

BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

2015 IS CRUCIAL FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE WORLD

NEWSLETTER FOR STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION | WITH APRIL 2015 ARTICLES

In-Depth Reports

Ban on Nuclear Testing, a 'Stepping Stone' to a Nuke-Free World

Interviews with LASSINA ZERBO, CTBTO Executive Secretary



NEW YORK - "The CTBTO bans all nuclear test explosions underwater, underground and in the air. We've built a network of nearly 300 stations for detecting nuclear tests, including tracking radioactive emissions. Our international monitoring system has stopped horizontal proliferation (more countries acquiring nuclear weapons), as well as vertical proliferation (more advanced weapons systems). That's why some [states] are hesitant to consider ratification of the CTBT: because they are of the view that they still need testing to be able to maintain or modernise their stockpiles." ➔ Pages 2-3-4

Nuclear Testing Legacy Haunts Pacific Island Countries

SUVA - Prominent Pacific Island anti-nuclear campaigners want a revival of their once-robust movement to support the international effort against 'nuclearism'. Their call coincides with a major international meeting at the United Nations in New York – the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) from April 27 to May 22, 2015. ➔ Pages 4-5-6

No Signs Yet Of Mass Destruction Weapon-Free Middle East

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Opinion: Shared Action for a Nuclear Weapon Free World by Daisaku Ikeda

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Mixed Middle East Reaction to Iran Nuclear Deal

RAMALLAH – Regional reactions to the April 2 framework agreement on Iran's nuclear programme have been mixed both in Israel and its Arab neighbourhood. Vested interests including geopolitical ambitions, economic competition, religious ideology, personal political ambition, and strategic alliances have all played their part in this mixed reaction. ➔ Pages 14-15-16

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America's Disastrous Non-Proliferation Policy by Ira Helfand, MD

The U.S. has long viewed this treaty as a key bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries. Since it was adopted 45 years ago, ➔ Page 23

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KANYA D'ALMEIDA interviews LASSINA ZERBO
CTBTO Executive Secretary

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - With the four-week-long review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) underway at the United Nations, hopes and frustrations are running equally high, as a binding political agreement on the biggest threat to humanity hangs in the balance.



Behind the headlines that focus primarily on power struggles between the five major nuclear powers – the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China – scores of organisations refusing to be bogged down in geopolitical squabbles are going about the Herculean task of creating a safer world.

One of these bodies is the Vienna-based [Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation](#) (CTBTO), founded in 1996 alongside the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), with the aim of independently monitoring compliance.

With 183 signatories and 164 ratifications, the treaty represents a milestone in international efforts to ban nuclear testing.

In order to be legally binding, however, the treaty needs the support of the 44 so-called 'Annex 2 States', eight of which have so far refused to ratify the agreement: China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea and the United States.

This holdout has severely crippled efforts to move towards even the most basic goal of the nuclear abolition process.

Still, the CTBTO has made tremendous strides in the past 20 years to set the stage

for full ratification.

Its massive global network of seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide detecting stations makes it nearly impossible for governments to violate the terms of the treaty, and the rich data generated from its many facilities is contributing to a range of scientific endeavors worldwide.

In an interview with IPS, CTBTO Executive Secretary Dr. Lassina Zerbo spoke about the organisation's hopes for the review conference, and shared some insights on the primary hurdles standing in the way of a nuclear-free world. ➡

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Excerpts from the interview follow.

Q: What role will the CTBTO play in the conference?

A: Our hope is that the next four weeks result in a positive outcome with regards to disarmament and non-proliferation, and we think the CTBT plays an important role there. The treaty was one of the key elements that led to indefinite extension of the NPT itself, and is the one thing that seems to be bringing all the state parties together. It's a low-hanging fruit and we need to catch it, make it serve as a stepping-stone for whatever we want to achieve in this review conference.

For instance, we need to find a compromise between those who are of the view that we should move first on non-proliferation, and between those who say we should move equally, if not faster, on disarmament.

We also need to address the concerns of those who ask why nuclear weapons states are allowed to develop more modern weapons, while other states are prevented from developing even the basic technologies that could serve as nuclear weapons.

The CTBT represents something that all states can agree to; it serves as the basis for consensus on other, more difficult issues, and this is the message I am bringing to the conference.

Q: What have been some of the biggest achievement of the CTBTO? What are some of your most pressing concerns for the future?

A: The CTBTO bans all nuclear test explosions underwater, underground and in the air. We've built a network of nearly 300 stations for detecting nuclear tests, including tracking radioactive emissions.

Our international monitoring system has stopped horizontal proliferation (more countries acquiring nuclear weapons), as well as vertical proliferation (more advanced weapons systems).

That's why some [states] are hesitant to consider ratification of the CTBT: because they are of the view that they still need testing to be able to maintain or modernise their stockpiles.

Any development of nuclear weapons happening today is based on testing that was done 20-25 years ago. No country, except for North Korea, has performed a single test in the 21st century.

Q: How do you deal with outliers like North Korea?

A: We haven't had official contact with North Korea. I can only base my analysis on what world leaders are telling me. [Russian Foreign Minister Sergey] Lavrov has attempted to engage North Korea in discussions about the CTBT and asked if they would consider a moratorium on testing. Yesterday I met Yerzhan Ashikbayev, deputy foreign minister for Kazakhstan, which has bilateral relations with North Korea, and they have urgently called on North Korea to consider signature of the CTBT.

Those are the countries that can help us, those who have bilateral relations.

Having said this, if I'm invited to North Korea for a meeting that could serve as a basis for engaging in discussions, to help them understand more about the CTBT and the organizational framework and infrastructure that we've built: why not? I would be ready to do it.

We are also engaging states like Israel, who could take leadership in regions like the Middle East by signing onto the CTBT. I was just in Israel, where I asked the questions: Do you want to test? I don't think so. Do you need it? I don't think so. So why don't you take leadership to open that framework that we need for confidence building in the region that could lead to more ratification and more consideration of a nuclear weapons-free zone or a [WMD-free zone](#). ☺

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Israel now says that CTBT ratification is not an “if” but a “when” – I hope the “when” is not too far away.

Q: Despite scores of marches, thousands of petitions and millions of signatures calling for disarmament and abolition, the major nuclear weapons states are holding out. This can be extremely disheartening for those at the forefront of the movement. What would be your message to global civil society?

A: I would say, keep putting pressure on your political leaders. We need leadership to move on these issues. Right now 90 percent of the world is saying “no” to nuclear testing, yet we are held hostage by the handful of countries [that have not ratified the treaty].

Only civil society can play a role in telling governments, “You’ve got to move because the majority of the world is saying ‘no’ to what you still have, and what you are still holding onto.” The CTBT is a key element for that goal we want to achieve, hopefully in our lifetime: a world free of nuclear weapons. (IPS | 29 April 2015) ◆

JAPANESE TEXT VERSION

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/465-q-a-comprehensive-ban-on-nuclear-testing-a-stepping-stone-to-a-nuke-free-world-japanese>

Nuclear Testing Legacy Haunts Pacific Island Countries

By SHAILENDRA SINGH*

SUVA, Fiji (IDN) - Prominent Pacific Island anti-nuclear campaigners want a revival of their once-robust movement to support the international effort against ‘nuclearism’. Their call coincides with a major international meeting at the United Nations in New York – the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) from April 27 to May 22, 2015.

