ↻

Image: Russia and USA measure their missiles, Credit: pravda-team.ru

According to the NATO, or, rather, to the U.S. government, the modernisation of this nuclear arsenal is necessary given the archaic character of the B61 weapons. They are so-called dumb or “gravity” weapons, to be dropped from war planes over target zones, and be guided by a radar that, according to U.S. senate hearings, was constructed in the 1960s and originally designed for “a five-year lifetime”.

Dropping such dumb nuclear weapons from an airplane would mean that, even in case they operate as expected, vast areas would be obliterated from the face of the earth.

The old B61 nuclear bombs manifest several additional dangers, especially for the own NATO armies and European populations: In 2005, a U.S. Air Force review discovered that procedures used during maintenance of the nuclear weapons in Europe held a risk that a lightning strike could trigger a nuclear detonation.

In 2008, yet another U.S. Air Force review concluded that “most” nuclear weapons locations in Europe did not meet U.S. security guidelines and would “require significant additional resources” to bring these up to standard.

All these risks were confirmed during several hearings at the U.S. congress late last year, and during which military officials explained the range of modernisation the B61 arsenal is expected to go through.

Officially, the U.S. government has dubbed this modernisation of the B61 arsenal “a full-scope Life Extension Program (LEP)”, as Madelyn R. Creedon, assistant secretary of defence for global strategic affairs, told a session of subcommittee of the House of Representatives last October. [Read more: <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=747337>]

During the session, Creedon described the B61 as “the oldest warhead design in the U.S. nuclear stockpile, with several components dating from the 1960s.” She added that its modernisa-

tion “will meet military requirements and guarantee an extended service life coupled with more affordable sustainment costs; and it will incorporate the upgrades that (the National Nuclear Security Administration) NNSA deems mandatory to provide a nuclear stockpile that is safe, secure, and effective.”

During the same hearing, General C. R. Kehler, head of the U.S. strategic command, told the representatives what many peace activists have been saying since years, but the NATO always and only until recently denied.

“The average B61 is over 25 years old, contains antiquated technology, and requires frequent handling for maintenance,” Kehler said. “Only through extraordinary measures has this aging family of weapons remained safe, secure and effective far beyond its originally planned operational life.”

If the schedule for the modernisation is to be respected, the new B61-12 weapons will be ready by 2020, and the programme would have cost at least eight billion U.S. dollars, according to the NNSA’s current estimate.

However, as the Centre for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, a Washington, D.C.-based, non-partisan research organisation, has pointed out, an independent U.S. Defence Department assessment found that the actual cost could be higher than \$10 billion.

At this price, the LEP will cost \$25 million per bomb. The Centre recalls too, that the Ploughshares Fund complained that at this cost each refurbished B61 will be worth more than its weight in gold.

According to critics of the LEP, the modernisation won’t mean only “a life extension programme”, but instead a formidable increase of the weapons’ capabilities.

Hans M. Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, and one of the most

distinguished civil experts on nuclear weapons, says that new features of the weapons contradict early pledges by U.S. authorities that the LEP “will not support new military missions (n)or provide for new military capabilities.” However, new information about the LEP indicates precisely the contrary.

“The addition of a guided tail kit will increase the accuracy of the B61-12 compared with the other weapons and provide new warfighting capabilities,” Kristensen says.

“The tail kit is necessary, officials say, for the 50-kilotons B61-12 (with a reused B61-4 warhead) to be able to hold at risk the same targets as the 360-kilotons B61-7 warhead. But in Europe, where the B61-7 has never been deployed, the guided tail kit will be a significant boost of the military capabilities - an improvement that doesn’t fit the promise of reducing the role of nuclear weapons.”

For comparison, the ‘Little boy’ nuclear bomb with which the U.S. destroyed on August 6, 1945 the Japanese city of Hiroshima had an explosive yield of between 13 and 18 kilotons. The ‘Fat governments concerned, in particular in Germany, have since at least 2009 openly expressed their wishes to dismantle the weapons.

In reaction to the historic speech U.S. president Barack Obama made in the Czech capital Prague in April 2009, where he called the nuclear weapons spread across the world “the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War”, the Berlin government of the time argued in favour of the dismantling the archaic B61 stationed on German soil.

In what it was called “an unprecedented statement”, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Social Democratic German foreign minister of the time, called for the withdrawal of the U.S. nuclear weapons deployed in his country. In April 2009, only days after Obama’s speech in Prague, Steinmeier told the German magazine Der Spiegel that “the (B61 nuclear) weapons are militarily obsolete

man’ bomb that destroyed Nagasaki three days later had a yield of up to 22 kilotons.

During the October 2013 hearings at the U.S. House of Representatives, it became also clear that B61-12 would replace the old B61-11, a single-yield 400-kiloton nuclear earth-penetrating bomb introduced in 1997, and the B83-1, a strategic bomb with variable yields up to 1,200 kilotons.

For Kristensen, “The(se) military capabilities of the B61-12 will be able to cover the entire range of military targeting missions for gravity bombs, ranging from the lowest yield of the B61-4 (0.3 kilotons) to the 1,200-kiloton B83-1 as well as the nuclear earth-penetration mission of the B61-11.”

Such upgrading of the destruction capabilities would make the new arsenal an “all-in-one nuclear bomb on steroids, spanning the full spectrum of gravity bomb missions anywhere.”

This extraordinary improvement of the B61 arsenal’s mass destruction potential is the most problematic, for the European today” and promised that he would take steps to ensure that the remaining U.S. warheads “are removed from Germany.”

In the two years that followed, the next German conservative government, represented by its new foreign minister Guido Westerwelle, continued to make the case for dismantling the B61 arsenal.

Like his predecessor Steinmeier, Westerwelle, serving for the Christian Democratic-Liberal ruling coalition, made the arguments of the anti-nuclear weapons activists his own, and recalled that such arsenal is in many ways obsolete, for it was conceived to be used in conjunction with other armament that itself is out of use, and it aimed at an enemy - the Soviet bloc - that had ceased to exist. ☹

On March 2010, a large majority of the German parliament, the Bundestag, passed a resolution unequivocally demanding the withdrawal of the “U.S. nuclear weapons from German soil.”

But both Steinmeier and Westerwelle failed at convincing the NATO in general, and the U.S. government in particular, to follow. Instead, they had to kowtow before the fait accompli decided in Washington, that the B61 arsenal be modernised to become, to again use Hans Kristensen’s aptly description, an “all-in-one nuclear bomb on steroids.”

Steinmeier is again foreign minister, but he long ago ceased to discuss the matter in public. He may have “gotten shell-shocked by the pushback from the old nuclear guard in NATO,” as Kristensen said of Westerwelle on the same question.

At least, Steinmeier less than two years ago signed a declaration by a group of German parliamentarians representing all political parties, in which they insisted that the U.S. nuclear arsenal be removed from Germany. In the declaration, Steinmeier, at the time leader of the social Democratic parliamentary group, and colleagues accused the then ruling conservative Christian Democratic-Liberal coalition of having failed at reaching the same goal. “Worst still: By now it seems as if the government has said goodbye to this goal.”

The same accusation can be made this time against Steinmeier, again German foreign minister: He has not lived up to his own conviction, that the NATO nuclear weapons must be removed from European soil. The new NATO-Russia crisis caused by the turmoil in Ukraine will certainly help him to argue his change of mind. ” [IDN-InDepthNews - March 6, 2014] ♦

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including the Hellman-Hammett human rights award, the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Investigative Reporting Online by the U.S. Society of Professional Journalists, and the Online Journalism Award for Enterprise Journalism by the Online News Association and the U.S.C. Annenberg School for Communication, as co-author of the investigative reports “Making a Killing: The Business of War” and “The Water Barons: The Pri-

vatisation of Water Services

Picture: Julio Godoy - Credit: ICIJ

'NOW IS THE TIME' FOR MIDDLE EAST NUKE-FREE ZONE

BY JAYA RAMACHANDRAN FROM BERLI

The eminent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has revived the issue of a Middle East nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ), first proposed in 1962. Discussions on the subject have been frozen since the last quarter of 2012, when a planned United Nations conference on the region came to naught in the face of Israel's opposition.

In fact, if further proliferation is to be prevented in the Middle East, and regional security enhanced, “now is the time to convene the conference mandated by the 2010 NPT Review Conference,” says Tariq Rauf in an essay posted on the SIPRI website.

“The process for establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East will not be easy,” he cautions, “but the experience of other regions with such zones suggests that political will and leadership are crucial.”

NWFZs have already been established in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, South East Asia, Africa and Central Asia, with a view to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international security and preventing the emergence of new nuclear-weapon states.

“These established NWFZs are of particular relevance to an examination of the material obligations to be included in the verification regime of a future NWFZ in the Middle East,” states Rauf.

He is of the view that a Middle East NWFZ would require the dismantlement of Israel's nuclear weapon capabilities under international verification. “Compliance by states with CSAs (Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement) will also need to be assessed,” he adds.

He recalls: “The 2010 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agreed that the United Nations Secretary-General, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States should convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all states in the Middle East, on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction, in keeping with the mandate of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.”

However, in November 2012 the USA unilaterally announced that it would not be convened due to the situation prevailing in the region.

Rauf points out that all states of the Middle East region except for Israel are parties to the NPT and have undertaken to accept comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Arab states of the Middle East maintain that the establishment of a NWFZ would contribute to the conclusion of a peace settlement in the region.

However, Israel takes the view that a Middle East NWFZ, as well as other regional security issues, cannot be addressed in isolation from the establishment of a lasting peace and stable regional security conditions.

These issues, according to Israel, should be addressed within the framework of a regional multilateral security and confidence-building process, says Rauf, an internationally respected authority on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues and currently the director of SIPRI's arms control and non-proliferation programme. ➡

From 2002 to 2011 he headed the Verification and Security Policy Coordination Office at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In that capacity he dealt with high-priority verification cases involving Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, South Korea and Syria. He was also the Alternate Head of the IAEA delegation to NPT conferences from 2003 to 2010, and the IAEA Liaison and Point-of-Contact for a number of multilateral control regimes and United Nations Security Council committees.

Rauf writes: “Effective verification is an important measure of arms control agreements that aims at creating confidence between states. In the Middle East, with a legacy of fear and mistrust, the creation of such confidence would require verification arrangements that are far-reaching and comprehensive. NWFZs are of relevance not only to the parties directly involved, but also to states bordering the region and to the wider international community.”

According to Rauf, this underscores the need for a verification regime that creates the necessary confidence among the parties to the NWFZ agreement and in the international community at large.

“Verification arrangements under existing NWFZ agreements, which provide for international inspection through the IAEA and for regional structures that may be invoked in specified circumstances, can be replicated in a NWFZ in the Middle East in order to help meet both regional and global concerns,” he adds.

Rauf is of the view that in a NWFZ in the Middle East, each state party would be required to conclude and bring into force a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. “In a non-nuclear-weapon state with a CSA in force with the IAEA pursuant to a NWFZ agreement and the NPT, any undeclared reprocessing or enrichment would constitute a clear violation of the provisions of the CSA.”

The eminent expert considers the verification of nuclear fuel cycle activities essential in order to ensure their exclusively peaceful use. This is because technologies that enable the enrichment of uranium and the separation of plutonium are regarded as sensitive because they can be used to make both fuel for nuclear power reactors and the generation of electricity, and nuclear weapons.

According to Rauf, the cost and effort required in the application of IAEA safeguards at declared reprocessing plants can vary from almost no cost for decommissioned or abandoned facilities to continuous inspection costing tens of millions of dollars.

The SIPRI expert adds: “Reprocessing operations normally involve the release of gaseous fission products into the atmosphere and the release of particulates, some of which are deposited at significant distances from the facility.”

It is possible to detect clandestine plants through enhanced information analysis, complementary access and environmental sampling. But the safeguards approach for an enrichment plant will also depend on the operational status of the facility, he adds.

“The methods used to detect undeclared enrichment plants are essentially the same as for undeclared reprocessing. Enrichment operations normally result in the release of aerosols - especially at locations where connections to the process piping are made, but also through the plant ventilation system. These aerosols may not travel very far, and thus environmental sampling is only likely to be effective close to such facilities,” writes Rauf.

According to him, the difficulty in finding emissions from clandestine enrichment plants is further compounded by advances in enrichment technology that greatly reduce the size of plants and reduce their electrical power requirements. ➡

The SIPRI expert assures that verification measures applied in a Middle East NWFZ would benefit from a system that parallels the existing strengthened IAEA safeguards system based on CSAs supplemented by an Additional Protocol.

Such measures are designed to track all nuclear material in use in a state taking account of current and future technological developments, which may help increase the level of assurance of non-proliferation provided by safeguards practices.

In addition, they provide increased assurances with respect to the detection of undeclared facilities and fissile material. The

SIPRI expert concludes that in order to provide states party to a NWFZ in the Middle East with a level of assurance analogous to the assurance provided by the IAEA under comprehensive safeguards agreements, the verification system would have to apply to the entire nuclear fuel cycle in those states and be geared to the detection of undeclared production facilities and nuclear material, through the supplementary verification tools provided by an Additional Protocol. [IDN-InDepthNews - March 2, 2014] ♦



Credit <http://www.iaea.org>

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, THE STATE OF PLAY

BY PETER WEISS* FROM NEW YORK

If psychosis is a loss of contact with reality, the current status of nuclear disarmament can best be described as psychotic.

On the one hand, the nuclear issue is beginning to creep out from under the rug where it has lain dormant for several decades. On the other hand, the commitment of the nuclear weapon states to a nuclear weapons-free world is honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

Let us begin by adding up the pluses and the minuses of nuclear disarmament.

On the plus side, we have a president of the United States, which is central to the problem, who has spoken out repeatedly on the subject, albeit in a decelerating mode. In a speech at Purdue University on Jun. 16, 2008, he said, "It's time to send a clear message to the world: America seeks a world without nuclear weapons ... we'll make the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons a central element in our nuclear policy."

There was no reference to how long it might take. A year later, in the famous Prague speech of May 6, 2009, Obama said, "I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons", but he added, "This goal will not be reached quickly - perhaps not in my lifetime."

He was 48 at the time. Four years later, on Jun. 19, 2013, in Berlin, Obama said, "Peace with justice means pursuing the security of a world without nuclear weapons - no matter how distant that dream may be."

In all fairness, the trajectory to abolition announced in Prague has either been implemented or blocked through no fault of the president: A substantial reduction in nuclear arms has been ne-

gotiated with Russia and the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy has been lessened.

The ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the negotiation of a Fissile Materials Treaty, both of which the Obama administration favours, have been held up, one by the U.S. Senate, the other by another country.

But reduction is not elimination and the Defence Department (DOD) and Department of Energy continue to pursue policies that are clearly incompatible with nuclear disarmament, to wit:

The Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States, issued by the DOD on Jun. 19, 2013, states that nuclear weapons will be used only in extreme circumstances, but that it is too early to limit their employment strictly to deterrence.

The Assessment of Nuclear Monitoring and Verification Technologies, released by the Defence Science Board in January 2014, concedes that for the first time since the beginning of the nuclear age the United States needs to be concerned not only with horizontal proliferation, i.e. to countries not possessing nuclear weapons, but also with vertical proliferation, i.e. in nuclear weapons countries.

But the 100-page report makes no reference to monitoring and verification requirements in a nuclear weapons free world.

On Feb. 6, in an apparent violation of at least the spirit if not the letter of the Nonproliferation Treaty, the U.S. announced that it had conducted a successful impact test (not involving an explosion) of the B-61 nuclear bomb. Donald Cook, deputy administrator for defence at DOE, said that engineering on the new bomb had commenced and that this would make it possible to replace older models "by the mid or late 2020s."

Thus, U.S. policy on nuclear disarmament is at best a mixed bag; that of the other eight nuclear armed powers is not much better.

Now for the good news. Last year saw more encouraging action by non-nuclear powers than most previous years:

- In February the Foreign Ministry of Germany, a member of NATO, hosted a Forum on Creating the Conditions and Building a Framework for a Nuclear Weapons Free World, convened by the Middle Powers Initiative. It was attended by 26 governments and a number of civil society organisations.
- In March, the Foreign Ministry of Norway, another NATO country, convened in Oslo a Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, attended by 128 governments, and numerous civil society organisations.
- On Oct. 21, Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand delivered to the First Committee of the U.N. the statement adopted by 125 countries, many of whom had attended the Oslo conference. It declared that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination.
- A Governmental Open Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament met for the first time in May in Geneva and produced in August a report to the General Assembly which outlined a variety of approaches to reaching nuclear disarmament, including a section on the role of international law.
- Also for the first time, on Sep. 26, the General Assembly held a high level meeting on nuclear disarmament in which

country after country, represented by Presidents, Foreign Ministers and other high officials, called for prompt and effective progress toward a nuclear weapons free world.

- Finally, and most importantly, during the follow up conference to Oslo held in Nayarit, Mexico, Feb. 13 and 14, Sebastian Kurz, the foreign minister of Austria, announced that he would convene a conference in Vienna later this year because “the international nuclear disarmament efforts require an urgent paradigm shift.”

The Vienna conference will not be simply a third rehearsal of the unspeakable horrors of nuclear weapons. It will get down to serious business, perhaps even the commencement of drafting a convention banning the use and possession of these weapons, as suggested by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

But there is a problem: The countries which have nuclear weapons have boycotted both Oslo and Nayarit. What if they boycott Vienna as well? That is the question. It is also the challenge facing the growing anti-nuclear weapons community, both official and unofficial. Embarrassment can be a tool of diplomacy.

The Nonproliferation Treaty, to which the nuclear powers pay lip service, requires good faith efforts by all states to achieve a nuclear weapons free world. This is a good time to remind the nuclear states, and particularly the big five, of that all important obligation.

[IPS - February 25, 2014] ♦

**Peter Weiss is President Emeritus of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy.*

PEACE FORUM AT UN PLEADS FOR NUKE ABOLITION

BY JAMSHED BARUAH FROM NEW YORK

The UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser has expressed deep concern about “the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the threat they pose to international peace and security”. Launching the book titled *A Forum for Peace and opening a discussion on Global Citizenship and the Future of the United Nations* at the UN headquarters in New York, he also stressed the importance of the culture of peace.



terror of other countries that are so terrified by the weapon,” he added.

Notwithstanding conflicts and threats around the world, Urbain said there was “a tremendous sense of hope” when he read the book. “As long as we have the space for personal creativity and solidarity, there is nothing that human beings cannot overcome,” he added. The UN, therefore, needs to create channels and mechanisms for people’s voices to be heard and, in so doing, let itself be empowered

by the people.

The book incorporates the proposals made by Daisaku Ikeda, President of the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), to the United Nations over the past 30 years. Themes discussed include the need for abolition of nuclear weapons, global education and human interconnectedness with the environment. The event was sponsored by the UNAOC and organised by Soka Gakkai International (SGI), Inter Press Service (IPS) news agency and the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research (Tokyo and Honolulu) on February 20, 2014.

The Institute’s director Olivier Urbain, who edited the book, said he was impressed by Ikeda’s firm belief in the power of ordinary people and his trust in the potential of solidarity. Ikeda’s promotion for a world without war does not stop with abolishing actual nuclear warheads, but it also deals with the mentality behind the fact that the world still have these weapons, Urban said.

“It’s not possible to build one’s happiness on the misery of another human being. The same thing with countries: it is not possible to build true lasting national security on the misery and

“This is the book that really needs to be read by all of us,” said Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, who chaired the event. “No human being in the world history has written so consistently and so substantively about the work of the U.N.,” he said, adding that many of Ikeda’s proposals, including the empowerment of women and young people in creating peace, have been reflected in the way the global body operates. Chowdhury pointed out that Ikeda’s concept of the ‘Culture of Peace’ is essential to make the world a secure place for future generations, by promoting peace through dialogue and nonviolence. ☺

Photo (L to R): UN High Representative for the UNAOC, Ambassador Al-Nasser; Ambassador Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative; 1976 Nobel Laureate Betty Williams | Credit: UNAOC/Aaron Fineman

Al-Nasser pointed out that peace and dialogue is also the business of the UN Alliance of Civilizations. “The peaceful and prosperous co-existence of people and nations is the cornerstone of

the United Nations mission. We are bound together as the international community in the belief that - despite different cultures, languages and religions, there are fundamental shared values and principles that underpin our humanity,” he said.

“We are bound together as the UN family because we recognize that it is through the celebration of our diversity, as well as through the promotion of tolerance and dispelling fears of the ‘other’, that we will build more peaceful world. And we are bound together because we understand that the citizens of world share common problems that require global solutions. This is where ‘the abolition of nuclear weapons’ and Global Citizenship Education come to play,” the UN High Representative for the AOC added.

“The International Community regardless of cultural differences has often expressed deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the threat they pose to international peace and security, Al-Nasser told a gathering of diplomats, journalists, academicians and representatives of non-governmental organisations.

The UN Member States had stated in the “outcomes of Disarmament Machinery” that mankind is confronting an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced. “It goes without saying,” he added, “that the non-peaceful use of nuclear power poses a serious threat to humanity exacerbated by the proliferation of these weapons.”

Against this backdrop, the majority of Member States had repeatedly reaffirmed that “the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”. This, in their view, should be followed by “a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to all non-nuclear weapons states”.

Al-Nasser recalled the advisory opinion on July 8, 1996 of the ICJ (The International Court of Justice) on the Legality of the Threat

or Use of Nuclear Weapons. The ICJ said that there is no specific authorization

of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in the conventional law and that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.

“I believe that ultimately one of the highest priority of the International Community is nuclear disarmament,” the UN High Representative said.

Global Citizenship Education

Moving to Global Citizenship Education (GCE) which is also interconnected to the culture of peace, Al-Nasser explained: “if the culture of peace is to take deeper root in us and among us then we should reach out more effectively to the younger minds as they grow up and to nurture and educate them about the bonding value of peace in our world.”

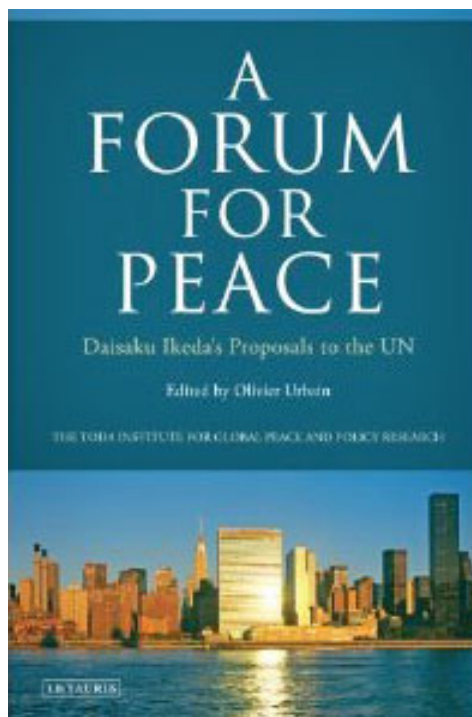
He added: “We must place crucial value on peace education. The young generation of today deserve a radically different education - one that does not glorify war but educates for peace. As such, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s Global Education First Initiative has three priorities including to ‘foster global citizenship’.”

The initiative explains this concept as transformative education that brings shared values to life and calls for an education that plays a central role in helping people to forge more peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. ☺

Al-Nasser said: “The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is the ideal forum whereby we can start to make peace within ourselves, within our families and between our communities and our nations.”

“The UN is all that we have in our world to try and make it better,” said Nobel Laureate Betty Williams. “I know that in certain areas it could do with a lot of improvements but give me one organisation in the world that is being run smoothly? What could we do if we didn’t have this organisation? How much worse would it be?” she asked.

Williams, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for promoting a peaceful society, believes that each person, as a global citizen, has a role to play in bringing peace to the world. “We can’t say ‘I don’t have to do it. Let them do it.’ Every child that dies in our world from conditions of malnutrition, from disease, from war, we are all guilty. As a human family, we are all guilty,” she said. [IDN-InDepthNews – February 24, 2014] ♦



Credit: <http://www.sgi.org/news/peace/peace20134/a-forum-for-peace-daisaku-ikeda.html>

ABOLITIONISTS WANT TO SET A DEADLINE FOR NUCLEAR BAN

BY EMILIO GODOY FROM NUEVO VALLARTA, MEXICO

Countries in favour of nuclear disarmament have reached the point where they are ready to set a date for the start of formal negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons, a decision that could be taken in Austria at the end of this year.

This was the general sense at the close on Friday Feb. 14 of the two-day Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in the tourist centre of Nuevo Vallarta in western Mexico. Delegates from 146 nations and over 100 non-governmental organisations from all over the world were in attendance.

Participants denounced the humanitarian effects of possession and use of nuclear arsenals and sent a powerful message in favour of the destruction of all nuclear warheads, 19,000 of which are still in the possession of China, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

“It’s a step towards a road map for the objective of prohibition, and I assume that the third conference will provide the road map for that aim. We are more advanced than the nuclear powers in acknowledging that there should be no weapons,” Japanese Hirotsugu Terasaki, vice-president of Soka Gakkai and executive director of Peace Affairs of Soka Gakkai International, a pacifist Buddhist organisation, told IPS.

“It’s about the creation of an environment for abolition [because] the nuclear powers defend non-proliferation, but they maintain their arsenals,” he said at the conference.

The Austrian government announced on Thursday Feb. 13 that they would host the third conference at the end of the year. It will precede the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the

main binding international instrument for limiting atomic armaments, which has made no progress for the past 15 years.

Héctor Guerra, the coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which has a membership of 350 organisations from 81 countries, told IPS that the process “is ready for the next steps and for the transition” to a “binding international instrument for the elimination” of nuclear weapons.

Ideally, “the entire international community” would participate, but if the nuclear powers abstain, “there is no problem,” said Guerra. In his view, the new treaty “would establish international regulations that would facilitate the delegitimisation of the weapons in international negotiations.”

As with the Oslo conference in 2013, the five nuclear powers authorised by the NPT (U.S., China, France, U.K. and Russia) were not present at Nuevo Vallarta.

Pakistan, however, was present, although like Israel and India it has not signed the NPT, which currently has 190 states parties.

Since the Oslo conference, the abolitionist movement has made headway in the denunciation of humanitarian impacts. In May 2013 the preparatory committee for the NPT Review Conference highlighted this angle, as did the General Assembly of the United Nations a few months later in New York.

At Nuevo Vallarta the factors of human error and technological failure in the maintenance and management of nuclear arsenals came under scrutiny, illustrated in detail by journalist Eric Schlosser in his book “Command and Control”. ➔

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

“Many times the arms were almost used due to miscalculation and mistakes,” Patricia Lewis, the head of international security research for the London-based NGO Chatham House, told IPS.

“The probability is greater than what we know and we have to consider what we don’t know. Today’s situation is even riskier,” she said.

Lewis presented the findings of a study in which she and her team reviewed nuclear incidents in tests, military exercises and potential risk alerts between 1962 and 2013, involving the U.S., the former Soviet Union, the U.K., France, Israel, India and Pakistan. Among its results, the study found lax physical and operational security practised at all levels by the U.S. air force.

Until all warheads are eliminated, Lewis recommended avoidance of large-scale military exercises at times of high political tension, and slowing the triggering of attack threat alerts.

Terasaki concluded that “nuclear weapons have made humanity their hostage.”

In Guerra’s view, a ban on nuclear weapons should be in place by 2020. “The political conditions are becoming ripe for negotiations,” which should be carried out in the U.N. framework, he said.

[IPS - February 15, 2014] ◆



Hirotsugu Terasaki, vice-president of Soka Gakkai and executive director of Peace Affairs of Soka Gakkai International, speaking in Nuevo Vallarta on progress towards a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. Credit: Courtesy of Kimiaki Kawai

NUCLEAR WEAPONS LEAVE UNSPEAKABLE LEGACY

BY EMILIO GODOY FROM NUEVO VALLARTA, MEXICO

For decades, Yasuaki Yamashita kept secret his experiences as a survivor of the nuclear attack launched by the United States on the Japanese city of Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945.

Yamashita, a 74-year-old artist who settled in Mexico in 1968, broke his silence in 1995 and told the story of what happened that morning to change the fate of Nagasaki and of the whole world.

“I was six years old, and we lived 2.5 kilometres away from ground zero (where the bomb detonated). Usually I went to the nearby mountains to catch insects with my friends, but that day I was alone in front of my house, near my mother, who was cooking the day’s meal,” Yamashita, a white-haired, soft-spoken man with fine features, told IPS.

In 1968, he came to Mexico as a correspondent covering the Olympic Games, and he stayed in this Latin American country. Today he digs deep into his past to recall how his mother called him to go into the shelter they had in their home.

“As we ran into it for cover there was a tremendous blinding light. My mother pulled me to the ground and covered me with her body. There was a tremendous noise, we heard lots of things flying over us,” he said.

They were surrounded by desolation. Everything was burning, there were no doctors, nurses or food. It was just the beginning of an endless tragedy that still endures.

At the age of 20, Yamashita started work at the Nagasaki hospital that treated atomic bomb survivors. He resigned years later.



His story greatly moved the participants of the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, being held Feb. 13-14 in Nuevo Vallarta, a tourist centre in the north-western state of Nayarit, and attended by delegates from 140 countries and more than 100 non-governmental organisations from around the world.

The goal of the two-day conference, which follows the previous conference in Oslo in March 2013, is to make progress towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, which are an economic, humanitarian, health and ecological threat to humanity and to the planet.

There are at least 19,000 atomic warheads in existence, most of them in the hands of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States - states authorised to possess them under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons - as well as India, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan.

The Mexican foreign ministry estimates that there are over 2,000 nuclear weapons on “high operational alert,” ready for launching within minutes. “These weapons are unacceptable. They must be banned, like biological and chemical weapons. There is no response capability, nationally or internationally, that can deal with the potential damages,” Richard Moyes, of Article 36, a UK-based not-for-profit organisation working to prevent unnecessary harm caused by certain weapons, told IPS.

In February 2013, Article 36 published a study of the likely impact of a 100 kilotonne bomb detonated over Manchester, UK. The broad urban area of Greater Manchester is home to 2.7 million people. ➡

The blast and thermal effects would kill at least 81,000 people directly and injure 212,000 more. Bridges and roads would be destroyed and the health services would be seriously incapacitated, hampering efforts at remedial action. The long term impact on the fabric of UK society “would be massive,” the Article 36 study says.

The Mexico City Metropolitan Area, with a population of over 20 million, carried out a similar theoretical exercise. It found that a 50 kilotonne bomb would affect up to 66 kilometres away from ground zero and some 22 million people, as the damage would extend to areas in the centre of the country beyond the metropolitan area itself.

“The consequences would be severe: loss of operational capacity of the emergency services, loss of rescue workers and health workers, hospitals, clinics,” Rogelio Conde, the coordinator of civil defence at the interior ministry, told IPS. “We would need help from other Mexican states, and from other countries, such as equipment, and operational and expert personnel,” he said.

Ecological devastation and damage to infrastructure would cause losses equivalent to 20 percent of the country’s economy. Places on the planet that have become atomic laboratories, like the Marshall Islands in the Pacific ocean, have suffered damage of various kinds.

The Marshall Islands, made up of chains of islands and coral atolls, were the site of 67 nuclear tests between 1946 and 1958.

“There have been environmental and health problems, although they have not been quantified. Many of our survivors have become humanguineapigs in the research laboratories, and 60 years on we are still suffering the consequences,” complained Jeban Riklon, a senator in the Islands’ government.

Riklon was two years old and living with his grandmother on Rongelap Atoll when the United States carried out its Castle Bra-

vo test on Bikini Atoll on Mar. 1, 1954, detonating a bomb 1,000 times as powerful as that dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The United States immediately performed a secret medical study to investigate the effects of radiation on humans.

A Human Rights’ Council Special Rapporteur’s report after a field trip to the Marshall Islands found violations to the right to health, to effective remedies and to environmental rehabilitation, in addition to forced displacement and other serious omissions by the United States.

The promoters of the Mexico conference want the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Tlatelolco Treaty, which was signed in 1967, to be the model for a future global convention against the bomb, even though they must overcome decades of diplomatic deadlock. The treaty led to the region becoming the first of the Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones (NWFZ), which now include 114 nations. The other four NWFZ are the South Pacific, Africa, South-east Asia and Central Asia.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation seeks to establish a clear road map to an atomic-weapons-free world by 2020. There are already 161 states party to this treaty, but its entry into force depends on its signature and ratification by China, North Korea, Egypt, the United States, India, Iran, Israel and Pakistan.

At the Nuevo Vallarta conference there are no representatives from the big five nuclear powers: the United States, China, France, the United Kingdom and Russia.

“I don’t know how many generations it will take for this to end. Why should so many innocent people be made to suffer, when there is no need? This is why we have to make the utmost efforts to abolish nuclear weapons,” Yamashita concluded. [IPS - February 14, 2014]◆

NUKE SUMMIT AGENDA CIRCUMVENTS ARMED POWERS

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

When over 50 world leaders meet in the Netherlands next month for a Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), the primary focus will be on a politically-loaded question: how do we prevent non-state actors and terrorists from getting their hands on nuclear weapons or nuclear materials?

But sceptical anti-nuclear activists and academics pose an equally serious, but long ignored, question: how do you prevent the use of nukes by the eight countries that already possess the devastating weapon of mass destruction (WMD)?

Alyn Ware, a consultant for the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), told IPS the problem with the Nuclear Security Summit is that it only focuses on one-third of the picture: non-state actors who don't even have nuclear weapons.

"It does not address the bigger picture: the current and real threats of the stockpiles of weapons and materials of nuclear-armed states, and the risks of proliferation to additional states," he said.

All of the nuclear-armed countries - the United States, Britain, France, China, Russia, India, Pakistan and Israel - will participate in the summit, scheduled to take place in The Hague Mar. 24-25.

North Korea, which is not a publicly-declared nuclear power, is not among the 58 countries which will be present at the international conference, which is also expected to attract some 5,000 delegates and over 3,000 journalists.



The Dutch government is touting the NSS as "the largest gathering of its kind ever in the country."

In response to fears that such weapons will "fall into the wrong hands," Ware said, "With regard to nuclear weapons, there are no right hands."

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague has long confirmed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally illegal, regardless of who would possess or use such weapons, and that there is an obligation to achieve complete nuclear disarmament.

