



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

NEWSLETTER FOR STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION
WITH AUGUST 2014 ARTICLES

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In-Depth Reports

Ban on Nuke Tests OK, But Where's the Ban on Nuke Weapons?



As the United Nations commemorated the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on Aug. 29, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lamented the fact that in a world threatened by some 17,000 nuclear weapons, not a single one has been destroyed so far. Instead, he said, countries possessing such weapons have well-funded, long-range plans to modernise their nuclear arsenals. Ban noted that more than half of the world's total population ... ➤ Pages 2-3

OPINION: Why Kazakhstan Dismantled its Nuclear Arsenal



August 29 is the fifth observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests. One of the first decrees of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was the historic decision to close on Aug. 29, 1991 the Semipalatinsk Nuclear test site, the second largest in the world. ➤ Page 4

Atom Bomb Anniversary Spotlights Persistent Nuclear Threat

It has been 69 years, but the memory is fresh in the minds of 190,000 survivors and their descendants. It has been 69 years but a formal apology has yet to be issued. It has been 69 years – and the likelihood of it happening all over again is still a frightening reality. ➤ Pages 5-6

UN Report Faults Humanitarian Vigilance in Response To Nuclear Detonations

About 22,000 nuclear weapons continue to threaten humankind's survival nearly 70 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted to date, according to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). But the world is far from prepared to effectively respond to nuclear weapons detonations, "even at basic levels of preparedness, let alone a large-scale nuclear war". ➤ Pages 7-8

Austrian Parliament Backs Government Efforts For Nuclear Disarmament

As the Austrian government prepares to host the third international conference on the humanitarian consequences of atomic weapons on December 8-9 in Vienna, the country's parliament has provided it the legal basis for its commitment to usher in a world without nuclear weapons of mass destruction. ➤ Pages 9-11

Civil Society Perspective

IPPNW To Discuss Test Ban Treaty Future in Kazakhstan

In the late 1980s, IPPNW helped bridge a dangerous and divided world to connect grassroots activists who wanted to stop nuclear testing by the United States and the former Soviet Union. Those "activists" were, in fact, ordinary people whose lives had been damaged (and sometimes taken from them) and whose communities had been destroyed by the contamination from nuclear weapons tests, which continued underground long after the Partial Test Ban Treaty outlawed them in the atmosphere, under water, and in space in 1963. ➤ Page 12

69 Years On: Need To Tread A Nuke Free Road

August 6, 2014 marked the 69th anniversary of the first detonation of a nuclear weapon over Japan. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki held ceremonies commemorating those hundreds of thousands who perished in the two nuclear attacks in 1945, and the countless more whose lives would forever be affected. ➤ Page 13

Inhumane, Illegal, Immoral and Cruel: A Survivor Account of the Hiroshima Bombing

At the Little White House in Key West Florida, on 16 May 2014, atomic bomb testimony was delivered in an official forum on Truman ground for the first time. Together with Clifton Truman Daniel, Hibakusha Stories organized an event where Setsuko Thurlow and Yasuaki Yamashita were able to share their experience of being children in Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively. ➤ Pages 14-16



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By THALIF DEEN

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - As the United Nations commemorated the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on Aug. 29, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lamented the fact that in a world threatened by some 17,000 nuclear weapons, not a single one has been destroyed so far.



A nuclear test tower belonging to the United States in Bikini Atoll. Credit: public domain

Instead, he said, countries possessing such weapons have well-funded, long-range plans to modernise their nuclear arsenals.

Ban noted that more than half of the world's total population – over 3.5 billion out of more than seven underway,” he said.

There are still eight countries – China, North Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States – yet to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose ratification is required for the treaty's entry into force.

Alyn Ware, founder and international coordinator of the network, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), told IPS, “Although I support the Aug. 29 commemoration of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, I would place greater priority on the issue of nuclear abolition than on full ratification of the CTBT.”

billion people – still lives in countries that either have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances.

“As of 2014, not one nuclear weapon has been physically destroyed pursuant to a treaty, bilateral or multilateral, and no nuclear disarmament negotiations are underway. He said there is now a customary norm against nuclear tests (the nuclear detonation type) and only one country (North Korea) that occasionally violates that norm.

“The other holdouts are unlikely to resume nuclear tests, unless the political situation deteriorates markedly, elevating the role of nuclear weapons considerably more than at the moment,” Ware said.

The CTBTO (Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organisation) is working very effectively on implementation, verification and other aspects even though the CTBT has not entered into force, he added. Ware also pointed out the issue of nuclear abolition is more closely related to current tensions and conflicts.



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“While nations still see a strong role for military options, including deterrence by force, then those with nuclear weapons will not be willing to relinquish them, and we face the risk of nuclear conflict by accident, miscalculation or even design,” warned Ware, a New Zealand-based anti-nuclear activist who co-founded the international network, Abolition 2000.

Kazakhstan was one of the few countries to close down its nuclear test site, Semipalatinsk, back in 1991, and voluntarily give up the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal, with more than 110 ballistic missiles and 1,200 nuclear warheads.

Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, permanent representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, told IPS his country’s decision to withdraw from membership of the “nuclear club” was more a question of political will because “Kazakhstan genuinely believed in the futility of nuclear tests and weapons which can inflict unimagined catastrophic consequences on human beings and the environment.”

In 1949, Ban pointed out, the then Soviet Union conducted its first nuclear test, followed by another 455 nuclear tests over succeeding decades, with a terrible effect on the local population and environment.

“These tests and the hundreds more that followed in other countries became hallmarks of a nuclear arms race, in which human survival depended on the doctrine of mutually assured destruction, known by its fitting acronym, MAD,” he noted.

“As secretary-general, I have had many opportunities to meet with some of the courageous survivors of nuclear weapons and nuclear tests in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Semipalatinsk.”

Their resolve and dedication “should continue to guide our work for a world without nuclear weapons,” he added.