The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology while promoting co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

However, besides Palau, there were no Pacific island countries represented in the 148 States parties that participated in one or more of the annual preparatory meetings held in the lead up to the 2015 NPT.

This is despite the Pacific region’s immense contribution to the nuclear disarmament movement, as recorded by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons ([ICAN](http://www.ican.org)). At the height of the U.S.-Soviet arms race, members of the South Pacific Forum signed and ratified the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (SPNFZ). Moreover, Pacific governments have tradi-

tionally voted in favour of resolutions calling for a global treaty banning nuclear weapons at the UN and at various international disarmament summits.

This latest NPT review conference will consider ways to promote engagement with civil society in strengthening NPT norms and in promoting disarmament education. Yet, participation by Pacific Islands-based civil society organisations in the conference will be scant.

*Shailendra Singh is Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the School of Language, Arts & Media, Faculty of Arts, Law & Education at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. The views in the story are not necessarily shared by the USP, where the writer is employed. ☺

JAPANESE TEXT VERSION <http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/462-nuclear-testing-legacy-haunts-pacific-island-countries-japanese>

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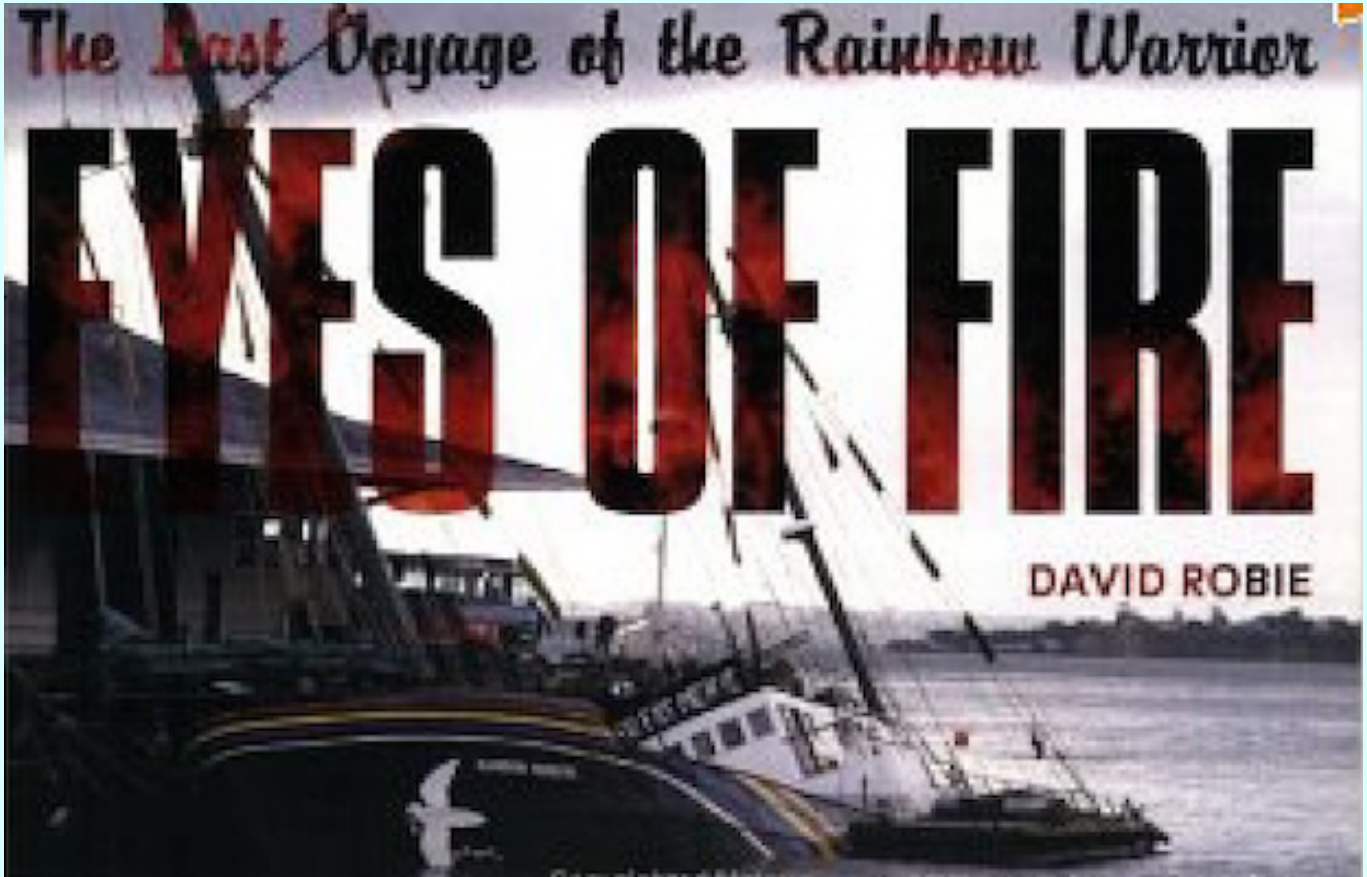


Image credit: www.academia.edu

According to Emele Duituturaga, the head of the Pacific Islands Association of Civil Society Organisations (PIANGO), none of their national liaison units are represented at the 2015 NPT. Neither is Duituturaga aware of any other NGOs that will represent the region at the conference. The Pacific's absence from a major event such as the NPT is another apparent sign of the overall decline of anti-nuclear advocacy in the region, which some see as a worrying trend that needs to be arrested.

Stanley Simpson, formerly the assistant director of the now non-operational Fiji-based regional pressure group, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, told IDN that 'nuclearism' is still a threat, even if it might appear dormant. "The danger is not over," insists Simpson. "We still live with the legacy of nuclear testing and activity." Nuclear testing in the Pacific began in 1946 and ended in 1996, with the former colonial powers – United States, Britain and France– collectively conducting more than 300 detonations in the region.

Nearly 70 years on, the continued refusal of the concerned powers to own up to their past transgressions and compensate victims deepens the sense of injustice felt in the region. In February this year, the Fiji Government pledged financial assistance to 24 surviving Fijian soldiers who were on Christmas Island (now Kiribati) during British nuclear tests in the late 1950s.

Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said, "We owe it to these men to help them now, not wait for the British politicians and bureaucrats. We need to erase this blight on our history." ➔

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A recent article by the President of the Marshall Islands, Christopher J. Loeak, outlines the callous manner in which his country was treated by the United States. The article appeared in the 2014 publication, [Banning Nuclear Weapons: A Pacific perspective](#), published by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Loeak points out that besides the “Bravo” test, which was 1,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, 17 other tests in the Marshall Islands were in the megaton range. The total yield of the tests in the Marshalls comprised nearly 80 per cent of the atmospheric total detonated by the United States.

