

BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

2015 IS CRUCIAL FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE WORLD

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

In-Depth Reports

Dangerous Nuclear War of Words Between NATO and Russia

BERLIN - The governments of Russia and the United States are using the Ukraine crisis as a justification for upgrading their formidable nuclear arsenals. This escalation became evident January 25, as the conservative German Sunday newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAS) opened its edition with a whole page devoted exclusively to accuse Russia of “threatening gesturing” with its nuclear weapons. ➤ Pages 2-3-4-5

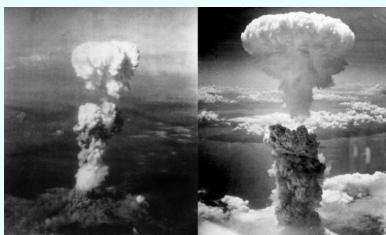


New Zealand Robustly Defend Nuclear Ban

SYDNEY – The small Pacific island country of New Zealand has punched above its weight in the international disarmament debate. For nearly three decades it has pursued an active nuclear free policy, banning entry of US warships carrying nuclear weapons or propelled by nuclear power into its ports despite being part of the [ANZUS](#) Treaty. NZ, along with the United States (US) and Australia, was amongst the three original signatory governments to the ANZUS treaty, a trilateral framework for security arrangements and cooperation, which was concluded in 1951. ➤ Pages 6-7-8

Obama-Congress Iran Sanctions Battle Goes International

WASHINGTON - While it's anyone's guess whether a final deal will be reached over Iran's nuclear programme this year, a number of key international actors have forcefully weighed in on calls from within the U.S. congress to impose more sanctions on the Islamic Republic. President Barack Obama reiterated his threat to veto new Iran-related sanctions bills while talks are in progress during his State of the Union (SOTU) address. ➤ Pages 9-10



Three Minutes Away From Doomsday

UNITED NATIONS - Unchecked climate change and the nuclear arms race have propelled the minute hand of the Doomsday Clock forward two minutes closer to midnight, from its 2012 placement of five minutes to midnight. The decision was announced in Washington DC by members of the [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#) (BAS), the body behind the calculations and creation of the 1947 Clock of Doom. The last time the clock was at three minutes to midnight was in 1984, when U.S.-Soviet relations were described by BAS as having “reached their iciest point in decades”. ➤ Pages 11-12



2015 Crucial For A Nuclear Weapon Free World

BERLIN - 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and promises to be a crucial year for moving toward a world without nuclear weapons. While indications are that the global movement for banning the bomb is gaining strength, attempts to open a new chapter in nuclear arms race should not be underestimated, a close look at developments in 2014 shows. A sign of growing awareness of the need to abolish atomic weapons is that 155 governments – more than 80 percent of the members of the United Nations – supported the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons tabled at the General Assembly in October 2014. ➤ Pages 13-14-15

What Others Say

Where's America's Commitment To Seek A World Without Nuclear Weapons? ➤ Page 16

Can Japan Jumpstart Action on Nuclear Disarmament? ➤ Page 17

The Nuclear Weapons “Procurement Holiday” ➤ Pages 18-19

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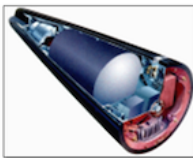
Life Extension Programs for Three Critical Weapons



W78 Warhead: Currently in Phase 6.2 (Feasibility Study) Initiated in 2012



B61 Bomb: Currently in Phase 6.3 (Development Engineering) Initiated in 2012



W76 Warhead: Currently in Phase 6.6 (Production)

This escalation became evident January 25, as the conservative German Sunday newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAS) opened its edition with a whole page devoted exclusively to accuse Russia of “threatening gesturing” with its nuclear weapons.

Under the headline “Atom weapons come again into play“, the FAS reported, without giving any source, of a long list of incidents involving Russian military “nuclear capable” – mind the ambiguity, for it is important – vehicles, from armoured tanks to aircraft, all allegedly occurred during the last couple of months.