"It's ironic that this summit is happening in The Hague, but appears to ignore the conclusion of, and legal imperative from, the highest court in the world situated in the same city," said Ware,

who is also a member of the World Future Council.

The Hague summit will be the third in a series, the first having been held in Washington DC in 2010, and the second in Seoul, South Korea, in 2012.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has called the amount of nuclear material in the world "enormous."

"If it falls into the hands of terrorists, the consequences could be disastrous. The international community must do everything in its power to prevent this," he said. ➡

A Trident missile launched from a Royal Navy Vanguard class ballistic missile submarine. Credit: public domain

By hosting the summit, he says, the Netherlands will contribute to a safer world.

Asked if there has been any progress since Seoul, Dr M. V. Ramana, of the Nuclear Futures Laboratory & Programme on Science and Global Security at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, told IPS, “Yes, there has been some progress since the last Nuclear Security Summit.”

According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, which in turn cited the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration, seven countries - Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Mexico, Sweden, Ukraine and Vietnam - have removed all or most of their stocks of weapons-usable nuclear materials from their territories.

“That is, of course, good,” says Ramana. “But these are not the countries the international community is really worried about, nor did they have large stockpiles of fissile materials to start with.”

The major concern, Dr. Ramana pointed out, should be the countries that have such stockpiles - the nuclear weapon states - and in these countries the larger context continues to be business-as-usual, with plans to hold on to the nuclear weapons, the associated fissile materials, and in some cases, plans to produce more.

“I do not expect any of them to make any dramatic announcements at the upcoming security summit,” he said.

U.S. President Barack Obama is quoted as saying that in a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone

down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up. And any use of nuclear weapons in an urban area in the 21st century would create a humanitarian, environmental and financial catastrophe of which we have had no precedent.

Ware said it is important for governments, scientists, lawmakers and civil society to cooperate to ensure that nuclear materials and technology are under safe and secure control to prevent the possibility of them being used to make a nuclear device, no matter how crude, and then using this device.

The Dutch government makes clear the limited focus of the summit when it points out the NSS “is not about non-proliferation.”

“It’s about rogue nuclear material. It’s about ensuring that such material does not fall into the wrong hands.”

And according to the Dutch government, the NSS will not discuss nuclear disarmament, the pros and cons of nuclear power, or protection from natural disasters.

But Ware argues governments are understandably dedicating considerable resources to prevent the spread of nuclear materials to non-state actors.

“But where are the same resources being dedicated to eliminating the current arsenals of nuclear weapons, including those deployed in the Netherlands - and securing the stockpiles of fissile materials possessed by the nuclear-armed states?” he asked. [IPS - February 11, 2014] ◆

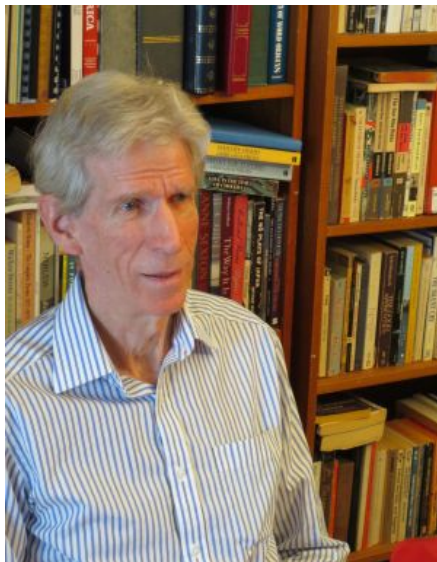
A MANUFACTURED NUCLEAR CRISIS

BY PETER JENKINS* FROM WASHINGTON

The subtitle of Gareth Porter's new book, "The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare," is well-chosen. Large parts of "A Manufactured Crisis" are indeed untold till now. They amount to what the author terms an "alternative narrative".

But don't be misled by "alternative". This is not the work of some crank who imagines conspiracies where none exist. One senses, rather, from the author's meticulous sourcing and the extent of his research that what motivates him is a fierce hunger for truth and aversion to deceit.

Porter has been investigating the Iranian nuclear case for the best part of a decade. The result of his researches is both a fascinating addition to a growing corpus, unlike any previous work on the issue, and a disturbing indictment of U.S. and Israeli policies.



Courtesy of Gareth Porter

One central theme is that hidden motives have coloured these policies. On the U.S. side, Porter explains, the end of the Cold War led to a federal bureaucratic interest in exaggerating the WMD and missile threat posed by Iran (and other emerging countries) to justify funding bids.

During the presidency of George W. Bush, some senior administration members also sought to exploit nuclear fears to "delegitimise" the Iranian government and engineer a pretext for enforced regime change.

On the Israeli side, every government since 1992 - both Likud and Labour - has seen advantage in dramatising the Iranian threat and in demonising Iran's leaders.

"Iran and Shi'a fundamentalism are the greatest threats to global peace," proclaimed one Israeli document. The purpose has been to maintain the value of Israel to the U.S. as a "strategic ally", to distract global unease from Israel's nuclear weapons arsenal, and to create excuses for remaining in occupation of Palestinian territory.

Porter concludes: "U.S. and Israeli policies have been driven by political and bureaucratic interests, not by a rational, objective assessment of available indicators of the motives and intentions of Iranian leaders."

Another central theme, one that complements the hidden motive theme, is that intelligence material and intelligence assessments have played a baleful part in this saga.

Faulty interpretation of intelligence in the early 1990s led U.S. analysts to believe in a full-scale, clandestine nuclear weapons programme, according to Porter, whereas, in his view, the weapons programme never amounted to more than some weapons-related research between the late 1990s and 2003.

Faulty interpretations can be forgiven. More seriously, Porter's researches suggest that in the first half of the last decade, U.S. analysts ignored or discounted evidence that called into question the assessments made in the 1990s. ☹

A CIA contract officer who transmitted human reporting that Iran did not intend to "weaponise" the product of its enrichment plants was ordered to cease contact with the source. Those within the CIA who pointed out the absence of evidence that Iran's

leaders had decided to make a nuclear weapon were unable to get this reflected in assessments.

Analysts refused to give weight to the outlawing of nuclear weapons on religious grounds, although by then it was clear that Iranians had respected a similar religious ban on chemical weapons. Iranian assurances of peaceful intent, or at least of an intention to go no further than mastering the fuel cycle, “to enable neighbours to draw the necessary inference”, were disregarded.

A still more serious charge is that Israel has engaged in the forgery and fabrication of intelligence.

Since early 2008 the case against Iran has rested mainly on material stored on a laptop. The material came into U.S. hands in 2004, and was passed to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2005. For two and a half years, IAEA officials regarded the material as dubious and made no use of it. It was only in 2008 that they started to press Iran to answer for it. Porter implies that their initial scepticism was justified by laying out extensive grounds to believe that Israel fabricated this crucial material.

Porter is also convinced that Israel fabricated two other documents that have kept the Iranian case alive, despite a U.S. National Intelligence (NIE) finding in late 2007 that Iran had abandoned its nuclear weapons programme in 2003, and despite the IAEA reporting in early 2008 that Iran had resolved all the concerns that had arisen out of IAEA investigations in the preceding years.

In 2008, Israel passed to the IAEA intelligence suggesting that, years earlier, Iran had conducted nuclear weapon detonation tests at its Parchin military site. Then in 2009 Israel supplied “evidence” that Iran had resumed weapons-related research post-2003.

If Porter is right, and if all three of these grounds for pursuing the case against Iran were fabricated, that is a very serious matter. The U.S. and its European allies, assuming this intelligence to be reliable, have rejected Iranian protests to the contrary. Indeed, they have interpreted the Iranian response as a refusal to cooperate with the IAEA, and on that basis they have mobilised international support for sanctioning Iran to the hilt. Those sanctions have hurt Iranians and have damaged European and Asian economies.

The supposed refusal to cooperate has also served to justify maintaining U.N. demands that were first made of Iran before the 2007 NIE, when it seemed reasonable to consider Iran’s nuclear programme a threat to peace, but which became inappropriate after the 2007 NIE and once the IAEA had reported the resolution of all its pre-2008 concerns.

No doubt some readers will prefer to continue believing in the authenticity of this Israeli intelligence material. That may or may not turn out to be the right call.

One inference, though, from “Manufactured Crisis” looks inescapable. There has never been conclusive evidence that Iran’s Islamic leaders want to have or to use nuclear weapons. All talk of an “Iranian nuclear threat” is therefore premature. Consequently, the draconian measures implemented by the U.S. and its allies to avert that threat are unreasonable and unwarranted. [IPS - January 29, 2014] ♦

**Peter Jenkins was a British career diplomat for 33 years following studies at the universities of Cambridge and Harvard. He served in Vienna (twice), Washington, Paris, Brasilia and Geneva. His last assignment (2001-06) was that of UK Ambassador to the IAEA and UN (Vienna). Since 2006 he has represented the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership.*

AFRICA ASKED TO ADDRESS NUKE PROLIFERATION RISKS

BY JAYA RAMACHANDRAN FROM STOCKHOLM



African countries, which are party to the 1996 African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty of Pelindaba and already contribute a significant share of the uranium used in the

peaceful nuclear industry worldwide, have been asked to develop “a full understanding of their extractive industries, to avoid the risk that uranium will be supplied from unconventional sources - for example, as a by-product of other mining activities”.

Such potential hazards can be addressed by making proper and up-to-date physical security arrangements at the sites where uranium is being mined and while it is being transported, says a new study by SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Uranium production is an important part of the African economy, with Niger, Namibia and South Africa creating up to 18% of the world's annual production. Many African countries produce uranium or have untapped uranium ore deposits.

The study titled *Africa and the Global Market in Natural Uranium - From Proliferation Risk to Non-proliferation Opportunity* points out that little attention has been paid to the limited, but

not negligible, nuclear proliferation risks associated with the mining of uranium. As the global market for uranium changes and as more African countries become uranium suppliers, there is a need for them to be vigilant of those risks. Authored by Ian Anthony and Lina Grip, this is the first study to look at the proliferation risks associated with uranium extraction in Africa and to suggest practical ways in which African states can act to mitigate them.

The authors argue that, “as countries of proliferation concern achieve proficiency in uranium conversion and enrichment, restricting easy access to uranium could be one part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to non-proliferation across the nuclear fuel cycle”.

Officially known as the SIPRI Policy Brief, the study recommends international cooperation by initiating dialogue with converters and suppliers of enrichment services. In particular, it says, uranium-supplier countries, perhaps working in cooperation with each other, should initiate a dialogue with converters and suppliers of enrichment services to better understand how those actors meet their legal obligations and manage proliferation risk.

“A potential framework would be to invite converters and enrichment service providers to participate in special sessions of regional or subregional meetings that are already being organized by African nuclear regulators,” says the policy brief, adding: “Another potential framework would be to make contact with, for example, the Nuclear Suppliers Group to explore the opportunities for dialogue on specific subjects relevant to proliferation risk management.” ☺

Picture by: Eskom | Koeberg Nuclear Power Station South Africa, is keen to develop new uranium mines in the country to support prospective nuclear plants

Those discussions, the authors suggest, could take up the questions: What are the legal obligations of converters and enrichment service providers? How do they understand those obligations? What procedures are in place to make them effective? What procedures exist in countries that have nuclear weapons to ensure separation of civil and military activities?

The study also stresses the need to initiate dialogue with uranium suppliers located in nuclear weapon-free zones. It argues: As African countries increasingly explore commercial uranium supply arrangements with countries in Asia and the Middle East, it will be important to develop a common understanding among uranium-supplier countries about how they interpret their obligations under current nuclear weapon-free zone treaties.

Although the language related to conditions for supply in the nuclear weapon-free zone treaties is similar or, in some cases, identical, their parties nevertheless seem to reach different conclusions about whether or not commercial agreements with, for example, India can be implemented with acceptable levels of risk.

An international conference could bring together uranium suppliers (current and anticipated) to discuss their interpretations of treaty obligations, with the final objective of a harmonized approach to conditions for supply, says the study, and pleads for discussing at the regional level current practices for key proliferation risk management policies and practices

“African countries engaged in uranium supply could benefit themselves and each other through regular discussion on the subject of how they manage proliferation risk. This can also be a valuable opportunity for information sharing and the development of standards tailored to specific conditions found in Africa,” the policy brief says.

It notes that special sessions of the regular meetings already taking place in the context of, for example, the Treaty of Pelinda-

ba, the network of African nuclear regulators and on arms control under the umbrella of the African Union could offer opportunities to convene such discussions.

“A topic that could be taken up at an early stage of such meetings is the need for a comprehensive understanding of uranium supply from Africa, taking into account the unconventional sources. A joint analysis and a comprehensive picture of unconventional sources of uranium in Africa would be a valuable outcome from discussions,” authors of the policy brief say.

Proliferation risks

A second topic that could be taken up at an early stage, they suggest, is assessing proliferation risks that may arise out of uranium supplied for non-nuclear purposes. The study further proposes convening the group of uranium suppliers and prospective uranium suppliers at periodic meetings to discuss proliferation risks and risk mitigation. At present, there is no forum where uranium suppliers meet to discuss proliferation risk management. Most African uranium-supplier countries participate in the IAEA Annual Conference.

“This could be a good opportunity to convene as many uranium-supplier countries as possible for an annual discussion of current tendencies and developments of mutual interest,” says the study. Examples of issues that could usefully be included on the agenda of such meetings include exchange of information on current practices in, for example, administration of safeguards, national implementation of physical protection obligations and effective export controls.

Meetings of this kind would be an opportunity to inform uranium-supplier states of the latest developments in guidance and principles of best practice on, for example, conditions to attach to permits, conditions for granting licences, physical protection, and safe and secure transport. [IDN-InDepthNews - January 10, 2014] ◆

NO-NUKE AUSTRALIA THWARTS NUCLEAR FREE WORLD

BY NEENA BHANDARI* FROM SYDNEY

Australia has been expressing support for a nuclear weapons-free world, but documents obtained by disarmament advocacy group, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), reveal that the Australian Government sees the increasing international focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons as "rubbing up against" its reliance on the United States nuclear weapons.

ICAN has obtained declassified diplomatic cables, ministerial briefings and emails under freedom-of-information laws, which show that the Australian Government plans to oppose efforts to ban nuclear weapons.

"Our freedom-of-information research has shown that Australia is worried that the increasing international focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons will lead to negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons," ICAN Australia Campaigns Director, Tim Wright, told IDN.

The former Labour government did not endorse the 80-nation humanitarian statement delivered at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Second Preparatory Committee meeting held from April 22 to May 3, 2013, in Geneva. ICAN is calling on the current Liberal-National coalition government to play a more constructive role in Disarmament.

"Australia should stand on the right side of history, rather than attempting to undermine the efforts of progressive nations to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons," said Wright.



In October 2013, another statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was delivered to the 68th session of the UN General Assembly First Committee by New Zealand on behalf of 125 nations.

"Unfortunately, not only did Australia fail to sign this statement, but it introduced its own rival statement designed to steer governments away from a ban on nuclear weapons. The much weaker statement by Australia was endorsed by just a small number of US allies, and had little impact. We were pleased that the New Zealand-led statement attracted the support of a large and diverse number of governments committed to delegitimising the use and possession of nuclear weapons," Wright told IDN.

Proponents of nuclear abolition find it disappointing that Australia appears desperate to thwart the efforts of many countries to highlight the devastating effects of nuclear weapons and the need to ensure they are never used again.

Dr Sue Wareham, Vice-President, Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) told IDN: "Australia will find itself in an increasingly small band of nuclear rogue states that either possess the weapons themselves or maintain policies for their possible use. Australian governments' claims that they want practical steps towards disarmament have never been accompanied by a plan to get to zero. Short of that, they are merely supporting a situation of nuclear haves and have-nots, despite all the rhetoric to the contrary." ☺

Photo: Campaigners at the Humanitarian Disarmament Campaigns Forum in New York

Nuclear weapons, despite having the greatest destructive capacity of all weapons, are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited by an international convention. The disarmament movement received a boost with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopting a resolution to work towards a legally binding global convention on nuclear abolition.

Professor Ramesh Thakur, Director of the Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation & Disarmament at the Australian National University, is of the opinion that there was no compelling case for Australia to have maintained distance from the NZ-led statement.

“By being seen to be disagreeing, Australia is undermining ongoing efforts in other respects. At about the time of the NZ statement, Gareth Evans and I were engaged in serious efforts to convince the policy elite in India and Pakistan (and earlier in China, Japan and South Korea too) about steps that each country can take on its own to generate some serious momentum for nuclear arms control and disarmament (for example ratifying the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) without first waiting for the US Senate to do so),” Professor Thakur, a former UN Assistant Secretary-General, told IDN.

Most Australians are overwhelmingly opposed to nuclear weapons. As ICAN’s International Steering Group Co-chair, Associate Professor Tilman A Ruff, said, “Australians would like to believe that their government is one of the ‘good guys’ on nuclear disarmament. The bitter reality is that because of its willingness to support and assist deployment, targeting and potential use of US nuclear weapons, Australia is more part of the problem, holding back disarmament, than it is working for the solution”.

In 1995 Australia’s then foreign minister had argued that a total ban on landmines was impractical and would never be accepted. This was two years before the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines opened for signature.

“To make matters worse, Australia’s increasing military involvement with the US is making particularly the huge and expanding military spy base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs an even higher priority nuclear target in the event of any war the US gets embroiled in with China or any other nuclear armed state,” Ruff, who is also co-president International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, told IDN.

New Zealand’s healthy and growing defence cooperation with the US makes plain that it is perfectly feasible for countries to have a military relationship with the US which excludes nuclear weapons. “Pursuing such a path would be the best thing Australia could do to actually help in freeing the world from nuclear weapons,” Ruff added.

Advocates for a nuclear free world argue that a global ban on nuclear weapons can be achieved through sustained public pressure and leadership from governments. Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who was critical of Australia’s decision not to endorse the humanitarian statement, is of the view that the current Australian Government may wish to please the US even more than the previous government.

A spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) told IDN that Australia had welcomed the New Zealand statement and it shares most of the sentiments expressed in it, “but we were not in a position to support this statement which was prepared without giving us an opportunity to contribute substantively and did not appropriately acknowledge the security dimensions of the debate. We remain committed, as a long time and active advocate of disarmament, to achieving and maintaining the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons”.

To pressurise the Australian Government to work towards nuclear abolition, Fraser said: “Make Australians understand how much we are bound by America and how much we are influenced by American decisions. The past three wars we have fought, have been fought because of our relationship with America.

We should tell them (the US) that we are not going to join them in their next war. We should establish an independent foreign policy and only then we will be able to work for disarmament more effectively.”

Australia is in an interesting situation because as a country it does not have any nuclear weapons, but it subscribes to the doctrine of extended nuclear deterrence under the US alliance, which is seen as key to Australia’s national security. It also has almost 40 per cent of the world’s known uranium reserves and it is a significant exporter of uranium.

Today, there are at least 20,000 nuclear weapons worldwide, around 3,000 of them on launch-ready alert. The potential power of these would roughly equate to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs.

The focus is moving from non-proliferation to abolition and Australia is concerned that it could shift the focus away from the nuclear-weapon states and Iran to US allies, such as Australia, that subscribe to extended nuclear deterrence.

In March 2013, the Norwegian government had hosted a landmark inter-governmental conference in Oslo on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which was attended by 128 governments (including Australia) and representatives from major UN agencies and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In the lead-up to the NPT preparatory committee meeting, South Africa had invited all parties to the treaty to endorse a two-page statement calling on all states to “intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons”. Australia did not endorse the statement.

The growing unity of civil society working on weapons-related issues was reflected in the Humanitarian Disarmament Campaigns Forum hosted on October 19 and 20 in New York. Mexico will host a conference of states, civil society and academia in February 2014, which will be a critical next step in acknowledging and responding to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. [IDN-InDepthNews - December 16, 2013] ◆



**Neena Bhandari is a Sydney-based foreign correspondent, writing for international news agencies IPS-Inter Press Service and IDN-InDepthNews, as well as India-based Indo Asian News Service (IANS) and other national and international publications.*

*Photo credit:
Climate Change Media Partnership*

DAUGHTER TAKES KENNEDY'S PEACE TORCH TO JAPAN

BY TARO ICHIKAWA FROM TOKYO

TOKYO (IDN) - Caroline Kennedy was just 20 years old when she accompanied her uncle, the late Senator Edward Kennedy, to Hiroshima, site of the first U.S. bomb attack that killed 140,000 people on August 6, 1945. In a Senate hearing in September, confirming her appointment as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, she said she was deeply moved by her visit in 1978 that included a tour of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

In her video message to the people of Japan posted before assuming office on November 12, 2013, she remarked that her trip to Hiroshima had left her "with a profound desire to work for a better, more peaceful world".

Less than one month after her arrival in Tokyo as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Caroline Kennedy - the only living daughter of President John F. Kennedy who was assassinated in Dallas some 50 years ago in November - visited Nagasaki in western Japan, which also suffered American atomic bombing on August 9, 1945.

Ambassador Kennedy was invited by the Nagasaki Municipal Government on the occasion of a ceremony for planting a dogwood tree, one of thousands the United States offered to Japan as a symbol of friendship, at the city's Peace Park, which commemorates the 73,000 people - more than a quarter of the city's 263,000 inhabitants at the time - who died in the U.S. atomic bomb attack on the city. Some 75,000 people were injured and hundreds of thousands were sickened by radiation, according to statistics at the Peace Park.

During the tree planting ceremony, she said: "I am deeply moved by my visit here, and reminisced: "President Kennedy was very proud that he was able to start the process of nuclear disarmament and all of our family shares that commitment."



ment and all of our family shares that commitment." She added: "President Obama also has been working very hard on this issue."

Earlier, on November 27, 2013, Ambassador Kennedy told a gathering of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) and the America-Japan Society in Tokyo that her father, President Kennedy, had "worked hard to strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship at a difficult time, and my mother often spoke of his wish to be the first sitting President to visit Japan."

She added: "As a child, it made a deep impression on me that my father's PT boat (torpedo-armed fast attack craft deployed by the U.S. during World War II) had been sunk by a Japanese destroyer, yet just 15 years later he was proud to invite the Japanese commander to his inauguration as President and excited about the possibility of uniting the crews of the two vessels on his future state visit.

"That's a great parable for our larger relationship and a reminder that when we focus on the things that unite us instead of those that divide us, when we look to the future instead of the past, we truly can create a better world."

Atomic bombing survivors (hibakusha) and peace activists have repeatedly pointed out that they would like a U.S. President to visit the two Japanese cities, which suffered atomic bombings. "We do hope that President Obama will respond to our call," said a peace activist. ☺

Photo: Caroline Kennedy | Credit: U.S. State Dept.

Ambassador Kennedy toured the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, accompanied by Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue and other officials, and signed the visitor's book. She also met hibakusha, including former Nagasaki University President Hideo Tsuchiyama and Japanese Red Cross Nagasaki Genbaku Hospital Director Masao Tomonaga. Reports quoted Ambassador Kennedy telling them that she felt the need to pursue efforts toward nuclear disarmament.

Ambassador Kennedy's programme also included a visit to the Urakami Cathedral, which was destroyed by the atomic bombing and was reconstructed after World War II. At Peace Park, she offered flowers in front of the Peace Statue, which is dedicated to the souls of A-bomb victims and symbolizes hope for eternal peace.

According to the Nagasaki Prefectural Government, Caroline Kennedy is the fifth U.S. ambassador to visit the city of Nagasaki. Her predecessor John Roos attended peace ceremonies on the anniversaries of the bombings in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the first U.S. ambassador to do so.

Commemorating the atomic bombing of Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue, who guided her during the visit, issued a 'Peace Appeal' on August 9, 2013, which stated: Under the current NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), nuclear-weapon states have a duty to make earnest efforts towards nuclear disarmament. This is a promise they've made to the rest of the world. In April of 2009, United States President Barack Obama expressed his desire to seek a nuclear-free world during a speech in Prague. In June this year, President Obama stated in Berlin that he would work towards further reduction of nuclear arsenals, saying, 'So long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe.' Nagasaki supports President Obama's approach."

Taue regretted that "there are over 17,000 nuclear warheads still in existence of which at least 90% belong to either the United States or Russia," adding: "President Obama, President Putin,

please commit your countries to a speedy, drastic reduction of your nuclear arsenal. Rather than envisioning a nuclear-free world as a faraway dream, we must quickly decide to solve this issue by working towards the abolition of these weapons, fulfilling the promise made to global society."

Nearly one week ahead of Caroline Kennedy assuming the office of U.S. Ambassador to Japan, the city of Nagasaki hosted the 5th Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons from November 2 to 4, 2013. Citizens of Nagasaki have continued their tradition of convening such Global Citizens' Assemblies, which they have held every few years since the year 2000.

Participants in the Assembly included representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and scientists from Japan and abroad. They heard again the voices of hibakusha, and their urgent appeal that the elimination of nuclear weapons becomes a reality while they are still alive. They also listened to hopeful voices of young people accepting responsibility for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

An eminent participant and speaker - as in previous four meetings as an invited guest of the city of Nagasaki - was David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, who has participated in the drafting of all the Nagasaki Appeals.

One highlight of the Appeal, Krieger told IDN, is that it calls for "a series of concrete actions, including commencing negotiations on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons; the U.S. and Russia taking unilateral and bilateral nuclear disarmament measures; phasing out of reliance on nuclear weapons in the security policies of all countries; having greater citizen participation in nuclear abolition campaigns; establishing new nuclear weapon-free zones; aiding the victims of Fukushima (nuclear power plant accident); and learning the lesson that humanity cannot continue to rely upon nuclear energy any more than it can rely upon nuclear weapons." ☺

Nuke Free Zone in Northeast Asia

The Appeal also offers some specific advice to the Japanese government based upon its special responsibilities as the world's only country to have been attacked with nuclear weapons, said Krieger. "These responsibilities include: coming out from under the U.S. nuclear umbrella; providing leadership to achieve a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia; demonstrating leadership for nuclear weapons abolition; and seeking and welcoming international assistance in controlling the radiological crisis at Fukushima."

The Appeal points out that leaders of 532 local authorities in Japan have expressed support for a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia, as did 83 Japanese and South Korean parliamentarians from across the political spectrum in a joint statement on July 22, 2010. In September 2013, the President of Mongolia indicated his country's interest in exploring the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia at the United Nations General Assembly.

To demonstrate leadership, says the Appeal, Japan should take advantage of the opportunity presented by the Non-Proliferation and

Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) Foreign Ministers' Meeting to be held in Hiroshima in April 2014. Japan, it says, should also urge political leaders and government officials who will participate in the G20 Summit that will be held in Japan in 2016 to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Further: The participants in the Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly pledge to continue "utmost efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons", and aver: "Nagasaki must be the last A-bombed city."

This, notes Krieger, is a necessary goal for humanity and for the future. "It is the great challenge that confronts all of us living on the planet in the Nuclear Age. Nagasaki is doing its part to lead the way. They need our voices and our commitment to succeed."

Since "change takes work," as Ambassador Kennedy said, "and it takes perseverance," a huge lot needs be done to turn Kennedys' commitment to peace and disarmament, particularly as 17,300 nukes remain, threatening many times over the very survival of human civilization and most life on earth, as the November 2013 Nagasaki Appeal points out.

IDN-InDepthNews - December 12, 2013] ◆

AN EMBITTERED RIYADH MAY WEIGH NUCLEAR OPTION

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

Saudi Arabia's unyielding opposition to last week's interim nuclear agreement with Iran has triggered speculation about its own projection of military power in the Middle East.

Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former Saudi ambassador to the United States, warned in 2011 that nuclear threats from Israel and Iran may force Saudi Arabia to follow suit. Credit: cc by 2.0

As the Wall Street Journal pointed out early this week, the Saudis may conclude that international acceptance of a nuclear programme of any kind by Iran may compel them "to seek their own nuclear weapons capability through a simple purchase."

The likely source: Pakistan, whose nuclear programme was partly funded by the Saudis.

But this is viewed as a worst case scenario, particularly if the longstanding political and military relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia continues to deteriorate.

The initial hint of Saudi nuclear ambitions surfaced back in 2011 when Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former Saudi ambassador to the United States, warned that nuclear threats from Israel and Iran may force Saudi Arabia to follow suit.

Speaking at a security forum in the Saudi capital of Riyadh, he was quoted as saying, "It is our duty toward our nation and people to consider all possible options, including the possession of these weapons."

Whether this was a serious or an empty threat will depend in part on the evolving negotiations with Iran to terminate its nu-



clear weapons capability when the current six-month interim agreement expires.

That agreement was between Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, namely the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China, plus Germany (P5+1).

Hillel Schenker, co-editor of the Jerusalem-based Palestine-Israel Journal, who has been tracking nuclear developments in the Middle East, told IPS Saudi criticism is also based on the assumption that the Geneva agreement is a bad deal.

Yet if it proves to be a building block towards an arrangement for preventing Iran from going nuclear militarily, Riyadh won't feel the need to obtain its own nuclear counterweight, he added.

In addition, he said, "just as Israel will lobby for the idea that Iranian support for [the Lebanese militant group] Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad be dealt with in the final agreement, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States [predominantly Sunnis] will lobby for American guarantees for their security against Iranian Shiite aspirations in the region."

Asked if the deal might spur other Middle Eastern states to develop or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, Shannon N. Kile, senior researcher heading the Project on Nuclear Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), told IPS, "I think this will depend on the shape of a long-term agreement." ↻

That long-term agreement is expected to be finalised at the end of the current six-month interim agreement.

At the moment, said Kile, it is unclear to what extent Iran is willing to limit or reduce its sensitive nuclear fuel cycle activities in exchange for a lifting of Western sanctions, or whether the U.S. and its European Union (EU) partners will agree to lift sanctions without a near-total dismantlement of Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

Assuming that a deal can be reached that will involve significant technical limitations on Iran's nuclear programme, accompanied by enhanced verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency - in particular, Iran's accession to the Additional Protocol - to provide assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear activities in Iran, this should help allay U.S., Israeli, and Arab worries by making it more difficult for Iran to build a nuclear weapon, Kile said.

In doing so, it would actually serve to ease nuclear proliferation incentives and pressures in the Middle East, he said.

Besides Saudi Arabia, there has also been speculation about the nuclear ambitions of another Middle Eastern nation, Egypt, currently in political turmoil.

Schenker told IPS that while the Egyptians may also be unhappy with a possible Iranian-Western rapprochement, and consider themselves in competition with Iran for hegemony in the region, they are currently immersed in their own internal issues.

"If the final agreement is a reasonable one from their point of view, there is no chance that they themselves will decide to go nuclear militarily," he predicted.

However, both deposed Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi and the successor military regime announced interest in reviving the dormant Egyptian programme to build a nuclear energy power plant, perhaps as a counterpoint to the Iranian nuclear energy programme.

In addition, a solid final deal with the Iranians will only increase Egyptian determination to promote a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, and a desire to place the Israeli nuclear programme on the table as well, he noted.

"It seems to me that the pessimism about last weekend's deal between Iran and the P5+1 states coming from Israel, Saudi Arabia and in some quarters of the U.S. Congress is understandable given that the Iranians have been less-than-fully forthcoming, and in some cases actively deceitful, about their nuclear activities in the past," Kile told IPS.

However, the deal is an important first step toward addressing international concerns about the scope of Iran's nuclear programme and, as such, should be welcomed by even those who are sceptical of Tehran's nuclear intentions, he added.

The agreement reached in Geneva imposes technical constraints and verification requirements that make it virtually impossible for Iran to use its nuclear facilities to make progress toward building a nuclear weapon during this period.

He said it also lengthens the amount of time that Iran would need if it were to later decide to build a weapon.

"These are important achievements that should not be overlooked or dismissed," Kile added. [IPS - November 27, 2013] ♦

‘WE ARE SUFFERING A SLOW-MOTION NUCLEAR WAR’

BY JULIO GODOY* FROM BERLIN

Robert Jacobs was born 53 years ago, at the height of the cold war, amidst the then reigning paranoia of nuclear annihilation of humankind. In school, he was eight years old. “We learned about how to survive a nuclear attack. We were told that the key to survival was to always be vigilant in detecting the first signs of a nuclear attack.”

45 years later, Jacobs, Bo for his friends, is one of the world’s leading researchers on the social and cultural consequences of radioactivity on families and communities. Bo holds a PhD in history, has published three books on nuclear issues, and is author of hundreds of essays on the same matter. He is also professor and researcher at the Graduate Faculty of International Studies and the Peace Institute, both at the Hiroshima City University, Japan.

Back in the early 1960s, Jacobs learnt at school that “The first thing we would perceive (on a nuclear attack) would be the bright flash of the detonation. Teachers told us to always be prepared for this flash and to take shelter. I remember going home that day and sitting on the steps in front of my house in suburban Chicago and just sitting there for an hour waiting for the flash.”

This dreadful experience marked Jacobs’ life, for it led his studies and professional life towards analysing the consequences of the nuclear age on humankind.

“We live through a slow motion nuclear war,” he says, referring to the sheer amount of nuclear and radioactive material stored across the world, which will be part of the global ecosystem for millenniums to come.



As professor at the Hiroshima City University, Jacobs spends most of his time in one of the two cities (along with Nagasaki) destroyed by nuclear annihilation in the final phase of World War II (1939-1945). He is a privileged witness of the social and psychological responses of society to such a tragedy; furthermore, the nuclear accident of Fukushima (in March 2011) has given him again a excruciating opportunity to analyse social, psychological, and bureaucratic reactions to such catastrophes.

Julio Godoy, associated global editor of IDN-InDepthNews, communicated with Prof. Jacobs

through Email:

What made you pursue an academic career on nuclear issues?