French Polynesians were similarly treated by the French Government, which conducted 193 atmospheric and underground nuclear tests at [Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls](#). The ICAN publication relates the case of a local Maohi (Polynesian) worker at the testing centre after an atmospheric test in September 1966 on Moruroa. The worker was among those instructed to clean up all the debris that littered the roads. The worker stated that the supervisors told them: ‘It’s OK, you can go over there.’

According to David Robie, a journalism professor at the AUT University in Auckland, New Zealand, the Pacific anti-nuclear movement grew out of a sense of outrage that countries like Britain, France and the United States were using vulnerable Pacific island territories as pawns to carry out tests that they were not willing to carry out in their own backyard.

Robie, who covered anti-nuclear issues as an independent journalist, authored a book in 1986, [Eyes of Fire](#), about the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior by French state terrorists in 1985. “The arrogance of the North really upset a lot of people in the Pacific,” Robie told IDN. “Newly emerging countries like Vanuatu, led by the late Walter Lini (Prime Minister of Vanuatu) and political leaders like Oscar Temaru, then mayor of the Pape’ete suburb of Fa’aa, declared themselves “nuclear-free” to make a statement of independence.”

After Pacific-wide protests forced a halt to French nuclear tests in 1996, the civil society groups at heart of the anti-nuclear movement either scaled down or closed

their operations. Some turned their attention to what became regarded as immediate hazards, such as global warming.

Robie states that while France was conducting nuclear tests in the Pacific, there was still a big “power ogre” to focus attention on. Once the end of these tests were achieved, other issues took precedence. “In the 1980s, the buzzword was nuclear refugees. Now it is climate change refugees,” says Robie.

The Fiji anti-Nuclear group (FANG), which was at the frontline of the anti-nuclear movement in the 1980s, is no longer active. The group opposed both French testing in Tahiti and the Fiji government’s policy on allowing nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed ships into the country. The Suva-based [Pacific Concerns Resource Center \(PCRC\)](#), which acted as the secretariat for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement, has since closed operations.

PIANGO’s Duituturaga states that with the closure of the PCRC, the nuclear issue “went off the radar”. Asked if the nuclear danger was over for the Pacific, Duituturaga replied: “No – of course not. Nuclear arms are destructive to all of us – whether or not we are directly involved.”

Robie too feels that the Pacific remains exposed. Specific threats include the persistent radioactive contamination from the tests; the issue of newer fallout from the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan; and the China-U.S. rivalry, especially with speculation about China’s eventual plans for Taiwan, which raises the specter of nuclear conflict.

According to Simpson, it behoves the Pacific to be part of the disarmament movement. “Nuclear testing is an emotional issue for Pacific Islanders. Pacific people can strengthen the movement’s heart and soul,” states Simpson.

Unfortunately, the Pacific will presence is unlikely to be felt at the 2015 NPT, which will consider a number of crucial issues, such as nuclear disarmament, and the promotion and strengthening of safeguards.

[IDN-InDepthNews – 17 April 2015] ◆

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No Signs Yet Of Mass Destruction Weapon-Free Middle East

By RAMESH JAURA

BERLIN (IDN) – In run-up to the four-week-long quinquennial review of the landmark Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the goal of a Middle East free of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery remains a distant dream. And so does the Helsinki Conference that should have been convened in December 2012.

All indications are that also the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) influential countries of the world – Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States – do not see a silver lining on the horizon. They met ahead of G7 summit June 7-8.

In a [communiqué](#) on April 15, they “commend the ongoing efforts of the Facilitator and co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution (the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States), particularly the five rounds of consultations held among the regional States.”

But they “regret that, despite these efforts, it has thus far not been possible to convene the Helsinki Conference”.

The statement issued at their meeting in the northern German port city of Lübeck adds: “The regional parties must engage actively with each other in order to reach consensus on a date and an agenda for the Helsinki Conference as soon as possible. We emphasise that the Conference can only lead to a meaningful process if the interests of all participants are taken into account.”

The 1995 Resolution emerged from the NPT Review Conference, which called for “the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems”.

The NPT entered into force in 1970, and 190 states have subscribed.

The proposal of a Weapons of Mass Destruction-Free Zone (WMDFZ) was first tabled by Egypt in 1990. It was based on longstanding calls to establish a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East. Both measures, intended to be pursued in parallel, rallied broad international support but practical progress has since been elusive.

In fact, on November 23, the U.S. issued a statement postponing the December 2012 conference. The conference has not yet been rescheduled, and the co-conveners have been offering different opinions as to when it should be held, and the reasons for the delay.

The U.S. statement cited “present conditions in the Middle East” and the lack of agreement by participating states on “acceptable conditions” for the December conference. No timeline for rescheduling was included.

In a November 24 statement, Russia called for the conference to be held before April 2013, citing that the preparations had already reached an “advanced stage” and that the reason for postponement was that not all states in the region agreed to participate in the conference. ➔

Image: Logo of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Lübeck © G7



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At the time of the announcement, conference facilitator Jaakko Laajava, a Finnish diplomat had not yet secured Israel's attendance. While Iran announced that it would attend on November 7, it also said it would not engage with the Israelis at the conference, and some experts believe Iran only announced it would attend because Tehran knew that the December 2012 meeting would not take place.

In protest of the postponement of the much awaited Helsinki conference, Egypt walked out of a NPT Preparatory Committee Meeting in Geneva on April 29, 2013, and called for it to be rescheduled as soon as possible.

As the U.S.-based Arms Control Association points out in a [fact sheet](#), at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, state parties were able to agree for the first time to five practical steps to make progress towards implementing the 1995 NPT Review Conference Middle East resolution.

The United States, Russia and the United Kingdom, the treaty depository powers and sponsors of that Resolution, committed to work together with the UN Secretary General to convene a regional conference to discuss the issue in 2012.

Other measures agreed included the appointment of a WMDFZ facilitator as well as designation of a government that will host the conference. State parties will take up the question of the implementation of these steps at the subsequent NPT Review Conference in 2015. As the Lübeck communiqué implies, it is unlikely to happen.

Nevertheless, the Foreign Ministers of G7 countries, which include three permanent members of the UN Security Council – France, Great Britain and the U.S. – say they are “committed to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in a way that promotes international stability and stresses the vital importance of non-proliferation for achieving this goal”.

They add: “Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery remains a top priority, since such proliferation poses a major threat to international peace and security. The fact that the uncontrolled proliferation of conventional arms is undermining stability in certain regions of the globe is a strong reason for the G7 to take action in this field as well.”