He stressed that achieving global nuclear disarmament has been one of the oldest goals of the United Nations and was the subject of the General Assembly’s first resolution as far back as 1946.

“The doctrine of nuclear deterrence persists as an element in the security policies of all possessor states and their nuclear allies,” Ban said.

This is so despite growing concerns worldwide over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of even a single nuclear weapon, let alone a regional or global nuclear war, he added.

Currently, there are five nuclear weapon states, namely the United States, Britain, Russia, France and China, whose status is recognised by the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

All five are veto-wielding permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (P5), the only body empowered to declare war or peace.

The three other nuclear weapon states are India, Pakistan (which have formally declared that they possess nuclear weapons) and Israel, the undeclared nuclear weapon state.

North Korea has conducted nuclear tests but the possession of weapons is still in lingering doubt.

Ware told IPS the health and environmental consequences of nuclear tests gives an indication of the even greater catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear weapons in a conflict.

This is what has spurred countries like Kazakhstan to establish the International Day Against Nuclear Tests as a platform to promote a nuclear-weapon-free world, he said.

“And it has spurred Marshall Islands to take this incredibly David-versus-Goliath case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ),” he added.

This has also given rise to the humanitarian consequences dimension, which has gained some traction and will be discussed at the third conference coming up in December.

But without increased confidence in the capacity to resolve conflicts without the threat or use of massive force, countries will continue to rely on nuclear deterrence, even if they do not intend to use the weapons, Ware said.

Thus, UNFOLD ZERO, which is promoting the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, is also advancing cooperative security approaches through the United Nations to resolve conflicts and security threats, he added. (IPS | August 30, 2014)



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OPINION: Why Kazakhstan Dismantled its Nuclear Arsenal

By KAIRAT ABDRAKHMANOV* | Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the UN

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - August 29 is the fifth observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests. One of the first decrees of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was the historic decision to close on Aug. 29, 1991 the Semipalatinsk Nuclear test site, the second largest in the world. Kazakhstan also voluntarily gave up the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal, with more than 110 ballistic missiles and 1,200 nuclear warheads with the capacity to reach any point on this earth.

Many believed at that time that we took this decision because we did not possess the ability or competence to support such an massive atomic arsenal. Not true. We had then, and have even today, the best experts.

For us, it was more a question of political will to withdraw from the membership of the Nuclear Club because Kazakhstan genuinely believed in the futility of nuclear tests and weapons which can inflict unimagined catastrophic consequences on human beings and the environment.

The closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was followed by other major test sites, such as in Nevada, Novaya Zemlya, Lop Nur and Moruroa.

Therefore, at the initiative of Kazakhstan, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/35, on Dec. 2, 2009, declaring Aug. 29 as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited the Ground Zero of Semipalatinsk in April 2010 and described the action of the president as a bold and unprecedented act and urged present world leaders to follow suit.

In the words of President Nazarbayev, this historical step made by our people, 23 years ago, has great significance for civilisation, and its significance will only grow in the coming years and decades.

It is acknowledged today that the end of testing would also result in the ultimate abolition of nuclear weapons and hence the importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

Kazakhstan was one of the first to sign the treaty, and has been a model of transforming the benefits of renouncing nuclear weapons into human development especially in the post-2015 phase with its emphasis on sustainable development.

It has been internationally recognised that nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthens



the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

Yes, there are political upheavals, and there will be roadblocks, but we have to keep pursuing durable peace and security. For these are the founding objectives of the United Nations.

Each year in the U.N.'s First Committee and the General Assembly, a number of resolutions are adopted, supported by a vast majority of member states calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments.

There are resolute and continuing efforts by member states, various stakeholders and civil society who advocate for an international convention against nuclear weapons.

We also see the dynamic action taken, especially by civil society, which brings attention to the devastating humanitarian dimensions of the use of nuclear weapons.

The meeting hosted by Norway in Oslo, and earlier this year in Nayarit by Mexico, have given new impetus to this new direction of thinking. We hope to carry further this zeal at the deliberations in Vienna, scheduled later this year.

The international community will continue its efforts on all fronts and levels to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

There was also a reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon states of their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all states parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The international community, I am sure, with the impassioned engagement of civil society will continue to redouble its efforts to reach Global Zero. (IPS | August 29, 2014)



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Atom Bomb Anniversary Spotlights Persistent Nuclear Threat

By SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI

TOKYO (IPS) - It has been 69 years, but the memory is fresh in the minds of 190,000 survivors and their descendants. It has been 69 years but a formal apology has yet to be issued. It has been 69 years – and the likelihood of it happening all over again is still a frightening reality.



Photo: The atomic bomb dome at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Japan was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. Credit: Freedom II Andres_Imahinasyon/CC-BY-2.0

As foreign dignitaries descended on Japan to mark the 69th anniversary of the atomic bombing Wednesday, the message from officials in the city of Hiroshima was one of urgent appeal to governments to seriously consider the enormous threat to humanity and the planet of another nuclear attack.

Survivors, known here as hibakusha, who have worked tirelessly since August 1945 to ban nuclear weapons worldwide, urged diplomats – including ambassadors from four of the nine nuclear weapons states (United States, Israel, Pakistan and India) – to heed the words of the 2014 Peace Declaration.

Representing the anguished wishes of aging survivors and peace activists, the declaration calls on policy makers to visit the bomb-scarred cities to witness first-hand the lasting devastation caused when the U.S. dropped its

uranium bomb (Little Boy) on Hiroshima and its plutonium bomb (Fat Man) on Nagasaki three days later.

Some 45,000 people observed a minute of silence Wednesday in a peace park close to the epicenter of the bomb, which killed an estimated 140,000 people in Hiroshima before the second bomb claimed a further 70,000 lives in Nagasaki.

The tragic events came as Japan was negotiating its surrender in World War II (1939-45).

The presence of so many survivors, whose average age is estimated to be 79 years, provided stark evidence of the debilitating physical and psychological wounds inflicted on those fateful days, with many hibakusha and their next of kin struggling to live with the results of intense and prolonged radiation exposure.