Robert Jacobs (RJ): My choice of a career working on nuclear issues is the result of a childhood in which I was very afraid of nuclear weapons. When I was 8 years old we learned in school about how to survive a nuclear attack. I don't remember the specific format, I don't think it was the classic Duck and Cover material but it was similar. We were told that the key to survival was to always be vigilant in detecting the first signs of a nuclear attack. The first thing we would perceive would be the bright flash of the detonation. They told us to always be prepared for this flash and to take shelter. I remember going home that day and sitting on the steps in front of my house in suburban Chicago and just sitting there for an hour waiting for the flash. ☺

Photo: Robert Jacobs | Credit: Academia.edu

Vigilantly waiting for the flash. I imagined the school across the street from me just dissolving. I imagined my house, and all of the houses on my block dissolving. I imagined my whole town just dissolving into white light. I became terrified. I think that this was partly when I became aware of my own mortality and that I would die one day, but it was very connected to nuclear weapons. The way that I dealt with this fear was to find books in the library about nuclear weapons and read them. Throughout my childhood I read everything that I could find about nuclear weapons. Since I had such a strong fear, my means of dealing with it was to learn whatever I could about the thing that terrified me. I have never stopped this process.

Fukushima

As staff member of the Hiroshima Peace Institute you are first-rank witness of the severest nuclear catastrophe of modern times. Fukushima typifies several dangers of all things nuclear: The difficulties to control the technology, the recklessness of administrations, both private and public, and the fact that radioactivity does not respect national borders. How do you see the catastrophe?

RJ: I see the catastrophe as absolutely horrifying and ongoing. There is no discernible end in sight to this tragedy, radiation will continue to seep into the Pacific Ocean for decades. I think that there were many instances of negligence that facilitated the disaster. The design of the reactors and site was bad. The maintenance of the plant was neglected for decades. Adequate emergency procedures were never designed or enacted. In many ways, this highlights the problems not just of nuclear power but especially of privately run, for profit, nuclear power plants. In this case profits are raised by lowering costs, a process which both facilitated and accelerated the disaster. TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) notoriously has neglected its nuclear plants in honour of increasing profitability.

Beyond this, I would say that we also see illustrated here that the decisions to build nuclear plants are national ones, but when

they have problems they are always global in scale. When one considers the time scale of some of the radionuclides that enter the ecosystem from nuclear disasters, they will stay in the ecosystem for thousands of years (as will the radionuclides in the spent fuel rods when they operate without a meltdown). These radionuclides will simply cycle through the ecosystem for milleniums. These toxins will remain dangerous for hundreds of generations and will disperse throughout the planet. At Fukushima the benefits of the electricity generated by the plants will have lasted barely longer than one generation while the sickness and contamination resulting from the disaster will last for hundreds.

‘Cold shutdown’ catastrophe

How do you evaluate the government’s handling of the catastrophe, for instance, the fact that only 12 square kilometres around the site have been evacuated?

RJ: The government's handling of the disaster is a second disaster. Virtually every decision has been driven by two things: money and public relations. The decision to evacuate only 12 square kilometres was driven by concerns of cost and not by concerns of public health. When the government mandates evacuation they incur financial responsibilities. This is why they limited it to 12 km. They made a "suggested" evacuation area of 20 square kilometres.

Why the difference? Mandatory vs. suggested? The area between 12 and 20 km where evacuation is suggested means that the government bears no fiscal responsibility for those evacuees. If they evacuate, it is their own decision, and must be done at their own cost. These people are in a terrible bind. They know that they must evacuate because of the levels of radiation, but they will receive no assistance. Their homes are now worthless and cannot be sold. They are on their own. They have become both contaminated and impoverished. The other thing guiding decision making by the government is public relations.

While they knew that there had been a full meltdown on the first day of the disaster, and three full meltdowns by the third day, they denied this for almost three months. The reason this was done was to control perceptions. They managed to keep the word "meltdown" off the front pages of the world's newspapers during the period when they were focused on Fukushima.

When the government acknowledged the meltdowns almost three months later the story was on page 10 or page 12 of international papers. This is a success for them. At the end of 2011 they declared the plants in "cold shutdown." This is insane. The term cold shutdown refers to the activities of an undamaged and fully functional reactor. A reactor whose fuel has melted and is now located somewhere unknown beneath the reactor building, and that must have water poured on it for years to keep it cool are not in cold shutdown. This was just a way of saying to people that the event was over and everything was under control—absolute conscious lies. These concerns, costs and perceptions have guided the government's response far more than public safety has.

Loss of livelihoods

How does the tragedy affect the food supply?

RJ: The government has set "legally acceptable" levels of contamination in food. For example, there is a legally allowable level for caesium in rice. So if some rice is contaminated above this legal level it is not removed from the food supply, but rather is mixed with uncontaminated rice until it is below this level. This is a process for moving contaminated food into the food supply, not excluding it.

The reasons for this are cost. Many thousands of people have lost their livelihoods because of the disaster. Many farmers, fisherman and others have lost the value of their businesses because of contamination, with no fault of their own.

What is to be done about these people? One solution would be to compensate them for their lost businesses, but this would cost a lot of money up front. The other solution is to try to keep their businesses viable. To do this you keep them at work, you continue to bring their agricultural goods and fish to market and support their businesses.

In this case you end up with increased costs to public health because of exposure to radiation, but those cost come in the future, they are on the backside, in 10-20 years. So bringing contaminated food to market reduces short term costs and pushes the consequences into the lives of politicians in the future. But by far the most disastrous thing is to allow so many children to remain in contaminated areas. All children should be removed from contaminated areas immediately, but that would, alas, cost money.

For the relatives of the mortal victims of the Fukushima accident, the fact that they cannot tend and worship the graves of their relatives constitutes a further penalty. Can you tell me something about this Japanese tradition and how radioactivity impedes it?

RJ: There are a few things to think about in relation to this. First is the Japanese holiday of Obon. This is a very old traditional holiday in which ancestors are celebrated and thanked. During this holiday many people return to the towns where their families are from and conduct very old rituals. The family goes to the site of the graves of their ancestors and clean and decorate their graves. They invite the spirits of their ancestors to return to visit with the living family for a few days. The family tends to spend this time together building both connections to the past and to each other. At the end of the festival the spirits of the ancestors are escorted back to the cemetery. ☺

For those whose hometowns are in the contaminated area, this ritual can no longer be observed. They are unable to honour the spirits of their ancestors in traditional ways, and the graves of their ancestors are untended. This can have a devastating psychological affect. The notion that ancestors are no longer being honoured, no longer being invited to join together with the living, and that they will spend eternity with the dishonour of graves untended by their descendants can damage families and individuals.

For many people, these are rituals that have been observed in their families for hundreds of years, for many generations, and it

‘Second class citizens’

What other humanitarian consequences has the catastrophe provoked?

RJ: There is almost no way to calculate this. Many families have divorced over conflicts about whether to move or to stay, whether to eat local food or not. Many children are unable to play or spend time outdoors because of contamination. Many wear dosimeters that record their exposures (they don't alert the children to the presence of radiation, merely record the exposures for later diagnostic purposes) and they will grow up with a sense of being "contaminated." Children in families that move away have been experiencing bullying and discrimination. Many people have no idea if they have been exposed to radiation, but

‘Military colonialism’

Now to nuclear weapons: Western countries in possession of the bomb have over the years carried out experiments in faraway locations, in Oceania, in the North African deserts, not near London or Paris... It is an extraordinary abuse, and yet such countries have never been made accountable for the damages they have caused...

RJ: I view nuclear testing as linked to military colonialism. Nuclear powers tend to test in the far reaches of their military empires and contaminating people with little political power or agency to protect themselves. As is true in general, colonialists rarely have to face any consequences for their exploitation. This is an extension of the brutalization of the colonized by the colonizer. ☹

When we look at the history of colonialism, the British have entirely retained the great wealth that came from the slave trade,

is they who have broken this chain. How will the ancestors know that they are not being disrespected, but that the descendants have no choice? Having worked with many radiation-exposed communities around the world, I know that many people are able to manage the distress that this causes for a few years, knowing it is not their fault. But over decades of neglecting ancestors people tend to feel a visceral sense of their own failure to honour their ancestors. Additionally, when the tsunami occurred, some people were unable to claim the bodies of their relatives and give them a proper burial as their bodies were recovered very close to the nuclear plants and were considered "nuclear waste."

are aware that they have been lied to repeatedly; about whether they will be able to return to their homes, about the dangers of radioactivity, about nuclear power in general. My work with radiation exposed people around the world has shown that those exposed to radiation often become "second class citizens." They are shunned, they are lied to, they are observed for medical information but rarely informed of this information, and they are marked as contaminated for the rest of their lives. In this way they are denied the dignity that other members of the same society expect.

when the French lost Haiti, Haiti was forced to pay compensation to the French for their "loss." In the case of the nuclear powers,

we can see this dominance both sustained and rewarded. Consider the Security Council of the United Nations, its five permanent members are the first five nuclear powers. Obtaining nuclear weapons has earned them a permanent veto over "lesser" countries. Those exposed to radiation from nuclear weapon testing have almost never been given any health care or compensation for loss of life or the contamination of land and food sources. It is criminal.

Nuclear ignorance - nuclear fatalism

You work and live in Hiroshima, one of the two cities, which directly suffered the unspeakable effects of nuclear weapons. Despite such horrors, still present in our lives, the world nuclear powers, from the U.S.A. to Pakistan, have accumulated some 30,000 nuclear heads capable of destroying the Earth several times. And yet, nobody seems to be scandalised about it. This lethargy, is it ignorance or fatalism?

RJ: Both. Most people don't ever think about nuclear weapons. Most didn't think much about nuclear power until Fukushima. For most people nuclear weapons are abstract - they have never seen one, they don't understand how they work - as poet John Canaday has said, most people experience nuclear weapons through stories, and for many those stories are Hollywood movies in which there are rarely consequences from nuclear detonations (besides killing aliens and destroying asteroids).

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But it is also true that many people don't feel that they can do anything about nuclear weapons. They are never a topic of public debate in the politics of nuclear nations, they are at the deepest, most secure parts of large militaries. And most people really have no idea of how much of their tax monies are being spent on nuclear weapons in nuclear nations. This, by the way, is where I feel that the stockpiles are vulnerable. As wealthy imperial nations decline, the billions spent annually on nuclear weapons will be questioned. They are rarely questioned in terms of desirability since many people living in nuclear armed countries feel that the weapons either protect them or help to establish their nation as one of the big players.

Can you imagine such a child terrified by the possibility of nuclear annihilation, as you were yourself today, in Israel, in Iran, in Korea, in India, or Pakistan?

RJ: Yes, it is possible for me to imagine such an experience in today's world, for instance Kashmir where the military stance between nuclear armed India and Pakistan is very visible. But I do think that it would be different. In the modern case the child would be imagining such a thing, piecing it together through what they hear at home and around the community. When I was young it was presented as formal education in the school system, so I didn't have to imagine it myself at all, I was being trained to think about nuclear war. [IDN-InDepthNews - November 27, 2013] ◆

NAGASAKI MEET RECOMMENDS CONCRETE STEPS FOR NUKE ABOLITION

BY RAMESH JAURA* FROM BERLIN | NAGASAKI

More than 50,000 nuclear weapons have been eliminated since the historic Reykjavik Summit between the then U.S. President Ronald Reagan and his counterpart from the erstwhile Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, which culminated into a groundbreaking Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in December 1987. But 17,300 nukes remain, threatening many times over the very survival of human civilization and most life on earth, as the 2013 Nagasaki Appeal points out.

The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) estimates that nine countries possess nuclear weapons: United States (7,700 warheads), Russia (8,500), Britain (225), France (300), China (250), Israel (80), India (between 90 and 110), Pakistan (between 100 and 120) and North Korea (10).

Five European nations - Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, and Turkey - host U.S. nuclear weapons on their soil as part of a NATO nuclear-sharing arrangement. Roughly two dozen other nations - Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, and Spain - claim to rely on U.S. nuclear weapons for their security. Furthermore, there are some 40 nations with nuclear power or research reactors capable of being diverted for weapons production.

According to experts, the spread of nuclear know-how has increased the risk that more nations will develop the bomb. And this despite the fact that “the danger of nuclear annihilation, by accident, miscalculation or design continues to cast a dark shadow over humanity’s future”.

In addition, states the Nagasaki Appeal, the failure of the nuclear weapon states to achieve more progress toward a nuclear weapons free world is undermining the legitimacy of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The Appeal warns: “The nuclear weapon states’ repeated delays in fulfilling their ‘unequivocal’ commitment to nuclear disarmament has discredited the nonproliferation regime and may destroy it.”

The landmark Nagasaki Appeal emerged from the 5th Nagasaki Global Citizens’ Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, November 2-4, 2013 in Nagasaki - the second and, to date, last city in the world to experience a nuclear attack along with Hiroshima 68 years ago. Citizens of Nagasaki have continued their tradition of convening such Global Citizens’ Assemblies, which they have held every few years since the year 2000.

Participants in the Assembly included representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and scientists from Japan and abroad. They heard again the voices of hibakusha, survivors of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and their urgent appeal that the elimination of nuclear weapons becomes a reality while they are still alive. They also listened to hopeful voices of young people accepting responsibility for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

An eminent participant and speaker - as in previous four meetings as an invited guest of the city of Nagasaki - was David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, who has participated in the drafting of all the Nagasaki Appeals. ☺

Krieger said in an email comment forwarded to IDN: “The 2013 Nagasaki Appeal is an extraordinary document. It reflects the spirit of Nagasaki, the second of two atomic bombed cities on the planet, and the desire of its atomic bomb survivors to assure that Nagasaki remains the last city ever to suffer such a tragedy. I believe the Appeal should be read by every citizen of Earth and studied by young people everywhere.”

One highlight of the Appeal, said Krieger is that it takes note of the nuclear power accident at Fukushima, Japan in March 2011: “The fear and suffering of Fukushima citizens for their health and life renewed our recognition of the danger of radioactivity, whether from nuclear weapons or nuclear energy. The experiences of Fukushima and the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima have shown us that the effects of nuclear disasters are uncontrollable in time and space,” states the Appeal.

Reasons for hope

Despite “daunting challenges,” the Appeal finds there are reasons for hope, among which is the renewed international attention to the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. It also found that reliance upon nuclear deterrence for national security is “delusional,” in a world in which human security and global security are threatened by nuclear weapons, said Krieger.

Describing the inhumanity of nuclear weapons, the resolution adopted in November 2011 by the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement identified the need to “conclude ... negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement.”

The humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons have been discussed in the United Nations General Assembly since 2010, and at preparatory committee meetings for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Moreover, the government of Norway hosted an international conference in Oslo in March 2013 on the humanitarian im-

pact of nuclear weapons. A follow-on meeting, will be hosted by the government of Mexico in February 2014.

Krieger highlighted another aspect of the Nagasaki Appeal, which calls for “a series of concrete actions, including commencing negotiations on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons; the US and Russia taking unilateral and bilateral nuclear disarmament measures; phasing out of reliance on nuclear weapons in the security policies of all countries; having greater citizen participation in nuclear abolition campaigns; establishing new nuclear weapon-free zones; aiding the victims of Fukushima; and learning the lesson that humanity cannot continue to rely upon nuclear energy any more than it can rely upon nuclear weapons.”

The Appeal states: “The accident at Fukushima has taught us that we cannot continue to rely upon nuclear energy.” It recalls that Senji Yamaguchi brought the hibakusha’s experience of the atomic bomb to the United Nations in 1982, when he declared: “No More Hiroshimas, No More Nagasakis, No more Hibakusha, No More War!”, adding: The accident at Fukushima requires the addition of “No More Fukushimas!”

The Appeal also offers some specific advice to the Japanese government based upon its special responsibilities as the world’s only country to have been attacked with nuclear weapons, said Krieger. “These responsibilities include: coming out from under the US nuclear umbrella; providing leadership to achieve a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia; demonstrating leadership for nuclear weapons abolition; and seeking and welcoming international assistance in controlling the radiological crisis at Fukushima.”

The Appeal points out that leaders of 532 local authorities in Japan have expressed support for a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia, as did 83 Japanese and South Korean parliamentarians from across the political spectrum in a joint statement on July 22, 2010. ➔

In September 2013, the President of Mongolia indicated his country's interest in exploring the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia at the United Nations General Assembly.

To demonstrate leadership, says the Appeal, Japan should take advantage of the opportunity presented by the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) Foreign Ministers' Meeting to be held in Hiroshima in April 2014. Japan, it says, should also urge political leaders and government officials who will participate in the G20 Summit that will be held in Japan in 2016 to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Further: The participants in the Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly pledge to continue "utmost efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons", and aver: "Nagasaki must be the last A-bombed city." This, notes Krieger, is a necessary goal for humanity and for the future. "It is the great challenge that confronts all of us living on the planet in the Nuclear Age. Nagasaki is doing its part to lead the way. They need our voices and our commitment to succeed."

Concrete steps

For this to become reality, the Appeal recommends a series of tangible steps - most of which have been proposed by Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda in his peace proposals - including:

The call for negotiations on the comprehensive prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons to start in 2014, and for these negotiations to be supported by the NPT Review Conference in

2015 and the High Level Conference proposed to take place no later than 2018.

Significant reductions by the U.S. and Russia in their strategic and non-strategic, deployed and un-deployed nuclear stockpiles through bilateral or unilateral measures, and halt on development and modernization of nuclear weapons systems by all nuclear-armed countries, paving the pathway to reallocating USD 100,000,000,000 per year to meeting social and economic needs.

Phasing out the role and significance of nuclear weapons in the military and foreign policies of nuclear-armed countries and those countries that rely on nuclear umbrellas, and stigmatizing nuclear weapons, by enacting national legislation and divesting from nuclear weapons industries.

Greater citizen participation and the engagement of young people around the world in campaigns for the elimination of nuclear weapons, such as Mayors for Peace, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons (Abolition 2000), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

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ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR AMBIGUITY PRODDED

BY PIERRE KLOCHENDLER FROM OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM

As Palestinian-Israeli peace talks and nuclear talks on Iran's disputed nuclear programme continue, a unique international conference, "A Middle East without Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)", was held in Jerusalem.

The topic is taboo because Israel maintains a veil of "studied ambiguity" on its alleged nuclear arsenal.

At the Notre Dame hotel in Jerusalem, the singular get-together took place: Ziad Abu Zayyad, former head of the Palestinian delegation to the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) multi-lateral talks; Dan Kurtzer, former peace mediator and former U.S. ambassador to Israel and Egypt; and young and veteran activists against the proliferation of WMDs.

Mordechai Vanunu, also present, is forbidden to speak to foreigners or leave Israel.

Invoking his opposition to WMDs, the former nuclear technician revealed in 1986 details of his country's alleged nuclear weapons programme to the British Sunday Times. Abducted by Mossad intelligence agents, the Israeli whistleblower spent 18 years in an Israeli jail, including more than 11 in solitary confinement.

"Ten years ago, we couldn't even have a conference disembodied from reality," notes an enthused Kurtzer.

This is no longer pie in the sky, but a very public event on an issue forcibly kept out of the public eye in Israel. The conference was organised by the Palestine-Israel Journal (PIJ), a joint civil society publication dedicated to the quest for peace in the region.

"Track-Two diplomacy will have an effect on Track One, formal diplomacy," explains the diplomat who is now a professor of Middle East policy studies at Princeton University. "If not this year - next year or the year after."

The conference was held just a few days prior to the start of Round Two on Thursday Nov. 7 between Iran and the P5+1 group of six major powers (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United State, plus and Germany). Round One ended on a positive note.

Notwithstanding the persistent suspicion that Iran is racing towards nuclear arms, the only major player in the Middle East, which allegedly possesses a nuclear arsenal is Israel.

Allegedly, because reports on the issue - all from foreign sources - have neither been confirmed nor denied by Israel. Maintaining its veil of "studied ambiguity", Israel hasn't signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Israel's nuclear policy is defined in one sentence: 'Israel won't be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East.'

"If Israel won't be the first, it won't be the second either," quips Israeli non-conventional weapons expert Reuven Pedatzur. Vanunu knows well the consequences of breaking the strict censorship code on the issue. Public debate is nonexistent. "The nuclear issue is Israel's last taboo," says Pedatzur.

A presentation on "Fissile Material Controls in the Middle East" by Princeton University's Senior Research Physicist Frank von Hippel proposes a ban on plutonium separation and use; an end to the use of highly enriched uranium (HEU) fuel; an end to en-

richment of uranium above six percent; and no additional enrichment plants.

It's only natural that Israel's nuclear programme would take centre stage. The Dimona nuclear plant is scrutinised. "Freeze, declare, and then step-by-step reduction of Israel's stocks of plutonium and HEU," is what Israel must give in return for von Hippel's global proposal.

Yet despite across-the-board harmony on the need to free the world's most volatile region from the most volatile weapon, the speakers failed to reach a consensus on the practicality of focusing on the region's one and only country believed to have nuclear arms.

"This excellent proposal is premature," comments Pedatzur. "Dealing with Israel's nuclear programme is a non-starter. If the U.S. will exert pressure on Israel, maybe; unfortunately, I don't see any U.S. incentive."

Kurtzer chimes in: "The U.S. is specifically interested in stopping nuclear weapons proliferation. Regarding Israel, we're back to the question of non-declared status, and the U.S.' strong bilateral relationship, a fact of life."

Following the Madrid Peace Conference (1991), Israel participated in the ACRS multilateral talks.

Israel focused on the regional security component; Arab states (led by Egypt) on the arms control component - that is, on controlling Israel's suspected nukes. The talks collapsed in 1995.

Secure in its don't-talk-about-it comfort zone, Israel is ready to discuss a WMD-free zone and thus forgo the ultimate deterrent against its so-called eternal enemies, but only within a comprehensive peace settlement with all of its neighbours, including Palestine, Syria and Iran.

That's a state of affairs as hypothetical as it is improbable.

"Israel wants the international community to agree de facto to its nuclear status," bemoans Abu Zayyad. "Assuming it's out of it, Israel isn't against a nuclear-free Middle East. That's ridiculous."

Abu Zayyad reflects the traditional Palestinian position. Both the nuclear weapons issue and the peace vision must be approached "correlatively, not sequentially."

Is there a linkage between or amongst these issues?

"The formal answer of diplomats is 'No'," says Kurtzer. "But surely, as the debate takes place in a civil society forum like this one without being cut off - here's the linkage."

Israel rejects any linkage between its nuclear programme and the nascent regional détente.

"A Russian-American agreement to move the chemical weapons from Syria; Iranian and U.S. presidents speaking for the first time since 1979; Palestinian-Israeli negotiations," enumerates Hillel Schenker, PIJ co-editor with Abu Zayyad. "This creates a constructive background for moving forward toward a WMD-free Middle East," he concludes.

Eager to pour cold water on the conference's optimism, Pedatzur enumerates inversely: "Chemical weapons use in Syria's civil war; failure till now to resolve Iran's nuclear crisis; Israel's continued possession of nuclear weapons and occupation of Palestine. A WMD-free Middle East can't be established any time soon."

Kurtzer says "To the extent the U.S. is ready to exercise its influence and power, a regional security breakthrough can occur which will ease the way for us not only to have a discussion on

the possibility of a WMD-free Middle East, but to actually start engaging on these issues.”

Abu Zayyad advocates a global arrangement. “When you speak about Israel, Israel speaks about Iran; Iran about Pakistan; Pakistan about India, etc.” - the nuclear chain.

The conference may have succeeded in breaking through the censorship surrounding Israel’s assumed nuclear weapons, but not the taboo on Israel effectively creating a WMD-free Middle East.

[IPS - November 7, 2013]◆

“The nuclear issue is Israel’s last taboo.”



The Negev Nuclear Research Center, an Israeli nuclear installation located in the Negev desert, is about thirteen kilometers to the south-east of the city of Dimona. Credit: Wikipedia

CHALLENGES REMAIN BUT GOOD NEWS FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

BY RAMESH JAURA* FROM BERLIN

There is a lot of good news on the nuclear disarmament front but there are miles to go before the campaigners for banning the bomb can 'lie down and sleep in peace'. Almost seventy years after the first use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, about 17,000 continue to threaten the very survival of humankind.

The few countries that keep these weapons of mass destruction are planning to spend more than USD 1,000,000,000,000 over the next decade to maintain, and modernize them. More than one trillion dollars over ten years, or USD 100,000,000,000 per year.

While the majority of that comes from taxpayers in the nuclear armed countries, a new report, shows that the private sector is investing over USD 314,349,920,000 in the private companies that produce, maintain, and modernise the nuclear arsenals in France, India, the UK and the US.”

The good news is that 124 countries around the world, including reluctant nuclear umbrella states such as Japan, have endorsed a landmark statement stressing that it is “in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances”.

In fact, as ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, points out, in 2013 alone the number of states and international organizations compelled by the undeniable evidence of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to express deep concern about the limited progress of nuclear disarmament has grown exponentially.



In March 2013, the conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, convened in Oslo by the Government of Norway, concluded that no international reaction plan could effectively be put in place to respond to a nuclear detonation.

In September the first high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament, summoned by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), despite resistance from nuclear-armed states, put focus on the humanitarian approach and numerous calls to ban nuclear weapons. Building on this momentum, the Government of Mexico has announced a conference to continue the discussion around the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, to be held on February 13-14, 2014 in Nayarit on the country's Pacific Coast.

The significance of the joint statement issued by New Zealand on October 21, 2013 at the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly is underlined by the Dutch peace organisation IKV Pax Christi's study *Don't Bank on the Bomb* together with ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Against this backdrop, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), an organization that has been involved in the quest for a nuclear weapon-free world for more than half a century, has welcomed and expressed support “for the ongoing effort to clarify the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and to establish a clear international norm against their use under any circumstances”. ☺

Image credit: ICAN

The catastrophic consequences that would result from any use of atomic weapons, SGI Executive Director of Peace Affairs Hirotsugu Terasaki told IDN, call for the next step that obliges governments “to unequivocally state that any such use would be a violation of international humanitarian law”.

At the same time, Terasaki who is also Vice President of Soka Gakkai, pointed to “practical limitations of the humanitarian argument for banning nuclear weapons - most critically the continued non-cooperation of the nuclear weapons states”.

He called for concerted efforts to reach opinion leaders and policymakers in the nuclear weapons states: “Many of them have already acknowledged the essential bankruptcy of deterrence doctrine in a world where non-state actors are seeking access to nuclear weapons technology and stated that a nuclear weapon-free world will be a safer world.”

Challenge to Civil Society

In this regard, the civil society is confronted with an important challenge, said Terasaki: “to develop a common language so that both nuclear-weapon-states and non-nuclear-weapon states can engage in productive dialogue”.

And this because, Terasaki added, “there is both a practical and moral imperative to rid the world of those apocalyptic weapons. In that sense, the work of eliminating those weapons is essentially a global enterprise, one in which all parties have a constructive role to play.”

This applies to diplomats in particular. ICAN Co-Chair Rebecca Johnson said: “Diplomatic action to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons will be the best way to prevent a nuclear catastrophe in the future.”

“The 124 governments that have co-sponsored this important (joint) statement on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons are putting the security of their people above the militarist

justifications for some states to have nuclear weapons,” she added.

Beatrice Fihn, member of ICAN’s International Steering Group, commented: “The humanitarian focus on nuclear weapons has again proven to be successful. A growing number of states are showing concern about the unacceptable harm that these weapons of mass destruction threaten to unleash. This debate strengthens our confidence and resolve that there is a credible way forward towards the prohibition of nuclear weapons.”

ICAN, a campaign coalition with more than 300 members in 80 countries, is working closely with the Mexican government to ensure effective and significant participation of civil society at the February 2014 conference. It will help to facilitate this process for civil society, and will make sure that it is open and inclusive. ICAN will also have a sponsorship programme for campaigners from developing countries, the campaigners said.

Why there are miles to go to usher in a nuclear weapons free world is illustrated by the IKV Pax Christi and ICAN report, *Don’t Bank on the Bomb*. It is the only report to feature how 298 private and public financial institutions from around the world invest almost USD 314 billion in 27 companies involved in the production, maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons.

The report’s executive summary lists all financial institutions which are found to have financing relationships with nuclear weapon producers. 175 are based in North America, 65 in Europe, 47 in Asia-Pacific, ten in the Middle East, and one in Africa. None are based in Latin America or the Caribbean. Among the banks and other financial institutions most heavily involved are: Bank of America, BlackRock and JP Morgan Chase in the United States; Royal Bank of Scotland in the UK; BNP Paribas in France; Deutsche Bank in Germany; and Mitsubishi UFJ Financial in Japan. ➔

Several states and financial institutions have spoken out against the risks and effects of these weapons of mass destruction, but

as the study's worldwide research shows, in the last three years financial institutions provided: loans for a total of at least USD 63 billion; investment banking services worth at least USD 43 billion; and owned or managed shares and bonds for at least USD207 billion.

Nevertheless, avers the study, many financial institutions do not want to wait for what seems to be a slow political process to outlaw nuclear weapons. "Instead of waiting for a multilateral treaty process to begin, some financial institutions have enacted policies prohibiting or limiting their investment in nuclear weapons producers. These financial institutions have acted on their ethical responsibility to prevent gross humanitarian harm," observes the report.

It adds: "Next to the growing emphasis on the ethical responsibilities of financiers there is a growing emphasis on the on individual responsibilities of citizens to send a clear signal to their financial institutions as well as to their governments that the continued possession or development of these weapons is unacceptable."

In fact, unlike biological or chemical weapons, nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet banned by international law, despite global recognition that they kill indiscriminately and that they could fall into the wrong hands. On

June 19, 2013, in Berlin, US President Obama said "so long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe".

"Our collective efforts to move away from the nuclear abyss have remained too modest in ambition and brought only limited success," warned Heinz Fischer, President of Austria at the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on nuclear disarmament. "Nuclear weapons should be stigmatized, banned and eliminated before they abolish us," he said.

To date, all 190 states party to the NPT - Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons - have recognized the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons", the next step is, as said by the International Committee of the Red Cross, to "outlaw and eliminate them".

Precisely this lends weight to the old adage: Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

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[IDN-InDepthNews - October 28, 2013] ♦

DISARMAMENT THE KEY TO SUSTAINING FUTURE GENERATION

BY JOAN ERAKIT* FROM NEW YORK

Striving to promote the interest of future generations through policy making, The World Future Council gathers each year to review strategies that are progressive and change the way our global community functions.

The process begins with a serious question: what are the most important topics of our time and which countries are addressing them with such vigour, others take notice?

This is the task given to the World Future Council in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) - a trifecta with the goal of affecting positive change.

On October 23, 2013, United Nations officials, civil society and international delegates gathered at the UN Headquarters in New York for the 2013 Future Policy Awards.

With performances by the UN Symphony Orchestra and a special song by Colombian musician Cesar Lopez who transformed an AK-47 into a guitar, the award ceremony made sure to point out the importance of policy making as a means to peace and security.

This year's theme focused on the best disarmament policies, and with three distinguished categories, awards were given out to various countries whose work to demolish the existence of weapons - both small arms and nuclear - proved exemplary and sustainable.

Affirming the importance of disbanding weapons of all forms, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has called disarmament "a global



public good of the highest order" and pledged his continued support to the efforts of the UNODA.

According to the World Future Council, global military spending was well over 1.7 trillion in 2012 - a shocking number when poised against the funds spent to combat poverty and disease and on environmental issues.

It can be said that the very existence of weapons poses a threat to society. And the trafficking of weapons continues to be an issue for many governments and also undermines the process of peace while fueling armed violence and killing innocent civilians.

Disarmament then becomes an essential piece to the puzzle of sustainable development and the protection of people, an idea that could not be more pronounced at this year's awards ceremony.

After inviting various nominations, a policy award jury of eight deliberated in early July of 2013 and decided on the winners who were honoured in New York. Over 25 policies were reviewed from 15 different countries, in six regions.

The diversity of policies presented is what really ignited the theme - let alone matched the diversity of countries nominated. Some of the policies focused on the elimination of specific weapons, whereas others zoned in on the complete destruction and disarmament of nuclear weapons. ➔

Photo: World Future Council awardees | Credit: Lusha Chen

Alexandra Wandel, Director of the World Future Council and host for the awards ceremony explained to IDN the significance of the policy awards in regards to the current global atmosphere:

"Many people around the world are desperate. Everyday we have negative news about armed conflict and guns being spread; therefore the future policy award is supposed to inspire people and governments that positive examples exist all over the world, and that it's possible to disarm and improve the living conditions for today and for future generations."

With four honorable mentions, the Future Policy Award celebrated the work of Belgium and their amendment to the Belgium Law on Arms and Ammunition of 1995, which banned anti-personal mines, and also their law regulating economic and individual activities with weapons of 2006, which worked to ban cluster munitions.

Costa Rica was also given an honorable mention for its Article 12 of the Constitution of Costa Rica of 1949, which abolished the national army after a five-week civil war in 1948.

Mozambique and South Africa also picked up honorable mentions for their 1995 initiative of cooperation and mutual assistance in the field of crime combating, while Mongolia was acknowledged for its law on a nuclear-weapon free status, created in 2000.

The winners of the Silver Award were New Zealand and Argentina. Argentina was recognized for its 2006 programme for the Voluntary Surrender of Firearms, a monumental stride to prevent unnecessary gun violence.

Following suit, New Zealand picked up the award for its Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act of 1987, setting a strong legacy for the perseverance of health and the environment during the nuclear testing of the South Pacific.

But at the end of the day there could only be one winner, and with an initiative that has lasted over half a century and affected

many countries, the Gold Award went to Latin America and the Caribbean for the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Established in 1967, this special treaty set the precedence for creating cooperative regional security using nuclear disarmament. Inspired by the Cuban Missile Crisis, two years later in 1969, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) was built to secure the main principles of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and ensure that peace and security continued in the region.

With standout characteristics such as the prohibition of manufacture, use, testing, installation, storage, acquisition and possession of any nuclear weapons, the Treaty of Tlatelolco proved its commitment to addressing the immediate threat of nuclear weapons in the region from external powers. However, it also looked at the future as many Latin countries were starting to develop nuclear energy industries with potential of future development of nuclear weapons. Years later in 2013, the policy is still relevant today as it was in the 1960s.

"What's so special about the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean is that they managed to have a nuclear free zone and they inspired others. The southern hemisphere is without nuclear weapons which should be an inspiration to other regions and other nuclear weapon power states, because it's a threat to our peace that we still have nuclear power." Wandell said.