Regarding the upcoming ninth NPT Review Conference, which will be held 45 years after the NPT's entry into force and 70 years after the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of World War II, the G7 “re-affirm” their “unconditional support for all three mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT” – disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

G7 Foreign Ministers point out: “The NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The NPT makes a vital and enduring contribution to making the world a safer place. It benefits its members on a daily basis.” [IDN-InDepthNews – 15 April 2015] ◆

JAPANESE TEXT VERSION

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/456-no-signs-yet-of-mass-destruction-weapon-free-middle-east-japanese>

NORWEGIAN

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/european/norwegian-swedish/448-no-signs-yet-of-mass-destruction-weapon-free-middle-east-norwegian>

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Growing Divide Between Nuclear Haves and Have-Nots

By THALIF DEEN



Photo: Angela Kane, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, addresses the 2013 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Credit: UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - As she prepared to leave office after more than three years, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane painted a dismal picture of a conflicted world: it is “not the best of times for disarmament.”

The warning comes against the backdrop of a new Cold War on the nuclear horizon and spreading military conflicts in the politically-volatile Middle East, including in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen.

“The prospects for further nuclear arms reductions are dim and we may even be witnessing a roll-back of the hard-won disarmament gains of the last 25 years,” she told the Disarmament Commission last week.

In one of her final speeches before the world body, the outgoing U.N. under-secretary-general said, “I have never seen a wider divide between nuclear-haves and nuclear have-nots over the scale and pace of nuclear disarmament.”



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Kane's warning is a realistic assessment of the current impasse – even as bilateral nuclear arms reductions between the United States and Russia have virtually ground to a standstill, according to anti-nuclear activists.

There are signs even of reversal of gains already made, for example, with respect to the longstanding U.S.-Russian Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty.

No multilateral negotiations on reduction and elimination of nuclear arsenals are in sight, and all arsenals are being modernised over the next decades.

And contrary to the promise made by the 2010 NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) Review Conference, a proposed international conference on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East never got off the ground.

John Burroughs, executive director of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (LCNP), told IPS: “As the world heads into the NPT Review Conference, Apr. 27-May 22, is nuclear disarmament therefore doomed or at least indefinitely suspended?”

Not necessarily, he said.

The tensions – with nuclear dimensions – arising out of the Ukraine crisis may yet spark some sober rethinking of current trends, said Burroughs, who is also director of the U.N. Office of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA).

After all, he pointed out, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis served to stimulate subsequent agreements, among them the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco establishing the Latin American nuclear weapons free zone, the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the 1972 US-Russian strategic arms limitation agreement and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Jayantha Dhanapala, former U.N. under-secretary-general for disarmament affairs, said the “Thirteen Steps” agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the 64-point Action Programme, together with the agreement on the Middle East WMD Free Zone proposal and the conceptual breakthrough on recognising the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, augured well for the strengthened review process.

“And yet the report cards meticulously maintained by civil society on actual achievements, the return to Cold War mindsets by the U.S. and Russia and the negative record of all the nuclear weapon states have converted the goal of a nuclear weapon free world into a mirage,” he added.

Unless the upcoming NPT Review Conference reverses these ominous trends, the 2015 Conference is doomed to fail, imperiling the future of the NPT, Dhanapala warned.

A stocktaking exercise is relevant, he added.

In 1995, he said, “We had five nuclear weapon states and one outside the NPT. Today, we have nine nuclear weapon armed states – four of them outside the NPT.

“In 1970, when the NPT entered into force, we had a total of 38,153 nuclear warheads. Today, over four decades later, we have 16,300 – just 21,853 less – with over 4,000 on deployed status and the promise by the two main nuclear weapon states to reduce their deployed arsenals by 30 percent to 1550 each within seven years of the new START entering into force.”

Another NPT nuclear weapon state, the UK is on the verge of renewing its Trident nuclear weapon programme, he pointed out. ➡

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Turning to the issue of conventional weapons, Kane said: “We are flooded daily with images of the brutal and internecine regional conflicts bedeviling the globe – conflicts fuelled by unregulated and illegal arms flows.”

It is estimated that more than 740,000 men, women, and children die each year as a result of armed violence.

“However, in the midst of these dark clouds, I have seen some genuine bright spots during my tenure as high representative,” Kane said.

The bitter conflict in Syria will not, in the words of the secretary-general, be brought to a close without an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, but Syria’s accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, facilitated by the Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons agreed upon between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, has been one positive outcome from this bloody conflict, she added.

“We have seen the complete removal of all declared chemicals from Syria and the commencement of a process to destroy all of Syria’s chemical weapons production facilities.”

Emerging from the so-called ‘disarmament malaise’, the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament, supported by a clear majority of states – as illustrated by the 155 states that supported New Zealand’s statement in the First Committee – has continued to gather momentum, Kane told delegates.

“This is not a distraction from the so-called ‘realist’ politics of nuclear disarmament. Rather, it is an approach that seeks to underscore the devastating human impact of nuclear weapons and ground them in international humanitarian law,” she said.

“This movement is supported by almost 80 percent of U.N. member states. The numbers cannot be ignored.”

One of the international community’s major achievements in the last year has been to bring the Arms Trade Treaty into force only a year and a half after it was negotiated.

This truly historic treaty will play a critical role in ensuring that all actors involved in the arms trade must be held accountable and must be expected to comply with internationally agreed standards, Kane said.

This is possible, she pointed out, by ensuring that their arms exports are not going to be used to violate arms embargoes or to fuel conflict and by exercising better control over arms and ammunition imports in order to prevent diversion or re-transfers to unauthorised users.

“To my mind, these achievements all highlight the possibility of achieving breakthroughs in disarmament and non-proliferation even in the most trying of international climates,” Kane declared. (IPS | 13 April 2015) ◆

JAPANESE TEXT VERSION

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/454-u-n-warns-of-growing-divide-between-nuclear-haves-and-have-nots-japanese>

核を「持つ者」と「持たざる者」の分断に国連が警告

【国連IPS = タリフ・デーーン】

3年の任期を経てまもなく職を離れる [アンゲラ・ケイン](#) 国連軍縮問題担当上級代表が、「(この3年間は) 軍縮にとって最良の時期とはいえませんでした。」と述べ、紛争に満ちた近年の世界情勢について暗い見方を示した。

こうした警告の背景には、核紛争のリスクを伴う [新たな冷戦状況](#) の登場や、シリアやイラク、[リビア](#)、[イエメン](#) など、政治的に不安定な中東地域で軍事紛争が拡大している現状がある。

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Opinion: Shared Action for a Nuclear Weapon Free World

By DAISAKU IKEDA*



TOKYO (IPS) - From the end of April, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference will be held in New York. In this year that marks the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I add my voice to those urging substantial commitments and real progress toward the realisation of a world without nuclear weapons.

In recent years, there has been an important shift in the debate surrounding nuclear weapons. This can be seen in the fact that, in October of last year, more than 80 percent of the member states of the United Nations lent their support to a joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, in this way expressing their shared desire that nuclear weapons never be used – under any circumstances.

Meanwhile, the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of

Nuclear Weapons held in Vienna, Austria, in December, marked the first time that nuclear-weapon states – the United States and the United Kingdom – participated, acknowledging the existence of a complex debate on this question.