The paper goes as far as to claim that the next North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) meeting of defence ministers, to take place February 5 in Brussels, Belgium,

will be devoted to analyse “the aggressive way Russia is targeting its nuclear capabilities against” NATO members, in Europe and North America, and its unofficial allies, such as the Ukraine.

Apart from the anonymity of its sources, the alarmist nature of the FAS report includes an important misrepresentation: It claims that until the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2014 the NATO felt under pressure to reduce its own nuclear arsenals.

Quite the opposite is true: Under the leadership of the present U.S. government, and despite president Barack Obama’s celebrated speech in the Czech capital Prague in 2009, during which he stated “[clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons](#)”, the NATO in 2010 launched a substantial modernisation of its nuclear arsenal, of some 180 B-61 nuclear bombs, deployed in Europe. The official cost of this modernisation programme amounts to at least 10 billion U.S. dollars.



This programme is but a tiny part of a whole process of massive renovation of the U.S. nuclear weapons facilities, from the actual bombs to research centres and industries, which is expected to cost more than 355 billion U.S. dollar over a period of ten years. But, as Lawrence Wittner (left), professor of history at the State University of New York/Albany, and author of the scholarly trilogy entitled “The Struggle Against the Bomb”, says in his most recent blog entry, the cost is scheduled to soar after this renovation, when an array of new nuclear weapons will be produced.

Wittner recalls that the Obama government “has asked the Pentagon to plan for 12 new nuclear missile-firing submarines, up to 100 new nuclear bombers, and 400 new (or refurbished) land-based nuclear missiles. According to outside experts and a bipartisan, independent panel commissioned by Congress and the Defence Department, that will bring the total price tag for the U.S. nuclear weapons build-up to approximately one trillion U.S. dollars.” ☞

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Such extraordinary nuclear build-up has disappointed many Obama supporters, as the New York Times (NYT) [re-ported](#) in September 2014. The NYT quotes Sam Nunn, former U.S. senator, whose writings on nuclear disarmament deeply influenced Obama, as saying: “A lot of (Obama’s nuclear weapons policies) is hard to explain. The president’s vision was a significant change in direction (in the nuclear weapons debate). But the process has preserved the status quo.” Actually, Obama’s nuclear expansion policies have worsened that status quo.

This context makes the German newspaper’s assertion the most startling, in addition to the fact that the modernisation of NATO’s nuclear arsenal deployed in Europe was adopted against the express opposition of the foreign ministry in Berlin.

More than a ‘Life Extension Program’

The modernisation of NATO’ nuclear arsenal, approved in 2010, is officially called “a full-scope Life Extension Program (LEP)” of the B-61 bombs. These bombs are deployed in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey, all members of the U.S.-led military alliance.

[According to the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration \(NNSA\)](#), the B61-12 Life Extension Program (LEP), now in its fourth year of development engineering, includes “refurbishment of both nuclear and non-nuclear components to address aging, ensure extended service life, and improve safety, reliability and security of the bomb.

With the incorporation of an Air Force tail kit assembly, the B61-12 will replace the existing B61-3, -4, -7, and -10 bombs. Moreover, fielding the B61-12 will enable the retirement of the B83, the last U.S. megaton class weapon, in the mid to late 2020s.”

Independent analysts of the LEP say such modernisation won’t mean only “a life extension programme”, but instead a formidable increase of NATO’s nuclear capabilities.

Hans M. Kristensen, director of the [Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists](#), and one of the most distinguished civil experts on nuclear weapons, says that new features of the weapons contradict early pledges by U.S. authorities that the LEP “will not support new military missions (n)or provide for new military capabilities.”

However, new information about the LEP indicates precisely the contrary. “The addition of a guided tail kit will increase the accuracy of the B61-12 compared with the other weapons and provide new warfighting capabilities,” Kristensen says. “The tail kit is necessary, officials say, for the 50-kilotons B61-12 (with a reused B61-4 warhead) to be able to hold at risk the same targets as the 360-kilotons B61-7 warhead. But in Europe, where the B61-7 has never been deployed, the guided tail kit will be a significant boost of the military capabilities – an improvement that doesn’t fit the promise of reducing the role of nuclear weapons.”