And as the respective winners take their awards back to their home countries and continue to do the work to protect our global community, one has to ask what the future of disarmament will mean for the next generation. ➡

In a telling piece written for the second issue of the Nuclear Abolition Forum, Rob van Riet refers to the largely unaware population who will have to soon grapple with the possibility of living in

a world where nuclear weapons are common place. Recalling a speech that U.S. President Barack Obama gave in April of 2009 in Prague, van Riet revisited a crippling aspect of ambivalence towards nuclear deterrence:

“The commentary proved concurrently sobering however, in that it reminded a young generation, largely unaware of the extent of nuclear danger, that the fall of the Berlin wall did not lead to the fall of the wall of nuclear weapons, still poised and ready to obliterate the world.”

A sad truth made even more real by the fact that most young people - those of Generation Y (the generation born between the late 1970s and the mid-1990s) who will most certainly have to sustain the effects of a nuclear world, are less likely to be aware of policies surrounding disarmament.

An action of the past has become a condition of the future, and the policies brought forth by the Future Policy Award ceremony highlight this phenomenon with great clarity.

Many of the policies date 30 or even 40 years back. Civil wars, global unrest and misuse of power weighed heavily during those times - as they do now. In retaliation, there were a few individuals who were inspired enough to come together and create poli-

cies that governments could implement as to not allow history to repeat itself.

When world leaders gather to discuss the future of nuclear weapons, one can only hope that those plans include the generations to come. Or at least call upon Generation Y to ponder the relationship between peace and disarmament.

Through a re-evaluation of ideas towards weapons, education on policies that protect communities and involvement in local and national government, insightful steps to sustaining the future are possible.

Disarmament strengthens international peace and security, and as witnessed through the eyes of the Future Policy Awards - creates a domino effect of change.

[IDN-InDepthNews - October 27, 2013] ◆

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RUSSIA MAY DO BETTER THAN ITS NUCLEAR RHETORIC

BY PAVOL STRACANSKY FROM MOSCOW

Despite a seemingly entrenched resistance to change on its nuclear disarmament policy, the Kremlin's recent initiative to get Syria to destroy its chemical weapons provides hope that Russia could play a more positive role in reducing the world's global nuclear stockpiles, experts say.

The recent high-level meeting of the U.N. general assembly on nuclear disarmament - the first of its kind - ended with Russia confirming its stance of no new nuclear arms reduction initiatives. It said it wants issues it sees as pressing, such as U.S. strategic defence systems, effective implementation of existing weapons reduction treaties, and concerns over other states' weapons programmes, addressed first.

But the meeting in New York at the end of last month saw almost as much discussion about chemical weapons in the wake of Syria's agreement to destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles as about nuclear arms.

Experts believe that the deal with Syria, originally proposed by Moscow, shows that if one state can be persuaded to rethink its WMD programmes, others can too, including nuclear weapons.

Petr Topychkanov, an expert on non-proliferation at the Carnegie Moscow Centre, told IPS: "There was no reason to really expect anything new from Russia on nuclear disarmament at the U.N. conference, but there is some hope of change following the Syrian chemical weapons deal.

"What that did is that it set a good example of cooperation between Russia and other countries on getting rid of weapons of mass destruction. It sends a signal that Russia can stimulate discussion with other countries on disarmament, even though in this case it was not nuclear weapons.

"Syria was not one of the countries signed up to the Chemical Weapons Convention, whose signatories agree to destroy their chemical weapons, but was persuaded to do so and get rid of their weapons. So, if that can be done with Syria, why can it not be done with other countries on other WMDs, such as nuclear weapons?"

While Russia and the U.S. hold 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, the Kremlin has been vocal on what it sees as the need for nuclear disarmament to be addressed not just by it and Washington, but by all nuclear states.

President Vladimir Putin has openly questioned calls for countries to cut their nuclear arsenals when neighbouring and near-neighbouring states are seen to be expanding their own nuclear capabilities.

And at the U.N. conference Russia stressed that it saw no real future in nuclear disarmament until all countries with nuclear weapons, and other forms of WMDs, take steps towards disarmament.

Topychkanov said: "Russia does not see nuclear disarmament just through the prism of U.S.-Russia disarmament alone. Moscow wants to engage other countries in disarmament agreements.

"These are not necessarily about multilateral agreements, such as between the P5 permanent U.N. Security Council nations, to all disarm, as that would be impossible. But they are looking to promote many bilateral agreements."

Indeed, Russia-U.S. nuclear disarmament efforts have stalled in recent years. Since the end of the Cold War there have been various agreements on reducing the number of warheads on both sides. ➡

Calls earlier this year by U.S. President Barack Obama for both Washington and Moscow to reduce their arsenals by a third have been de facto rebuffed by the Kremlin. It has been reluctant to agree to drastic cuts due to the differences in weapons delivery capabilities between the two countries, fearing that it would be left at a military disadvantage by dramatic blanket cuts.

It has also been wary of U.S. missile defence plans, and without assurances that they would not be used against Russia, the Kremlin will not agree to concessions on nuclear weapons.

“The Russian position [on nuclear disarmament] is set quite hard. They do not see a compelling reason to change it,” Nikolai Sokov, a fellow at the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, told IPS.

“Domestically, the public is not particularly friendly to nuclear disarmament and internationally, they would like to see at least some movement from others. The argument that I hear quite often that we, usually the U.S., cannot change our position because of domestic politics, is met with the argument that ‘why should we bear the burden? Everybody needs to pitch in’.”

Russian officials are happy to also point out that while it has slashed its nuclear weapons arsenal to meet requirements of the new START treaty signed with Washington in 2010, the U.S. is dragging its heels on the same commitments.

The latest official data, released earlier this year, shows that while both countries have until 2018 to reach missile targets under the treaty, the U.S. remains well above the limit for deployed strategic warheads and launchers while Russia is already below them.

It also defends increased spending on its nuclear arsenal - only this month it was reported in Russian media that government spending on its nuclear arsenal would increase 50 percent per year for the next three years - by the need to maintain and update weapons and technology which, for the most part, were created under the Soviet regime.

“Russia has a commitment to disarm but the country’s nuclear arsenal is old and expensive to maintain and needs to be modernised. Moscow is committed to the START treaty and its limits, but within those limits it is also committed to updating and developing its nuclear weapons,” explained Topychkanov.

However, despite any agenda the Kremlin may have of promoting bilateral agreements with other countries on nuclear disarmament or on engaging other countries in negotiations on giving up weapons of WMD, a go-slow on further nuclear weapons cuts in both Russia and the U.S. is far from unwelcome in Moscow.

Sokov told IPS: “Leaders in Moscow actually quite like the stalemate. It gives them an opportunity to continue modernisation programmes without hindrance. Whatever the U.S. is doing - in missile defence, for example - is years away and even more years when a completed research and development programme is translated into production at a scale that might affect Russian security.

“All parties are using the slowdown in arms control to continue programmes they feel they need. In the absence of a threat of major conflict, they can afford to do so, and the only thing that can interfere with their plans is pressure from the international community. But that is not strong enough.”

[IPS - October 16, 2013] ◆

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI BECKON NUKE FREE WORLD

BY RAMESH JAURA FROM BERLIN FROM HIROSHIMA

“World leaders, high-ranking UN officials, city mayors and representatives of the civil society from around the globe, gathered for a summit at Hiroshima and Nagasaki to mark the seventieth anniversary of the atom bombing of two Japanese cities, declared that nuclear weapons will be outlawed by 2020, and called upon all governments to agree at the earliest on a nuclear weapons convention.”

A press release in August 2015 might read somewhat like this if the momentum building up for ushering in a world free of nuclear weapons continues and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda’s proposal for a nuclear abolition summit to be held in 2015 on the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is translated into action.

He reiterated the proposal in a message to an exhibition titled ‘Everything You Treasure: For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons’ on September 24, 2013 in Hiroshima City, “an eternal bastion of peace”, as he termed it. SGI - with members in 192 countries and territories around the world - has been engaged in peace activities since the public call at the height of the Cold War in 1957 by its second president Josei Toda for prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons,

In the 1980s, with the support of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, SGI created the exhibition ‘Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World’, aiming to raise public awareness of the grave consequences of nuclear weapons. As part of a campaign to support the United Nations, the exhibition toured different parts of the world including the nuclear weapons states.



In 2007, SGI launched its grassroots anti-nuclear campaign ‘People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition’, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the antinuclear declaration made by Toda. The exhibition ‘From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Toward a World Free From Nuclear Weapons’ was created by SGI as the first project to launch this campaign.

It examined the nuclear threat from the perspective of human security. The exhibition, after touring more than 230 cities in 31 countries and territories around the world, completed its successful showing in Bahrain in March 2013 in the presence of Bahrain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Everything You Treasure - For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons today builds on those experiences. “The exhibition, realized with the invaluable support of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), aims to foster a deep awareness of the consequences of nuclear weapons by reexamining the challenges they pose from twelve different perspectives, including ecological integrity, human rights and gender,” said Hirotsugu Terasaki, Vice President of Soka Gakkai and Executive Director, SGI Peace Affairs:

The English-language version of the exhibition was first launched at the 20th World Congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in Hiroshima in 2012. It has since *been shown at ICAN’s Civil Society Forum in Oslo, Norway*

☺
Picture: Visitors to the Hiroshima exhibition | Credit: SGI

in March 2013, and later at the UN Office at Geneva, during the Second Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in April 2013.

As Ikeda stressed, the organizers of the exhibition feel “acutely the importance of sharing with the world the message of the *hibakusha* (survivors of atom bombs) and all the citizens of Hiroshima - that the catastrophic tragedy of nuclear bombing must never be repeated and that humankind cannot coexist with nuclear weapons.”

“In today’s world, beset by the growing threat of nuclear proliferation, the spirit of Hiroshima represents a fundamental and universal principle to which all people, of all backgrounds and nationalities, must return if we are to make peace a reality,” the SGI president added.

A tipping point

Whether the imaginary press release is realized in August 2015 or not, recent developments suggest that the nuclear debate is approaching a tipping point. The discourse is finally reframing the issue of nuclear weapons from the Cold War focus on state security through deterrence to efforts for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament based on a frank recognition of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

A landmark is May 2012, when 16 countries, led by Norway and Switzerland, issued a joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, stressing: “All states must intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.” There have since been more than one similar joint statements and the most recent, the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, has been signed by 80 governments.

Statements made by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement

gave a significant impetus to shifting the discussion and highlighting the need to reframe the nuclear weapons debate in humanitarian terms. Also the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament on September 26, 2013 has underscored the need for a nuclear weapons free world.

“Given the intensifying interrogation of the continued existence of nuclear weapons on humanitarian grounds, it is vital that both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states effect a decisive shift in policy,” argues Ikeda.

“This is necessary if we are to move forward toward the outlawing and abolition of nuclear weapons. And to grow momentum toward this end we must expand the solidarity of people around the world who share the determination of Hiroshima’s citizens that their tragic experience must never be visited upon anyone else,” the SGI president adds.

Against this backdrop, it was particularly significant that the inspiring 2013 Hiroshima Peace Declaration described the atomic bomb as “the ultimate inhumane weapon and an absolute evil”. It added: “The *hibakusha*, who know the hell of an atomic bombing, have continuously fought that evil. To that end, the city of Hiroshima and the more than 5,700 cities that comprise Mayors for Peace, in collaboration with the UN and like-minded NGOs, seek to abolish nuclear weapons by 2020 and throw our full weight behind the early achievement of a nuclear weapons convention,” said Matsui Kazumi, Mayor of the City of Hiroshima at the memorable exhibition.

In a clarion call the Mayor added: “Policymakers of the world, how long will you remain imprisoned by distrust and animosity? Do you honestly believe you can continue to maintain national security by rattling your sabers? Please come to Hiroshima. Encounter the spirit of the *hibakusha*. Look squarely at the future of the human family without being trapped in the past, and make the decision to shift to a security based on trust and dialogue.”



TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The exhibition indeed reexamines the threat nuclear weapons pose to today's world from multiple perspectives: ecological integrity, economic security, human rights, gender and the social responsibility of science. SGI and ICAN hope that the exhibition will help foster and expand solidarity for the elimination of nuclear weapons “based on a consciousness that nuclear weapons are something deeply and personally relevant to each of our lives”.

As the SGI President argues, “To build a world free of nuclear weapons requires more than removing existing nuclear threats. It is the challenge to empower citizens to take the initiative in creating an era of peaceful coexistence - realizing a sustainable global society in which all people, including the members of fu-

ture generations, can fully experience the dignity of their own lives and the lives of others.”

In this context, Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki rightly pointed out at the exhibition: “Hiroshima is promoting a message of peace throughout the world. At the same time, we are currently working to build a mechanism that will sustain and support peace-building efforts around the world. We wish to cooperate with like-minded organizations in Japan and abroad to consolidate efforts toward this goal and make Hiroshima become the hub for promoting global peace.”

[IDN-InDepthNews - October 7, 2013] ◆



Credit: <http://www.peoplesdecade.org/decade/exhibition/eyt/eyt.html>

U.N. PRESSES FORWARD ON GLOBAL BAN ON NUKE TESTS

BY JAYA RAMACHANDRAN FROM NEW YORK

Seventeen years after the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) opened for signature, the United Nations has launched a new initiative to expedite its entry into force “at the earliest possible date”.

Foreign ministers and high-level representatives from the 183 Member States of the Treaty have urged the eight remaining States - China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States - to sign and ratify the CTBT, “thus ridding the world once and for all of nuclear test explosions”. Ratification by these eight countries is indispensable for the Treaty coming into force.

The Final Declaration of the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT adopted unanimously on September 27, 2013 at the United Nations headquarters in New York affirms “the importance and urgency of achieving early entry into force of the Treaty as a crucial practical step for systematic and progressive efforts towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.”

The declaration also describes the universal condemnation of the North Korea’s announced nuclear tests as “a testament to the normative strength of the Treaty and its contribution to the stigmatization of nuclear test explosions”.

The declaration argues that the cessation of all nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions, by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nu-



clear weapons, constitute an effective measure of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

“The ending of nuclear weapon testing is, thus, a meaningful step in the realization of the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons globally, and of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control,” the declaration states.

The declaration states that the UN Security Council Summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in New York on September 24, 2009, which adopted resolution 1887, and the adoption by consensus of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), among other events, demonstrate continued strong international will to see this Treaty brought into force.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who opened the conference, urged all remaining States to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay. “This is a call I make on behalf of all people in our world who adamantly oppose the development of those indiscriminate weapons and yearn for a safer world,” Ban said.

“History teaches that we have to be diligent in pressing for ratification,” he added, pointing out that the 1919 Convention for the Control of the Trade in Arms and Ammunition never entered into force. Neither did the 1925 Convention for the Supervision of the International Trade in Arms and Ammunition and in Implements of War. ☺

Photoon page 79: Some of the members of the Group of Eminent Persons at the official launching of the group in New York on September 26, 2013. Credit: CTBTO

“After these setbacks, it took 88 years for governments to adopt another multilateral treaty to control conventional arms transfers, the Arms Trade Treaty. The international community cannot afford anything near this long wait to revive efforts to outlaw nuclear testing if the CTBT fails to enter into force,” Ban emphasized. “The repeated nuclear tests by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea should serve as a wake-up call that now is the time to act,” he added.

A uniting force

Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), said the UN General Assembly’s High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on September 26 “marked the resolve of the international community to breathe new life into the multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.”

He added: “The CTBT is a uniting force in the multilateral system. Today, the prospects for entry into force of the Treaty appear much more positive than they did for many years. It shall be up to you to seize the moment and to determine the action necessary to realize the dream.”

János Martonyi and Marty Natalegawa, the Foreign Ministers of Hungary and Indonesia, jointly chaired the biennial meeting, commonly referred to as the “Article XIV conference.” In his opening remarks, Martonyi said particular effort should be placed on dialogue with the eight remaining countries yet to ratify. “We will therefore spare no efforts to convince these countries that embracing the CTBT can only enhance their own security and standing.”

Hungary was one of the first to ratify the CTBTO. Former CTBTO Executive Secretary Tibor Tóth, who headed the organization for eight-years until Zerbo - who hails from Burkina Faso - took over in August 2013.

Referring to his country’s ratification of the CTBT on February 6, 2012, Natalegawa said: “Indonesia decided to ratify the Treaty last year to create new momentum that would encourage the remaining Annex 2 counties to also ratify it. We also wanted to demonstrate our firm commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.”

“The continuing moratorium on nuclear test explosions is important but this is only a temporary measure. It does not ensure the permanent cessation of nuclear weapon test explosions,” Natalegawa added.

The recent ratifications by Guinea-Bissau on September 24, 2013 and Iraq on September 26, 201, which increased the total number of ratifications to 161 were welcomed by States attending the conference.

The conference agreed on eleven concrete measures to accelerate the CTBT’s entry into force. These include support for bilateral, regional and multilateral outreach initiatives and cooperation with civil society as well as encouraging a range of other activities designed to increase the number of signatures and ratifications by raising awareness about the importance of the Treaty.

Group of Eminent Persons

The Final Declaration also welcomes the establishment of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) on September 26, 2013 to promote the objectives of the Treaty and help secure its entry into force. ➡

“The Group will inject new energy and dynamics into the entry into force process,” the CTBTO Executive Secretary said. “As I look to this Group, I am inspired by the sheer magnitude of their experience and expertise. Through their credibility, credentials and experience, I expect the Group to open new paths for the entry into force of the Treaty,” Zerbo said.

States commended the effectiveness of the CTBT verification regime as demonstrated on many occasions, most recently in response to the North Korea’s nuclear test announced on February 12, 2013.

The CTBT bans all nuclear explosions everywhere, by everyone. The CTBTO is building an International Monitoring System (IMS) to make sure that no nuclear explosion goes undetected. Over 85% of this network has already been established. CTBTO monitoring data also have non-verification uses and can be used for disaster mitigation such as earthquake monitoring, tsunami warning, and the tracking of radioactivity from nuclear accidents.

[IDN-InDepthNews - September 30, 2013] ♦



Credit: <http://www.ctbto.org>

Lassina Zerbo, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), said the UN General Assembly’s High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on September 26 “marked the resolve of the international community to breathe new life into the multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.”

WHAT ABOUT THE 'GLOBAL RED LINE' FOR NUKES

BY RAMESH JAURA* FROM BERLIN

Reputed to be an ardent campaigner for a nuclear weapons free world, ICAN has yet again called upon the powers-that-be to ban all nukes threatening the very survival of planet Earth and entire humankind. The fervent appeal by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons coincided with the UN high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament in New York.

In a statement on September 26, ICAN, a global campaign coalition of more than 300 organizations in 80 countries, asks: "Where is the 'Global Red Line' for Nuclear Weapons?"

The question alludes to U.S. President Barack Obama's reference to the 'red line' having been crossed in Syria, in the wake of alleged use of chemical weapons, and threatening military action, which has been averted by Russia jumping in to build a bridge to President Bashar Hafez al-Assad.

"The horrors of the attack in Syria have shown the danger inherent in the continued possession of weapons of mass destruction. The global outrage in response to the carnage caused by the use of chemical weapons is proof that until they are eradicated, there is a significant risk that one day they will be used, whether by intention or by accident. Nuclear weapons, for all their status and symbolism, are not exempt from this stark reality, and the cost of neglecting to recognize this would be disastrous," the ICAN warns.

Eight 'confirmed signatories' of the statement, besides Liv Tørres, General Secretary of the Norwegian People's Aid, who posted it on The Huffington Post, are: Madeleine Rees, Secretary General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); Philip Jennings, General Secretary, UNI Global Union; Jan Gruiters, Executive Director, IKV Pax Christi; Kate Hudson, General Secretary, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND);

Akira Kawasaki, Member of the Executive Committee, Peace Boat; Michael Christ, Executive Director, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW); and Hirotsugu Terasaki, Executive Director, Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

SGI - a lay Buddhist movement linking more than 12 million people around the world - has a pride of place among faith-based organisations. It has been campaigning relentlessly for abolition of nuclear weapons since the second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons issued on September 8, 1957. In 2007, SGI launched the People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition campaign in order to galvanize public opinion in favour of banning all nuclear arsenal.

In fact SGI president Daisaku Ikeda put forward in his annual Peace Proposal 2010 the idea of organising a nuclear abolition summit in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015 to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of those cities. He reiterated the proposal in 2011 and the following year, and suggested the possibility of even organising the 2015 NPT Review Conference in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In Peace Proposal 2013, Ikeda went a step further and pleaded for an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world:

"The G8 Summit in 2015, the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would be an appropriate opportunity for such a summit, which should include the additional participation of representatives of the United Nations and non-G8 states in possession of nuclear weapons, as well as members of the five existing NWFZs (nuclear weapons free zones) and those states which have taken a lead in calling for nuclear abolition." ☺

Global humanitarian threat

The statement carried by The Huffington Post stresses: “Nuclear disarmament is not solely the province of nuclear weapon possessors. Nuclear weapons are a global humanitarian threat, and the responsibility to eliminate them lies with nuclear free states as much as it does with nuclear weapon possessors.”

The signatories argue that nukes are indiscriminate weapons, whose effects cannot be limited or controlled. In fact, the use of even a small fraction of existing arsenals - more than 17,000 warheads - would disrupt the climate and threaten agricultural production, leading to the starvation of up to two billion people.

This is because, as was made clear by the Hiroshima Committee of Experts in their analysis of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima, “It is not possible to protect civilians from a nuclear weapons attack. To protect civilians, there is no measure other than to prevent a nuclear weapons attack from occurring, whether it be deliberate or accidental. To prevent the use of nuclear weapons, there is no way other than to abolish nuclear weapons themselves.”

In an attempt to drive home the point, the signatories of the statement say: “Study upon study has pointed to the inability to prevent or care for civilian casualties on a mass scale. Mitigation is simply impossible for a weapon capable of producing temperatures comparable to the centre of the sun.”

With an eye on states which tend to bury their heads in the sand, the statement adds: “Nuclear weapon possessors are, of course, not ignorant of the true effects of nuclear weapons, just as they are not ignorant of the double standard that is afforded these weapons compared to other weapons of mass destruction.”

The statement adds: “The truth is that, for decades, nuclear weapons have been given an almost mythological status: they are seen as ‘keepers of the peace’ or ‘necessary evils.’ They have

been transmuted into symbols of power and prestige for the political and military elites of nuclear possessor states.”

While keeping the focus on the grave humanitarian impact of nukes, the eight ‘confirmed signatories’ of the ICAN statement emphasize: “Nuclear weapons are weapons -- not policy tools. No security doctrine or theory can completely obscure the fact that any use of nuclear weapons would entail catastrophic humanitarian consequences -- massive civilian casualties and irreparable damage to the environment, public health and the world economy.”

The Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Oslo held in March 2013, concluded that it would not be possible to coordinate and deliver any meaningful humanitarian response, to a catastrophe brought about by nuclear weapons. No international organization or state could adequately deal with the situation.

Experts pointed out at the Oslo conference that any use of nuclear weapons would eradicate hospitals, food, water and medical supplies, transportation and communications—infrastructure required for the treatment of survivors. They cautioned that physicians and paramedics arriving from outside would have to work without resources needed for effective treatment; furthermore, radiation, as we know from both Chernobyl and Fukushima, can make it impossible for rescuers to enter highly contaminated areas.

Against this backdrop, the ICAN statement signatories said: “Recognising the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons means taking a clear position against the acceptability of these weapons. It means clearly articulating that the possession and threat of use of nuclear weapons are directly opposed to humanitarian principles and formulating that stigma into a legally binding instrument which bans them outright.” ➡

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Expanding this argument, ICAN campaigner Nosizwe Lise Baqwa said at the UN General Assembly on September 26: “That nuclear weapons have not already been clearly declared illegal for all, alongside the other prohibited weapons of mass destruction, is a failure of our collective social responsibility.”

Speaking on behalf of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), she said: “The time has come for committed states to correct that failure. The time has come to ban nuclear weapons once and for all.”

“The current framework provided for multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations has not been able to overcome the lack of political will of nuclear-armed states to comply with their obligations to disarm. Let us not allow deadlocks in meetings to be the legacy we leave behind us, for our children,” she added.

Baqwa appeared to be sharing SGI President Ikeda’s conviction,

when she said: “A treaty banning nuclear weapons is achievable. It can be initiated by states that do not possess nuclear weapons. Nuclear-armed states should not be allowed to prevent such negotiations. We should not abandon productive or promising efforts in other forums, but neither should we ignore the opportunity that lies before us now, to make history.” [IDN-*InDepthNews* - September 27, 2013] ♦

**Ramesh Jaura is global editor of IDN and its sister publication Global Perspectives, chief editor of IPS Germany as well as editorial board member of Other News. He is also executive president of Global Cooperation Council, board member of IPS international and global coordinator of SGI-IPS project for strengthening public awareness of the need to abolish nukes.*



Image: UN General Assembly

HIGH OPPORTUNITY FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AT HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

BY JONATHAN GRANOFF* FROM HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.

Every nation in the world has been invited to participate at the highest political level in the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament scheduled for Sep. 26. This has never happened before. We have never been at such a moment of crisis and opportunity.

The crisis arises because the rational route forward which has been identified by the vast majority of the world's countries in support of advancing a convention banning nuclear weapons or, as the secretary general has also suggested, a framework of legal agreements achieving elimination, has not been supported by the U.S. or Russia, two states with more than 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons.

Thus, progress toward disarmament lacks the galvanising focus preliminary negotiations on a treaty would provide. It is also a moment of opportunity since except for India and Pakistan, no states with nuclear weapons are actually hostile to one another.

Rhetorical puffery has become expected in season after season while regularly a new crisis du jour sweeps attention away from nuclear disarmament obligations. Anyone can see cynicism as a dangerous and contagious problem looming on the horizon if nothing meaningful is done soon.

Many countries know this and that is why the 67th session of the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/67/39 moved to convene this high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament for the 68th session of the General Assembly.

China and India have both expressed support for negotiating a universal ban on the weapons and Pakistan has stated it would follow. France, the U.S. and UK, and Russia openly oppose progress now on even taking preliminary steps to negotiate a legal ban.

Claims are made that progress through the START process and obtaining incremental steps such as entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban and a treaty banning the further production of weapons grade fissile materials must be achieved and focused upon to the exclusion of other efforts. Diplomats from nuclear weapons states even assert that advocacy for a universal, non-discriminatory ban would divert attention and diminish effectiveness in pursuing incremental steps.

The problems with only taking this incremental approach are many. The U.S. Senate is unlikely in the near term to ratify the test ban. The case for the test ban as part of the march toward disarmament has not been made domestically and thus its advocacy appears as incoherent.

It is hard to make the case that the U.S. military should ever be constrained without demonstrating the benefits of obtaining a universal ban on the weapons. Incoherence in advocacy leads to policies going in multiple directions. An example of such incoherence was obvious in the policy for ratification for the START treaty - support the treaty and pledge hundreds of billions of dollars to "modernise" the arsenal and infrastructure.

The negotiations for the fissile materials cut off treaty are being done in the Conference on Disarmament, a body of 61 nations in Geneva that operates by consensus. Thus, one country can always stop progress. This body has not even had a working agenda in over a decade. Spoilers abound. Progress will not take place there. Third, reliance on progress on the bilateral leadership of Russia and the U.S. is foolish. Russia has made clear that the next round on START reductions will not happen without resolution of differences on the dangers of global precision strike aspirations of the U.S. military where nuclear warheads are replaced by conventional warheads and new weapons fulfill old missions, missile defense as a possible sword and shield should technical

breakthroughs arise, and weaponisation of space, a course Russia wants prohibited by treaty.

These issues will not be resolved soon since behind them all is a cadre within the U.S. military which wants to always have a dominant position for security purposes. Progress is unlikely while Russia feels threatened.

Yet: Consensus with Russia and the U.S. that through a universal treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, progress in Syria can be made thus making us all safer bodes well for progress on banning nuclear weapons. Surely no one would claim nuclear weapons are any less abhorrent and more legitimate to use than chemical weapons.

Yet: Imagine if the 114 leaders of governments in the five nuclear weapons-free zones of Latin America, Africa, South Asia, Central Asia and the South Pacific each said, “My country benefits from being in a nuclear weapons-free zone and remains threatened by those countries with nuclear weapons. It is time we made the entire world a nuclear weapons-free zone.”

The necessary upgrading of the issue to the prominent position it deserves would happen.

Imagine if the statement from the gathering said, “We will dedicate a high level day each year until the threat of nuclear weapons is gone.” Imagine if commencement of preliminary negotiations were committed to happen by a critical mass of leaders “in the Conference on Disarmament, or any other appropriate and effective venue at the earliest possible time, and we commit to full participation in this process.”

Such a call for progress would be an irresistible stimulant. But what would really ring a bell for progress would be a statement along these lines:

“There are global common public goods which must be obtained to make us all safer. Cooperation in addressing terrorism, cyber security, stable financial markets, and peaceful democratisation in countries in transition are of high value and critical importance. The very survival of civilisation depends on how well we work together in obtaining other global common goods - protecting the climate, the oceans, the rainforests, all living systems upon which humanity depends.

“There is an existential imperative that we cooperate in new dynamic ways to meet these new challenges. Nothing could compel us more strongly to resolve our differences in a spirit of peace and common purpose. Even thinking of seriously stating what is common and good for us all makes clear that possessing and threatening to use nuclear weapons is irrational, dysfunctional and must end, now.

“We breathe the same air and it is either cleansed with a spirit of cooperation or befouled by fear and threat. We are resolved to succeed in spirit of cooperation for this and future generations. That spirit calls us to denounce and renounce nuclear weapons for all now.” [IPS - September 18, 2013] ♦

**Jonathan Granoff is President of the Global Security Institute, and Adjunct Professor of International Law at Widener University School of Law.*

LOW EXPECTATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL NUKE MEET

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

The upcoming event at the United Nations is being billed as something politically unique. For the first time in its 68-year history, the 193-member General Assembly is holding a high-level meeting of world leaders on one of the most controversial issues of our time: nuclear disarmament.

But expectations for the meeting are low, says Jayantha Dhanapala, a former U.N. under-secretary-general for disarmament affairs.

Unless disarmament becomes a priority for possessor states, he told IPS, speeches and meetings alone are not going to change the stark dangers posed by this most destructive weapon of mass destruction (WMD).

“A decision to outlaw nuclear weapons in the same way as biological and chemical weapons is essential,” said Dhanapala, who is president of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, which jointly won the 1995 Nobel Peace prize for their efforts at nuclear disarmament. “The time to start negotiations on a Nuclear Weapon Convention (NWC) is not tomorrow but now,” he said.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has consistently maintained that nuclear disarmament is one of his top priorities, is expected to call for “a world free of nuclear weapons” at the meeting scheduled to take place at the United Nations on Sep. 26.

Asked if the high-level meeting will be another exercise in futility, Alyn Ware, a member of the World Future Council and consultant to the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, told IPS, “It could be an exercise in futility if governments, including the non-nuclear governments, do not treat it seriously.”



He said non-nuclear governments should participate at the highest level, and make strong statements that they are more secure without nuclear weapons and that the security of all in the 21st Century requires the abolition of nuclear weapons, meaning that it is a “global good of the highest order”.

Ware said they should also pledge to dedicate greater resources and political traction to developing the building blocks for a nuclear weapons-free world through the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) to which the nuclear weapons states (NWS) have an obligation to join.

Currently, there are five declared nuclear weapon states, namely the United States, Britain, Russia, France, China, all five permanent members of the Security Council (P5), along with three undeclared nuclear weapon states, India, Pakistan, Israel.

Despite its three nuclear tests, North Korea still remains in limbo.

The three undeclared nuclear powers have all refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as against the five declared nuclear powers who are states parties to the treaty.

Dhanapala said nine countries - five within the NPT and four outside - possess a total inventory of 17,270 nuclear warheads today, 4,400 of them placed on missiles or located on bases ready to be launched in minutes. ☹

Photo: The U.N. General Assembly Hall. Credit: UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

The U.S. and Russia alone own 16,200 of these warheads, he pointed out.

And despite the lingering horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the risks of nuclear weapons being used again - by design or accident, by states or non-state actors - are huge, he added.

“The results would be catastrophic for all humankind,” Dhanapala warned.

Ware told IPS the role of nuclear weapons could be reduced in Northeast Asia through negotiations for a North East Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

The U.S., he said, could exercise more effective diplomacy in the Middle East to move the Arab states and Israel to participate in good faith in the proposed U.N. Conference on a Middle East Zone Free from Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. Arab States are demanding preconditions that are unacceptable to Israel, so both need to exercise some flexibility, he noted.

Non-nuclear countries could use the OEWG, as long as the mandate is renewed, to commence preparatory work on the building blocks for a nuclear weapons-free world (based on the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention circulated by the secretary-general) regardless of whether or not the nuclear weapons states join the OEWG in the near future.

Dhanapala told IPS the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSODI) was held in 1978 as a direct outcome of the summit of world leaders of the 1976 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

It was a period of detente in the Cold War and a far-reaching Final Declaration was adopted.

No multilateral gathering has matched that remarkable consensus on fundamental concepts achieved 35 years ago, especially on the priority of nuclear disarmament, he added.

“Yet today, the multilateral disarmament machinery established by SSOD I is in grave disarray,” he said.

The sole multilateral negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament, has neither negotiated treaties nor even adopted a programme of work since 1996, according to Dhanapala.

The Disarmament Commission has met ritualistically every year without any agreed texts in the last 14 years.

And the U.N.’s First Committee, dealing with disarmament, is still churning out resolutions with little impact, he added.

“While the mirage of a nuclear weapon-free world is held aloft, the CTBT has not entered into force, the promised conference on the Middle East as a WMD-free zone has not been held and bilateral U.S.-Russian nuclear disarmament talks have not even started,” Dhanapala said. The need for a radical change has been recognised by the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and their supporters have resisted NAM demands for a SSOD IV.

A one-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly is a compromise, he said.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference with its 64-point action programme and the increasing recognition of humanitarian disarmament are an inadequate basis for the non-nuclear weapon states, most of which are in legally recognised nuclear weapon-free zones, to trust the nuclear armed states to disarm.