In order to break out of the current deadlock, I believe we need to refocus on the fundamental inhumanity of nuclear weapons in the full breadth of their impacts. Taking this as our point of departure, we must formulate measures to ensure that no country or people ever suffer the kind of irreparable damage that nuclear weapons would wreak.

Here, I would like to propose two specific initiatives. One is to develop a new NPT-centred institutional framework – a commission dedicated to nuclear disarmament:

I urge the heads of government of as many states as possible to attend the NPT Review Conference this year, and that they participate in a forum where the findings of the international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons are shared. ➡

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Then, in light of the fact that all parties to the NPT unanimously expressed their concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons at the 2010 Review Conference, I hope that each head of government or national delegation will take the opportunity of this year's conference to introduce their respective plans of action to prevent such consequences.

Finally, building upon the "unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament," reaffirmed at the 2000 Review Conference, I propose that an "NPT disarmament commission" be established as a subsidiary organ to the NPT to ensure the prompt and concrete fulfilment of this commitment.

*Daisaku Ikeda is a Japanese Buddhist philosopher and peace-builder, and president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) grassroots Buddhist movement (www.sgi.org)

Photo: Dr. Daisaku Ikeda. Credit: Seikyo Shimbun

The second initiative I would like to propose concerns the creation of a platform for negotiations for a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons:

Creation of such a platform should be based on a careful evaluation of the outcome of this year's NPT Review Conference, and it could draw on the 2013 General Assembly resolution calling for a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened no later than 2018. This conference could be held in 2016 to begin the process of drafting a new treaty.

I strongly hope that Japan will work with other countries and with civil society to accelerate the process of eliminating nuclear weapons from our world.

In August of this year, the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues will be held in Hiroshima; the World Nuclear Victims' Forum will take place in November, also in Hiroshima; and the annual Pugwash conference will be held in Nagasaki in November.

Planning is also under way for a World Youth Summit for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons to be held in Hiroshima at the end of August as a joint initiative by the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and other groups. I hope that the summit will adopt a youth declaration pledging to bring the era of nuclear weapons to an end, and that it will help foster a greater solidarity among the world's youth in support of a treaty to prohibit these weapons.

At the Vienna Conference in December, the government of Austria issued a pledge to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in order to realise the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In the same spirit, together with the representatives of other faith-based organisations, the SGI last year organised interfaith panels in Washington D.C. and Vienna which issued Joint Statements expressing the participants' pledge to work together for a world free of nuclear weapons.

The future is determined by the depth and intensity of the pledge made by people living in the present moment. The key to bringing the history of nuclear weapons to a close lies in ensuring that all actors – states, international organisations and civil society – take shared action, working with like-minded partners while holding fast to a deep commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. (IPS | 9 April 2015) ◆

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Mixed Middle East Reaction to Iran Nuclear Deal

By MEL FRYKBERG



Officials at the Iran talks in Lausanne, Switzerland. Credit: European External Action Service/CC-BY-NC-ND-2.0

RAMALLAH (IDN) – Regional reactions to the April 2 framework agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme have been mixed both in Israel and its Arab neighbourhood. Vested interests including geopolitical ambitions, economic competition, religious ideology, personal political ambition, and strategic alliances have all played their part in this mixed reaction.

As one of the chief antagonists to any deal reached between the P5 +1 – five permanent members of the UN Security Council, namely China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, plus Germany – and Iran, the predictable reaction of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the agreement has been one described by Israeli critics as “hysterical” and “right-wing reactionary”.

Days before the framework agreement was reached, Netanyahu continued to try and pressure the US administration to back out of any accord, claiming that Iran represented an existential threat to Israel, while simultaneously dredging up the Holocaust. ➡

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Once the deal was done, much of Israel's extreme right-wing cabinet was in agreement that US President Barack Obama had thrown Israel under the bus – as if the central issue of the agreement reached was Israel.

Netanyahu, convinced of a higher calling, tried unsuccessfully to force Obama into obtaining an agreement from Iran that recognition of Israel's right to exist was a prerequisite for any nuclear deal.

Israeli commentator Alex Fishman voiced what many Israelis feel in Israel's right-leaning 'Ynet News' website.

"Our friends in Washington have sold us out, along with their other allies in the Middle East, for a pittance", was how he summed up the deal.

Fishman argued that the interim agreement was evidence of the strategic importance Iran attributes to its military nuclear programme.

However, not all Israelis concur with their government.

Prof Haggai Ram, head of Middle East Studies Department at Israel's Ben Gurion University and an expert on Iran, challenged that assessment, stating that the claim that Iran presented an existential threat was a fig leaf for Israel's occupation.

Ram said that for years Israel argued that peace with the Arabs was impossible and when that bogeyman turned out to be false they looked for a new one – Iran.

"Basically, since 1996 they have warned us that in a year, Iran will have a nuclear weapon," said Ram in an interview with the left-leaning Israeli daily 'Haaretz.'

"Let's assume they are on the way. Are they intending to use nuclear capabilities to destroy Israel?"

"In my opinion, the answer is a sweeping and unequivocal no. Most historians of the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1979 point out that Iranian policy is not dictated by messianic or religious considerations but rather pragmatic ones based on state interests," said Ram.

"To say Iran poses an existential threat to Israel is wrong, if not a deception. Israel has bigger and more dangerous enemies. Iran serves as a fig leaf to the real danger to Israel's fate – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The Israeli government was not the only one in the region voicing concerns about Iran's regional political ambitions.

Strange bedfellows

Indeed, Israel has found strange bedfellows in a number of Arab governments who have also voiced scepticism over the agreement.

Samir Altaqi and Esam Aziz from the Middle East Briefing (MEB), a research and risk advisory company, believe the Arabs have reasons to question Iran's motives. In an article, 'What to Expect From the Arabs After the Iran Nuclear Deal', MEB said: "The Region's leaders do not reject a nuclear deal with Iran as a matter of principle, but they see the whole issue of Tehran's nuclear programme from a different perspective from that of Washington."

"They understand that for any country to seek a nuclear weapon means one of two things: either it is trying to build a decisive retaliatory capacity or it is trying to expand its influence out of its borders through nuclear blackmail."

The article went on to point out regional polarisation, citing the disintegration of Yemen as an example where the Iranians have supported the Houthis. Further examples of Iranian interference include Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria and Bahrain. ➡

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“The problem here is that Iran – without a nuclear bomb, but free of sanctions and of any serious restrictions on its ballistic capabilities – will still be more aggressive in the regional theatre,” said MEB.

Sunni Saudi Arabia, whose military is fighting against the Houthis in Yemen, is also wary of its Shi’ite adversary and the deal reached with Iran, believing that Iranian influence flourishes on weak central governments and sectarian instability.

The Saudi cabinet released a conciliatory public statement in regard to the Iran deal but simultaneously called for “commitment to the principles of good neighbourliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries and respect of their sovereignty” even though the Saudis and Iran are backing opposing sides in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

Nasser Ahmed Bin Ghaib, a researcher from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), told ‘*Al Jazeera*’ the Gulf States with their struggling economies are worried about economic competition, with the possibility of cheap Iranian oil flooding a saturated oil market and further lowering prices, following Western acceptance of Iran.