For comparison, the ‘Little boy’ nuclear bomb, with which the U.S. destroyed on August 6, 1945 the Japanese city of Hiroshima, had an explosive yield of between 13 and 18 kilotons. The ‘Fat man’ bomb that destroyed Nagasaki three days later had a yield of up to 22 kilotons.

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

For Kristensen, “The(se) military capabilities of the B61-12 will be able to cover the entire range of military targeting missions for gravity bombs, ranging from the lowest yield of the B61-4 (0.3 kilotons) to the 1,200-kiloton B83-1 as well as the nuclear earth-penetration mission of the B61-11.” Such increasing in destructive capabilities would make the new arsenal an “all-in-one nuclear bomb on steroids, spanning the full spectrum of gravity bomb missions anywhere,” Kristensen points out. ☞

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The FAS report is the last in a series of articles and studies, published by U.S. and European media and think-tank institutes, all based on NATO leaks, or on rumours. One widespread rumour, for instance, claims that Russia has deployed Iskander-M short-range ballistic missiles in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula in the Black Sea Moscow annexed in 2014.

The source of the rumour is a video available on the Internet, which allegedly shows Russian ballistic missile launchers rolling through downtown Sevastopol. But nuclear weapons experts, such as Kristensen, consider that the video in question shows no Iskander missiles, but instead Bastion-P (K300P or SSC-5) coastal defence cruise missiles.

Breedlove – Dr. Strangelove

Other reports in Western media are not so clear-cut misrepresentations, but at least ambiguous enough as to cause alarm about the Russian nuclear arsenal. In November 2014, NATO's top commander U.S. Gen. Philip Breedlove – all resemblances with the character in Stanley Kubrick's nuclear war satire "Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb", are real life ironies – claimed that Russia was reinforcing its bases in Crimea.

Breedlove admitted that the NATO does not possess information whether the Russian military operations included the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Breedlove only said at the occasion that Russian forces "capable of being nuclear" were being moved to the Crimean Peninsula.

To quote Hans Kristensen again: "Th(is) uncertainty about what's being moved to Crimea and what's stored there illustrates the special problem with non-strategic nuclear forces: because they tend to be dual-capable and serve both nuclear and conventional roles, a conventional deployment can quickly be misinterpreted as a nuclear signal or escalation whether intended or real or not."

Kristensen adds: "The uncertainty about the Crimea situation is similar (although with important differences) to the uncertainty about NATO's temporary rotational deployments of nuclear-capable fighter-bombers to the Baltic States, Poland, and Romania. Russian officials are now using these deployments to rebuff NATO's critique of Russian operations."

Again, independent experts consider talk of such operations exaggerated, because neither the Soviet Union nor today's Russia deployed nuclear arsenal in Crimea since 1950s until today.

The rhetoric on nuclear weapons is not confined to NATO or the U.S. government. In November 2014, almost simultaneous to Breedlove's press conference, the Russian newspaper Pravda [published](#) a comment titled "Russia prepares nuclear surprise for NATO" in which it claimed that, as of today, "Russia's strategic nuclear forces (SNF) are even more advanced in comparison with those of the US, as they ensure parity on warheads with a significantly smaller number of carriers of strategic nuclear weapons."

Return to Cold War hard times

This gap between Russia and the United States, the formerly official Soviet newspaper goes on as if it were a matter of pride, "may only grow in the future, given the fact that Russian defence officials promised to rearm Russia's SNF with new generation missiles."