The Sep. 26 meeting must be the beginning of a nuclear disarmament process, Dhanapala said. [IPS - September 13, 2013]



'DELUSION' CHALLENGES U.S. CLAIMS ABOUT NUCLEAR IRAN

BY PETER JENKINS* FROM LONDON

A Dangerous Delusion is the work of one of Britain's most brilliant political commentators, Peter Osborne, and an Irish physicist, David Morrison, who has written powerfully about the misleading of British public and parliamentary opinion in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War.

This book will infuriate neoconservatives, Likudniks and members of the Saudi royal family but enlighten all who struggle with what to think about the claim that Iran's nuclear programme threatens the survival of Israel, the security of Arab states in the Persian Gulf, and global peace.

Writing with verve and concision as well as with the indignation that has been a feature of good criticism since the days of Juvenal, the authors spare the reader potentially tedious detail so that the book can be devoured in a matter of hours.

Their purpose, stated early in the work, is to argue that U.S. and European confrontation with Iran over its nuclear activities is unnecessary and irrational. Insofar as some concern about Iranian intentions has been and is justified, that concern can be allayed by measures that Iran has been ready to volunteer since 2005 and by more intrusive international monitoring.

An international legal instrument, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has a starring part in the story. This treaty, one of the fruits of the détente following the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, has been remarkably successful in discouraging the spread of nuclear weapons. Iran has been a party since the NPT entered into force in 1970.

In 1968 a senior U.S. official testified before the Senate that the newly drafted NPT did not prohibit the acquisition of nuclear technologies that could be used for military as well as civil purposes (dual-use).

It was assumed that parties would have an interest in complying with a treaty designed to limit the spread of devastating weapons and that those tempted to stray would be deterred by frequent international monitoring of the use of nuclear material.

Iran's troubles began with India's 1974 nuclear test. Although India had not signed, let alone ratified, the NPT and had used plutonium to fuel its device, the United States and Europe interpreted the explosion as evidence that the NPT's drafters had blundered in failing to prohibit have-nots from acquiring dual-use technologies such as uranium enrichment.

They formed the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and set about making emerging states' acquisition of such technologies progressively harder - in a sense, amending the NPT without the consent of most of its parties.

Then, in the 1990s, Israeli politicians began to claim publicly that Iran had a nuclear weapons programme and was only a few years away from producing warheads.

As a result, when Iranian opponents of the Islamic Republic claimed in 2002 that Iran was secretly building a uranium enrichment plant, many U.N. members were ready to believe that Iran was violating or was about to violate the NPT. Such was the sense of danger generated by the United States and some of its allies that people overlooked the absence of evidence that Iran had even intended the enrichment plant to be secret.

Instead, Iranian admission that scientists and engineers had engaged in undeclared nuclear research led people to assume that Iran's obligation to declare the enrichment plant 180 days before the introduction of nuclear material (and not earlier) would have been ignored had it not been for the opposition group's whistle-

blowing. Iran's travails since 2004 - condemnation by the IAEA Board of Governors and the U.N. Security Council, ever harsher sanctions, U.S. and Israeli military threats in violation of the U.N. Charter - would have been both logical and rough justice if there had been evidence that Iran was intent on acquiring nuclear weapons.

That is not the case, however, as Osborne and Morrison make plain. On the contrary, since 2007 U.S. intelligence estimates have stressed the absence of an Iranian decision to use its enrichment plants to make fuel for nuclear weapons; the IAEA has repeatedly stated that Iran's known nuclear material remains in civil use; and the only nuclear weapon activity in Iran for which there is evidence is the kind of research that many NPT parties are assumed to have undertaken.

Trying to account for this irrational handling of the Iranian case, the authors posit a U.S. determination to prevent Iran from becoming a major Middle East power.

That view may be the most questionable of their judgements, as possible explanations exist elsewhere: intensive lobbying in Washington, London and Paris by Israel and Saudi Arabia, which see Iran as a regional rival and need to justify the strategic demands they make of the United States, the influence of counter-proliferation experts obsessed with closing an imagined NPT loophole, the Islamic Republic's terrorism and human rights record, and antagonisms born of bitter memories.

The hypocrisy of politicians is, rightly, a target of the authors' indignation. In 2010 then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, defending the imposition of sanctions, proclaimed: "Our goal is to pressure the Iranian government... without contributing to the suffering of ordinary Iranians."

In 2012 President Obama, seeking re-election, boasted: "We organised the strongest sanctions in history and it is [sic] crippling the Iranian economy."

But the authors' fiercest indignation is reserved for the mainstream media, whom they indict for embedding in public discourse the idea that Iran has or is seeking nuclear weapons by ignoring facts and serving as a conduit for anti-Iranian propaganda.

By endorsing the proposition that Iran's nuclear ambitions must be curbed by sanctions or the use of force, the mainstream media risk repeating their past mistake of failing to question the Bush/Blair case for war on Saddam Hussein.

A Dangerous Delusion was written before Iran's June presidential election, begging the question of whether the re-emergence of pragmatic diplomatists in Tehran will encourage Western politicians to heed the "plea for sanity" with which Osborne and Morrison close.

"It's time we [in the West] asked...why we have felt such a need to stigmatise and punish Iran....Once we do that...we may find it surprisingly easy to strike a deal which can satisfy all sides."
[IPS - September 2, 2013] ♦

**Peter Jenkins was a British career diplomat for 33 years following studies at the universities of Cambridge and Harvard. He served in Vienna (twice), Washington, Paris, Brasilia and Geneva. His last assignment (2001-06) was that of UK Ambassador to the IAEA and UN (Vienna). Since 2006 he has represented the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, advised the Director of IIASA and set up a partnership, ADRgAmbassadors, with former diplomatic colleagues, to offer the corporate sector dispute resolution and solutions to cross-border problems.*

U.N. CHIEF EYES EIGHT HOLDOUTS IN NUKE TEST BAN TREATY

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

A group of about 20 “eminent persons” is to be tasked with an unenviable job: convince eight recalcitrant countries to join the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The eight holdouts - China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States - have not given any indication of possible ratifications, leaving the treaty in limbo.

Under the provisions of the CTBT, the treaty cannot enter into force without the participation of the last of the eight key countries.

“We are working hard day-in and day-out to make the treaty into law,” Lassina Zerbo, executive secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), told reporters Wednesday.

He urged non-signatories to understand that ratification would enhance not only international security, but their own national security as well.

Zerbo said the proposed group, comprising former prime ministers and other highly regarded figures from both states parties and non-signatory states, will be launched during the eighth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The conference is scheduled to take place in New York on Sep. 27.

Providing an update on the treaty’s current status, Zerbo said 183 countries had signed, of which 159 had already ratified it.

But in accordance with its Article XIV, the treaty will enter into force after all 44 states, including the missing eight, listed in its Annex 2 have ratified it.

With the General Assembly belatedly commemorating the annual International Day Against Nuclear Tests Thursday, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lamented the fact that the CTBT has still not entered into force, even though 20 years have passed since the Conference on Disarmament began negotiations on the treaty.

The International Day Against Nuclear Tests was commemorated worldwide on Aug. 29 but the General Assembly meeting took place Thursday.

In a message to the Assembly, Ban said with the adoption of the Partial Test Ban Treaty 50 years ago, the international community completed its first step towards ending nuclear-weapon-test explosions for all time.

“This objective remains a serious matter of unfinished business on the disarmament agenda,” he said.

Urging all states to sign and ratify CTBT without further delay, Ban singled out the eight holdouts as having a special responsibility.

“None should wait for others to act first,” he implored. “In the meantime, all states should maintain or implement moratoria on nuclear explosions.”

John Loretz, programme director at International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, told IPS the moratorium has been honoured by most of the nuclear-weapon states since the 1990s. The exceptions, he said, have been India and Pakistan, both of whom tested nuclear weapons in 1998, but have not done so since then, and North Korea, which has conducted three very small tests since 2006. ➔

When Pyongyang conducted its third test last February, the 15-member U.N. Security Council condemned the test as “a grave violation” of its previous resolutions and described North Korea as a country which is “a clear threat to international peace and security”.

Hirotsugu Terasaki, executive director of the Office of Peace Affairs of the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), which has long campaigned for the abolition of all nuclear weapons, told IPS he would like to pay special attention to the efforts of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO which has played an important role in preventing and prohibiting nuclear test explosions.

Since North Korea’s first nuclear tests in 2006, 23 countries have ratified the CTBT, he noted. “And nearly 95 percent of the world ratifying the CTBT implies that the vast majority of the states recognise the immense political impact of the treaty’s entry into force.”

Following their nuclear tests in 1998, both India and Pakistan announced their decision to extend the moratorium of nuclear testing. In this sense, he pointed out, the CTBT has had a major positive impact on the prevention of nuclear testing.

“The international community sees the CTBT as a positive step,” Terasaki added.

Asked what remains to be done, Terasaki told IPS the key to bringing the CTBT into force is its ratification by the U.S. and China.

The United States revealed that Z machine plutonium trials were conducted between April and June this year at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico to assess the working order of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Despite this, President Barack Obama’s June address in Berlin renewed his commitment to U.S. ratification of the CTBT.

“This statement is important and welcomed but will require serious follow-through to win the support of the U.S. Senate,” he added.

The Obama administration will need the strong support of the international community. And the role of civil society is indispensable in putting pressure on the U.S. policy-makers to deliver on their commitments, Terasaki said.

Also, on Aug. 7, he said, Zerbo met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his trip to China. Wang stressed China’s continued commitment to the CTBT and reconfirmed the importance of the early ratification of CTBT.

Zerbo stated that there is a strong case for China to demonstrate leadership and pave the way for the remaining eight countries to ratify the CTBT.

The international community must work together to support China in overcoming the various technical and political barriers that stand in the way of the treaty’s ratification, Terasaki added.

[IPS - September 5, 2013] ◆

DISARMAMENT DEAL TAKES TWO STEPS BACK

BY PAVOL STRACANSKY FROM MOSCOW

A Kremlin compromise on nuclear disarmament looks as far away as ever as Russian president Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama use their countries' strained relations to bolster their own domestic political agendas, experts say.

Obama's call, during a speech in Berlin in June, for a dramatic reduction in the world's nuclear weapons had led to hopes that there would be cuts in world nuclear arsenals on the agenda of a potential nuclear summit in 2016, and gave extra impetus to what will be the first-ever high level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on nuclear disarmament this month.

But following Russia's granting of asylum to U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden and Washington's subsequent cancelling of a summit meeting between Obama and Putin, some critics say the U.S. may use the political rift between the two states as a pretext to fail to make progress on disarmament.

And the Kremlin is more than happy to do the same.

Nikolai Sokov, a fellow at the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, told IPS: "What drives nuclear disarmament in both countries is domestic, not foreign policy. Confrontation serves the Russian domestic political agenda, just as it does for U.S. politicians with the U.S. domestic political agenda. The current impasse satisfies both sides.

"Russia has no need to change its position on nuclear weapons and President Putin is under no pressure whatsoever at home to change the stance. Even with the political administration there is no one in the Russian administration who is against the current stance, not even in private."

Russia and the U.S. control 90 percent of the world's nuclear arsenal and since the end of the Cold War there have been vari-

ous agreements on reducing the number of warheads on both sides.

The recent call by Obama would see both Washington and Moscow reduce their arsenals by a third.

But even under the best circumstances the Kremlin has historically been reluctant to agree to drastic cuts due to the differences in weapons delivery capabilities between the two countries, fearing that it would be left at a military disadvantage by dramatic blanket cuts.

It has also been wary of U.S. missile defence plans and without assurances that they would not be used against Russia, the Kremlin is reluctant to agree to concessions on nuclear weapons.

Speaking on Russian television foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said that nuclear weapons reductions should only be considered if they involved all countries - a view repeated by Putin.

But the recent strains in the countries' relationship mean that the Kremlin has a chance to further entrench its position and win political points with the electorate.

"The Russian public is not against the current anti-American stance. The image of the U.S. at the moment is not good in Russia. People see the situation with Syria and think to themselves 'we can't deal with the Americans, all they want to do is drop bombs'.

"The Russian public likes the tough tone being taken with the U.S.," Sokov told IPS. ➔

Recent opinion polls show that the majority of Russians supported what Snowden did and back the decision to grant him asylum.

They also show attitudes towards Obama changing negatively.

Some political commentators in Russia argue that the Kremlin's stance on disarmament is not even anti-American but simply a normal protection of the country's interests.

Tatiana Gomozova, political editor at Kommersant FM radio in Moscow, told IPS: "I don't really think that Russia is actually against the U.S. on the issue - it's just for itself. The truth is that what Mr. Obama called for [in Berlin] was something over the long term. It's a goal he himself can't reach so it was more a political statement than a specific plan. It was also more a speech for his allies than for Russia.

"But while it's not on today's Russia-U.S. agenda, I wouldn't say that Moscow won't support this idea [of a drastic cut in nuclear weapons] one day."

But while much of the major media in Russia toes the Kremlin line on many matters, there have been some voices calling for a more conciliatory approach from both sides.

In a long editorial earlier this month the Nezavisimaya Gazeta daily newspaper urged both the White House and the Kremlin to work together on the issue of global security, including nuclear disarmament, and lead the way in helping to form a new, safer, international community.

It said: "The issues of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the prevention of nuclear terrorism fall mainly on the shoulders of our two nations.... Common sense dictates that sooner or later Russia and the United States will become partners in the construction of a new system of international politics of the 21st century. It is hoped that this will happen sooner rather than later - the price of delay may be too high."

But experts remain pessimistic of any progress on disarmament between the two nations in the near future.

Sokov told IPS: "While it would be good for both sides to agree something on disarmament, concessions are unlikely and I'm not hopeful that anything positive will happen soon."
[IPS - September 2, 2013] ♦

NUCLEAR TEST MORATORIUM THREATENED BY NORTH KOREAN IMPUNITY

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

When the United Nations commemorates the International Day Against Nuclear Tests later this week, the lingering question in the minds of most anti-nuclear activists is whether or not the existing moratorium on testing will continue to be honoured - or occasionally violated with impunity.

John Loretz, programme director at International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, told IPS that since the 1990s the moratorium has been honoured by most states with nuclear weapons.

The exceptions, he pointed out, have been India and Pakistan, both of which tested nuclear weapons in 1998, but have not done so since then, and North Korea, which has conducted three very small tests since 2006.

When Pyongyang conducted its third test last February, the 15-member U.N. Security Council condemned the test as “a grave violation” of its previous resolutions and described North Korea as a country which is “a clear threat to international peace and security.”

And when the council adopted its third resolution, immediately following the third test, it expressed a determination to take “significant action” in the event of a “further” nuclear test by North Korea.

The annual International Day Against Nuclear Tests - observed on Aug. 29 but being commemorated at the U.N., with a seminar and an exhibition, on Sep. 5 - is an important way to raise awareness about nuclear weapons, said Loretz, and specifically “the continuing threat they pose to our health and survival and the imperative that we rid the world of them”.

Asked if the growing new rift between the United States and Russia will have a negative impact, Loretz admitted, “The rift is problematic, but I have no reason to think either country would resume nuclear testing as a result of a presumably temporary souring of the relationship.”

He said both countries are modernising their arsenals, however, and current problems could increase political pressure to do so further.

Currently, there are five declared nuclear weapon states - the United States, Britain, Russia, France and China, which are the five permanent members (P-5) of the Security Council - along with three undeclared nuclear weapon states - India, Pakistan and Israel.

But it has still not been determined whether North Korea should be designated a nuclear power.

Dale Dewar, former executive director of Physicians for Global Survival, told IPS the world has somewhat successfully eliminated atmospheric and deep underground testing of nuclear weapons, although North Korea did the latter just a year ago.

The United States has embarked upon a plan for “subcritical nuclear testing” where no self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction can occur, she said. The behaviour of plutonium, an important component of nuclear weapons, can be observed during these tests.

The costs of the tests and testing facility are exorbitant. A single test costs around 20 million dollars, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and preparation for the test costs upwards of 100 million dollars. ➡

Dewar said Physicians for Global Survival sees these costs as monies removed from health care, education and social services - taxpayer money that has been diverted for military and in this case theoretical science fictional future use.

“Were the bombs for which these tests are conducted ever used, the lives and health of hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, would be affected. There is no justification for continuing to possess such weapons, much less test them,” she asserted.

Tilman A. Ruff, associate professor at the Nossal Institute for Global Health at the University of Melbourne, told IPS an estimated 2,061 nuclear test explosions, conducted by eight or nine nations since 1945, have been used to develop nuclear weapons, fuelling the greatest immediate threat to global survival and health.

Test explosions themselves also exact a substantial and persisting environmental and human toll, he said.

“Every person and living thing contains strontium-90 in their teeth and bones, cesium-137 inside their cells, carbon-14, plutonium-239 and other radioactive materials dispersed worldwide,” said Ruff, who is also co-chair of the International Steering Group and Australian Board member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

He said a study by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) found that at least 430,000 people died of cancer by the year 2000 because of this radioactive fallout, and over time, more than 2.4 million people will die of cancer caused by nuclear test explosions.

“In almost every case, nuclear test sites have been forced upon indigenous, minority and colonised peoples, and downwind communities and test site workers have suffered most,” he noted.

At every nuclear test site, he pointed out, a long-term radioactive and toxic legacy remains along with yet unmet needs for clean-up and remediation, long-term environmental monitoring, and care and compensation for those affected.

These responsibilities rest with the governments that undertook the tests.

While underground nuclear tests disperse much less radioactive fallout into the atmosphere than above-ground tests, they shatter the surrounding rock and pose a long-term hazard for future generations of radioactive leakage into the environment and groundwater, Ruff declared.

Loretz told IPS the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted in 1996 but has not yet been ratified by enough states to enter into force.

The United States has signed but not ratified it, and a commonly shared opinion is that U.S. ratification, which is a necessity, would tip the balance and lead to the other ratifications required for entry into force, he said. “That’s one big thing that remains to be done.”

“Many of us have come to believe that CTBT ratification, while important and useful, is now secondary to the comprehensive treaty for which the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is campaigning.”

A global ban as the opening act to eliminating actual nuclear weapons would include a prohibition against testing, he added.
[IPS - August 27, 2013] ◆

ICAN AUSTRALIA SHOWS THE WAY TO ABOLISH NUKES

BY NEENA BHANDARI FROM SYDNEY

Even as the nuclear-armed countries continue to amass new warheads and build and modernise ballistic missiles, bombers and submarines to launch them, the campaign for nuclear abolition is growing from strength to strength.

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons' (ICAN) Paper Cranes Project - symbolizing support for nuclear disarmament - is urging governments to begin negotiations on a global treaty banning nuclear weapons this year. More than 190,000 paper cranes have already been delivered to world leaders, and messages of support have been received from the Secretary-General of the United Nations and amongst others national leaders of Australia, Afghanistan, Greece, Kazakhstan, the Marshall Islands, Mozambique, Slovenia and Switzerland.

“Our focus now is on getting responses from the presidents and prime ministers of other countries. This month around 70,000 paper cranes will be delivered to ambassadors in Tokyo, asking them to pass on the cranes to their leader. We will use the letters to demonstrate the strength and breadth of support globally for a ban on nuclear weapons,” ICAN Australia Director, Tim Wright, told IDN.

Students across the world are participating in the campaign. Earlier this year, students from Gisborne Secondary College in Victoria (Australia) made 1000 paper cranes and delivered them to the parliamentary secretary to Australian prime minister, calling for ban on nuclear weapons.

The school's Japanese language teacher, Noriko Ikaga, has been taking Years 10 and 11 students to Japan every alternate year. “It has become a tradition to make 1000 paper cranes when we



visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. This year, the students also folded another 6000 paper cranes for the kids affected by the Fukushima nuclear disaster,” Ikaga told IDN.

With Australia going to polls on September 7, these students are hoping that future leaders will take Australia's nuclear obligations seriously. ICAN's Global Parliamentary Appeal is calling on all national governments to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons and building political will for stringent action to bring global nuclear weapons stockpiles down from about 17,000 to zero.

“In Australia we are virtually ignorant to the risks that we, as a population, are under every day, due to the enormous amounts of nuclear weapons that still exist in the world. Our trip to Hiroshima made us determined to do something about it. We sought to show the Australian Prime Minister how much we cared, and that Disarmament was an issue that could not be ignored,” Holly Dwyer (17), a Year 11 student, told IDN.

Holly's classmate, Joel Mackinnon (17), was surprised how little most students in her class knew about the nuclear weapons industry. “It genuinely scares me that we hold the fate of the world and humanity in the hands of such governments which appear to be almost willing to go to war. Participating in the Paper Cranes project is a start to saving the world from the unacceptable global threat posed by nuclear weapons,” Mackinnon told IDN. ☺

An ICAN Australia's *Disarm Your Degree* report, which examined Australian public university investments in nuclear arms makers,

confirmed that four universities did invest in nuclear weapons producers and 12 did not. The information available for the remaining 17 universities was insufficient.

“Many university students have shown a strong interest in this campaign, and are working with us to raise awareness. The University of Sydney has indicated that it is in the process of adopting an ethical investment policy. None of the other universities have indicated that they intend to change their investment practices, but we will maintain the pressure,” Wright told IDN.

The Future Fund

ICAN is calling on universities to develop ethical investment policies that exclude nuclear weapons companies both from their direct investments and their investments through fund managers. An Australian Government investment fund, The Future Fund, currently invests A\$227 million in nuclear weapons companies.

A petition with 14,000 signatures was delivered in August 2013 to the Fund’s board members and ICAN members visited the Fund’s head office in Melbourne on Hiroshima Day (August 6) and Nagasaki Day (August 9), demanding that it divests from nuclear weapons companies.

Wright said, “The Fund has divested from companies involved in the production of other inhumane weapons such as cluster munitions and landmines. They recently excluded tobacco companies from their investments in response to public pressure, so we are optimistic that we can also convince them to exclude nuclear weapons companies.”

Earlier, the Fund had disclosed to the Senate (one of the two houses of Australian Parliament) that it invests taxpayers’ money in 14 companies involved in the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons or associated technology.

Doctrine of extended nuclear deterrence

“I think a lot of Australians would be shocked to learn that the Future Fund has more than A\$130 million invested in companies that manufacture nuclear arms. Our members regularly express concern about the investment choices made by those overseeing the Future Fund,” said Rohan Wenn, Communications Manager at GetUp Australia, an independent, grassroots community advocacy organisation.

As many as 76 per cent of Australians believe that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament should be a top foreign policy objective of the Australian Government, according to a 2011 survey conducted by the Lowy Institute for International Policy, an independent think tank.

Australian governments have been strong proponents of nuclear non-proliferation. Australia is a party to all major international conventions relating to nuclear weapons including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty commonly known as The Treaty of Rarotonga as it was signed by the South Pacific nations on the island of Rarotonga (Cook Islands).

“It’s easy to imagine that Australia is not involved in the global nuclear weapons trade, but with the Future Fund’s investments in nuclear weapons companies and the Federal Governments intentions to export uranium to India and other nuclear weapons states, it most certainly is,” ICAN Australia’s Outreach Coordinator, Gem Romuld, told IDN.

The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits Australia from facilitating the manufacture of nuclear weapons anywhere in the world. According to ICAN, the Future Fund might be contravening Australian legislation that outlaws assistance to anyone involved in the “manufacture, production, acquisition or testing” of nuclear devices inside and outside Australia. ☹

While Australia doesn’t have any nuclear weapons, it subscribes to the doctrine of extended nuclear deterrence under the United

States alliance. The supposed protection afforded by the US nuclear weapons is seen as key to Australia's national security. It also has almost 40 per cent of the world's known uranium reserves and supplies 19 per cent of the world market.

All of Australia's uranium is exported, including to countries who continue to produce nuclear weapons. The Australian Conservation Fund has consistently opposed uranium mining and worked to highlight the threats it poses to the environment, sensitive ecosystems, Indigenous cultures and local communities.

In May this year, ICAN Australia launched a booklet entitled *Disarmament Double-Speak* assessing Australia's record on nuclear weapons, its continuing support for the United States extended nuclear deterrence, its resistance to a global ban on nuclear weapons, the inadequacy of safeguards on uranium exports and investments in nuclear arms companies.

Today, there are at least 20,000 nuclear weapons worldwide, around 3,000 of them on launch-ready alert. The potential power of these would roughly equate to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs. Sixty-eight years on since the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the need to develop a legally binding tool to prohibit and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons is more than ever before.

[IDN-InDepthNews - August 27, 2013] ◆

“It's easy to imagine that Australia is not involved in the global nuclear weapons trade, but with the Future Fund's investments in nuclear weapons companies and the Federal Government's intentions to export uranium to India and other nuclear weapons states, it most certainly is.”

IRAN AND P5+1 TALK ABOUT NEW NUCLEAR TALKS

BY JAYA RAMACHANDRAN FROM BERLIN

Preparations are afoot for a new, and perhaps a promising, round of talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) over Tehran's nuclear energy program. According to Press TV, Kazakhstan is willing to host the negotiations for the third time in succession this year.

Undeterred by continued impasse at the talks in Almaty on April 6-7 and earlier on February 26-27, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov made the announcement during a phone conversation with new Director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi on August 18.

Congratulating Salehi on his appointment as the AEOI chief as well as a vice president, the Kazakh foreign minister expressed the hope that the stalled nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 group will have "a fortunate ending", reported the Press TV, the first Iranian international news network, broadcasting in English round-the-clock.

Iran and the P5+1, which comprises five permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Russia, China, France, Britain, and the U.S. plus Germany, have held several rounds of talks with the main focus being on Iran's nuclear energy program.

The announcement by the Kazakh foreign minister, reported by Press TV on August 21, comes at a point in time when Iran and the P5+1 have yet to decide on a next round of negotiations, but in the aftermath of a new government having been installed in Tehran, both sides have expressed their willingness to talk



afresh. In a telephone conversation on August 18, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who represents the P5+1, and Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif expressed readiness for resuming negotiations.

Earlier, on August 16, the German Foreign Office spokesperson said at a press conference in Berlin that Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle had in a telephone conversation with Iran's Foreign Minister

Zarif expressed the hope that "the new Government in Iran would provide fresh impetus for the launch of constructive and substantial negotiations aimed at resolving the dispute over Iran's nuclear program".

A bilateral meeting between the German and Iranian foreign ministers is planned on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly in September in New York.

Germany's membership of P5+1 grouping is underlined by the fact that Iran is a key trading partner of the country. Tehran's nuclear programs mainly depend upon the German products and services. Around 50 German firms have their own branch offices in Iran and more than 12,000 firms have their own trade representatives in Iran. Several renowned German companies are involved in major Iranian infrastructure projects, especially in the petrochemical sector, like Linde, BASF, Lurgi, Krupp, Siemens, ZF Friedrichshafen, Mercedes, Volkswagen and MAN.

Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif reaffirmed Tehran's intention to resume talks with the P5+1 with a view to finding "a solution to the Islamic Republic's nuclear issue," Iran Review, a "leading

independent, non-governmental and non-partisan website” reported on August 21.

It said: “Ms. Catherine Ashton contacted me and expressed her desire for the resumption of talks between Iran and the P5+1. In response..., I reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is willing to resume talks,” Zarif said. “In the phone conversation, I told Ms. Ashton that we favor a solution instead of merely engaging in talks,” Zarif added. Ashton’s spokesperson said that the EU foreign policy chief had “underlined her continued determination and commitment to seek a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue,” during her conversation with Zarif.

Hindsight

According to the Iran Review, “Iran’s Foreign Ministry also said the newly-released documents on U.S. involvement in a 1953 coup against a popular Iranian government reveal no previously-unknown information and do nothing to fade Washington’s crimes.” Abbas Araqchi of Iran’s Foreign Ministry said that the release of the recent documents 60 years after the coup “neither adds anything new to what we already knew, nor does it lessen the American crimes.” The Iranian official noted that the declassified documents do not belong to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) - contrary to what has been claimed - and that Iran expects the agency to release its actual documents on the issue.

“Araqchi also underlined the British role in the 1953 coup and noted that although the coup of August 19, 1953 is generally viewed as an American ploy, we should not lose sight of Britain’s behind-the-scene role in planning the coup and the subsequent violence and hostility it perpetrated against Iran prior to and in the course of the coup,” Iran Review said.

Commenting on the future of Iran’s comprehensive talks with the P5+1 group of countries and whether the talks will be handled by Iran’s Foreign Ministry or Supreme Council of National Security, Araqchi said that, regardless of which body would pursue the

negotiations, Iran’s principles on its nuclear energy issue will remain unchanged. He further noted that newly elected President Hassan Rouhani has not yet decided which of the aforementioned bodies will undertake the task of the negotiations with the P5+1.

“Regarding the reports about the ‘reduction of Iranian nuclear reserves’ in the run-up to the next round of talks between Iran and the P5+1, Araqchi stated that the rate of Iranian nuclear production and reserves will be based on our needs and consumption in the field of energy and other fields such as agriculture and medicine and is not a political issue,” Iran Review said.

Araqchi said Iran’s Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in southern Iran will most likely be ready for full function and be inaugurated “within the next several weeks”. He reiterated, however, that the plant has long been producing electricity while undergoing experimental stages, which is a common practice that takes place at nuclear power plants from the time when their construction is completed by the contractor to when their handling is entirely relayed to the possessor country.

The Foreign Ministry official described the Bushehr NPP as a case jointly handled by Iran’s Atomic Energy Agency and the Foreign Ministry, adding that it has been one of the nation’s key foreign policy issues in the past 20 years.

Press TV said: “The U.S., Israel and some of their allies falsely claim that Iran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program, with Washington and the European Union using the unfounded allegation as a pretext to impose illegal sanctions on Iran.” It added: “Tehran strongly rejects the groundless claim over its nuclear activities, maintaining that as a committed signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it has the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.”

[IDN-InDepthNews - August 22, 2013] ◆

U.S.-RUSSIA RIFT COULD IMPACT UPCOMING NUKE TALKS

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

The growing political rift between the United States and Russia triggered by the granting of temporary asylum to U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden, who is now holed up in Moscow, is threatening to further undermine relations between the two superpowers at the United Nations.

With the U.S. decision Wednesday to call off an upcoming summit meeting between U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which was scheduled to take place in Moscow early September, the negative fall-out is expected to have an impact on several politically sensitive issues, including the civil war in Syria, Iran's nuclear programme and the proposed reduction in nuclear arms.

Russia, along with China, has already vetoed four Western and U.S. inspired Security Council resolutions aimed at punishing Syria - and the chances of any future U.N. sanctions on Damascus remain remote.

"The strained political relations between the U.S. and Russia will further reduce the Security Council to a non-entity," warns an Asian diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. At the same time, he pointed out, the on-again, off-again Geneva conference on Syria looks to be another casualty.

The growing confrontation between the two superpowers also comes amidst the first-ever high level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament scheduled to take place Sep. 26.

"This won't be a return to the Cold War," she said, sounding less pessimistic.



In a speech at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin last June, Obama called for drastic cuts in nuclear weapons, which was expected to be on the agenda of a proposed nuclear summit in 2016.

Tilman A Ruff, co-chair, International Steering Group and Australian board member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, told IPS the disagreement between Russia and the U.S. over Snowden could be used by the US as a pretext to fail

to make progress on disarmament.

"That is why the 184 U.N. member states that don't have nuclear weapons should stop being held hostage by the nine nuclear armed states," he said.

They should take the lead and begin negotiating a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, paving the way for their eradication, said Ruff, who is also an associate professor at the Nossal Institute for Global Health at the University of Melbourne.

Besides the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council, namely the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia, the other four undeclared nuclear weapons states include India, Pakistan, Israel, and possibly North Korea.

Dr. Rebecca Johnson, executive director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament and Diplomacy, told IPS the United States and Russia have far too many mutual interests at stake for Russia's granting of temporary asylum to Edward Snowden to derail them.

☞

She pointed out that Putin imprisoned Russian nuclear analyst Igor Sutyagin for over 11 years, and is as keen as the United

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

States to prevent exposure of security and intelligence practices and mistakes.

“So even as the U.S. and Russia engage in a public spat over Snowden, their overriding bilateral interests will be in maintaining some kind of arms reduction relationship,” she said.

As more and more governments raise concerns about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, said Dr Johnson, Russia and the U.S. will probably want to put on a strong show of P5 solidarity at the High Level Meeting at the U.N., in the hope of heading off the growing calls to ban nuclear weapons globally.

Ruff told IPS that nuclear weapons pose a mortal danger like no other to everyone, wherever they live.

Photo on page 102: Russian President Vladimir Putin faces a growing confrontation with Washington. Credit: Imaginary Museum Projects: News Tableaus/cc by 2.0

With 16,200 (94 percent) of the world’s 17,270 nuclear weapons between them, Russia and the U.S. bear a heavy responsibility to remove this existential threat.

“Yet both are developing new nuclear weapons and spending between them more than 75 billion dollars per year to modernise their nuclear arsenals, with every indication that they plan to retain them indefinitely,” Ruff noted.

Eradicating nuclear weapons is the most urgent global priority, and must not be derailed because of other issues, said Ruff, who is also the international medical advisor for the Australian Red Cross. [IPS - August 7, 2013] ◆

EX-ENVOY'S ACCOUNT CLARIFIES IRAN'S 2003 NUCLEAR DECISION

BY GARETH PORTER* FROM WASHINGTON

Newly published recollections by the former French ambassador to Iran suggest that Iran was not running a covert nuclear weapons programme that it then decided to halt in late 2003, as concluded by U.S. intelligence in 2007.

Ambassador Francois Nicoullaud recounted conversations with high-ranking Iranian officials indicating that Tehran's then nuclear policy chief - and now president-elect - Hassan Rouhani did not know what research projects relating to nuclear weapons had been carried out over the years.

The conversations described by Nicoullaud in a Jul. 26 New York Times op-ed also portray Rouhani as having difficulty getting individual researchers to comply with an order to halt all research related to nuclear weapons.

The picture of Iranian nuclear policy in 2003 drawn by Nicoullaud is different from the one in the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, which concluded that Iran had halted "its nuclear weapons program". That conclusion implied that Iranian government leadership had organised a programme of research and development aimed at producing a nuclear weapon.

Nicoullaud recalled that a high-ranking Iranian official confided to him in late October 2003 that Rouhani had just "issued a general circular asking all Iranian departments and agencies, civilian and military, to report in detail about their past and ongoing nuclear activities."