However, there are also mixed reactions to the Iran deal in the Gulf.

“Those who support a deal argue it would prevent the region from sliding into a destructive nuclear arms race that would deplete everybody. But others say the deal will have a number of negative consequences for the Gulf,” Bin Ghaib told ‘*Al Jazeera*.’

Egyptian political analyst Ahmed Abd-Rabo told Egyptian daily ‘*Al Ahram*’ he believes sectarianism in the

Middle East seems the most likely outcome as the feud between Sunnis and Shias deepens.

“This follows anxiety in the Saudi-led Sunni camp following the conclusion of the framework agreement between Iran, the leader of the Shia camp, and the West,” said Abd-Rabo.

Turkey for its part is also divided over the Iran question. Akin Unver, assistant professor of international relations at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, says Turkey’s Iran policy shifted in the wake of the Arab Spring.

Afraid of Iran’s regional ambitions Turkey was complicit in NATO’s defence shield in 2011.

“However, playing out behind the shadow of Iran’s nuclear programme was Turkey’s strategy of securing an eventual Iranian contribution to the European Union’s Southern Gas Corridor – first, in the form of Nabucco, and after it was discarded, the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project,” explained Unver.

So despite being disappointed about being sidelined diplomatically during negotiations with Iran, Turkey could still reap some benefits from Iran in the form of Iran being connected to the Southern Gas Corridor.

Most Iranians are elated at the prospect of rejoining the international community as a respected member, except of course for Iranian hardliners who believe the Iranian leadership has been too accommodating with the American “Great Satan”.

[IDN-InDepthNews – 8 April 2015] ◆

「イラン核問題」米議会との対立決着を図るオバマ大統領

【ワシントンIPS = ジャスミン・ラムジー】

イランの核問題をめぐる「枠組合意」妥結期限から2日が過ぎ、交渉担当者らは成果なく手ぶらで帰国するかに見えた。しかし、4月2日、スイスのローザンヌとワシントンにおいて驚きの詳細な枠組みが発表された。それと時を同じくして米国のバラク・オバマ大統領の頭の中にあったのは、米議会との対決であった。

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/447-obama-prepares-for-showdown-with-congress-over-iran-deal-japanese>

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Obama Prepares for Showdown with Congress Over Iran Deal

By JASMIN RAMSEY



President Barack Obama addresses a joint session of Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Sep. 9, 2009. Credit: Official White House Photo by Pete Souza

WASHINGTON (IPS) - Two days after the deadline for reaching a deal over Iran's nuclear programme had passed, negotiators looked like they would be going home empty handed. But a surprisingly detailed framework was [announced](#) Apr. 2 in Lausanne, Switzerland, as well as in Washington, and in the same breath, U.S. President Barack Obama acknowledged the battle he faces on Capitol Hill.

The issues at stake here are bigger than politics," said Obama on the White House lawn after announcing the "historic understanding with Iran," which, "if fully implemented will prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon."

"If Congress kills this deal – not based on expert analysis, and without offering any reasonable alternative – then it's the United States that will be blamed for the failure of diplomacy," he said. "International unity will collapse, and the path to conflict will widen." ➡

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Negotiators from Iran and the P5+1 countries (U.S., U.K., France, China, Russia plus Germany) have until Jun. 30 to produce a comprehensive final accord on Iran's controversial nuclear programme. That gives Congress just under three months to embrace a "constructive oversight role", as the president said he hoped it would.

"Congress has played a couple of roles in these negotiations," Laicie Heeley, policy director at the Washington-based Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, told IPS. "I think some folks would like to think they are playing a bad cop role, but I'm not sure how effective they've been...it's a dangerous game to play."

If negotiators had gone home empty handed, hawkish measures, like the Kirk-Menendez sponsored [Iran Nuclear Weapon Free Act of 2013](#), which proposes additional sanctions and the dismantling of all of Iran's enrichment capabilities – a non-starter for the Iranians – would have had a better chance of acquiring enough votes for a veto-proof majority.

But now that a final deal is on the horizon, Republicans will have a much harder time convincing enough Democrats to sign on to potentially deal-damaging bills.

With the Kirk-Menendez bill out of the way, the most immediate threat Obama faces now comes from the [Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015](#) proposed by the Republican chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Bob Corker.

The Corker bill gives the final say to a Republican-majority Congress – which has consistently criticised the president's handling of the negotiations – granting it 60 days to vote on any comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran immediately after it's reached. During that period, the president would not be able to lift or suspend any Iran sanctions.

Corker said Thursday that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would take up the bill on Apr. 14, when lawmakers return from a spring recess.

"If a final agreement is reached, the American people, through their elected representatives, must have the opportunity to weigh in to ensure the deal truly can eliminate the threat of Iran's nuclear program and hold the regime accountable," he said in a [statement](#).

But administration officials reminded reporters yesterday that the president would oppose any bill that it considered harmful to the prospects of a final deal.

"The president has made clear he would veto new sanctions legislation during the negotiation, and he made clear he would veto the existing Corker legislation during negotiations," said a senior administration official yesterday during a press call.

"What would not be constructive is legislative action that essentially undercuts our ability to get the deal done," said the official.

The idea that Congress should have a say on any deal became especially popular after a preliminary accord was reached in Geneva two years ago, clearing the path for a host of congressional measures particularly from the right. But now that a final deal is in the works, hawks will have a harder time acquiring essential support from Democrats.

"Before yesterday Senator Corker was fairly certain he could get a veto-proof majority, but now that there's a good deal on the table he's going to have a lot of trouble getting votes from enough Democrats," said Heeley, who closely monitors Capitol Hill.

Statements from key democrats yesterday retained what has become customary skepticism, but some are already hinting that they are gearing up to support the administration's position. ➡

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Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid called on his colleagues to “take a deep breath, examine the details and give this critically important process time to play out.”

“We must always remain vigilant about preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon but there is no question that a diplomatic solution is vastly preferable to the alternatives,” he said in a [statement](#) Thursday.

Obama has his work cut out for him, however, in the next two weeks as pro- and anti-deal groups press Congress to take up their positions.

“[W]e have concerns that the new framework announced today by the P5+1 could result in a final agreement that will leave Iran as a threshold nuclear state,” said the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a leading Israel lobby group, in a [statement](#).

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), a well-known hawkish think tank in D.C., also reiterated its stance against any deal that allows Iran to maintain its nuclear infrastructure.

“The parameters of the nuclear deal that have emerged look like we are headed toward a seriously flawed one,” wrote FDD’s Mark Dubowitz and Annie Fixler in an article on the Quartz website entitled ‘Obama’s Nuclear Deal With Iran Puts the World’s Safety at Risk’.