Russia and the NATO possess some 15,000 nuclear weapons, about 93 percent of the whole world's total nuclear arsenal. This formidable capacity of global devastation, obsolete and implying high maintenance costs, constitutes, as Obama put it in his Prague speech, the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War. ☞

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And yet, to no surprise to independent analysts, both sides have grabbed the first opportunity, the Ukraine crisis, to justify their nuclear build-up. For the U.S., the Ukraine crisis was a welcome chance to retighten its relations with the European Union, badly damaged after the revelations that the National Security Agency and other U.S. intelligence agencies have been tapping all electronic communications between Gibraltar and Berlin, including the cellular phones of heads of allied governments.

In addition to assuring European NATO members' mute support for the costly B61-12 LEP, the U.S. also needed a major crisis to force European governments to accept the highly unpopular Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), as well as to wipe out all chances for political asylum for Edward Snowden.

For Russia, the crisis brought evidence that it was about time to stop behaving as a supplicant, as Michael Krepon, another U.S expert on nuclear arms control, has said.

Commenting on yet another victim of the new war of nuclear words between Russia and the NATO, the unceremonious end of the so called Nunn-Lugar cooperative threat reduction act, Krepon [writes](#), "A quarter-century after the Cold War ended, bilateral relations have again reverted to hard times. The (Nunn-Lugar) programs are now deemed unnecessary and inappropriate by Russian President Vladimir Putin and by majorities in both houses of the U.S. Congress. Russia is no longer a supplicant, and the U.S. Congress is no longer feeling generous."

The Nunn-Lugar act aimed at securing and dismantling former Soviet nuclear arsenals deployed in former Soviet territories, in such states as Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Or, to quote Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Centre, and one of the most distinguished peace researchers in Russia: "The political crisis that erupted in Ukraine in early 2014 has ended the period in Russian-Western relations that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The crisis marks the end of a generally cooperative phase in those relations (...). Instead, the Ukraine crisis has opened a new period of heightened rivalry, even confrontation, between former Cold War adversaries." They are in fact more than armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons. [IDN-InDepthNews – January 30, 2015] ❖

". . . Russia's strategic nuclear forces (SNF) are even more advanced in comparison with those of the US, as they ensure parity on warheads with a significantly smaller number of carriers of strategic nuclear weapons. This gap between Russia and the United States may only grow in the future, given the fact that Russian defense officials promised to rearm Russia's SNF with new generation missiles.

The progress was made possible thanks to the treaty on the limitation of nuclear weapons, also known as START-3. The treaty was signed by Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama on 8 April 2010 in Prague (came into force on 5 February 2011). In accordance with the document, nuclear warheads of the parties are to be reduced to 1,550 by 2021. The number of carriers (intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers) is supposed to be cut to 700 units." – pravda.ru

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New Zealand Robustly Defend Nuclear Ban

By NEENA BHANDARI

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NZ, along with the United States (US) and Australia, was amongst the three original signatory governments to the ANZUS treaty, a trilateral framework for security arrangements and cooperation, which was concluded in 1951.

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, New Zealand opposed French nuclear tests in the Pacific. In 1983, the visit of the nuclear-powered frigate USS Texas sparked protests. Ordinary people spurred an anti-nuclear movement, which reached its peak in the mid-1980s and shaped NZ's foreign policy and identity as a nation.

“It was an extremely broad campaign, which included professionals, neighbourhood groups, students, religious, non-religious, young and old. In many ways, it was the diversity and the non-hierarchical nature of the movement that was part of its appeal and strength. At one point there were over 300 local activist groups across the country,” says Marie Leadbeater, the author of *Peace, Power and Politics: How New Zealand became nuclear free*.

The defining moment came in July 1985 with the sinking of the Greenpeace flagship, Rainbow Warrior, which had been involved in protests over French nuclear testing.

The then Prime Minister David Lange said: “There is only one thing more dangerous than being attacked by nuclear weapons and that is being protected by them.” In 1987, the Labour government passed the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act.

“The legislation is now so well entrenched in the New Zealand psyche, that no party would propose rescinding it in the future. The National Party (the leader of the current government) has now said explicitly that they would not repeal that legislation,” Maryan Street, former NZ Labour Party Spokesperson on Disarmament and Arms Control, told IDN.