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In a tribute to their suffering, the Hiroshima Peace Declaration states, "We will steadfastly promote the new movement stressing the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and seeking to outlaw them.

"We will help strengthen international public demand for the start of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention with the goal of total abolition by 2020," the declaration added.

But the likelihood of this dream becoming a reality is dim, with the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington reporting earlier this year that the nine nuclear weapons states possessed a combined total of 17,105 nuclear weapons as of April 2014.

The United States, the only state to deploy these weapons against another country, has steadfastly held out on issuing an official apology, claiming instead that its decision to carry out the bombing was a "necessary evil" to end World War II.

This argument is now deeply entrenched in global geopolitics, with states like Israel – not yet a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – vehemently protecting its arsenal as essential for national security in the face of protracted political tensions in the region.

Following Israel's military offensive in Gaza, which resulted in 1,800 civilian casualties in the Palestinian enclave before a ceasefire brokered by Egypt came into effect Tuesday, some in the Arab community insist that Israel represents the biggest security threat to the region, and not vice versa.

China, a nuclear state with an inventory of 250 warheads and currently embroiled in a territorial dispute with Japan, was conspicuously absent from the proceedings.

With run-ins between East Asian nations in the disputed South China Sea becoming increasingly confrontational, peace activists here feel an urgent need to address tensions between nuclear weapons powers, including North Korea.

Professor Jacob Roberts at the Hiroshima Peace Research Institute told IPS, "The call is to ban nuclear weapons that kill and cause immense suffering of humans. By possessing these weapons, nuclear states represent criminal actions."

He said the anti-nuclear movement is intensely focused on holding states with nuclear weapons accountable for not abiding by the 1968 NPT.

He cited the example of the Mar. 1 annual Remembrance Day held in the Pacific Ocean nation of the Marshall Islands, which suffered devastating radiation contamination from Operation Castle, a series of high-yield nuclear tests carried out by the U.S. Joint Task Force on the Bikini Atoll beginning in March 1954.

Thousands fell victim to radiation sickness as a result of the test, which is estimated to have been 1,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima blast.

In total, the U.S. tested 67 bombs on the territory between 1946 and 1962 against the backdrop of the Cold War-era nuclear weapons race with Russia.

In a bid to challenge the narrative of national security, the Marshall Islands filed lawsuits this April at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and separately in U.S. Federal District Court, against the nine nuclear weapon states for failing to dismantle their arsenals.

The lawsuits invoke Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which contains a binding obligation for five nuclear-armed nations (the U.S., UK, France, China and Russia) "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament."

As in Hiroshima, the United States has not apologized to the Marshall Islands but only expressed "sadness" for causing damage. A former senator from the Marshall Islands, Abacca Anjain Maddison, told IPS, "The U.S. continues to view the disaster as 'sacrificing a few for the security of many'."

The U.S. is not the only government to come under fire. Hiromichi Umebayashi, director of the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA) at Nagasaki University, is a leading advocate for a nuclear-free zone in East Asia and a bitter critic of the administration of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which is alleged to be currently pushing the argument that nukes are necessary for national security.

Umebayashi is spearheading a campaign to stop Japan's latest decision to work closely with the United States, under a nuclear umbrella, on strengthening the country's national defence capacities.

"North Korea's nuclear threat in East Asia is used by the Japanese government to push for more military activities. As the only nation to be atom bombed, Japan is making a huge mistake," the activist told IPS. (IPS | August 7, 2014)



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UN Report Faults Humanitarian Vigilance in Response To Nuclear Detonations

By JAMSHED BARUAH

BERLIN (IDN) - About 22,000 nuclear weapons continue to threaten humankind's survival nearly 70 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted to date, according to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). But the world is far from prepared to effectively respond to nuclear weapons detonations, "even at basic levels of preparedness, let alone a large-scale nuclear war".

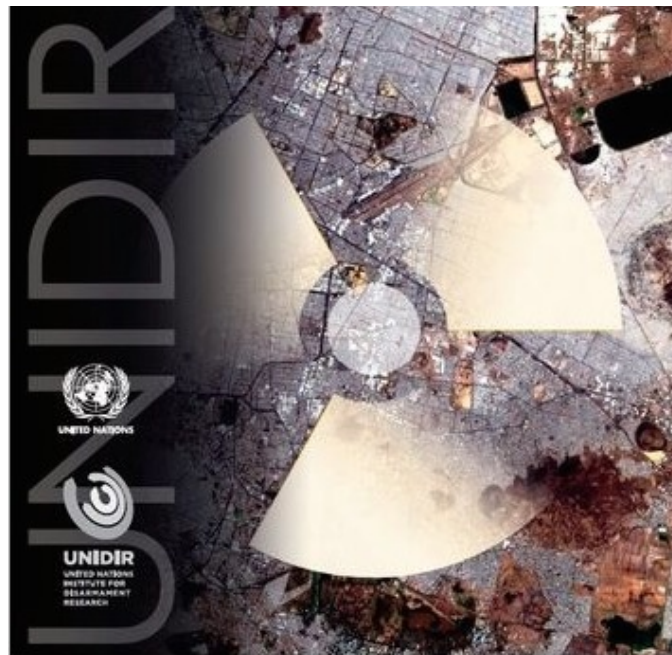


Photo: UNIDIR

This perturbing view has been expressed in a study by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) undertaken in cooperation with OCHA (*Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*) and UNDP (UN Development Programme) ahead of the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on September 26.

The study says: "Anecdotal evidence, based on our interviews with United Nations humanitarian personnel in various agencies, indicates that nuclear detonations in populated areas, would come as a surprise to many of them – some assume plans exist for 'lower end' nuclear weapon detonation events, with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) assumed to play a leadership role in providing expertise, equipment, and operational capacity."