The Israeli prime minister, who received numerous standing ovations when he addressed Congress on Iran in March – even after the White House made its opposition to his visit crystal clear – meanwhile called the framework deal “a grave danger” that would “threaten the very survival” of Israel.

Both Israel, and to a lesser degree Saudi Arabia, have made their opposition to the negotiations with Iran clear, and are expected to voice their concerns loudly over the next few months.

But the Obama administration’s efforts can’t be solely devoted to convincing allies or fighting a home front battle—it must also nail down the details of the final deal, which is far from guaranteed at this point.

“A lot of thorny issues will have to be resolved in the next three months, chief among them the exact roadmap for lifting the sanctions, language that goes into the U.N. Security Council resolution, measures for resolving the PMD [possible military dimensions] issues, and the mechanism for determining violations,” Ali Vaez, the International Crisis Group’s senior Iran analyst, told IPS.

“Negotiations will not get easier in the next three months; in fact, they will get harder as the parties struggle to resolve the remaining thorny issues and defend the agreement,” said Vaez, who was in Lausanne when the agreement was announced.

“Success is not guaranteed, but this breakthrough has further increased the cost of breakdown,” he added. (IPS | 3 April 2015) ◆

JAPANESE TEXT VERSION

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/447-obama-prepares-for-showdown-with-congress-over-iran-deal-japanese>

「イラン核問題」米議会との対立決着を図るオバマ大統領

【ワシントンIPS = ジャスミン・ラムジー】

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What Others Say

Opinion: Challenging the Nuclear Powers' Extremism

By JOSEPH GERSON

NEW YORK (IPS) - On the eve of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference five years ago, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned that governments alone will not rid the world of the specter of nuclear annihilation.

Addressing an assembly of movement and civil society activists, he expressed heartfelt sympathy and appreciation for our efforts, urging us to remain steadfast in our outreach, education, organising and in pressing our demands.

As if to prove the secretary-general's critique of governments correct, anyone who has been paying attention knows that this year's Review Conference is in trouble before it starts. It could fail, jeopardising the future of the treaty and – more importantly – human survival. In the tradition of diplomatic understatement, U.N. High Representative for Disarmament Angela Kane has explained that this is “not the best of times for disarmament.”

Apparently not understanding the meaning and purpose of treaties, and with remarkable disregard for the vast majority of the world's nations which have long been demanding that the nuclear powers fulfill their NPT Article VI obligation to engage in good faith negotiations to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, lead U.S. Non-Proliferation negotiator Adam Scheinman warned that “countries not pursue extreme agendas or place unrealistic demands on the treaty.”

Practicing the double standard of holding one set of parties accountable to a contract while others flaunt its terms is its own kind of extremism. C. Wright Mills called it “crackpot realism.”

Joseph Rotblat, the realist Nobel Laureate and single senior Manhattan Project scientist to quit the nuclear bomb project for moral reasons, put it well years ago while speaking in Hiroshima. He explained that the human species faces a stark choice.

We can either completely eliminate the world's nuclear weapons, or we will face their global proliferation and the omnicidal nuclear wars that will follow. Why? Because no nation will long tolerate what it perceived to be an unequal balance of power, in this case nuclear terror.

Blinded by the arrogance of power, Schienmen and his Nuclear Nine comrades are apparently oblivious to the mounting anger and loss of trust by the world's governments in the face of the nuclear powers' disregard for their Article VI obligations, traditional humanitarian law, and the dangers to human survival that follow.

As a U.S. American, I had something of an Alice in Wonderland “through the looking glass” experience observing the U.N. High Level Conference on Disarmament debate in 2013.

After the opening formalities, Iranian President Rouhani spoke on behalf of both his country and the Non-Aligned Movement, stressing three points: Iran does not intend to become a nuclear weapons state.

The P-5 Nuclear Powers have flaunted their refusal to fulfill their Article VI NPT obligation to commence good faith negotiations for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. And, the United States had refused to fulfill its 2010 NPT Review Conference commitment to co-convene a conference on a Middle East Nuclear Weapons and WMD-Free Zone. ➡

* Dr. Joseph Gerson is the Director of the Peace & Economic Security Program of the American Friends Service Committee and the Co-Convener of the Peace & Planet Mobilization.

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NEWSLETTER FOR STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION | WITH APRIL 2015 ARTICLES

What Others Say

What was remarkable was not Rouhani's speech. It was the succession of one head of state, foreign minister and ambassador after another who rose to associate his or her government with the statement made by President Rouhani on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The U.S. response? A feeble and arrogant "trust us", followed by the announcement that under Chinese leadership the P-5 had almost completed work on a glossary of terms.

Similar dynamics followed at the International Conferences on the Human Consequences of Nuclear Weapons in Mexico and Austria, which were attended by the vast majority of the world's nations.

The tiny New START Treaty reductions in the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, which leaves them still holding more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear arsenals – more than enough to inflict Nuclear Winter many times over – won't pacify the world's nations.

Nor will the recent U.S.-Iran deal which the U.S. Congress has placed in jeopardy. On the eve of the 2015 Review Conference the inability of other nations to trust commitments made by the United States are one more reason the Review Conference and the NPT itself could fail.

Add to this the new era of military confrontations, resumption of nuclear (and other) arms races, and continuing nuclear threats from the simulated U.S. nuclear attack on North Korea to the U.S. and Russian nuclear "exercises" over Ukraine.

What are other nations to think when the U.S. is on track to spend a trillion dollars for new nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and every other nuclear power is following suit?

Clearly Ban Ki-moon was right.

And as anti-slavery abolitionist Fredrick Douglass observed more than a century ago, "Power concedes nothing without a struggle. It never has, and it never will."

This is why nuclear abolitionists, peace, justice and environmental advocates – including 1,000 Japanese activists carrying five million abolition petition signatures in their suitcases – are returning to New York from across the United States and around the world for the Peace & Planet mobilisation on the eve of this year's NPT review conference.

We're anything but starry eyed.

Recognising that change will only come from below, our international conference at The Cooper Union and our rally, march and festival in the streets will press our central demand: Respect for international law.

The Review Conference must mandate the beginning of good faith negotiations for the abolition of the world's nuclear weapons. And, being the realists that we are, we will be building the more powerful and issue-integrated (abolition, peace, economic and social justice and climate change) people's movement needed for the longer-term and urgent struggle ahead. (IPS | 22 April 2015) ◆

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President Obama: A Chance to Lead

BY JONATHAN GRANOFF | PRESIDENT OF THE GLOBAL SECURITY INSTITUTE

(Huff Post, April 29) - This month at the United Nations, 190 nations will gather to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which constrains the spread of nuclear weapons and contains a promise by the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons.

There is a crisis because the steps these five states have agreed to as a path to move toward a nuclear weapons-free world, such as entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, commencing negotiations on a treaty banning further production of weapons capable fissile materials, and convening a conference to bring about a nuclear weapon-free Middle East, have not moved forward.

There are treaties eliminating other weapons of mass destruction - biological and chemical weapons. The failure to pursue the reasonable route forward by commencing negotiations on a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons has created a crisis.