The conversation came immediately after Rouhani had concluded an agreement with the foreign ministers of the UK, France and Germany on Oct. 21, 2003, Nicoullaud recalled.

The same official explained that "the main difficulty Rouhani and his team were encountering was learning exactly what was happening in a system as secretive as Iran's," wrote Nicoullaud.

A few weeks after, the French ambassador learned from a second official, whom he described as "a close friend of Rouhani", that Rouhani's nuclear policy team had issued instructions to halt projects relating to nuclear weapons.

The Iranian official said the team was "having a hard time", because, "[p]eople resist their instructions," according to Nicoullaud. The official remarked that it was difficult to "convince researchers to abruptly terminate projects they had been conducting for years".

In an e-mail to IPS, Nicoullaud said he did not believe the Iranian government had ever approved a nuclear weapons programme. "The first challenge for Rouhani when he took hold of the nuclear," said Nicoullaud, "must have been to get a clear picture of what was going on in Iran in the nuclear field."

Rouhani had been the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) since 1989 and would not only have known about but would have been involved in any government decision to establish a nuclear weapons programme.

"I guess that most people, [Supreme Leader Ali] Khamenei included, were surprised by the extent of the activities," Nicoullaud told IPS.

Nicoullaud's recollections are consistent with published evidence that nuclear weapons-related research projects had begun without any government authorisation. ➡

Despite an Iranian policy that ruled out nuclear weapons, many Iranian officials believed that a nuclear weapons “capability” would confer benefits on Iran without actually having nuclear weapons.

But the meaning of such a capability was the subject of ongoing debate. Nasser Hadian, a well-connected Tehran University political scientist, wrote in late 2003 about two schools of thought on the option of having a “nuclear weapons capability” but not the weapons themselves. One definition of that option was that Iran should have only the capability to produce fuel for nuclear reactors, Hadian explained, while the other called for Iran to have “all the necessary elements and capabilities for producing weapons”.

That debate had evidently not been officially resolved by a government decision before Rouhani’s appointment. And in the absence of a clear statement of policy, figures associated with research centres with military and defence ministry ties began in the latter of the 1990s to create their own nuclear weapons-related research projects without the knowledge of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

Such projects were apparently begun during a period when the Supreme National Security Council was not exercising tight control over the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI), the Ministry of Defence or the military industrial complex controlled by Defence Industries Organisation related to nuclear weapons.

By the mid-1990s, AEOI was already taking advantage of the lax supervision of its operations to take actions that had significant policy implications without authorisation from the SNSC.

Seyed Hossein Mousavian, then the spokesman for Iran’s nuclear negotiating team, recalls in his memoirs that in January 2004, Rouhani revealed to him that AEOI had not informed the SNSC about a policy-relevant matter as important as the purchase of the P2 centrifuge designs from the A. Q. Khan network in 1995.

AEOI officials had misled him, Rohani said, by claiming that “they had found some information about P2 centrifuges on the Internet and are studying it!”

When Rouhani was named to take over as nuclear policy coordinator in early October 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was demanding a full accounting by Iran of all of its nuclear activities. Rouhani’s circular to all civilian and military offices about nuclear work came soon after he had promised the IAEA that Iran would change its policy to one of full cooperation with the IAEA.

At the same time, Rouhani moved to tighten up the policy loophole that had allowed various entities to start weapons-related nuclear research.

Rouhani anticipated resistance from the bureaucratic entities that had nuclear weapons-related research projects from the beginning. He recalled in a later interview that he had told President Mohammad Khatami that he expected that there would be problems in carrying out the new nuclear policy, including “sabotage”.

The sequence of events surrounding Rouhani’s new nuclear policy indicates that he used Khamenei’s public posture that nuclear weapons were forbidden according to Islamic law to ensure compliance with the ban on such research projects.

Around the same time that Rouhani ordered the bureaucracy to report on its nuclear-related activities and to stop any research on military applications of nuclear power in late October, Khamenei gave a speech in which he said, “In contrast to the propaganda of our enemies, fundamentally we are against any production of weapons of mass destruction in any form.”

Three days later, Rouhani told students at Shahrud Industrial University that Khamenei considered nuclear weapons as religiously illegal. ➡

That same week, in an interview with San Francisco Chronicle correspondent Robert Collier, Hossein Shariatmadari, the editor of the conservative newspaper Kayhan and an adviser to Khamenei, alluded to tensions between the Rouhani team and those researchers who were not responding to or resisting the Rouhani circular.

Khamenei was forcing those working on such projects to “admit that it is forbidden under Islam”, Shariatmadari said. He also suggested that the researchers resisting the ban had been working “clandestinely”.

After the U.S. intelligence community concluded in November 2007 estimate that Iran had halted a “nuclear weapons program”, a U.S. intelligence official said key pieces of evidence were intercepted communications from at least one senior military officer and others expressing dismay in 2007 that nuclear weapons-related work had been shut down in 2003.

But U.S. intelligence officials said nothing about what kind of work was being shut down, and revealed no further evidence

that it was a “nuclear weapons program” under the control of the government.

Nicoullaud’s recollections suggest that the 2007 estimate glossed over a crucial distinction between an Iranian “nuclear weapons program” and research projects that had not been authorised or coordinated by the Iranian regime.

Nicoullaud told IPS he believes the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which controls Iran’s ballistic missile programme, was also carrying out a clandestine nuclear weapons programme. The IRGC’s own ministry had been merged, however, with the old Ministry of Defence to form a new ministry in 1989, which implies that any such clandestine programme would have necessarily involved a wider military conspiracy. [IPS - July 30, 2013] ♦

**Gareth Porter, an investigative historian and journalist specialising in U.S. national security policy, received the UK-based Gellhorn Prize for journalism for 2011 for articles on the U.S. war in Afghanistan.*

NORTH KOREA AND A NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN

BY FREDERICK N. MATTIS* FROM ANNAPOLIS, USA

To abolish nuclear weapons, North Korea and all states would have to join the ban before its entry into force, for three reasons. First, the nuclear ban (or abolition) treaty, often called a Nuclear Weapons Convention, would not create true abolition unless all states are parties to it. Second, current nuclear powers in all likelihood would not join unless the ban when enacted is truly global. (There already exists the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been joined by all but nine states as “non-nuclear weapon” parties.) Third, unanimity of accession by states would give the ban unprecedented geopolitical force for ongoing compliance by states - desirable in itself, and a crucial incentive for today’s nuclear weapon possessors to actually renounce their arsenals.

An enacted nuclear ban treaty would bring the following benefits to all states and people: freedom from the threat of nuclear war or attack, freedom from possible “false-alarm” nuclear missile launch, and freedom from possible terrorist acquisition of a weapon from a state’s nuclear arsenal.

As with all nuclear possessors, North Korea claims that its weapons are for “deterrence.” But the presence of North Korea’s nuclear weapons could actually work to cause demise of the North Korean regime. If the USA, in a moment of crisis, launches a preemptive (preventive) strike even with just conventional weapons against North Korea’s nuclear weapons or sites, then a North Korean military response likely would become a full-scale new and terrible Korean War. North Korea can be bellicose, but it is reasonable to believe that North Korea does not want to engage in full-scale war against South Korea and the USA. (The USA, for its part, has proclaimed that it has “no intention” of attacking North Korea.)



The “Agreed Framework”

North Korea to its credit in 1994 even agreed, without a [prospective] worldwide nuclear ban, to freeze its plutonium-based nuclear weapons development program, and in return was to be provided fuel oil supplies by the USA, plus there was arrangement of construction subsidy for two safeguarded (internationally monitored) light-water nuclear power reactors for North Korean electricity production. Why did this plutonium-centered pact - 1994 “Agreed Framework” - fall apart eight years later in late 2002, which was followed in 2006 by

North Korea’s first nuclear test explosion? Because the USA, aggravated when it discerned evidence of undeclared North Korean work or research on uranium enrichment - usable for nuclear weapons or for other, peaceful purposes - cut off in fall 2002 the fuel oil supplies that were an integral part of the Agreed Framework. North Korea regarded this as abrogation of the Framework, and expelled International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors and restarted plutonium nuclear weapons work.

It is conceivable, though, that North Korea would have refused to sign the 1994 Agreed Framework if uranium enrichment research or work was prohibited, and if so inevitably on familiar grounds that enriched uranium has its domestic, non-weapons uses (such as electricity production from power reactors, which generally use low-enriched uranium which is not suitable for weapons). But to those who say that the collapse of the Framework in 2002 shows extreme perfidy on North Korea’s part and that North Korea would never (reliably) maintain a denuclearization agreement, let this serve as a reminder that it was the USA, not North Korea, that first abrogated a major part of the

Framework by cutting off oil supplies, and North Korea reacted by declaring the Framework null and void - and resumed plutonium-based weapons work, culminating in first test explosion on 9 October 2006.

2005 Joint Statement of Principles

Between the 2002 demise of the plutonium-centered Framework and that first nuclear test in 2006, a seeming breakthrough occurred with the Sept. 2005 denuclearization agreement called "Six-Party Joint Statement of Principles." But this soon hit rough seas, particularly on the Statement's obligation of parties to "discuss at an appropriate time the subject of provision of a light-water [power] reactor to [North Korea]." When North Korea averred that elimination of its entire nuclear weapons program would have to be preceded by provision of the power reactor (a huge construction project), recriminations ensued. But North Korea's blustery assertiveness on this point was somewhat justified, considering the multi-year delay, under the fallen 1994 Agreed Framework, in merely commencing the Framework's stipulated power reactor construction project: first concrete for footings was poured in early fall 2002 (shortly before the Framework's de facto demise), whereas initial target completion date for first of two promised reactors was 2003. North Korea and the other parties to the talks, not North Korea alone, deserve retrospective blame for not clarifying in the 2005 Statement of Principles the issue of reactor construction in regards to its time-relation to actual North Korean nuclear disarmament.

With each side accusing the other of abrogating or disregarding the letter or the spirit of the 2005 Statement of Principles, the stage was set for North Korea's aforementioned first (2006) nuclear test explosion. North Korea then returned to negotiations, and in December 2006, North Korea and the others of the six-party talks agreed to reaffirm the 2005 Statement of Principles. North Korea kept its word on this and proceeded to laboriously shut down its source of new weapons plutonium (Yongbyon reactor), and in return for fuel oil from South Korea, weapons inspectors were re-admitted into North Korea - and were given access

they needed to confirm North Korea's shutdown of the reactor and later demolition of its cooling tower.

So as of 2007, the North Korean plutonium nuclear weapons program was again stemmed from further growth (as it was for eight years with the 1994 Agreed Framework), although the issue of uranium enrichment - which in some aspects is a more difficult path to a nuclear arsenal than plutonium separation - was still unsettled. This relatively much better state of affairs ended in the wake of North Korea's attempted launch of a satellite on 5 April 2009. The USA and others mightily condemned the launch, because it could have missile-applicability and was seen as severely provocative, whereupon North Korea expelled international inspectors and proclaimed that it was restarting its weapons program, and then conducted its second nuclear test on 25 May 2009.

Before casting all blame and obloquy on North Korea for the demise (although it may be revived in some form) of the denuclearization 2005 Statement of Principles (and subsequent 2007 understandings): the Statement and follow-up discussions did not specifically prohibit North Korean satellite launches, and therefore the launch did not directly or unequivocally violate that "reigning," 2005 agreement. For its part, though, North Korea has by no means obeyed the panoply of U.N. Security Council Resolutions on its nuclear and missile programs; obviously the "sovereign state" of North Korea does not feel bound by such - which has also been the case for various other countries from time to time.

Short-lived 2012 Agreement

On 29 February 2012, North Korea in a seeming new breakthrough agreed to suspend uranium enrichment activity and institute moratoriums on nuclear and long-range missile tests in exchange for 240,000 metric tons of food aid. Just six weeks later, though (13 April), North Korea attempted to launch another satellite. The effort failed, but its occurrence destroyed the agreement - just as U.S. and others' reaction to North Korean satellite

launch attempt of April 2009 had ended North Korean compliance with the 2005 Statement of Principles.

On 12 December 2012 North Korea proceeded with another satellite launch, this one successful. As with the 2009 and April 2012 efforts, because the rocket technology for satellite-launch could be missile-applicable, the USA and others denounced the action and pressed for further international sanctions against North Korea. The angered North Korea then conducted its third nuclear test, on 12 February 2013. But North Korea had never agreed to abstain from space-launches; in any case, one lesson from the roiling waters of nuclear negotiations with North Korea is to not expect anything of North Korea which is not explicitly called for in an agreement.

North Korea and a Nuclear Weapons Ban

Looking forward to a possible nuclear weapons-free world, it bears emphasis that North Korea twice verifiably froze its nuclear weapons (plutonium) program, for eight years with the 1994 Agreed Framework and then with the 2007 shutdown of plutonium-producing reactor and related steps pursuant to 2005 Statement of Principles. Also, although very short-lived, North Korea as just noted agreed (29 February 2012) to halt uranium enrichment and nuclear and long-range missile tests - until food aid promised to North Korea was rescinded when it conducted (failed) satellite launch in April. These actions by North Korea to freeze and in some cases even reverse elements of its nuclear weapons program (such as shutdown of Yongbyon reactor) were undertaken by North Korea despite the absence of a [prospective] worldwide nuclear weapons ban - and surely such a ban, when open for states' signatures, would amplify the prospects that North Korea would join the ban and join the world in eliminating nuclear weapons.

It is possible, perhaps, that North Korea will (again) freeze important elements of its nuclear program or even eliminate its nuclear weapons, without a worldwide nuclear ban. But presumably this would require a major change in the U.S. stance toward

North Korea - including one or more manifestations such as normalization of diplomatic relations, perhaps an official "peace treaty" or non-aggression pact (although the USA, as mentioned, has stated that it has no intention of attacking North Korea), elimination of special U.S.-South Korean military exercises, provision of food aid and power reactor, etc. Given such prospective requests or demands, nuclear disarmament by North Korea is much more likely to occur in the context of worldwide abolition - which context, to the benefit of the USA and others, would hold much less justification for North Korea (even in its own eyes) to issue extreme "demands" or requirements before it would join. In addition: fealty to elimination of nuclear weapons by North Korea (or any state) would, for geopolitical and psychological reasons, obviously be much stronger with a nuclear ban treaty that regards states equally and that all states have joined.

Incentives to Join

Following are security and other advantages that would accrue to North Korea if it joined a nuclear weapons ban (along with all other states before entry into force):

First, under worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons, North Korea would no longer be subject to possible nuclear war - such as escalation of a border conflict with South Korea and its currently nuclear-armed U.S. ally.

Second, as mentioned earlier, North Korea would not be subject to (or "forced into") all-out war (nuclear or otherwise) by possible U.S./South Korean pre-emptive attack during a crisis against North Korean nuclear weapons, missiles, or facilities.

Third, North Korea would be praised worldwide - for playing a crucial role in bringing the worldwide nuclear ban to reality.

Fourth, states would be inclined to engage in some or additional beneficial action such as trade with North Korea.

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Fifth, on an inner moral level North Korean leaders and the people would feel deserved satisfaction that they had crucially aided worldwide liquidation of nuclear weapons - which persons everywhere know have an abhorrent and inhuman aspect, with their quadruple means of dealing mass death (blast, heat, radiation, firestorm).

Sixth, on the “psychological” level of nuclear weaponry and fairness, the USA and North Korea would be equal (with no states having nuclear weapons under the ban).

If, right now, a nuclear ban was introduced for states’ signatures, North Korea probably would decline to be an immediate

signatory - or only with likely-unacceptable (extreme and sudden) conditions. But the above-noted security, prosperity, and psychological benefits to North Korea of worldwide nuclear abolition in all likelihood would, as more and more states join the ban and it approaches unanimity needed for entry into force, become evident to North Korea - which would not (as today) be “singled out” for nuclear abolition while other countries maintain their arsenals. [IDN-InDepthNews - July 19, 2013] ◆

** Frederick N. Mattis is author of Banning Weapons of Mass Destruction, pub. ABC-Clio/Praeger Security International*

Image on page 107: A statue of Kim Il-sung | Credit: Wikimedia Commons

ISRAEL RESUMES THREATS AGAINST IRAN AS EXPERTS URGE PATIENCE

BY JIM LOBE* FROM WASHINGTON



As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resumed his threats to attack Iranian nuclear facilities, 29 former senior U.S. experts and foreign diplomats urged President Barack Obama to show greater flexibility in anticipated negotiations following the inauguration of President-elect Hassan Rouhani.

“While it will take time to secure an agreement to resolve all concerns, diplomacy will only succeed if we are prepared to leverage existing sanctions and other incentives in exchange for recip-

rocal Iranian concessions,” according to the letter.

It was signed by, among others, former U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs Thomas Pickering and Bruno Pelleau, the former deputy director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

“Further, in the lead-up to Rouhani’s inauguration, it is critical that all parties abstain from provocative actions that could imperil this diplomatic opportunity,” said the letter, which was also signed by Peter Jenkins, the former British ambassador to the IAEA, and Paul Pillar, a veteran CIA analyst who served as the National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia from 2000 to 2005.

“For the U.S., no further sanctions should be imposed or considered at this time as they could empower hardliners opposed to nuclear concessions at the expense of those seeking to shift poli-

cy in a more moderate direction,” according to the letter. It was released on the eve of a meeting Tuesday of senior officials of the so-called P5+1 (the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia plus Germany), which has been negotiating with Iran over its nuclear programme since 2006.

Both Netanyahu’s comments, which during a widely viewed Sunday CBS News programme, and the letter come as the Obama administration grapples with the aftermath of last week’s military coup d’etat in Egypt, the ongoing civil war in Syria that appears to be going badly for the U.S.-backed opposition, and new uncertainties about the pace and timing of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, as well as increasingly bleak prospects for peace talks with the Taliban.

Netanyahu downplayed the relative significance of these other crises and complained about what he said was the lack of a sense of urgency in Washington about Iran’s nuclear programme.

“(A)ll the problems that we have, however important, will be dwarfed by this messianic, apocalyptic, extreme regime that would have atomic bombs,” warned the Israeli leader, reverting to the kind of rhetoric he has generally avoided for much of the past year. He also renewed his past threats to take unilateral military action, insisting, “I won’t wait until it’s too late.” ☺

Photo: President Obama talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Mar. 20, 2013. Netanyahu has complained about what he said was the lack of a sense of urgency in Washington about Iran’s nuclear programme.

Credit: White House/Pete Souza

He called for the P5+1 to demand that Iran halt all enrichment of nuclear material, shut down an underground enrichment facility near Qom, and remove and remove its existing stockpile of enriched uranium from its territory.

Those demands, he said, “should be backed up with ratcheted sanctions...(a)nd, if sanctions don’t work, ...they have to know that you’ll be prepared to take military action; that’s the only thing that will get their attention.”

Netanyahu also characterised Rouhani, whose election last month was greeted among experts here with both surprise and cautious optimism given his explicit appeal to moderate and reformist sectors in the Iranian electorate, as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing”.

“Smile and build a bomb,” he said of Rouhani’s diplomatic skills and alleged strategic aim.

Netanyahu’s remarks were not well-received by some administration officials. “We did not regard the interview as helpful,” said one who asked not to be further identified.

Indeed, the administration, which just imposed a new set of economic sanctions against Iran Jul. 1, has quietly made clear since Rouhani’s election that it opposes any additional sanctions before the next round of P5+1 negotiations, which are expected to take place in September, at least one month after Rouhani’s inauguration Aug. 4.

Briefing reporters late last week, senior officials said Washington is not prepared to offer new concessions until it and its P5+1 partners receive a formal response to an offer they tabled at the last round of talks with Iran in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in April.

In exchange for Iran’s suspending its 20-percent enrichment of uranium and transferring its existing 20-percent stockpile out of the country, the Western powers in the group offered to-

ease sanctions on the gold and precious-metal trade and some Iranian petrochemical exports as a confidence-building measure (CBM).

Officials told reporters that the offer should not be seen as a “take-it-or-leave-it” proposal and that, if Tehran wanted a more comprehensive deal, the P5+1 would be prepared to discuss it.

“If Iran says, yes, we are interested in the CBM but let’s talk about something larger, alright,” one official was quoted as saying. “If they say they are interested in all three measures on 20 percent [enriched uranium], but are looking for more sanctions relief, [then our response will be], ‘What are you looking for? Here’s what we want in return.’ This is a negotiation.”

The officials also stressed that the administration has called for direct bilateral talks with Iran within the framework of the P5+1 but that Tehran has so far ignored the proposal.

“We think they would be valuable,” one official was reported as saying. “We will reinforce that in any appropriate way we can.”

During his electoral campaign, Rouhani criticised Iran’s current negotiating team headed by one of his rivals, Saeed Jalili, for its inflexibility. In his first post-election press conference, Rouhani said relations with Washington are “an old wound that needs to be healed,” although he did not commit himself to bilateral talks.

Iran’s Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is believed to have the ultimate authority with regard to both Tehran’s nuclear programme and ties with the U.S., has often expressed scepticism about the value of direct talks with Washington but has not ruled them out either.

Netanyahu’s hawkish words have been echoed in recent weeks in Congress where the Israel lobby exercises considerable influence.



Earlier in July, all but one of the 46 members of the Republican-led House Foreign Affairs Committee sent a letter to Obama calling on him to increase pressure on Iran by closing loopholes in existing sanctions and adding new ones despite Rouhani's victory. The letter anticipates an effort to pass a new round of sanctions in the house before Rouhani's inauguration.

At the same time, however, a bipartisan letter to Obama co-authored by Rep. Charles Dent, a Republican from Pennsylvania, and Rep. David Price, warned that "it would be a mistake not to test whether Dr. Rouhani's election represents a real opportunity for progress toward a verifiable, enforceable agreement on Iran's nuclear program..."

It said Washington should avoid "engaging in actions that ...weaken his standing relative to hardliners within the regime who oppose his professed 'policy of reconciliation and peace'".

That letter has so far gathered a not-insignificant 61 signatories in the 435-member House.

Despite that effort, administration officials said the House may indeed approve new sanctions before the next round of P5+1 talks but that the Senate was unlikely to quickly follow suit.

In the letter released Monday, the 29 experts and former government officials very much echoed the message of the Dent-Price letter, stressing that the "major opportunity" represented by Rouhani's presidency should not be squandered.

"It remains to be seen whether this opportunity will yield real results. But the United States, Iran, and the rest of the international community cannot afford to miss or dismiss the potential opportunity before us," according to the letter, which was released by the National Iranian American Council. [IPS - July 16, 2013] ◆

**Jim Lobe's blog on U.S. foreign policy can be read at <http://www.lobelog.com>.*

OBAMA MAGIC IS GONE - CAUTION OUTWEIGHS ZEAL

BY RAMESH JAURA FROM BERLIN

President Barack Obama's commitment four years ago "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" reverberated across the globe generating hope that humankind will not be annihilated by a sheer flash of light. On June 19 in Berlin he sought to build on the iconic Prague speech. But there was no magic filling the air.

The reason, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) General Secretary Kate Hudson wrote on June 28 in her blog: "... despite Obama's apparent continued commitment to the goal of global abolition, he did not quite take us to the dizzy heights of hope and emotion stirred by his Prague speech in 2009."

Much of what Obama spoke of in Berlin was on the Prague list too, but progress has been slow, said Hudson. "Ratifying the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty) and moving forward on a fissile material treaty were both there in Prague and are still there now, as are the questions of nuclear security and access to civil nuclear power. Looking back, it is clear that the ratification of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty - START - was the only real achievement out of Obama's 2009 initiative, with some success in reducing their respective nuclear stockpiles."

Hudson added: "... maybe that is because since then we have seen that whatever his intentions, he has been unable to deliver on his disarmament promises without at the same time pledging modernisation of nuclear weaponry and pursuing new systems



which void the 'deterrent' effect of his potential opponents' nuclear weapons."

She pointed out that Obama was not having an easy time of it at home either. "Since Berlin, a number of Republican senators have jumped up to denounce the president in no uncertain terms with Kelly Ayotte describing his intentions as misguided and dangerous. So there are many obstacles to further progress on nuclear disarmament, to put it mildly. Although the picture would not be complete

without recognising the impact of the financial crisis on public opinion and changing perceptions of security needs.

"Whether in the US or the United Kingdom, there is increasing hostility to spending on nuclear weapons. They are widely perceived as wasteful and anachronistic. People feel they are failing to meet 21st century threats such as terrorism, cyber warfare or climate change."

While welcoming President Obama's announcement in Berlin calling for a world without nuclear weapons and the readiness to pursue further reductions in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) said: "... the humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon use, increasingly the focus of global engagement on these weapons, demands their prohibition and elimination."

ICAN added: "The speech by President Obama contributes to a growing recognition that nuclear weapons are unusable weapons with no practical utility in today's global security environ-

ment. Despite this, they threaten shocking humanitarian consequences if they were to be used. Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not subject to treaty prohibition and ICAN is calling for such a treaty to provide the framework for their elimination.”

Speaking from the former East German side of the historic Brandenburg Gate in divided Germany, Obama declared: “We may no longer live in fear of global annihilation, but so long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe.” In this context, it was significant that Obama linked nuclear weapons to peace and justice: “Peace with justice means pursuing the security of a world without nuclear weapons - no matter how distant that dream may be.”

“While this goal may seem to be a distant or even unrealistic one to some, it is not beyond our reach,” said Soka Gakkai (SG) Vice President Hirotsugu Terasaki - who is also Executive Director, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) Peace Affairs. He quoted SGI President Daisaku Ikeda: “In order to achieve real security in the twenty-first century we need to bring forth the powers of imagination that will enable us to directly and accurately apprehend evolving realities, to guide these changes toward the desired direction and to give birth to entirely new realities.”

The Tokyo-based lay Buddhist organisation with members around the world, has been in the forefront of promoting awareness of the need to abolish nuclear weapons.

“President Obama’s Berlin speech is a welcome reaffirmation of his commitment to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. The readiness he expresses to pursue further reductions in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals represents a concrete step toward this goal,” Terasaki said in a statement forwarded to IDN. He added: “To make good on its stated commitments, the US administration now needs to establish a path of tangible actions to move beyond a world of decreased nuclear risks to reach the goal of nuclear weapons abolition. As President Obama’s stance makes clear, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence can no longer

make any meaningful contribution to the security of any state. This is something the world’s ordinary citizens have long known: holding humanity hostage to nuclear Armageddon makes no one safe.”

In view of the risks, effects and costs of nuclear weapons, Terasaki said, there is both the practical necessity and the moral imperative to rid the world of those apocalyptic weapons. “The time has come to initiate negotiations on a treaty that will prohibit nuclear weapons,” he added.

“The work for eliminating nuclear weapons must be a global enterprise, shared by all members of the human family,” Terasaki stressed. “Every actor - the nuclear weapons states, the states that have refrained from developing these weapons and, most critically, the world’s people - must play a role. The SGI is committed to building grassroots awareness in order to empower people’s efforts toward the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.”

More work to do

Obama admitted in his Berlin speech that “we have more work to do”, and said he was “announcing additional steps forward”. He went on to say: “After a comprehensive review, I’ve determined that we can ensure the security of America and our allies, and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent, while reducing our deployed strategic nuclear weapons by up to one-third. And I intend to seek negotiated cuts with Russia to move beyond Cold War nuclear postures.”

“At the same time,” he said, “we’ll work with our NATO allies to seek bold reductions in US and Russian tactical weapons in Europe. And we can forge a new international framework for peaceful nuclear power, and reject the nuclear weaponization that North Korea and Iran may be seeking.” ☺

Obama added: “America will host a summit in 2016 to continue our efforts to secure nuclear materials around the world, and we

will work to build support in the United States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and call on all nations to begin negotiations on a treaty that ends the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. These are steps we can take to create a world of peace with justice.”

Although the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which bans all nuclear explosions, has been signed by 183 countries of which 158 have also now ratified, it can only enter into force after it has been ratified by the eight remaining nuclear capable countries: China, the North Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States.

Towards Global Zero

Expectedly, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle’s response on June 19 underlined cautious optimism mixed with an oblique reference to Berlin’s interest in having U.S. tactical weapons removed from the German soil and a genuine dialogue with Russia: “President Obama’s proposals on nuclear disarmament are a bold step forward which Germany supports in its foreign policy.

“The world will become a safer and better place if we together manage to realize his plans for nuclear disarmament. Fewer nuclear weapons and effective global rules on nuclear non-proliferation are decisive steps towards Global Zero - a world without nuclear weapons.

Now we need to work together to use the momentum. This is especially true of dialogue with Moscow. A reduction also in tactical nuclear weapons in Europe is particularly important to us. The German government will do its utmost to support President Obama’s plans.”

On June 20, Westerwelle explained in a statement at a conference on security in Nuremberg: “There are still 17,000 nuclear warheads around the world. If this figure can be reduced, the world will be a safer place. That’s why President Obama’s dis-

armament initiative is a bold step forward for peace and security.

“That President Obama has expressly included tactical nuclear weapons in Europe in his proposals, will give a boost to our efforts to bring about the withdrawal of the last nuclear weapons remaining on German soil.

“President Obama’s initiative is a great vindication of our decision to make nuclear disarmament a priority in Germany’s foreign policy. Of course, the other nuclear powers, especially Russia, have to play their part. We will now step up the dialogue with Moscow with a view to supporting President Obama’s initiative. The focus of German foreign policy will be on building bridges to foster nuclear disarmament.

“A world without nuclear weapons is a vision, not an illusion. Of course, it will not come about overnight. We need political will, astute diplomacy and, above all, perseverance and strategic patience.”

Chance passed

Uta Zapf, Chair of the German parliamentary sub-committee on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation said on June 27 that Russia will not accept President Obama’s proposal for further reduction in nuclear weapons as long as no heed is paid to the country’s security needs.

She added: “Why should U.S. tactical nuclear weapons continue to stay in Europe and with us until disarmament has taken place? Would it not be much more conducive to disarmament if these weapons were stationed in the U.S.?” ☞

In fact, the chance for a withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons seems to have passed, Zapf said. “The June 12, 2013 new ‘Nuclear Employment Strategy’ of the United States - probably as a consequence of the decisions of Chicago (NATO summit) - stipulates the deployment of these weapons in Europe. The moderni-

zation of the B61 would appear to be an integral component of the U.S. strategy to protect allies ('extended deterrence')."

Russian reaction showed that Zapf is not off the mark. As the New START accord already requires each nation by 2018 to cap its stockpile of fielded warheads at 1,550, under Obama's proposal a new ceiling could become roughly 1,000 deployed strategic warheads apiece, according to the Global Security Newswire.

"Russia objects to the Obama administration's plan through the next five years to field increasingly capable missile interceptors in Europe. The Kremlin has not accepted the White House insistence that the antimissile systems are solely aimed at protecting against possible Iranian missile attacks, and is demanding a legally binding accord that would govern the interceptors' usage. Numerous rounds of US-Russia talks on missile defense have been unable to resolve the core differences," noted the Global Security Newswire.

Considering that the antimissile issue is not yet resolved, Moscow is taking Obama's concept for talks with a grain of salt, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin was reported by ITAR-Tass to have said on June 20.

"How can we possibly take this thesis about cutting the strategic nuclear potentials seriously, when the USA. is building up the potential to intercept this strategic potential? Obviously, the top political leadership cannot take these assurances seriously," Rogozin said to journalists.

Moscow is unable to "indefinitely and bilaterally talk with the United States about cuts and restrictions on nuclear weapons in a situation where a whole number of other countries are expanding their nuclear and missile potentials," Russian Deputy Foreign Min-

ister Sergei Ryabkov said to RIA Novosti. "Before discussing the necessity of a further reduction of nuclear weapons we need to arrive at an acceptable solution of the (missile defence) problem."

Cold war posture

In an analysis for the Global Security Newswire, Elaine M. Grossman wrote on June 21: "While President Obama made headlines ... for proposing to negotiate with Russia fresh reductions in each side's fielded nuclear arms, the US leader has more quietly directed the Defense Department to hang onto some notable mainstays of the Cold War.

"A few hours after Obama's speech in Berlin, the Pentagon released publicly a report to Congress on guidance the president issued in recent days on 'nuclear employment strategy' (to which Uta Zapf also referred) - the broad targeting directives that help determine how many atomic arms the nation requires."

"On the one hand, the guidance directs pursuit of additional reductions in deployed strategic warheads and less reliance on preparing for a surprise nuclear attack," Grossman quoted nuclear weapons expert Hans Kristensen saying in a June 20 blog post. "On the other hand, the guidance reaffirms a commitment to core Cold War posture characteristics such as counterforce targeting, retaining a triad of strategic nuclear forces, and retaining non-strategic nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe." [IDN-InDepthNews - June 30, 2013] ◆

Image on 115: President Barack Obama delivers remarks at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, June 19, 2013. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

U.N. DOWNPLAYS HEALTH EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR RADIATION

BY GEORGE GAO FROM UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has come under criticism from medical experts and members of civil society for what these critics consider inaccurate statements about the effects of lingering radioactivity on local populations.

Scientists and doctors met with top U.N. officials last week to discuss the effects of radioactivity in Japan and Ukraine, and the U.N. has enlisted several of its agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the U.N. Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), to address the matter.

In May, UNSCEAR stated that radiation exposure following the 2011 Fukushima-Daichii nuclear disaster in Japan poses “no immediate health risks” and that long-term health risks are “unlikely”.

“I think it’s ridiculous,” said Helen Caldicott, an Australian doctor and dissident, in response to the UNSCEAR report.

“There have been health effects. A lot of people have experienced acute radiation illness, including bleeding noses, hair loss, nausea and diarrhoea,” she told IPS.

The UNSCEAR report followed a February WHO report, which also predicted low health risks and normal cancer rates in Japan after the Fukushima disaster, even while noting that long-term studies are still needed. WHO warned instead of resulting psychosocial damage to the population.

Asked why UNSCEAR and WHO released such statements if they were medically inaccurate, Caldicott referred to a 1959 WHO-IAEA agreement that gives the IAEA - an organisation that pro-



notes nuclear power - oversight when researching nuclear accidents.

“The WHO is a handmaiden to the IAEA,” said Caldicott, who engaged in a 2011 debate on the subject with The Guardian’s George Monbiot. Monbiot had argued that nuclear plants are a viable alternative to coal plants.