The study, 'An Illusion of Safety: Challenges of Nuclear Weapon Detonations for United Nations Humanitarian Coordination and Response', by UNIDIR experts John Borrie and Tim Caughley examines the finding of the first international conference on the humanitarian im-

pact of nuclear weapons, held in Oslo, Norway, in March 2013, which said: "It is unlikely that any state or international body could address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation in an adequate manner and provide sufficient assistance to those affected. Moreover, it might not be possible to establish such capacities, even if it were attempted."

Portraying a nuclear weapon detonation scenario, Borrie and Caughley say: "The instantaneous effects of such a detonation event – the blast, thermal radiation, and prompt radiation from the explosion of one or more nuclear weapons – will have created many casualties and destroyed a great deal of critical infrastructure. It will have generated fear and disruption, which may lead many people to alter their normal patterns of behaviour and make disruption worse (for instance, fleeing their homes to go to already overwhelmed hospitals because they fear radiation contamination). In an important sense, any response is by definition inadequate because the immediate harm has already been done."



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According to the study, most experts seem to agree that the immediate needs of the victims in a nuclear weapon detonation event will fall on local and national authorities to the extent they still function. “In a highly populated area the humanitarian need will be vast, including from large numbers of seriously burned and injured people (many of them dying). Much of the expert literature in this area assumes that help will take days or longer to arrive – let alone international assistance.”

Challenges to the humanitarian system

The report points out that although there have been international exercises in the recent past based on scenarios such as radiological “dirty bombs” or chemical weapons use, there have been no equivalent exercises in order to understand the challenges to the humanitarian system of assisting the victims of nuclear weapon detonations events in highly populated areas.

Besides, there is no focal point within the humanitarian system for a systematic planning for response to nuclear weapon detonation-specific phenomena. Furthermore, specialized standing responsibilities such as radiation monitoring and radiation decontamination at the field level in support of humanitarian operations in the event of nuclear weapon detonations do not appear to have explicitly been allocated, either to international agencies or humanitarian partners.

A key finding of the study is that some specialized agencies view their mandated responsibilities as applying in civil radiological emergencies but not in cases of nuclear weapon use, or to certain kinds of nuclear weapon detonation scenarios (e.g. terrorism) but not others (e.g. state use, nuclear weapon accidents).

The authors of the report further point out that standing arrangements for coordination between the UN humanitarian system and relevant national authorities in the specific case of a nuclear weapon detonation event do not appear to exist, although the formation of bodies such as the Operational Preparedness Group on CBRN (*Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear*) defence are encouraging developments.

“While we have no doubt the humanitarian system would swing into action as swiftly as it could, developing these arrangements in the heat of the crisis is not ideal, and would take time – with ample chance of confusion or misinterpretation that would be likely to impede the most timely and effective response,” warns the study.

Yet another conclusion of the study is that threat or fear of further nuclear weapon detonation events could

vastly complicate decision-making about the nature and scale of humanitarian coordination and response, let alone its delivery.

“In the hours, days, or even weeks following a nuclear weapon detonation event, its origin, or the identity of those responsible for it, may not be known. Such uncertainty could create further nuclear crises of its own.

“Moreover, in terms of risk assessment, humanitarian actors (including relevant United Nations agencies) may feel it is too hazardous to deliver humanitarian relief to the affected. For their part, the state (or states) affected might be unwilling to accept relief until the environment is sufficiently ‘secure’. States in a position to offer assistance coordinated by the humanitarian system might be unwilling to do so if they fear further nuclear weapon detonation events are plausible. This could exacerbate suffering for those directly affected or displaced,” notes the study.

Though prevention is the best response to nuclear weapon detonation events, authors of the report feel that some advance thought and planning within the UN system “could plausibly reduce the overall level of human suffering arising from some nuclear weapon detonation events significantly, even if there is not much it could do in the immediate aftermath”.

Organizing a capacity for a response, however inadequate it may prove to be, is not simply a matter of responsible anticipation, organizational cohesion, and readiness to meet public expectations. It would also help save lives in reducing the time necessary for devising decision-making channels, coordinating the mobilization of resources, and resolving health issues relating to positioning personnel to conduct relief activities.

In essence, concludes the report, what is needed are systematic decision-making processes determined in advance and setting out clearly the premises on which mobilization will be “triggered”, based on assessments of the hazards arising, levels of contamination, and other risks to be weighed in deploying relief personnel.

According to Valerie Amos, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, “this study reminds us all that until we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, they will continue to pose the risk of catastrophic consequences for humanity – whatever the United Nations and its humanitarian partners endeavour to do to pick up the pieces.” [IDN-InDepthNews – August 23, 2014]



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Austrian Parliament Backs Government Efforts For Nuclear Disarmament

By JAMSHED BARUAH

VIENNA (IDN) - As the Austrian government prepares to host the third international conference on the humanitarian consequences of atomic weapons on December 8-9 in Vienna, the county's parliament has provided it the legal basis for its commitment to usher in a world without nuclear weapons of mass destruction.



Photo: The Parliament Building in Vienna, Austria. In the foreground, the fountain with the statue of Pallas Athena. Credit: Manfred Werner / Tsui| Wikimedia Commons

The forthcoming gathering in Vienna will be the third since the March 2013 conference in Oslo convened by the Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide who said the Conference had "provided an arena for a fact-based discussion of the humanitarian and developmental consequences of a nuclear weapons detonation".

Delegates from 127 countries as well as several UN organizations, the International Red Cross movement, representatives of civil society and other relevant stakeholders participated. Summarising the Conference, Barth Eide observed: "This broad participation reflects the increasing global concern regarding the effects of nuclear weapons detonations, as well as the recognition that this is an issue of fundamental significance for us all."

The second conference in Nayarit, Mexico, on February 13-14, 2014, discussed "global and long-term consequences of any nuclear detonation, accidental or deliberate, from the perspective and concerns of the 21st

century society, including areas such as public health, humanitarian assistance, the economy, development and environmental issues, climate change, food security and risk management, amongst others".