Agrees Kennedy Graham, Green Party MP with responsibility for global affairs. “There is multi-party support now for New Zealand's Nuclear Free Zone legislation.”

The US Government has not attempted to overturn NZ's nuclear ban, but in the past five years it has begun to re-establish defence and strategic ties with New Zealand. In November 2010, the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and the then NZ Foreign Minister Murray McCully, signed the Wellington Declaration, which laid the framework for a new strategic partnership between the two countries.

In June 2012, the Washington Declaration further enhanced defence cooperation arrangements that included maritime security, counter-proliferation, counter-terrorism, and anti-piracy. Under this agreement, NZ agreed to join RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific), the world's largest maritime exercise, and joint exercises with the US and Australian forces. ➔

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Cautions Nic Maclellan, author and researcher: “We should be careful and not glorify NZ’s position too much as it is changing. Recent revelations by Wikileaks and Edward Snowden have highlighted the level of engagement between the ANZUS allies and the five party UKUSA agreement also known as the ‘Five Eyes Treaty’, whereby the UK, Canada and the ANZUS allies share signals intelligence.”

NZ has two signals intelligence bases in Tangimoana and Waihopai. Leadbeater says, “I opposed NZ’s participation in the UKUSA agreement on account of its lack of transparency and its potential to make us party to spying on other nations and even contributing to wars.”

The ANZUS allies are also part of the Quadrilateral Defence Coordinating Group with France as an observer. So is there renewed pressure from the US on NZ to join the nuclear umbrella?

“The US understands that our nuclear legislation is a no-go area and works with us around it. They see us as a leader in the area on non-proliferation and disarmament. We were also invited by US President Barack Obama to attend the security conference on the threat of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists,” Street, who is also the former Chair of NZ Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, told IDN.

Dangers lurking

NZ’s clean green image further promoted as 100% Pure by the Tourism NZ campaign is partly to do with the country being nuclear free. It doesn’t have nuclear power so the chances of a localised accident occurring are slim.

But Street warns: “The most real danger would be in the transporting of nuclear waste through our waters (eg: depleted uranium, yellow cake from Australia, etc.). There is no protection against that happening and therefore we would be vulnerable to an accident occurring to any of those vessels. Protection against that would require new legislation around hazardous goods and substances.”

NZ has been very active in highlighting the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in direct contrast to Australia. By October 2014, 155 countries had signed the NZ-led UN statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

“Given the width of support for the New Zealand initiative among members of the UN it seems to me that the time is right to nail down the illegality of nuclear weapons through international agreement. Now New Zealand is on the Security Council and I hope we will keep our foot on the pedal and advance strongly the cause of nuclear disarmament,” wrote former NZ Prime Minister, Sir Geoffrey Palmer in an article ‘The Nuclear Nightmare’ in November 2014.

The International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion on Nuclear Weapons in 1996 had stated: “The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet.”

Today, the anti-nuclear movement is not very active in NZ, but there is a strong small core group of people, who are active in global anti-nuclear activities.

As Kate Dewes, a nuclear abolition activist who has carried on this fight for over three decades told IDN, “There are a few groups, both national and local, which have members on the government appointed Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC), who give advice as to what the government should be doing to implement the NZ Disarmament and Arms Control Act of 1987. Some groups meet regularly with the Ambassador for Disarmament and ministry officials to encourage them to take leadership on current disarmament issues such as nuclear abolition, banning of landmines, cluster and depleted uranium munitions, and the Arms Trade Treaty.” ☺

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“The New Zealand population will never accept a role in upholding nuclear deterrence under the 'nuclear umbrella'. We have won that debate and young New Zealanders are very proud of our nuclear free policy”, added Dewes, quoting a 1986 opinion poll that confirmed that 92 percent New Zealanders opposed nuclear weapons and 69 percent opposed warship visits; 92 percent wanted NZ to promote nuclear disarmament through the UN, while 88 percent supported the promotion of nuclear-free zones.