“It’s a scandal which has not really been exposed in general literature and to the public,” said Caldicott of the WHO-IAEA agreement.

When the U.N. General Assembly proclaimed 2006-2016 the “Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions”, it committed to a “development approach” to redress the areas affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear fallout in the former Soviet Union.

The U.N.’s action plan was based on scientific studies from the 2005 Chernobyl Forum, which brought member states Belarus, Russia and Ukraine together with experts from the IAEA and seven of the world’s most influential development agencies, including the World Bank Group, WHO and UNSCEAR.

The Chernobyl Forum noted that the Chernobyl nuclear accident was a “low-dose event”. It stated, “The vast majority of people living in contaminated areas are in fact highly unlikely to experience negative health effects from radiation exposure and can safely raise families where they are today.” ☺

Photo: Ana Pancenko, one of the many Ukrainian children affected by the Chernobyl disaster. Credit: José Luis Baños/IPS

Caldicott said of WHO, “They didn’t do any studies of Chernobyl, they just did estimates.” She cited a 2009 report by the New York Academy of Sciences, which painted a different picture.

The IAEA promotes “safe, responsible development of uranium resources”, the raw materials used to fuel nuclear reactors and build nuclear bombs.

For Ashish Birulee, a Ho tribal resident of Jadugoda, India, safe uranium mining in his community is far from reality, and the health effects of radiation are as clear as the photographs he has taken to document them. Birulee, a student and photojournalist, lives next to a tailings dam, filled with radioactive waste from a uranium purification plant operated by the Uranium Corporation of India. “Lung cancer, skin cancer, tumours, congenital deformities, down syndrome, mental retardation, megacephaly, sterility, infertility in married couples, thalassemia [and] rare birth defects like Gastroschisis [are] common in the area,” he told IPS. “We are like guinea pigs here,” he said, citing government negligence on the matter. “I’m experiencing everyday radiation exposure and also witnessing how my people are suffering.”

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union conducted 456 nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk test site in present day Kazakhstan.

“Based on information collected during the missions and subsequent research, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that most of the area has little or no residual radioactivity directly attributed to nuclear tests in Kazakhstan,” according to the IAEA.

But the IAEA narrative differs from those who live around Semipalatinsk. According to the preparatory committee for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), “A number of genetic defects and illnesses in the region, ranging from cancers to impotency to birth defects and other deformities, have been attributed to nuclear testing.”

“There is even a museum of mutations at the regional medical institute in Semey, the largest city near the old nuclear testing

site,” it noted. “What radiation does - gamma, alpha or beta - is it either kills the cell or changes the biochemistry of the DNA molecule,” Caldicott, who has worked on nuclear issues for 43 years, explained. “One day [the cell] will start to divide by mitosis in an unregulated way, producing literally trillions and trillions of [mutated] cells, and that’s a cancer,” she said. “You don’t know you’ve been exposed to radiation,” Caldicott pointed out. “You can’t taste or see radioactive elements in the food, and when the cancer develops, of course it doesn’t denote its origin.”

Meanwhile, two nuclear plants at Indian Point Energy Centre - just 60 kilometres upriver from U.N. headquarters in New York - are fighting for new licences, making the health and radiation question more relevant to diplomats from the 193 U.N. member states who live and work in the area. Critics have dubbed Indian Point, which sits on two fault lines, as “Fukushima on the Hudson”, in reference to the nuclear disaster in Japan that was sparked by an earthquake and a tsunami.

However, there are a few differences between Fukushima and Indian Point. “Fukushima was directly over the ocean, and the winds were favourable. They were blowing most of the radiation out to sea,” said Manna Jo Greene, environmental director for Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, noting that the remaining radiation was still disastrous.

But the winds in New York would blow plumes of radiation from north to south and from east to west. “There are 20 million people living within [100 kilometres], and there are 9 million people between Indian Point and the nearest ocean,” Greene told IPS.

“If there was a problem at Indian Point,” she added, “there’s a very good chance that the radiation could move in a southeasterly direction and expose millions of people to radiation before it blew out to sea.” [IPS - June 26, 2013] ♦

TANGIBLE ACTIONS NEEDED NOW FOR NUKE ABOLITION

BY HIROTSUGU TERASAKI* FROM TOKYO

President Obama's speech in Berlin on June 19 is a welcome reaffirmation of his commitment to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. The readiness he expresses to pursue further reductions in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals represents a concrete step toward this goal.

To make good on its stated commitments, the US administration now needs to establish a path of tangible actions to move beyond a world of decreased nuclear risks to reach the goal of nuclear weapons abolition. As President Obama's stance makes clear, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence can no longer make any meaningful contribution to the security of any state. This is something the world's ordinary citizens have long known: holding humanity hostage to nuclear Armageddon makes no one safe.

In view of the risks, effects and costs of nuclear weapons, there is both the practical necessity and the moral imperative to rid the world of those apocalyptic weapons. The time has come to initiate negotiations on a treaty that will prohibit nuclear weapons.

While this goal may seem to be a distant or even unrealistic one to some, it is not beyond our reach. As SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has pointed out: "In order to achieve real security in the twenty-first century we need to bring forth the powers of imagi-



nation that will enable us to directly and accurately apprehend evolving realities, to guide these changes toward the desired direction and to give birth to entirely new realities."

Speaking in Berlin, President Obama has again demonstrated his unique talent for taking the lessons of the past as a vantage-point from which to offer visions of a more hopeful future. Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be the most appropriate possible venues for a speech in which to announce concrete steps toward the realization of his stated goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

The work for eliminating nuclear weapons must be a global enterprise, shared by all members of the human family. Every actor—the nuclear weapons states, the states that have refrained from developing these weapons and, most critically, the world's people—must play a role. The SGI is committed to building grassroots awareness in order to empower people's efforts toward the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons. ◆

**Hirotsugu Terasaki is Vice President, Soka Gakkai and Executive Director, Soka Gakkai International Peace Affairs. [June 20, 2013]*

Read also by the writer: Nukes Indefensible on Humanitarian Grounds

OBAMA RENEWS PUSH FOR NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL

BY CYDNEY HARGIS FROM WASHINGTON

Reactions have been mixed to President Barack Obama's call for greater nuclear arms reductions in the United States and Russia, made during his speech in Berlin on Wednesday.

"We may no longer live in fear of global annihilation, but so long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe," Obama stated. "We may strike blows against terrorist networks, but if we ignore the instability and intolerance that fuels extremism, our own freedom will eventually be endangered."



The president addressed about 6,000 invited guests at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, marking 50 years after U.S. President John F. Kennedy made a similar speech at the height of the Cold War. Obama announced he would push to work with Russia to reduce the number of U.S. and Russian tactical weapons in Europe, as well as the total number of strategic nuclear weapons deployed by both countries.

"To me, the speech today was disappointing," John Burroughs, executive director of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (LCNP), a New York advocacy group, told IPS. "Obama did not talk about some important multi-lateral opportunities, nor about creating more opportunities."

Others lauded the president's call as critical, if belated.

"The Berlin Wall fell more than two decades ago, and these reductions are long overdue," Lisbeth Gronlund, a senior scientist

and co-director of the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an advocacy group, said Wednesday.

"The president's initiative implicitly acknowledges that today nuclear weapons are a liability, not an asset," Gronlund added.

The New START Treaty of 2010 limited U.S. and Russian stockpiles to 800 missiles, bombers and submarine launchers each, as well as 1,550 deployed strategic warheads.

The Obama administration is now proposing cutting each country's strategic warheads by a third, which would leave the United States and Russia with slightly over 1,000 nuclear weapons each.

"Bipartisan national security leaders agree that further, deeper nuclear reductions would increase U.S. security, lead to budget savings, and help pressure other nuclear-armed states to join the disarmament enterprise," Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based advocacy group Arms Control Association, said Wednesday.

According to the Arms Control Association, the United States spends an estimated 31 billion dollars annually to support its arsenal of deployed strategic nuclear warheads and associated delivery systems. ➡

U.S. President Barack Obama chairing the Security Council Summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in 2009.

Credit: Bomoon Lee/IPS

If the country reduced its deployed strategic warheads to 1,000 or fewer, the group estimates, taxpayers would save some 58 billion dollars over the coming decade.

With terrorist and cyber attacks increasingly prevalent in recent years, analysts have stepped up calls for the U.S. government to re-evaluate whether a massive nuclear arsenal remains the most relevant way of addressing those threats, particularly given the hundreds of billions of dollars in upkeep those arsenals require.

Obama has renewed commitments to the U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which forbids all nuclear test explosions. Ratification of the treaty has already failed once in Congress, however, and the president has set no new deadline for submitting it to the Senate. Obama has also stated that he plans to hold the fourth meeting of the Nuclear Security Summit, a biennial meeting to prevent nuclear terrorism around the world, in 2016, with the United States hosting the talks.

The administration now hopes to work with NATO allies to come up with concrete proposals for reducing the world's stockpiles of tactical nuclear weapons, which are not covered by the New START Treaty from 2010.

Russia, which has many more tactical weapons than either the United States or Europe, has been resistant to such reductions in the past.

On Wednesday, Russia's initial response to Obama's call for reductions was lukewarm. One senior foreign policy adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow wants to "expand the circle of participants" of countries reducing their nuclear arms.

"How can we take seriously this idea about cuts in strategic nuclear potential while the United States is developing its capabilities to intercept Russia's nuclear potential?" Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin told reporters in St. Petersburg.

In the United States, some civil society voices are suggesting that Obama's new proposals sound suspiciously repetitive.

"President Obama's nuclear proposals in Berlin are a tired rehash of U.S. nuclear policy," said Alice Slater, the director of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, a non-profit advocacy group, "designed to maintain America's global military superiority in a web of alliances entangling other nations in a U.S. sphere of nuclear weapons and missile 'offenses' under the ribs of a leaky nuclear umbrella."

Republicans in Congress, meanwhile, have already made it clear that they will push back against any treaty that proposes cuts deeper than those proposed in the 2010 New START Treaty, suggesting that the proposed reductions would hurt U.S. security. "I do not believe the American people will support the president's policy, which will serve only to weaken our nuclear deterrent and our ability to deal with threats to our strategic interest in the years to come," James Inhofe, a conservative senator and ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Wednesday.

According to LCNP's Burroughs, if proposed cuts made it into the treaty, it is not certain they would receive the required two-thirds majority in the Senate. However, he said a political understanding between the Obama administration and the Russian government would not actually require congressional approval. But he also warned of severe objections to proceeding in that direction.

"The steps that Obama was talking about taking with respect to tactical nuclear weapons or the long-range strategic weapons is basically making any U.S. reduction contingent on Russian reciprocity," Burroughs told IPS. "I understand the political reasons...but the United States could make reductions on its own and invite Russia to follow - and we'd be perfectly safe." [IPS - June 19, 2013] ♦

U.N. CAN HELP DEVALUE NUKES AS GEOPOLITICAL CURRENCY

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS

When the 193-member U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) holds its first-ever high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament next September, there is little or no hope that any of the nuclear powers will make a firm commitment to gradually phase out or abandon their lethal arsenals.

At the beginning of 2013, eight states - UK, the United States, Russia, France, China, India, Pakistan and Israel - possessed approximately 4,400 operational nuclear weapons, according to the latest Yearbook released Monday by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Nearly 2,000 of these are kept in a state of high operational alert, SIPRI said.

Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute and adjunct professor of International Law at the Widener University School of Law, told IPS, "What is needed to counteract the slow pace in arms control and disarmament is higher political profile."

For example, he said, if certain leaders were to say at the General Assembly, "My country is one of 114 countries in a nuclear weapons-free zone. We want to help countries relying on nuclear weapons for security to obtain the benefits of helping to make the entire world a nuclear weapons-free zone."

The SIPRI report highlights the need to bring commitments made solemnly at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2012 to advance nuclear disarmament into action. Promises must mean something, said Granoff.

If all nuclear warheads are counted, says SIPRI, these eight states together possess a total of approximately 17,265 nuclear weapons, as compared with 19,000 at the beginning of 2012.

The decrease is due mainly to Russia and the United States further reducing their inventories of strategic nuclear weapons under the terms of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START), as well as retiring ageing and obsolescent weapons.

At the same time, says SIPRI, all five legally recognised nuclear weapons states - China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States - are either deploying new nuclear weapon delivery systems or have announced programmes to do so, and appear determined to retain their nuclear arsenals indefinitely.

Of the five, only China seems to be expanding its nuclear arsenal.

And of the others, India and Pakistan are both expanding their nuclear weapon stockpiles and missile delivery capabilities.

"Once again there was little to inspire hope that the nuclear weapon-possessing states are genuinely willing to give up their nuclear arsenals," according to SIPRI.

"The long-term modernisation programmes under way in these states suggest that nuclear weapons are still a marker of international status and power," says Shannon Kile, senior researcher at SIPRI's Project on Nuclear Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation.

Asked if the upcoming UNGA disarmament conference will produce anything tangible towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, Kile told IPS that in light of current trends in global nuclear arsenals, the General Assembly cannot be reasonably expected to be able to adopt concrete measures that will require the

nuclear weapon-possessing states to begin eliminating these weapons or to change their nuclear force postures and operational practices.

However, the positive role the UNGA can play in terms of strengthening existing norms and political commitments to pursue nuclear disarmament should not be underestimated, Kile said.

This involves, first and foremost, maintaining political pressure on the nuclear weapon-possessing states to reduce the role and salience of nuclear weapons in their national security strategies and defence postures.

This could be done, for example, by persuading these states to adopt explicit declaratory policies ruling out the first-use of nuclear weapons, and to provide legally-binding negative security assurances - that is, guarantees not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.

In the longer term, he said, the UNGA can contribute to and strengthen efforts to devalue nuclear weapons as a currency of international geopolitics and to delegitimise their possession.

“This will admittedly be a part of a long-term process that will require considerable patience and diplomatic persistence but its normative significance should not be overlooked,” Kile added.

Granoff told IPS the deals the administration of President Barack Obama believed it had to make to get the START Treaty ratified in the U.S. Senate included modernisation of aspects of the nuclear arsenal.

Some modernisation simply keeps the weapons in a stable situation while others actually improve accuracy and reliability and could be construed as a form of vertical proliferation, he said.

“Such activities should not be funded, but even if they are, they are not being brought into practice because of military geo strategic planning,” Granoff said.

However, he said, it is not the case that such actions affirm the status of nuclear weapons or a commitment to abrogate pledges under the NPT to move toward a nuclear weapons-free world.

“They only represent short term political deals necessary in an extremely difficult domestic partisan environment to achieve modest arms control measures,” Kile said.

But to say that the policy is not to move in the correct direction is incorrect, he added.

Granoff said there is a new open-ended working group in Geneva that will come up with recommendations.

Norway recently hosted a large conference with many countries highlighting the horrific humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. These activities bode well for our future, he said.

“It is odd that the P5 (UK, United States, Russia, France and China) did not participate in these activities,” Granoff added. “It shows, however, that they can cooperate and come up with the same strategy and positions when they want.

“Our job is to help push the issue of the abolition of nuclear weapons up the political ladder so that they will cooperate on disarmament,” he said.

Asked about the absence of North Korea from the list of nuclear weapon states, Kile told IPS, “The section of the Yearbook’s nuclear forces chapter dealing with North Korea’s nuclear weapon capabilities notes that it is not known whether North Korea has produced operational (militarily usable) nuclear weapons.” ➡

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

An operational weapon is not the same as a simple nuclear explosive device and would require more advanced design and engineering skills to build, he said.

“We have published in SIPRI Yearbook 2013 the estimate of six to eight nuclear weapons to indicate the maximum number that

North Korea may possess, based on publicly-available information about its plutonium production activities.

“But again, it is unclear whether North Korea has actually produced operational nuclear weapons, so we did not include it in the table in the press release,” he added. [IPS - June 3, 2013] ◆



NUCLEAR IRAN UNLIKELY TO TILT REGIONAL POWER BALANCE

BY JIM LOBE* AND JOE HITCHON FROM WASHINGTON

A nuclear-armed Iran would not pose a fundamental threat to the United States and its regional allies like Israel and the Gulf Arab monarchies, according to a new report released here Friday by the Rand Corporation.

Entitled “Iran After the Bomb: How Would a Nuclear-Armed Tehran Behave?“, the report asserts that the acquisition by Tehran of nuclear weapons would above all be intended to deter an attack by hostile powers, presumably including Israel and the United States, rather than for aggressive purposes.

And while its acquisition may indeed lead to greater tension between Iran and its Sunni-led neighbours, the 50-page report concludes that Tehran would be unlikely to use nuclear weapons against other Muslim countries. Nor would it be able to halt its diminishing influence in the region resulting from the Arab Spring and its support for the Syrian government, according to the author, Alireza Nader.

“Iran’s development of nuclear weapons will enhance its ability to deter an external attack, but it will not enable it to change the Middle East’s geopolitical order in its own favour,” Nader, an international policy analyst at RAND, told IPS. “The Islamic Republic’s challenge to the region is constrained by its declining popularity, a weak economy, and a limited conventional military capability. An Iran with nukes will still be a declining power.”

The report reaches several conclusions all of which generally portray Iran as a rational actor in its international relations.

While Nader calls it a “revisionist state” that tries to undermine what it sees as a U.S.-dominated order in the Middle East, his report stresses that “it does not have territorial ambitions and does not seek to invade, conquer, or occupy other nations.”

Further, the report identifies the Islamic Republic’s military doctrine as defensive in nature. This posture is presumably a result of the volatile and unstable region in which it exists and is exacerbated by its status as a Shi’a and Persian-majority nation in a Sunni and Arab-majority region.

Iran is also scarred by its traumatic eight-year war with Iraq in which as many as one million Iranians lost their lives.

The new report comes amidst a growing controversy here over whether a nuclear-armed Iran could itself be successfully “contained” by the U.S. and its allies and deterred both from pursuing a more aggressive policy in the region and actually using nuclear weapons against its foes.

Iran itself has vehemently denied it intends to build a weapon, and the U.S. intelligence community has reported consistently over the last six years that Tehran’s leadership has not yet decided to do so, although the increasing sophistication and infrastructure of its nuclear programme will make it possible to build one more quickly if such a decision is made.

Official U.S. policy, as enunciated repeatedly by top officials, including President Barack Obama, is to “prevent” Iran from obtaining a weapon, even by military means if ongoing diplomatic efforts and “crippling” economic sanctions fail to persuade Iran to substantially curb its nuclear programme.

A nuclear-armed Iran, in the administration’s view - which is held even more fervently by the U.S. Congress where the Israel lobby exerts its greatest influence - represents an “existential threat” to the Jewish state. ➡

In addition, according to the administration, Iran's acquisition of a weapon would likely embolden it and its allies - notably Lebanon's Hezbollah - to pursue more aggressive actions against their foes and could well set off a regional "cascade effect" in which other powers, particularly Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, would feel obliged to launch nuclear-weapons programmes of their own.

But a growing number of critics of the prevention strategy - particularly that part of it that would resort to military action against Iran - argue that a nuclear Iran will not be nearly as dangerous as the reigning orthodoxy assumes.

A year ago, for example, Paul Pillar, a veteran CIA analyst who served as National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East and South Asia from 2000 to 2005, published a lengthy essay in 'The Washington Monthly', "We Can Live With a Nuclear Iran: Fears of a Bomb in Tehran's Hands Are Overhyped, and a War to Prevent It Would Be a Disaster."

More recently, Colin Kahl, an analyst at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) who also served as the Pentagon's top Middle East policy adviser for much of Obama's first term, published two reports - the first questioning the "cascade effect" in the region, and the second, published earlier this week and entitled "If All Else Fails: The Challenges of Containing a Nuclear-Armed Iran," outlining a detailed "containment strategy" - including extending Washington's nuclear umbrella over states that feel threatened by a nuclear Iran - the U.S. could follow to deter Tehran's use of a nuclear bomb or its transfer to non-state actors, like Hezbollah, and persuade regional states not to develop their own nuclear arms capabilities.

In addition, Kenneth Pollack, a former CIA analyst at the Brookings Institution whose 2002 book, "The Threatening Storm" helped persuade many liberals and Democrats to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq, will publish a new book, "Unthinkable: Iran, the

Bomb, and American Strategy", that is also expected to argue for a containment strategy if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon.

Because both Brookings and CNAS are regarded as close to the administration, some neo-conservative commentators have expressed alarm that these reports are "trial balloons" designed to set the stage for Obama's abandonment of the prevention strategy in favour of containment, albeit by another name.

It is likely that Nader's study - coming as it does from RAND, a think tank with historically close ties to the Pentagon - will be seen in a similar light.

His report concedes that Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons would lead to greater tension with the Gulf Arab monarchies and thus to greater instability in the region. Moreover, an inadvertent or accidental nuclear exchange between Israel and Iran would be a "dangerous possibility", according to Nader who also notes that the "cascade effect", while outside the scope of his study, warrants "careful consideration".

Despite Iran's strong ideological antipathy toward Israel, the report does not argue that Tehran would attack the Jewish state with nuclear weapons, as that would almost certainly lead to the regime's destruction.

Israel, in Nader's view, fears that Iran's nuclear capability could serve as an "umbrella" for Tehran's allies that could significantly hamper Israel's military operations in the Palestinian territories, the Levant, and the wider region.

But the report concludes that Tehran is unlikely to extend its nuclear deterrent to its allies, including Hezbollah, noting that the interests of those groups do not always - or even often - coincide with Iran's. Iran would also be highly unlikely to transfer nuclear weapons to them in any event, according to the report. [IPS - May 18, 2013] ◆

U.S.-RUSSIA NUCLEAR ARSENALS CLING TO BYGONE ERA

BY GEORGE GAO FROM UNITED NATIONS

In the late 19th century, Russian playwright Anton Chekhov famously touted one golden rule for dramatic productions: if you show your audience a loaded gun in the first act, that gun must go off by the last.

But Chekhov's storytelling trope is troubling if applied to the world's weapons technology today, which include an estimated 17,300 nukes - used primarily by nations as props to leverage international power.

According to the Ploughshares Fund's *World Nuclear Stockpile Report*, an estimated 8,500 nukes belong to Russia and 7,700 to the U.S. The seven other nations with a nuclear arsenal trail far behind: they include France (300), China (240), the U.K. (225), Pakistan (90-110), India (60-110), Israel (60-80) and most recently North Korea (<10).

"It's hard to imagine any military mission that will require the use of one nuclear weapon. The use of 10 weapons would be a catastrophe beyond human experience, and 50 is unthinkable," said Joe Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund, a global security foundation based in the U.S.

"The number you need to actually deter an enemy from attacking the U.S. with or without nuclear weapons is very, very low. To be on the safe side, you might want a couple of hundred," he told IPS.

"The idea that we need thousands of nuclear weapons... is an outmoded, irrational, expensive legacy of the Cold War," he said.

While the U.S.'s nuke budget is secret, Cirincione estimates that in the next decade, the U.S. will spend 640 billion dollars on

nukes and its related programmes - such as missile defence systems, environmental clean-up of nuclear activity and the technological upgrade of the current nuclear arsenal.

Asked about the U.S.'s role in pushing for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on the international scale, Cirincione said, "The U.S. is probably the most influential voice in this debate, but it can't do it alone. Most importantly, it needs Russia to reduce the arsenals with them."

On Feb. 5, 2011, the U.S. and Russia entered into force a New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), in which both nations agreed by 2018 to limit the number of their warheads to 1,550; and the number of their combined intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments to 800.

"If the U.S. and Russia can agree to cut their arsenals in half, for example, as they did in the 1980s and the 1990s... it would be universally applauded, and it would be very difficult for bureaucracies and political opponents to resist that in either country," said Cirincione.

But U.S. progress for disarmament and non-proliferation has stalled in the past few years. George Perkovich, director of the Nuclear Policy Programme at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, attributes the U.S.'s balk partly to internal politics in Washington.

In his April 2013 monograph, *Do Unto Others: Toward a Defensible Nuclear Doctrine*, Perkovich writes, "A relatively small, specialized community of experts and officials shapes U.S. nuclear policy." ➡

Members of this community often distort nuclear threats to the U.S., as well as the best ways to respond to such threats, argues Perkovich. They do this not in the U.S.'s national security interest, but in their own career interests to prevent "their domestic rivals from attacking them as too weak to hold office".

Nukes deter U.S.-led regime change

Perkovich also notes in his monograph that Iran, North Korea and Pakistan believe having their own nuclear arsenals deter U.S.-led regime change. They fear the fates of nuclear-free Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011.

Asked how the U.S. should respond if future world governments - oppressive or not, who are acting against U.S. interests - continue pursuing nukes to prevent regime change, Perkovich told IPS that would be a difficult problem.

"The one and only thing nuclear weapons are good for is to keep people from invading your country. So, states and leaders that worry about getting invaded tend to find nukes attractive, or alliance with the U.S. attractive," he said.

"Non-proliferation would be easier to achieve if states didn't worry they were going to be invaded and/ or overthrown if they didn't have nuclear weapons.

"The problem, clearly, is that some governments are so brutal and menacing to their own people and neighbours that it is hard to forswear trying to remove them," he added.

Perkovich recommended that the U.S. limit pressure against repressive governments to political and moral means, as well as to sanctions; and that the U.S. clarify it won't act militarily, if the repressive regime does not attack its neighbours or seek nukes.

Cirincione, author of *Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons*, argued that vying for nukes, in Iran and North Korea's cases, may actually be counterproductive.

"I don't think it improves their security, I think it isolates them even further," he said. "It prevents them from forging the kind of international ties that can really aid their country, build their economies (and) increase their influence.

"That means that in order to stop those countries from getting or keeping nuclear weapons, you have to address their legitimate security concerns. A part of the engagement with those countries has got to be security assurances that guarantees then that you won't attack them, or that their neighbours won't attack them."

Obama's nuclear legacy

During his December 2012 speech at the National War College in Washington, U.S. President Barack Obama said, "Missile by missile, warhead by warhead, shell by shell, we're putting a bygone era behind us."

Cirincione explained that pursuing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has been important to Obama since his youth. Obama's first foreign policy speech as president - in Prague in April 2009 - and his first foreign policy speech after re-election both focused on nukes.

"The president faces a multitude of pressing issues, but only two of them threaten destruction on a planetary scale: global warming and nuclear weapons," said Cirincione.

While opposition to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is prevalent inside Washington, it pales in comparison to opposition facing warming, immigration, or tax reform. ➔

“This is an opportunity for the president to make a major improvement in U.S. and global security with a relatively small investment of his time,” said Cirincione, who explained that Obama’s efforts to curb nukes may conclude a historic arc, which

started with President John F. Kennedy’s efforts in the 1960s and was accelerated by President Ronald Reagan’s efforts in the 1980s. [IPS - May 17, 2013] ◆

Nuclear Powers Duck International Stage

The world’s nine nuclear powers are excusing themselves from multilateral forums on nukes.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - which aims to prevent nuclear proliferation and promote nuclear disarmament - is signed by 190 parties. According to the U.N., “More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement.” But those absent from the treaty include nuclear powers India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea.

When the International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons convened in Oslo in March, only two of the nine nuclear powers - India and Pakistan - were in attendance.

On May 6, IPS reported that nuclear powers France, U.S., Israel and the U.K. abstained from the U.N. General Assembly vote on whether or not to host its first ever high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament. The vote passed, and the date is set for Sep. 26, but the U.S., France and the U.K. remain unresponsive.

And on May 13, Erin Pelton, spokesperson for the U.S. Mission to the U.N., announced that her country refuses to send its ambassadors to any U.N. Conference on Disarmament (CD) meeting during Iran’s rotating presidency, from May 27 to Jun. 23.

UN Watch executive director Hillel Neuer quipped that putting Iran in charge of the CD “is like putting Jack the Ripper in charge of a women’s shelter”.

He added, “Any member state that is the subject of U.N. Security Council sanctions for proliferation - and found guilty of massive human rights violations - should be ineligible to hold a leadership position in a U.N. body.”

The CD is widely seen as unproductive, and has been so for the past 15 years. But before then, the CD and its predecessors negotiated the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, among other agreements.

Jim Paul, senior adviser at Global Policy Forum, responded to Neuer’s statement by noting the irony in the U.S.’s own boycott of the CD.

Paul told IPS in an email exchange that the U.S. is the world’s largest arms exporter; it has one of the most lethal nuclear arsenals; it recently used depleted uranium munitions, cluster bombs and land mines; it keeps its military bases scattered around the world; and it carries out exorbitant military operations.

He said, “Right-wing critics of the U.N. like (to) argue that only ‘good’ governments should preside over U.N. bodies. But who ARE the ‘good’ governments? The ones that are friendly with the U.S. and Israel, of course!”

NUCLEAR IRAN CAN BE CONTAINED AND DETERRED

BY JIM LOBE* FROM WASHINGTON

While preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon is preferable, the United States could successfully contain a nuclear Iran, according to a new report released here Monday by the Center for a New American Security, an influential think tank close to the administration of President Barack Obama.

The report, “If All Else Fails: The Challenges of Containing a Nuclear-Armed Iran,” outlines a detailed “containment strategy” designed to deter Tehran’s use of a nuclear bomb or its transfer to non-state actors, and persuade other regional states not to develop their own nuclear arms capabilities.

“The United States should do everything in its power to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, and no option should be left off the table,” said Colin Kahl, the lead author of the 80-page report and the Pentagon’s top Middle East policy official during most of Obama’s first term.

“But we also have to consider the possibility that prevention efforts - including the use of force - could fail,” he added in an email to IPS. “In that case, we’d need a strategy for managing and mitigating the threats a nuclear-armed Iran would pose to vital U.S. interests and allies. That’s what we’re focusing on.”

The administration, according to the report, has so firmly committed itself to a prevention policy - including threatening military action if diplomatic efforts and economic pressure fail - that cannot explicitly endorse a different approach “without damaging the very credibility it needs to effectively address the Iranian nuclear challenge,” according to the report.

At the same time, however, Tehran may be able to achieve “an unstoppable breakout capability” or build a weapon in secret before preventive measures have been exhausted. In addition, a U.S. or Israeli military strike may inflict only minimal damage to

Iran’s nuclear programme while strengthening hard-liners in the regime who believe a nuclear deterrent is the only way to ensure its survival.

“Under any of these scenarios, Washington would likely be forced to shift toward containment regardless of current preferences,” the report notes, arguing that Washington needs to think through the requirements for an effective strategy.

The new report adds to a growing literature about U.S. options in dealing with Iran, which has itself repeatedly denied that its nuclear programme is designed to develop nuclear weapons.

The U.S. intelligence community has also reported consistently over the last six years that Iran’s leadership has not yet decided to build a weapon, although the increasing sophistication and infrastructure of its nuclear programme will make it possible to build one more quickly if such a decision is made. U.S. intelligence agencies have expressed confidence that they will be able to detect any effort by Iran to achieve a “break-out” capacity.

Since coming to office in 2009, the Obama administration has described its efforts to dissuade Iran from developing a nuclear weapon as a “dual-track” approach involving both diplomatic outreach through the so-called P5+1 process of negotiations between Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany, and economic pressure exerted primarily through the imposition of harsh economic sanctions - some multilateral, most unilateral - designed to “cripple” the Iranian economy.

While the sanctions have clearly damaged Iran’s troubled economy, Tehran has so far rejected far-reaching concessions demanded by the Western members of the P5+1, such as suspending all operations at its underground Fordo enrichment facility

and shipping most of its 20-percent enriched-uranium stockpile out of the country.

While there have been some exchanges between the P5+1 and Iran since their last meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan last month, the diplomatic process appears to have been put on hold pending next month's presidential elections in the Islamic Republic.

The lack of progress on the diplomatic front combined with technological advances in Iran's nuclear programme - with estimates that Tehran will have likely enough enriched uranium to build a bomb within a very short period by next spring or summer - has provoked a simmering conflict here.

It revolves around pro-Israel and proliferation hawks pushing for yet more draconian sanctions and "credible threats of force" by the administration on the one hand and more dovish forces who are calling for more emphasis on the diplomatic track.

Much of the foreign policy establishment, including former senior military, intelligence, and diplomatic officials, lean to the latter camp; recent reports by blue-ribbon task forces of The Iran Project, the Atlantic Council, the Carnegie Endowment, and the Center for the National Interest have shown a developing elite consensus in favour of greater U.S. flexibility at the negotiating table.

In Congress, where the Israel lobby enjoys its greatest influence, however, the emphasis remains on the pressure track. Measures currently being circulated in both houses of Congress target foreign companies and banks in ways that, if enforced, would impose a virtual trade embargo against Iran.

The new report, the latest in a series by CNAS on Iran policy, does not address either strategy, although Kahl has in the past argued for greater U.S. flexibility in negotiations. It is likely, however, to fuel the ongoing debates between the hawks and doves on whether Washington can indeed live with a nuclear-armed Iran if its "prevention" strategy fails.

A containment strategy, according to Kahl and his two-co-authors, Raj Pattani and Jacob Stokes, would integrate five key components: deterrence, defence, disruption, de-escalation and de-nuclearisation.

Deterrence would involve, among other steps, strengthening Washington's threat to retaliate in kind if Iran uses nuclear weapons and extending the U.S. nuclear umbrella to other regional states in exchange for their commitment not to pursue independent nuclear capabilities.

Defence would aim to deny Iran any benefit from its nuclear weapons by building up U.S. missile-defence capabilities and naval deployments in the region and increasing security co-operation with Gulf countries and Israel.

Disruption would include "shap(ing) a regional environment resistant to Iranian influence" by, among other steps, building up Egypt and Iraq as strategic counterweights; "promoting evolutionary political reform" in the Gulf; and increasing aid to moderate elements among Syrian rebels and the Lebanese Army as a counter to Hezbollah.

De-escalation would be designed to prevent any Iran-related crisis from spiralling to nuclear war "persuading Israel to eschew preemptive nuclear doctrine and other destabilizing nuclear postures," creating crisis-communication mechanisms and exploring confidence-building measures with Iran; assuring Tehran that "regime change" is not Washington's goal, and providing it with "face-saving' exit ramps" during crises.