Delegations representing 146 States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and civil society organizations, participated in the Nayarit international gathering.

The Austrian offer to host the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons evoked "great support from participants as a follow-up to Oslo and Nayarit, to deepen the momentum, anchor these conclusions and take them forward", the Nayarit conference chair said, adding: "As it was expressed by many delegations, the Conference reiterates the invitation to nuclear weapon States and States non-parties to the NPT to participate in the Third Conference, in Austria."



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The chair added: "In doing so, we need to take into account that, in the past, weapons have been eliminated after they have been outlawed. We believe this is the path to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. In our view, this is consistent with our obligations under international law, including those derived from the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) as well as from Common Article 1 to the Geneva Conventions.

"The broad-based and comprehensive discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons should lead to the commitment of States and civil society to reach new international standards and norms, through a legally binding instrument.

"It is the view of the Chair that the Nayarit Conference has shown that time has come to initiate a diplomatic process conducive to this goal. Our belief is that this process should comprise a specific timeframe, the definition of the most appropriate fora, and a clear and substantive framework, making the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons the essence of disarmament efforts.

A new dynamic?

"It is time to take action. The 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks is the appropriate milestone to achieve our goal. Nayarit is a point of no return," he said.

Against this backdrop, in a unanimous resolution, the Austrian Parliament has pledged its "full support" for the forthcoming conference in Vienna, which it expects to "give a new dynamic to the international disarmament discourse, through including the humanitarian impact to its scope and facilitating greater involvement of civil society organizations".

The motion was introduced by the members of parliament Mag. Christine Muttonen (SPÖ and Co-president of the network Parliamentarians for Non-proliferation and Disarmament PNND) and Dr. Reinhold Lopatka (Chairman of the ÖVP group in the Austrian Parliament) on April 30 in the foreign affairs committee.

It urges the Federal Government "to continue its engagement on the international and European level for disarmament and for the complete prohibition of the development, sale, acquisition, proliferation and possession of nuclear weapons under international law".

The resolution tasks the government:

- to plead actively for the realization of weapons of mass destruction-free zones at bilateral and multilateral level;

- in this regard, to adopt as its own the goal of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East stipulated in UN-Resolution 687 and to take initiatives to this end at multi- and bilateral level;

- to push for an effective ban in the EU on arms exports and in particular on means of delivery of nuclear weapons in crisis zones;

- to pronounce itself in favour of deleting nuclear deterrence from the NATO-doctrine;

- with respect to the current crisis in the Ukraine, to oppose any political or military act aiming at the expansion of nuclear deterrence;

- to condemn in strongest terms any threat to use nuclear weapons;

- to advocate for the strengthening and, where need be, the creation of non-military intergovernmental organizations for security and cooperation in Europe and beyond; and

- to advocate for a prohibition or at least for a stricter regulation of the export of nuclear technology in Europe.

The parliamentary resolution complies on the whole with the Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz's view expressed in Nayarit, while offering to organize the third conference as follow-up: "Nuclear weapons are not only a permanent threat to all humankind but also a relic of the cold war that we must finally overcome. The international nuclear disarmament efforts require an urgent paradigm shift, not the least in light of the danger of further nuclear weapons proliferation." He added: "Nuclear disarmament is a global task and a collective responsibility."

A Sword of Damocles

According to new research, even a limited regional nuclear conflict would cause devastating global consequences for health, food security, climate, economy and the social order much beyond the immediate humanitarian emergencies. "This danger is by no means abstract. It is a Sword of Damocles above our heads and should be at the center of international efforts. Moreover, the possibility of a nuclear explosion by accident, misjudgment or terrorism constitutes a considerable risk that we need to be aware of. Reliance on nuclear weapons is an outdated approach to security. A concept that is based on the total destruction of the planet should have no place in the 21st century", underlined Kurz.



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“This discourse is especially necessary in Europe, where cold war thinking is still prevalent in security doctrines. 100 years ago, the era of weapons of mass destruction commenced with the devastating use of chemical weapons in World War I.

In a today united Europe, we should use the commemoration to also make every effort to move beyond nuclear weapons, the most dangerous legacy of the 20th century”, urged Kurz.

The importance of the forthcoming conference lies in the fact that Vienna is the seat of the only global organization dealing with nuclear issues: the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA). Together with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), it plays a vital role in preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Despite reductions in the numbers of nuclear weapons since the end of the cold War, however, the number of nuclear weapons is still sufficient to extinguish human civilization. At the same time, the number of nuclear armed states has risen and the technological hurdle to build these weapons is getting lower.

Austria therefore holds the position that the prevention of nuclear weapons can only be achieved in conjunction with credible and irreversible nuclear disarmament and the international stigmatization of nuclear weapons.

As was stressed in Oslo and Nayarit, in the event of a nuclear explosion, governments and relief organizations would not be in a position to provide humanitarian assistance adequate to the scale of the emergency.

For this reason, Austria considers the close cooperation with these organizations and civil society at large an essential element to build the broad international support that is necessary for the elimination of nuclear weapons, according to a note posted on the Austrian Foreign Ministry’s website.

A goal shared by humanity

Though a world without nuclear weapons is a goal shared by all humanity, it has remained elusive so far. An estimated 16.300 nuclear weapons still exist nearly 25 years after the end of the cold war. Nine states are believed to possess nuclear weapons, but as nuclear technology is becoming more available, more states, and even non-state actors, may strive to develop nuclear weapons in the future.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry argues: As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use by design,

miscalculation or madness, technical or human error, remains real.

Nuclear weapons, therefore, continue to bear an unacceptable risk to humanity and to all life on earth. Any use of nuclear weapons could cause gravest humanitarian emergencies and have catastrophic global consequences on the environment, climate, health, social order, human development and the economy.

A single detonation of a modern nuclear weapon would cause destruction and human suffering on a scale far exceeding the devastation seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No State or international body would be able to provide adequate assistance.

Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to all humankind. These risks are not abstract. They are real, more serious than previously known and can never be eliminated completely.

Increased focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is, therefore, an important development and has a positive and uniting effect on international discussions about nuclear weapons.

The more the international community discusses and understands the scale of these consequences and of the risks involved, the clearer the case and the stronger the sense of urgency become for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

With the forthcoming conference, Austria wishes to strengthen the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to contribute to the growing momentum to firmly anchor the humanitarian imperative in all global efforts dealing with nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament.

According to the Austrian Foreign Ministry, the Vienna Conference will be open to all interested parties. All states will receive official invitations and will be invited to nominate experts and/or senior officials. International organizations and civil society representatives with relevant expertise will also be welcome.

The conference will feature facts based discussions and expert presentations and aims to allow for an interactive debate among participants, and will also provide delegations an opportunity for statements of a more general nature.

Plans are also in preparation for a limited sponsorship programme for participants from the least developed countries. [IDN-InDepthNews – August 16, 2014]



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IPPNW To Discuss Test Ban Treaty Future in Kazakhstan

By JOHN LORETZ*

In the late 1980s, IPPNW helped bridge a dangerous and divided world to connect grassroots activists who wanted to stop nuclear testing by the United States and the former Soviet Union. Those “activists” were, in fact, ordinary people whose lives had been damaged (and sometimes taken from them) and whose communities had been destroyed by the contamination from nuclear weapons tests, which continued underground long after the Partial Test Ban Treaty outlawed them in the atmosphere, under water, and in space in 1963.

The Nevada-Semipalatinsk Antinuclear Movement, the creation of Kazakh poet Olzhas Suleimenov, began to demonstrate at the Soviet test site in 1989, in solidarity with US protesters at the Nevada Test Site. After meeting with Suleimenov, IPPNW co-sponsored the International Citizens Congress for a Nuclear Test Ban in Alma-Ata and Semipalatinsk, where 300 delegates, joined by 20,000 “ordinary people,” called for the closure of the test sites. The Soviet government cancelled a whole series of tests in response and, in August 1991, the President of Kazakhstan closed Semipalatinsk. Within months, Mikhail Gorbachev declared a moratorium on Soviet tests, and the US followed in 1992. That moratorium, now global with a few obvious exceptions, has held ever since—a direct result of informed, impassioned, and massive citizen action.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan renounced nuclear weapons altogether and, along with Ukraine and Belarus, returned the warheads and missiles based on its territory to Russia.

This month (25-30 August), IPPNW will return to Kazakhstan, where it will convene its 21st World Congress in the capital, Astana. The theme is “From a nuclear test ban to a nuclear-weapon-free world,” and if that sounds familiar to ICAN campaigners, it’s no coincidence. ICAN’s humanitarian case for a global treaty to ban nuclear weapons and to achieve their elimination will be at the heart of the Congress program, presented in plenaries and workshops where our national affiliates and their members will be given the tools and inspiration they need to make the most effective contribution possible to ICAN’s preparations for Vienna and beyond.

In addition to presentations on the medical consequences of nuclear war, including nuclear famine and health effects of exposure to ionizing radiation—perennial topics at an IPPNW meeting—plenaries and workshops will feature presentations on the Vienna conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons; the new UNIDIR study on the inability to



mount any meaningful emergency and relief response to the use of nuclear weapons; the Action Plan adopted by the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement; an examination of the impact of the nuclear chain on health, the environment, and security; a scientific panel on the long term health and ecological consequences of the nuclear tests at Semipalatinsk; and an exploration of possible political and diplomatic processes for nuclear abolition. The complete program is available on the Congress website.

When IPPNW launched ICAN in 2007, our intent was to create the foundations for a broad-based campaign built on humanitarian principles that could bring decades of struggle for a nuclear-weapons-free world to a successful conclusion. In a few short years, ICAN has taken major strides toward that goal. Our pledge going into Astana is to complete this task with our ICAN partners, starting with getting a ban treaty in about the same amount of time it took our Kazakh friends to close their nuclear test site once they had put their minds to it. Think we can do it?

**John Loretz has worked on behalf of peace, disarmament, and environment organizations for more than three decades. As IPPNW’s Program Director, since 2000, he is responsible for coordinating the federation’s work on the medical and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the public health and environmental dangers of nuclear energy. He represents IPPNW on the core group of ICAN -- the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. As a nuclear policy expert, he has joined physician delegations in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and coordinates IPPNW’s participation at major UN-based meetings on nuclear weapons and disarmament. John has written and spoken extensively on nuclear issues, and is a regular contributor to IPPNW’s Peace and Health Blog, and other publications. A graduate of Boston College with an MA from the University of Virginia, John was Communications Director for Women’s Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) in the early 1980s.*



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69 Years On: Need To Tread A Nuke Free Road

By AKIRA KAWASAKI*

TOKYO (IDN) - While the numbers of nuclear weapons are down significantly from the days of the Cold War – when it seemed as though another Hiroshima or Nagasaki could be imminent – we are far from having secured our future against another such unspeakable human tragedy.

According to the most recent estimates by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, there are currently over 16,000 nuclear weapons in the possession of nine states across the world. Each one of these missiles represents a potential catastrophe that, if detonated over a city, would likely exceed even the horrific death and injury tolls of the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And while this number represents a modest decrease from 2013, all of the nuclear weapons possessors are investing billions into modernisation programmes intended to update and expand their strike capabilities.

What is needed is a new perspective and a new strategy. And that is precisely what is currently taking place with the new focus by governments, international organisations and civil society on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons – represented by the two conferences held on the subject in Norway and Mexico, and statements at the United Nations General Assembly and the meetings of state parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Austria will now carry the torch for the next step – the third conference on the humanitarian consequences on 8-9 December 2014. This reframing and refocusing on the inherent nature of nuclear weapons is something that seems to have been forgotten over the past decades. But it is this focus that is the only appropriate way of discussing the most horrible weapon ever invented – one whose legacy we know all too well and one that must never be used again.