This rational route forward--which has been identified by the vast majority of the world's countries, and the UN Secretary-General--is to advance a convention banning nuclear weapons. Neither the United States nor Russia, two states with more than 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, support this rational route, instead insisting that the singular way forward is to support a step-by-step, incremental approach.

In the midst of renewed tensions with Russia, it is also a moment of opportunity: any reasonable person can see that reinvigorating the Cold War nuclear stand-off is too dangerous, and that the continued failure to fulfill disarmament commitments will surely stimulate proliferation by other states.

Many nations are concerned that rhetorical puffery is expected, while a new crisis du jour sweeps attention away from nuclear disarmament obligations. This cynicism is a dangerous and contagious problem, and will become even more so if nothing meaningful is done soon.

China and India have both expressed support for negotiating a universal ban on nuclear weapons and Pakistan has stated it would follow. France, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia openly oppose even taking preliminary steps to negotiate a legal ban. Dip-

lomats from these states assert that work toward a universal, non-discriminatory ban would divert attention from the incremental steps, neverminding that progress on these steps is lackluster at best, and failing to bring us closer to the stated goal of nuclear disarmament.

The problems with the incremental approach are many. This US Senate is unlikely to ratify the test ban, and its benefits have not been argued effectively to the American people or their elected representatives. Moreover, the commitment to spend upwards of a trillion dollars to modernize the nuclear arsenal illustrates an incoherence of policy that is outrageous.

Progress toward disarmament that relies on the bilateral, unified leadership of Russia and the United States is unwise. Acrimony over the Ukraine makes this obvious. Yet US-Russia leadership to entice Syria to join the near-universal Chemical Weapons Convention made us all safer. Surely no one would claim nuclear weapons are any less abhorrent and more legitimate to use than chemical weapons, yet such unified leadership by major powers remains starkly lacking.

Amidst the threats of global nuclear proliferation, most Americans probably do not realize that most of the world's states took it upon themselves to declare their regions nuclear-free. Latin America, Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, and the South Pacific negotiated legally binding treaties to permanently create nuclear-weapon-free zones (Mongolia, too, is a unilateral nuclear-weapon-free zone). Good news like this remains dormant.

These next four weeks as the NPT Review Conference meets in New York is an exceptional opportunity for a world leader who is serious about making historic strides toward protecting the global commons. The time for reiterated rhetorical support has passed and real movement must be realized. This is a time for leadership. And, considering the increasing threat that nuclear weapons pose, time just may be running out. ♦

This newsletter is part of Inter Press Service (IPS) and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) project. It includes independent news and analyses as well as columns by experts, news from international NGOs and a review of the global media for a glimpse of what is happening on the ground. Newspaper articles reproduced in this newsletter are for personal use and aim at giving information to readers. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is forbidden.

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America's Disastrous Non-Proliferation Policy

BY IRA HELFAND, MD

(The Hill – April 29) - This week, the states who are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT, will gather at the United Nations for their five-year review conference to assess whether the treaty is meeting its goals.

The U.S. has long viewed this treaty as a key bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries. Since it was adopted 45 years ago, 3 nations which never signed the Treaty have developed nuclear weapons and one country that did sign has withdrawn and built a small nuclear arsenal, but we have not seen the wholesale spread of nuclear weapons that many feared when the NPT was negotiated in the late 1960's.

Now the U.S. government is worried that the NPT regime could fall apart. While the NPT sought to keep states that did not have nuclear weapons from acquiring them, it also required, under Article VI of the Treaty, that the states which did have nuclear weapons conduct good faith negotiations to eliminate them. There is a growing consensus around the world that the nuclear weapons states have not met their obligations under Article VI and do not have any plans to do so.

Indeed, all of the nuclear weapons states have ambitious plans to upgrade and modernize their nuclear forces. Here in the US, the administration has put forth a modernization plan that will cost over \$1 trillion over the next 30 years.

The message to the rest of the world is clear: The US intends to retain its nuclear arsenal indefinitely. If the US, which has the strongest conventional military in the world, wants nuclear weapons, shouldn't everyone want them?

Fortunately the rest of the world has shown remarkable restraint. Over the last 2 years non nuclear weapons states have gathered at three international conferences to discuss what will actually happen to the world if nuclear weapons are used and to discuss how to get the states that do have nuclear weapons to take their obligations under the NPT seriously. The most recent, in Vienna last December, attracted representatives of 158 countries.

They heard reports from scientists and medical doctors detailing the existential threat to human survival posed by the 15,600 nuclear weapons in the world day. They heard new data showing that even a limited nuclear war between India and Pakistan would cause global climate disruption, cut food production worldwide and put 2 billion people at risk of starvation. They heard the Red Cross assessment that there would be very little that anyone could do if there were even a single nuclear explosion in a populated area, and no effective response at all to a nuclear war.

The Vienna meeting ended with a pledge by the Austrian government to fill the gap in international law which has banned land mines and cluster bombs, chemical and biological weapons, but not nuclear weapons, the most dangerous of all.

This "Austrian Pledge", as it has come to be known, offers a way out of the dangerous impasse over nuclear weapons.

Faced with the failure of the nuclear weapons states to meet their obligations under the NPT, the rest of the world can abandon the Treaty and begin to develop nuclear weapons. Or, they can join in a new effort to enforce the NPT. They can begin the good faith negotiations to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons that the Treaty demands.

The US should embrace this effort. Instead it is working actively to undermine these negotiations before they even start. Reports in the Japanese and Norwegian press have clearly documented the efforts of the State Department to keep other countries from joining this movement. The US needs to change course.

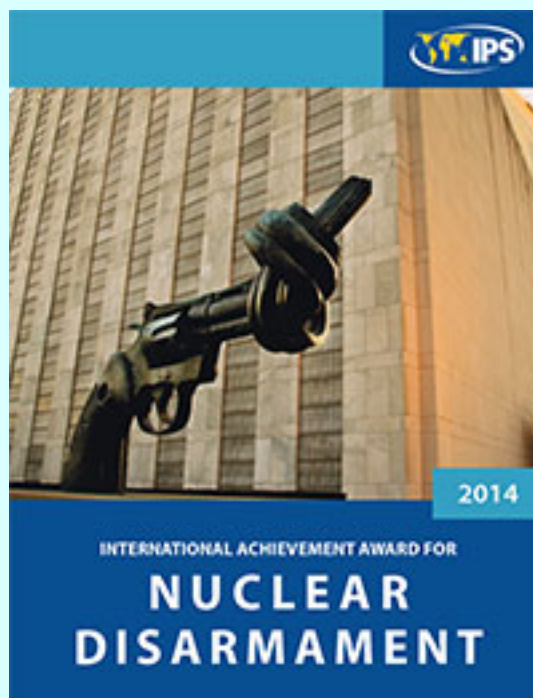
It should recognize that the world will not indefinitely tolerate a system of nuclear apartheid where some countries get to have nuclear weapons and others don't. ♦

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