Finally, de-nuclearisation would try to constrain Iran's nuclear programme and limit broader damage to the non-proliferation regime by maintaining and tightening sanctions against Iran and strengthening interdiction efforts. ➡

The report stressed that such a strategy would entail major costs, including "doubling down on U.S. security commitments to the Middle East," making the administration's military "rebalanc-

ing” to the Asia/Pacific more difficult; “greatly complicate efforts to promote reform” allied Arab states; and “increase the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy at the very time the Obama administration hopes to move in the opposite direction.”

The CNAS report was immediately assailed by several prominent neo-conservatives who have long been warning that Obama, given his clear reluctance to risk war in another predominantly Muslim country, would himself eschew his prevention strategy in favour of “containment by another name.”

But, as noted by Kahl, the hard-line neo-conservative American Enterprise Institute published a paper 18 months ago that concluded

that “containing and deterring” a nuclear-armed Iran could be the “least-bad choice” for U.S. policy if Washington can “demonstrate that it can deter both Iran’s use of nuclear weapons and aggression by Tehran’s network of partners and terrorist proxies.”

Kahl’s position on containment is also expected to be echoed with the anticipated publication by Ken Pollack, a former CIA analyst at the Brookings Institution, of his new book, “Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy”. Pollack’s 2002 book, “The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq,” helped persuade many liberals and Democrats to back the invasion. [IPS - May 14, 2013] ◆

**Jim Lobe’s blog on U.S. foreign policy can be read at <http://www.lobelog.com>.*

**"We have to consider the possibility that prevention efforts - including the use of force - could fail."
CNAS' Colin Kahl**

TACKLING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AT ITS ROOTS

BY IAN ANTHONY AND LINA GRIP* FROM STOCKHOLM



Making nuclear weapons requires access to materials - highly enriched uranium or plutonium - that do not exist in nature in a weapons-usable form. To constitute a threat, natural uranium needs to go through a challenging and time-consuming process of transformation as it moves

through the nuclear fuel cycle.

The effort to cap the number of nuclear armed states in the world has largely focused on limiting the spread of the industrial items and processes needed for the stages of the fuel cycle that can turn uranium or plutonium into forms that could be used to make a nuclear weapon: enrichment or reprocessing.

The most important suppliers of nuclear technology have recently agreed guidelines to restrict access to the most sensitive industrial items, in the framework of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Nevertheless, the number of countries proficient in these industrial processes has increased over time, and it is now questionable whether a strategy based on close monitoring of technology 'choke points' is by itself a reliable barrier to nuclear proliferation.

Not all the states that have developed a complex nuclear fuel cycle have naturally abundant uranium. This has created a global market for uranium that is relatively free - particularly compared with the market for sensitive technologies. As countries of pro-

Closing gaps in uranium market regulation

liferation concern achieve proficiency in the most sensitive industrial processes, restricting access to natural uranium could be part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to non-proliferation across the fuel cycle.

Today, the proliferation risks associated with industrial processes used to extract uranium attract relatively little attention. Natural uranium does not, for example, fall under the NSG supplier guidelines or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Most uranium-producing states seem to be working hard to ensure that they do not contribute to nuclear weapon programmes. However, these countries (some of which have very limited resources to devote to the effort) still face significant challenges.

Many African states have experienced increased investment in their uranium extractive sectors in recent years. Many, though not all, have signed and ratified the 1996 African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (Pelindaba) Treaty, which entered into force in 2009.

Furthermore, in recent years, the relevant countries have often worked with the IAEA to introduce an Additional Protocol to their safeguards agreement with the agency. By signing an Additional Protocol, the state commits to collect, and make available to the IAEA on request, information specifying the location, operational status and the estimated annual production capacity of uranium mines and concentration plants as well as their current annual production.

However, the value of this information for the purposes of non-proliferation is limited, as it is only provided after some time has passed since extraction, and detailed nuclear material accountability is not required. ↻ Image credit: Wikimedia Commons

The success of the Pelindaba Treaty and safeguards agreements depends on the quality of their national implementation. Finding a balance between effectiveness and affordability requires states to think carefully about which legal and technical competences are required and how to organize administrative efforts for success.

One proliferation risk inherent in the current system is that inadequate or falsified information connected to what appear to be legitimate transactions will facilitate uranium acquisition by countries that the producer country would not wish to supply.

To reduce this risk, national regulators need to have full picture of how uranium extracted on their territory is to be used. Current systems normally monitor the physical movement of uranium from extraction until it arrives at the place where it is converted to the feedstock introduced into a uranium enrichment plant. However, the regulators often appear to have little knowledge of the associated commercial arrangements.

Governments could consider imposing disclosure requirements on the companies engaged in extraction, regarding the customers, size of payments, beneficiaries of payment arrangements and sub-contracting arrangements for the supply of services (such as transportation). The information provided could then be scrutinized to help reduce proliferation risk. Parts of government responsible for reducing proliferation risk do not currently seem to have access to this information—if it is being collected at all.

A second risk is that uranium ore concentrate (UOC) is diverted, either from the site where it was processed or during transportation, so the legitimate owners no longer have control over it. UOC is usually produced at facilities close to mines - often at the mining site itself - to avoid the cost and inconvenience of transporting large quantities of very heavy ore in raw form to a processing plant.

UOC is usually packed into steel drums that are loaded into standard shipping containers for onward movement by road, rail or sea for further processing. The loss of custody over relatively small quantities of UOC represents a serious risk if diversion takes place regularly. The loss of even one full standard container during transport would be a serious proliferation risk by itself. There is thus a need for physical protection of the ore concentrate to reduce the risk of diversion at these stages.

A third risk is that some uranium extraction activity is not covered by the existing rules. For example, uranium extraction can be a side activity connected to gold mining or the production of phosphates. Regulations should cover all activities that could lead to uranium extraction, not only those where uranium extraction is the main stated objective. It is also important that all actors involved in uranium extraction are aware of the potential proliferation risks arising from their activities and engaged in risk-mitigation efforts.

Restricting access to natural uranium could be an important aspect of the global efforts to obstruct the spread of nuclear weapons. The time is ripe to start thinking seriously about the design of such control measures and how responsibility can be shared across the non-proliferation regime.

[IDN-InDepthNews - May 13, 2013] ◆

**Dr Ian Anthony is the Research Coordinator at SIPRI and Director of the SIPRI Arms Control and Non-proliferation Programme. Lina Grip is a Researcher with the Arms Control and Non-proliferation Programme. This article first appeared on the SIPRI website under the title 'The global market in natural uranium - From proliferation risk to non-proliferation opportunity'. It is being republished by arrangement with SIPRI.*

U.N. ACCUSED OF PLAYING DOWN NUKE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

BY THALIF DEEN FROM UNITED NATIONS



The lack of publicity stands in contrast to the strong public stand taken by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has consistently called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Credit: Bomoon Lee/IPS

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is one of the most vociferous advocates of a world free of nuclear weapons.

“Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are not utopian ideals,” he says. “They are critical to global peace and security.”

Still, the Group of 77, the largest single coalition of 132 developing countries, implicitly accuses the United Nations of falling short in its efforts to publicise a meeting on nuclear disarmament scheduled to take place Sep. 26.

Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, the G77 chair, last week described the upcoming talks as “the first-ever high level

meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament.”

He said the meeting is of importance to developing nations, and therefore, all efforts should be made to give it timely and wide publicity.

A G77 delegate told IPS the conference is not getting the advance publicity it should, probably because three of the big powers, the United States, UK and France, are not supportive of the meeting.

“We have not seen anything on the high level meeting so far,” he added.

The lack of coverage stands in contrast to the strong public stand taken by the secretary-general, who has consistently called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Asked about the significance of the upcoming meeting, Dr. John Burroughs, executive director of the New York-based Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, told IPS the meeting is a chance for world leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama and others, to give direction to the nuclear disarmament enterprise, “which is now drifting aimlessly despite much rhetoric over the past five years.”

“Of course they should reassert that the global elimination of nuclear weapons is a shared aim of the international community,” he said.

But they can and should do more, he said, specifically to set in motion concrete, multilateral processes to achieve that objective.

“If there can be a Nuclear Security Summit process, focused on securing nuclear materials, why can there not be a Nuclear Disarmament Summit Process?” he asked. Or definitive action could be taken to overcome the 16-year deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, if necessary by establishing a separate process, Dr Burroughs said.

The resolution calling for the high-level meeting, which was sponsored by Indonesia and the 120-member Non-Aligned Movement, was adopted last December in the General Assembly by a vote of 179 to none against, with four abstentions (Israel, and

three of the five permanent members of the Security Council, namely France, UK and the United States).

The other two permanent members, China and Russia, voted for the resolution.

All five permanent members are the world's five declared nuclear powers, with India, Pakistan, Israel, and more recently North Korea, outside the P-5 nuclear club.

In an explanation of his country's decision to abstain on the vote, Guy Pollard, deputy permanent representative of the UK, told delegates last December, "We question the value of holding a high-level meeting (HLM) of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament when there are already sufficient venues for such discussion."

He cited the General Assembly's First Committee (on Disarmament), the U.N. Disarmament Commission, and the Conference on Disarmament.

"We are puzzled about how such a HLM will further the goals of the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) Action Plan that was agreed by consensus in 2010," Pollard said.

"In our view," he said, "this roadmap of actions offers the best way of taking forward the multilateral nuclear disarmament agenda, along with related issues."

"We continue to believe that nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing and therefore regret that this high level meeting doesn't treat both of these aspects in a balanced manner," Pollard said.

Meanwhile, in a new study released last month, George Perkovich, director of the Nuclear Policy Programme at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, points out one of the few ways that President Obama could restore confidence in U.S. intentions would be to update the declaration of the role of nucle-

ar weapons in U.S. security policy, including in defence of its allies.

"In his searching Nobel Peace Prize speech (in December 2009), Obama recognised the occasional inescapability of war and the imperative of waging it justly," Perkovich said.

So, too, Obama now could examine how the ongoing existence of nuclear arsenals, even if temporary, can be reconciled with the moral-strategic imperative to prevent their use, says the study titled "Do Unto Others: Toward a Defensible Nuclear Doctrine."

"The president could articulate a limited framework for the legitimate use of nuclear weapons that the United States believes would be defensible for others to follow as long as nuclear weapons remain," it says.

Such a nuclear policy, says Perkovich, could then be conveyed in the U.S. Defence Department's Quadrennial Posture Review, which is due later this year.

Dr. Burroughs told IPS that non-nuclear weapon states have been doing their best to create opportunities to set a clear course on disarmament.

At the initiative of Austria, Mexico and Norway, the General Assembly in 2012 established an open-ended working group on taking forward proposals on multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, scheduled to meet for three weeks this summer in Geneva.

Norway hosted a conference in Oslo in March on the humanitarian impact of nuclear explosions.

And Indonesia and the Non-Aligned Movement proposed the resolution last year that scheduled the September high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament. ➡

“However, the P-5 in the Security Council have been recalcitrant. So far they have said they will not participate in the open-ended working group,” said Dr. Burroughs.

They also declined the invitation to participate in the Oslo meeting. And last year the UK, the United States, and France, along with Israel, abstained on the resolution scheduling the high-level meeting, expressing doubt as to its value, he added.

“So the personal engagement of heads of state/government and foreign ministers is clearly necessary,” Burroughs said.

At lower levels, the Permanent Five officials have been floundering, he added.

“Unless there is a change of tune coming from the very top, the September meeting will turn out to be a fruitless exercise,” he said.

The crisis on the Korean peninsula should be a wake-up call.

The nuclear threats exchanged by North Korea and the United States have once again laid bare an often underappreciated fact, the unacceptable risks arising from reliance on nuclear weapons.

In September, P-5 leaders and other governments possessing nuclear arsenals should seize the moment to signal clearly, to their own governments as well as to the world, that they will now engage constructively with non-nuclear weapon states on a process for the global elimination of nuclear weapons, he said.

Parliamentarians, mayors, and civil society groups working for a nuclear weapons-free world should also take advantage of this global platform, which surprisingly is the first time a General Assembly high-level meeting will be held on nuclear disarmament, Dr Burroughs said. [IPS - May 6, 2013] ◆

DON'T TAKE ARABS' NPT MEMBERSHIP FOR GRANTED'

BY **BAHER KAMAL*** FROM CAIRO

Not that nuclear issues are an actual source of concern to Egyptian citizens. They are deeply worried about their present and immediate future now that inter-religious violence is on the rise, triggering a dangerous, growing insecurity amidst an overwhelming popular discontent with President Mohamed Morsi's regime. Simply put, there is too much frustration and deception here to think of nukes.

Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the governments of Arabs countries in general, and in the Gulf region in particular - following reported U.S. political pressures - have lately been expressing increasing fear of Iran's nuclear programme and therefore focusing, again, on nukes.

In fact, Bahrain's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ghanum Fadhel Al Buainain, and Foreign Affairs Minister Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, told this journalist in Manama in March that their nation - as well as all other Gulf countries - do not want to hear a word about any nuclear activities, even for peaceful purposes.

Their arguments are that even civil nuclear activities of whatever nature, have strong, negative impacts on the very lives and livelihoods of the Gulf peoples, from polluting waters and thus affecting the fish - which historically constitutes the main source of living - to the risk of a nuclear accident. These anxieties are shared by Egypt, which has always played a pivotal role in efforts aimed at declaring the Middle East a nuclear-free-zone. In fact,



Egyptian diplomacy continues to undertake efforts in that direction in spite of the internal situation, with the support of Arab countries.

Egypt's perspective was explained to this journalist by one of the country's top experts on this issue, Major General (Ret.) Mohamed Kadry Said, Military and Technology Advisor and head of the Military Studies Unit at the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo

Mohamed Kadry believes that in spite of all obstacles, a major breakthrough is required to end the current nuclear deadlock in the region, where Israel is the only atomic power, though the Iranian nuclear programme continues to draw attention - and sanctions - in Western

countries.

Should such a breakthrough not happen, Egypt and Arab countries may withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which they were pushed to join in 1995 in exchange of U.S. promises to free the Middle East from atomic warheads, Israeli nuclear arsenal included.

Mohamed Kadry emphasized that currently no Arab country in the region has a 'declared' nuclear project. "The only exception in the Middle East is Israel. I am talking about the Arabs, not Iran, not Pakistan," he said. ➡

Picture: Mohamed Kadry Said

Credit: facebook.com/mohamedkadry.said

Asked how he viewed the fact that Israel is estimated to have some 230 nuclear bombs - a figure that exceeds the combined number of atomic warheads in India and Pakistan - Mohamed Kadry said the number of Israel's nuclear warheads varies according to different estimates, though the figure of 150 heads has been most often circulated.

Some estimates put this number between 100 and 200 nuclear bombs. "Anyway, whether 100 or 200 it does not make a real difference. The really important fact here is that the very possession of nukes is dreadful."

Interview excerpts

Following are excerpts from this journalist's interview with the Kadry:

Question: During their last five-year periodical NPT review conference in New York in May 2010, participants agreed to launch an international conference to discuss ways how to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons. After intensive negotiations, Finland announced the hosting of such a conference in Helsinki last year. But the meeting has been postponed ...

Mohamed Kadry (MK): Let me give you some background. Because of dreadful consequences and the menace emerging from any new atomic power, the international community decided to establish the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty).

The initial idea was that the Treaty would be open to all countries to join, with a review or a renewal discussion process every ten years, after which any country could renew its membership in the Treaty or just withdraw from it. At the beginning, Egypt and Arab countries decided not to join the Treaty ...

Q: Why?

MK: Perhaps because they considered it 'useless' in view of the fact that it was a Treaty out of which anybody could walk out. At

this stage the U.S. appeared on the scene pressurising Egypt and the Arabs as well as Iran to join the NPT. They agreed to join in exchange of two promises: that the Treaty would be valid indefinitely - instead of being renewable every ten years - and that efforts would be made to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons. Of course, this would include Israel. All that process culminated in 1995. [The Treaty was opened for signature in 1968, and it entered into force in 1970. On May 11, 1995, it was extended indefinitely.]

Q: That very year the UN Security Council issued a resolution on the need to free the region from atomic weapons. Any breakthrough since then?

MK: The fact that the Security Council's resolution was adopted in 1995 did mean that the whole issue would be settled that very year. It would be the starting point ...

Q: But with the exception of the 2010 decision to hold an international conference to find ways how to eliminate nuclear weapons in the Middle East, nothing has happened over the last 18 years. Why should then the Arab countries in the region continue to be a part of the Treaty?

MK: The fact is that Arab research centres have met on several occasions in the previous months to discuss precisely this point. So far, there is a general consensus that if the planned Helsinki conference is not held this year, in 2013, then we would recommend to Arab governments to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Q: The Iranian nuclear programme was launched in 2003, before current president Ahmadi Nijad was elected. Tehran claimed that it can enrich its uranium by 20 percent. But the scientific community assures that an atomic bomb requires 95 per cent enriched uranium. Do you think Iran has the capability to produce nuclear weapons?

MK: Yes, definitely!

Q: Are you saying that Iran already has nuclear weapons?

MK: I said that they have the “capability” to produce them ... this is a very complex process.

Q: Back to the Middle East nuclear-free-zone and the postponed Helsinki conference. Do you think that such a conference will ever take place?

MK: Yes, I do believe so.

Q: With a specific, legally binding, and an applicable outcome?

MK: I believe something will happen ... I mean a breakthrough like what occurred after the Second World War.

Q: Such a breakthrough would really imply the elimination of all nukes in the Middle East, including Israeli atomic arsenal? How realistic is this?

MK: I think so. Realistic? Who did expect all those major changes that happened after the Second World War, particularly in Europe?

[IDN-InDepthNews - May 3, 2013] ◆

**Baher Kamal is an Egyptian-born Spanish national with nearly 40 years of professional experience as a journalist. He is Publisher and Director of Human Wrongs Watch, Spain.*

YOUTH HOLDS OUT HOPE FOR BANNING NUKES

BY RAMESH JAURA* FROM BERLIN | GENEVA

If it were up to the youth, all nuclear weapons in global arsenals would be declared inhumane and a comprehensive treaty banning these would be put in place. This is the upshot of an international survey released at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) during a milestone conference.

The survey, carried out by youth members of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), shows that 91.2% of respondents aged between 15 and 45 are of the view that nukes are inhumane and 80.6% favour a comprehensive global treaty banning all these weapons of mass annihilation. Read in Japanese

SGI is a socially engaged Buddhist association with over 12 million members around the world. It has been campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons since the second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons issued on September 8, 1957. In 2007, SGI launched the People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition campaign in order to galvanize public opinion in favour of banning all nuclear arsenal.

In fact SGI president Daisaku Ikeda put forward in his annual Peace Proposal 2010 the idea of organising a nuclear abolition summit in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015 to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of those cities. He reiterated the proposal in 2011 and the following year, and suggested the possibility of even organising the 2015 NPT Review Conference in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Picture: SGI Youth in exchange meeting | Credit: SGI



In Peace Proposal 2013, Ikeda went a step further and pleaded for an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world: "The G8 Summit in 2015, the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would be an appropriate opportunity for such a summit, which should include the additional participation of representatives of the United Nations and non-G8 states in possession of nuclear weapons, as well as members of the five existing NWFZs (nuclear weapons free zones) and those states which have taken a lead in calling for

nuclear abolition."

It is against this backdrop that youth members of SGI surveyed between December 2012 and February 2013 a total of 2,840 young men and women in nine countries: Japan, USA, Britain, Italy, Australia, South Korea, Brazil, Malaysia and Mexico. These included official and unofficial nuclear weapons states, those under a U.S. nuclear umbrella and others in NWFZs.

The significance of the survey findings is underlined by Global Zero, a movement campaigning for a world without nuclear weapons, which estimates that the nine official and unofficial nuclear weapons states spent about \$100 billion on their nuclear programs in 2011.

This conservatively assessed expenditure represents about 9% of their total annual military spending. Global Zero estimates that at this rate the nuclear-armed states will spend at least \$1 trillion on nuclear weapons and their direct support systems over the next decade. ➡

The nine states include Russia, United States, France, Britain, and China, which are recognised as official nuclear weapons states under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as well as Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea considered as unofficial nuclear weapons states.

The results of the survey carried out by SGI youth members were presented to Ambassador Cornel Feruta of Romania, chair of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2015 NPT Review Conference from April 22 to May 3, 2013 in Geneva.

The findings were released about two months after the groundbreaking intergovernmental conference organised by Norway's foreign ministry in Oslo on March 4-5 to focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

The Oslo conference followed up on a movement to outlaw nuclear weapons that has been growing since the 2010 review conference of the parties to the NPT. The conference final document noted "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and reaffirmed "the need for all states at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law."

This was followed by a resolution by the council of delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in November 2011, strongly appealing to all states "to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement."

Subsequently, at the first session of the preparatory committee for the 2015 NPT review conference held in May 2012, 16 countries led by Norway and Switzerland issued a joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, stating that "it is of great concern that, even after the end of the Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation remains part of the 21st century international security environment."

Catastrophic humanitarian consequences

Observers agree that this should initiate serious consideration of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, which were highlighted at the Oslo conference:

"In the event of a sudden humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation, it is unlikely that any state or international body has the means to respond in an adequate manner and be able to provide sufficient assistance to those affected. Moreover, it might not be possible to establish such capacity, even if attempts were made.

"The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of cause, will not be constrained by national borders, and will affect states and people in significant ways, regionally as well as globally."

These and equally atrocious consequences of a possible human error call for the global civil society to play a pivotal role in concerted efforts towards ushering in a nuclear weapons free world, said Kimiaki Kawai, SGI Program Director for Peace Affairs in a presentation at Palais des Nations in Geneva on April 26, 2013.

The consequences of human error have been spelt out by David Krieger, founder-president of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation: "While a nuclear war is not likely, it is possible and could occur by accident, miscalculation or design. Just as the large-scale radiation releases from the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant seemed unlikely until they occurred, the possibility of nuclear war also may seem unlikely until deterrence fails and it occurs...One thing we know about humans is that we are fallible. We are not capable of perfection and we cannot eliminate human error altogether no matter how diligently we try. Human fallibility and nuclear weapons are a highly volatile mix."

However Krieger guards against despair. "Despair is a recipe for giving up but hope is a choice. We can choose hope," he said in a

presentation at UNOG, and pleaded for "boldness and hope" with a view to ushering in a nuke-free world.

Hope, not despair, characterises an overwhelming majority of the young people surveyed by the SGI youth members. Nobuyuki Asai, chair of Soka Gakkai Youth Peace Conference and coordinator of the survey, said: "It is encouraging that so many youth recognize the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons. We will continue raising awareness among youth concerning nuclear weapons

and the gravity of the threat they pose." [IDN-InDepthNews - April 30, 2013] ◆

**Ramesh Jaura is global editor of IDN and its sister publication Global Perspectives, chief editor of IPS Germany as well as editorial board member of Other News. He is also executive president of Global Cooperation Council, board member of IPS international and global coordinator of SGI-IPS project for strengthening public awareness of the need to abolish nukes.*



Credit: <http://www.sgi.org>

NUKES INDEFENSIBLE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS

BY HIROTSUGU TERASAKI* FROM TOKYO

It is a cause of grave concern that there are an increasing number of regions under tension and exposed to the threat of nuclear weapons; namely, the Middle East, South Asia and Northeast Asia. Today, there are more countries that seem to be adhering to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and/or extended deterrence than during the Cold War era.

This reminds me of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's warning to the world, "Unfortunately, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has proven to be contagious. This has made non-proliferation more difficult, which in turn raises new risks that nuclear weapons will be used." It is critical that all of us share an awareness that humanity is standing at an important tipping point today.

There is a growing cognitive gap between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states on the role of nuclear weapons in national defence. Daisaku Ikeda, president of SGI, points out: "Unless we confront the fundamental source of that contagion, moves to prevent proliferation will be neither convincing nor effective."

I would like to hereby stress that the logic of nuclear deterrence is no longer justifiable, as no state should pursue its own security interests at the risk of holding the world's population hostage to nuclear ambitions. As a step to stop the further "contagion" of nuclear deterrence, I urge all state parties to the NPT to confirm this point during the upcoming second NPT PrepCom in Geneva.

Risks of nuclear proliferation, terror and accidents continue to jeopardize our lives. Hiroshima and Nagasaki have taught us that any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. This point should never be forgotten. At the same time, the huge economic burden of nuclear weapons spending is what the world can no longer afford to ignore. We need to ask ourselves whether these risks, effects and costs of

nuclear weapons can continue to justify nuclear arms. Is the value of nuclear deterrence justifiable in the face of these negative consequences?

Humanitarian focus

An emerging approach supported by non-nuclear-weapon states sheds light on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Greater humanitarian focus and renewed awareness of the fundamental nature and consequences of these arsenals could alter the discourse and normative questions asked. The challenge facing the nuclear-weapon states is how well they can grasp these humanitarian concerns into their nuclear calculations.

It is therefore vital to galvanize the voices of the citizens around the world to question the humanitarian acceptability of these weapons especially in the nuclear-weapon states. We need to give greater space for "the common sense" of citizens questioning the utility of nuclear weapons in order to rid the world of these apocalyptic arsenals.

Let us recall what US President Obama declared in 2009 in Prague: "So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons ... But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, 'Yes, we can.'"

Can we allow the nuclear-weapon states to remain complacent about nuclear deterrence? The answer to this rhetorical question is clearly "no" and the reason why is, as President Obama stated, because they are completely unjustifiable on humanitarian grounds irrespective of any political justifications. ☞

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We must redouble our efforts to resolutely push the state actors to see nuclear weapons use through a humanitarian lens. Regardless of how low the probability of a nuclear weapons detonation may seem to the nuclear strategists, the consequence is still extremely high in humanitarian terms. [IDN-InDepthNews - April 26, 2013] ♦

**Hirotugu Terasaki is Vice President, Soka Gakkai and Executive Director, Soka Gakkai International Peace Affairs. He issued this statement in run-up to the NPT PrepCom from April 22 to May 3, 2013 in Geneva.*



Credit: <http://www.nuclearabolition.info>

CIVIL SOCIETY RAISES PRESSURE OVER NPT

BY RAVI KANTH DEVARAKONDA FROM GENEVA

As parties to the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) begin their second preparatory conference in Geneva on Monday, representatives of civil society and several countries have decided to bring the festering nuclear issue and its potential humanitarian consequences to the centre stage.

“The NPT has its own process and business as usual,” said Rebecca Johnson, co-chair for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a Geneva-based global coalition of pressure groups working on disarmament and a ban on nuclear weapons.

The Geneva preparatory committee meeting will focus on a range of issues for the next two weeks to prepare the agenda for the 2015 Review Conference which will take place in Geneva.

More importantly, it is taking place against the backdrop of rising nuclear tensions in the Korean peninsula and Iran’s nuclear enrichment programme. Also, several countries held an international conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear weapons in Oslo last month.

“My hope is that a large number of countries talk (at the Geneva meeting) about the importance of bringing the nuclear issue back to human level and understanding the humanitarian consequences because of nuclear weapons,” Johnson told IPS.

She expects that a large number of parties to the NPT will sign up to the South African statement on the human dimension of nuclear weapons which will be delivered at the meeting.

“We want a sustained dialogue on the humanitarian impact so that it changes the balance of power in the NPT,” Johnson argued.

The NPT came into force in 1970 with the avowed goal of stopping countries from building a nuclear bomb. So far, 189 countries have ratified the treaty while India, Israel, and Pakistan refused to become parties to it. All three countries possess a nuclear arsenal, with total estimates varying from 50 to 200 nuclear weapons.

The official nuclear weapon states - the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China who are known as P5 - are required to implement measures under the treaty to “cessation” of the nuclear arms race, and complete nuclear “disarmament”.

The five nuclear weapon states held a meeting last week during which they discussed promoting dialogue and mutual confidence on nuclear issues. The P5 members exchanged views on various issues concerning “non-proliferation”, “the peaceful uses of nuclear energy”, and “disarmament” - known as the three pillars of the NPT. The five nations, who are the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, reaffirmed their commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

However, progress on nuclear disarmament is almost limited or negligible over the last 45 years. “There is not much progress on nuclear disarmament and we need a new dynamic to break the paralysis, otherwise there will be new cold war,” said Martin Hinrichs, an ICAN activist. Representatives of ICAN from some 16 countries held a brainstorming session on how to go about their advocacy campaign during the NPT meeting this week.

“They (the P5) have got a vested interest and they constructed their industry, defence industries, and military to deploy, to possess, and to modernise nuclear weapons,” said Johnson. ☺

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The P5 members, says Johnson, “have a vested interest in keeping the status quo and stopping new countries entering the nuclear club.”

Besides, they enjoy numerous privileges because of their status and it would be a mistake to think that they would implement substantive measures towards complete nuclear disarmament, she said.

So, the “game” for the elimination of nuclear weapons will not start from the P5 side who wield powerful nuclear weapons, Johnson said.

“What has to change is that the non-nuclear states have to start things to bring about nuclear disarmament,” the ICAN co-chair argued. “They (the non-nuclear weapon states) have the power

and tools to change by becoming aware that nuclear weapons are a humanitarian problem even if they are set in the international legal and political rules.”

Therefore, it is important not to give exalted status to the nuclear arms states every time on the hope that they would carry out disarmament. “The non-nuclear weapon states are not supplicants, and they have to engage in politics and change international relations by joining forces with civil society,” Johnson asserted.

The international ban movement intends to delegitimise nuclear weapons for everybody so that countries are dissuaded from spending billions of dollars on nuclear weapons.

[IPS - April 21, 2013] ◆



Credit: <http://www.icanw.org>

FROM NON-PROLIFERATION TO A TOTAL BAN ON NUKES

BY TIM WRIGHT* FROM MELBOURNE



At the beginning of March, the Norwegian government hosted a landmark conference in Oslo on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the inability of relief agencies to respond effectively

in the event of a nuclear attack. More than 120 governments, the Red Cross and several UN agencies participated. Their message came through loud and clear: the only way to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again is to outlaw and eliminate them without further delay. Read in Japanese

This unprecedented gathering of diplomats, experts and civil society actors was part of a new humanitarian-based approach to nuclear disarmament, which evolved out of the final document adopted in 2010 at the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference. There, the 189 parties to the treaty - including nuclear-armed Russia, the United States, Britain, China and France - had expressed their "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons".

The NPT parties meet again in Geneva from April 22 to May 3, 2013 to prepare the ground for the 2015 review conference. Those that are genuinely interested in advancing the nuclear disarmament agenda will view this meeting as an opportunity to build on the momentum generated in Oslo, and to garner support for the follow-up conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to be hosted by Mexico later this year or early in

2014. Many governments will also call for negotiations to begin on a universal treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

A humanitarian discourse

The governments of Norway, Switzerland, Austria, South Africa and Mexico, among others, have been vocal in their support for a humanitarian-based approach to nuclear disarmament, arguing that the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons on our health, societies and the environment should be at the centre of all debates about these weapons. The global Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons have also sought to emphasize the humanitarian impact.

Remarkably, the Oslo conference was the first time in the 68-year history of the nuclear age that governments had come together to address the problem of nuclear weapons purely through a humanitarian lens. Disarmament and non-proliferation discussions have traditionally focused on geopolitical and national security concerns. But as the processes that led to bans on landmines and cluster munitions demonstrated, adopting a humanitarian discourse is an important first step: new political coalitions can be formed and longstanding deadlocks overcome.

Disarmament diplomacy

Of the nine nuclear-armed states, only two - India and Pakistan - attended the Oslo conference. The permanent five members of the UN Security Council jointly boycotted the meeting, claiming that an emphasis on humanitarian consequences somehow diverted attention from the existing "step-by-step approach" to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. But multilateral treaty negotiations to advance a nuclear-weapon-free world have been at a standstill for more than a decade and a half. The last

major accomplishment in this field was the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996, which has still not entered into force.

Today the negotiating priority for the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament - often described as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum - is a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for weapons (although this is a non-proliferation measure, not a disarmament measure). In general, the nuclear-armed states have been unwilling to make legally binding commitments to reduce their nuclear arsenals. However, Russia and the United States have agreed bilaterally to limit the number of deployed nuclear warheads in their forces.

The NPT review meetings remain the main diplomatic forum for disarmament and non-proliferation discussions, despite four of the nine nuclear-armed states not being involved - India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. The other five nuclear states have consistently refused to accept any timelines in relation to meeting their Article VI disarmament obligations. While paying lip service to the idea of a "world without nuclear weapons", they invest tens of billions of dollars modernizing their nuclear forces with the clear intention of retaining them for many decades to come.

Towards a universal ban

The Non-Proliferation Treaty prohibits the 184 states parties without nuclear weapons from ever acquiring the bomb. In this sense, the treaty serves as a partial ban on nuclear weapons, complemented by several regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. However, the NPT does not expressly prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, nor their possession by the P5 nuclear-weapon states. Rather, it imposes an obligation on all states to pursue negotiations in good faith for nuclear disarmament.

Despite this disarmament provision, the nuclear-weapon states promote the view that retaining and modernizing their nuclear forces is entirely legitimate. They describe the attainment of a nuclear-weapon-free world as a centuries-long proposition. The negotiation of a nuclear weapons ban treaty - led by non-nuclear-weapon states - would powerfully challenge this status quo. It would delegitimize nuclear weapons for all states and help speed up the disarmament process.

Even without the support of the nuclear-weapon states, the benefits of a ban would be considerable. For example, it would strengthen the case against British renewal of its nuclear-armed submarines. It would put pressure on the five NATO states that host US nuclear weapons - Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey - to end this practice. It would force countries such as Australia and Japan to rethink their participation in extended nuclear deterrence. And it would encourage banks around the world to stop financing companies that manufacture nuclear arms.

Conventions already exist to prohibit chemical and biological weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. All of these treaties have been influential in greatly reducing the stockpiles of such weapons. It is beyond time that nuclear weapons be prohibited also. As the Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu remarked during the Oslo conference, "nuclear weapons are abhorrent and a grave danger no matter who possesses them ... threatening a city with radioactive incineration is intolerable no matter the nationality or religion of its inhabitants." [IDN-[InDepthNews](#) - April 20, 2013] ♦

**Tim Wright is Australian Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (www.icanw.org).*

Photo on page 150: Tim Wright | Credit: [Pressenza](#) - Jana Jedličková

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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