We are approaching 70 years since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is a sad inevitability that, as time passes, those who can and have spoken most poignantly on the terror of nuclear weapons, the Hibakusha, who experienced the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima firsthand, will gradually fall silent. They have longed for a world without nuclear weapons and many have devoted themselves to try to make sure that no one in the world would have to experience the suffering that they have. Their strong voices have managed to convince the government of Japan, whose reliance on the United States' so-called "nuclear umbrella" had initially made it reluctant to embrace the humanitarian initiative, to eventually come

on board and support it, and to decide to participate at the upcoming conference in Austria.

While the only true measure of preserving future generations and finally doing right by the Hibakusha will be when the last nuclear weapon is dismantled, a treaty banning nuclear weapons would be a strong statement of rejection and stigmatisation – a message by states that these weapons have no place in our world. The chair of the most recent conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, Deputy Foreign Minister Juan Manuel Gomez Robledo of Mexico, elucidated this vision in his summary of the conference, calling for a new legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and setting the 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks as the appropriate milestone to achieve this goal.

A treaty banning nuclear weapons is not just a symbol. History shows us that legal prohibitions usually precede elimination. This has been the case for the other weapons of mass destruction – chemical and biological weapons – as well as other weapons whose effects were considered too unjust to ever be used in any context, such as landmines and cluster munitions. And real action, more than words and tributes, is the best way of honouring the victims and those who have suffered and continue to suffer the horrible legacy of nuclear weapons.

In the words of one of the Hibakusha, Setsuko Thurlow, who has dedicated her life to telling her story and those of her friends and family who did not survive: "Although we hibakusha have spent our life energy to warn people about the hell that is nuclear war, in nearly 70 years there has been little progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. We therefore urgently need a new path, one that recognizes the utterly unacceptable humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons — weapons we have a moral obligation to prohibit. It is our hope that this new movement to ban nuclear weapons will finally lead us to a nuclear weapon free world. The time has come for non-nuclear weapons states and civil society to initiate a nuclear weapons ban for the sake of humanity. You and I, together, we can. We must." [IDN-InDepthNews – August 7, 2014]

*Akira Kawasaki is an International Steering Group member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Executive Committee member of Tokyo-based NGO Peace Boat.



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Inhumane, Illegal, Immoral and Cruel: A Survivor Account of the Hiroshima Bombing

By SETSUKO THURLOW

At the Little White House in Key West Florida, on 16 May 2014, atomic bomb testimony was delivered in an official forum on Truman ground for the first time. Together with Clifton Truman Daniel, Hibakusha Stories organized an event where Setsuko Thurlow and Yasuaki Yamashita were able to share their experience of being children in Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively.

Thanks to support from the Truman Family, The Little White House and The Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, atomic bomb survivors are now on the official record defending the position that nuclear weapons are immoral no matter in whose hands. On that fateful day, August 6, 1945, I was a 13 year old grade 8 student and a member of the Student Mobilization Program, we were at the Army headquarters, 1.8 km from ground zero. About 30 of us students were assigned to work as decoding assistants of secret messages. At 8:15 AM, as Major Yanai was giving us a pep talk at the assembly, suddenly, I saw in the window a blinding bluish-white flash and I remember having the sensation of floating in the air. As I regained consciousness in the silence and darkness, I found myself pinned by the collapsed building. I could not move, and I knew I faced death. I began to hear my classmates' faint cries, "Mother, help me" "God, help me". Then, suddenly, I felt hands touching my left shoulder, and heard a man saying, "Don't give up! Keep moving! Keep pushing! I am trying to free you. See the light coming through that opening? Crawl towards it and get out as quickly as possible." As I crawled out, the ruins were on fire. Most of my classmates in that room were burned alive. A soldier ordered me and two other surviving girls to escape to the nearby hills.

Outside, I looked around. Although it was morning, it was as dark as twilight because of the dust and smoke rising in the air. I saw streams of ghostly figures, slowly shuffling from the centre of the city towards the nearby hills. They did not look like human beings; their hair stood straight up and they were naked and tattered, bleeding, burned, blackened and swollen. Parts of their bodies were missing, flesh and skin hanging from their bones, some with their eyeballs hanging in their hands, and some with their stomachs burst open, with their intestines hanging out. We students joined the ghostly procession, carefully stepping over the dead and dying. There was a deathly silence broken only by the moans of the injured and their pleas for water. The foul stench of burned skin filled the air.

We managed to escape to the foot of the hill where there was an army training ground, about the size of

two football fields. It was covered with the dead and injured, who were desperately begging, often in faint whispers, "Water, water, please give me water." But we had no containers to carry water. We went to a nearby stream to wash off the blood and dirt from our bodies. Then we tore off our blouses, soaked them with water and hurried back to hold them to the mouths of the injured, who desperately sucked in the moisture. We did not see any doctors or nurses all day. When darkness fell, we sat on the hillside and all night watched the entire city burn, numbed by the massive, grotesque scale of death and suffering we witnessed.

My father left town early that morning, my mother was rescued from under our collapsed home, my sister and her four year old son were burned beyond recognition while on their way to the doctor's office, an aunt and two cousins were found as skeletons. My sister-in-law is still missing. We rejoiced in the survival of my uncle and his wife, but about ten days later they died with purple spots all over their bodies, and their internal organs seemed to be liquified. My own age group of over 8,000 grade 7 and 8 students from all the city's high schools were engaged in the task of clearing fire lanes in the centre of Hiroshima. Many of them were killed instantly by the heat of 4,000 degrees Celsius. Many were simply carbonized or vaporized. Radiation, the unique characteristic of the atomic bombing, affected people in mysterious and random ways, with some dying instantly, and others weeks, months or years later by the delayed effects, and radiation is still killing survivors today.

Thus, my beloved city of Hiroshima suddenly became desolation, with heaps of ash and rubble, skeletons and blackened corpses. Out of a population of 360,000, most of them non-combatant, women, children, and elderly became victims of the indiscriminate massacre of the atomic bombing. By the end of 1945 some 140,000 had perished. As of now, at least 260,000 have died in Hiroshima alone from the effects of the blast, heat and radiation. As I use the numbers of the dead, it pains me deeply. Reducing the dead to numbers trivializes their precious lives and negates their human dignity.



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Not only did people have to endure the physical devastation of near-starvation, homelessness, lack of medical care, rapidly spreading social discrimination against survivors as “contaminated ones by nuclear poison”, total lack of service by the Japanese government, the collapse of the authoritarian, militaristic social system, and the sudden introduction to a democratic way of life, but also they suffered from psycho-social control by the Allied Forces Occupation Authority following Japan’s surrender. The Occupation Authorities established the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the sole purpose of this commission was to study the effects of radiation of the bombs on human beings, and not to provide treatment to the injured.

Needless to say, the survivors felt they were treated like guinea pigs not once but twice, first as the targets of the atomic bombing, then as the subjects of the medical research. The Occupation Authorities also censored media coverage of survivors’ suffering and confiscated their diaries, literary writings, films, photographs, medical records, etc. – 32,000 items in all. The triumphant scientific and technological achievement in making the atomic bomb could freely be written, but the human suffering inflicted by the atomic bomb was not to be heard by the world. Following the massive trauma of the bombing, survivors had to repress themselves in silence and isolation, and were thus deprived of the normal process of grieving.

With the return of full sovereignty to Japan in 1952, a flood of political, scientific, medical and historical information became available enabling scholars, researchers and journalists to see survivors’ experiences in historical perspective and global context. They became aware that the main motive for the atomic bombings was political rather than military. They rejected the American myth that the use of the bombs was necessary to avoid a costly invasion of Japan and saved lives firstly, because the invasion (Operation Olympic) was not scheduled until November 1st, almost three months after the actual bombings; secondly, the American government knew that the Japanese military organization had practically ceased to function; thirdly, they also knew that the Japanese government had made initial overtures for a negotiated surrender; and fourthly, that the unclarified status of the Emperor in an unconditional surrender was the main stumbling block for the Japanese.

Also extremely important was the US desire to position itself as the dominant power in East Asia in the post-war period. In addition, some American decision makers wanted to test the new weapons of two different kinds on two cities that had been purposely left intact. With the understanding of the historical perspec-

tive the survivors saw themselves as pawns in the opening moves of the Cold War rather than as sacrifices on the altar of peace.

On the cenotaph in the Peace Park in Hiroshima is an inscription which reads, “Rest in peace; the error will not be repeated.” What error and whose error were purposely left ambiguous. Although some wanted to point an accusing finger at America, the consensus was reached to see the issue on a higher philosophical plane as a universal need for nothing less than a cultural transformation away from our obsession with violence and war.

We Hibakusha, survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, became convinced that no human being should ever have to repeat our experience of the inhumanity, illegality, immorality and cruelty of the atomic bomb, and that our mission was to warn the world about the threat of this ultimate evil. We believe that, “Humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist”, and it is our moral imperative to abolish nuclear weapons in order to secure a safe, clean and just world for future generations. With this conviction we have been speaking out around the world for the past several decades for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

In the summer of 1954, I arrived at a college in the US on a scholarship. At a press interview I gave my frank opinion about the US hydrogen bomb test at the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the southern Pacific, which caused the Islanders severe public health problems and environmental damage. In addition, the bomb test caused radiation-induced illness to every member of the crew of a nearby Japanese fishing boat, and the death of one member. As a result of my remarks, I began to receive unsigned hate letters. This was my introduction to America. This hostile reaction forced me to do some soul searching. It was a temptation to quit and remain silent, but I came out of this experience with a stronger resolve to work for peace and disarmament.

I was deeply disturbed by the way many Americans uncritically and blindly followed the government line justifying the atomic bombings. It was a chilling reminder for me of the wartime behaviour of Japanese in unthinkingly swallowing government propaganda and brainwashing.

During this lonely time I was able to come across the writings of some scholars with profound analyses of the issue. One of them was Richard Falk, who said, “The bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were viewed as contributions to the ending of a popular and just war. Therefore they have never been appraised in the necessary way as atrocities.



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They have never been understood as they certainly would have been understood had Hiroshima and Nagasaki been located (in an Allied country). Somehow we have got to create that awareness, so that Hiroshima is understood to have been on the same level of depravity, and in many ways far more dangerous to us as a species and as a civilization than was even Auschwitz.”

The failure to see Hiroshima and Nagasaki as atrocities, the regarding of those two 1945 bombs as “good bombs” that contributed to winning and ending a just war helped the American conscience to accept the subsequent development of nuclear weapons, thus linking the justification of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the disastrous nuclear arms race and cold war.

Examining the current reality of the world’s efforts for nuclear disarmament, we hibakusha are dismayed and disturbed at the lack of tangible progress toward the goal. We see the nuclear weapons states’ obvious lack of political will for nuclear disarmament demonstrated by the non-ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; non-compliance with Article 6 of the Nuclear

Non-Proliferation Treaty; the 17-year deadlock in the Conference of Disarmament; the failure to negotiate a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East; the continued modernization of nuclear arsenals, etc.

Thus, a small number of nuclear weapons states have kept the world as hostages in fear and anxiety while squandering trillions of dollars away from meeting human needs in order to build ever more destructive weapons of mass destruction. This is an intolerable and unacceptable reality.

What should be our response to the nuclear status quo? I have shared my painful memories of the impact and consequences of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In nearly 70 years since then nuclear weapons states have developed much more sophisticated nuclear weapons, 17,000 of them, enough weapons to kill every one of us on the planet many times over. Is it not about time we do some soul searching, critical thinking and positive action about the choices we make for human survival? I urge you, younger people in particular, to do just that.

<http://peaceandhealthblog.com/2014/07/07/doom-from-depths/>



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