Successive opinion polls in Australia have shown that Australians overwhelmingly reject nuclear weapons. “Yet our government, in deference to the US, remains opposed to the idea of a treaty banning these ultimate weapons of mass destruction. We are calling on the government to rule out any role for nuclear weapons in our nation's military doctrines, just as New Zealand did in the 1980s, and to join efforts to achieve a global ban”, Australia Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Tim Wright, told IDN.

Australia is part of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and like NZ, Australia also has nuclear-free legislation, [the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty Act 1986](#). “However, this legislation (and the treaty itself) doesn't prevent US nuclear-armed vessels from entering Australian ports, nor does it prevent Australia from maintaining its policy of extended nuclear deterrence”, says Wright. [IDN-InDepthNews – January 26, 2015] ❖



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Obama-Congress Iran Sanctions Battle Goes International

By JASMIN RAMSEY

WASHINGTON (IPS) - While it's anyone's guess whether a final deal will be reached over Iran's nuclear programme this year, a number of key international actors have forcefully weighed in on calls from within the U.S. congress to impose more sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

President Barack Obama reiterated his threat to veto new Iran-related sanctions bills while talks are in progress during his State of the Union (SOTU) address.

"It doesn't make sense," he said Jan. 20 in his second to last SOTU. "New sanctions passed by this Congress, at this moment in time, will all but guarantee that diplomacy fails—alienating America from its allies; and ensuring that Iran starts up its nuclear programme again."

The administration's call to "give diplomacy with Iran a chance" was echoed a day later by key members of the P5+1 (U.S., U.K., France, Russia, China plus Germany), which is negotiating with Iran over its nuclear programme, through an op-ed in the Washington Post.

"...[I]ntroducing new hurdles at this critical stage of the negotiations, including through additional nuclear-related sanctions legislation on Iran, would jeopardize our efforts at a critical juncture," wrote Laurent Fabius (France), Philip Hammond (U.K.), Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Germany) and Federica Mogherini (EU) on Jan. 21.

"New sanctions at this moment might also fracture the international coalition that has made sanctions so effective so far," they continued. "Rather than strengthening our negotiating position, new sanctions legislation at this point would set us back."

During a joint press conference with Obama at the White House, the U.K.'s Prime Minister David Cameron admitted he had contacted members of the U.S. Senate to urge against more sanctions on Iran at this time.

"[Y]es, I have contacted a couple of senators this morning and I may speak to one or two more this afternoon," he told reporters on Jan. 16.

"[I]t's the opinion of the United Kingdom that further sanctions or further threat of sanctions at this point won't actually help to bring the talks to a successful conclusion and they could fracture the international unity that there's been, which has been so valuable in presenting a united front to Iran," said Cameron.

In what has been widely perceived by analysts as a rebuff to Obama's Iran policy, reports surfaced the day after Obama's SOTU that the House of Representatives Speaker John A. Boehner had invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—who has made no secret of his opposition to Obama's approach to Iran—to address a joint session of Congress on Feb. 11.

Netanyahu accepted the invitation, but changed the date to Mar. 3, when he would be visiting Washington for a conference hosted by the prominent Israel lobby group, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

The invite, which was not coordinated with the White House, clearly surprised the Obama administration, which said it would not be receiving the Israeli prime minister while he is in town, citing a policy against receiving foreign leaders close to election dates (the Israeli election will be in March). While Netanyahu has long recommended hard-line positions on what a final deal over nuclear program should entail—including "non-starters" such as zero-percent uranium enrichment on Iranian soil—he cannot be faulted for accepting the speaker's invitation, according to the U.S.'s former ambassador to NATO, Robert E. Hunter, who told IPS: "If there is fault, it lies with the Speaker of the House." ☞

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“If the Netanyahu visit, with its underscoring of the political potency of the Israeli lobby on Capitol Hill, is successful in ensuring veto-proof support in the Senate for overriding the threatened Obama veto of sanctions legislation, that would saddle Boehner and company with shared responsibility not only for the possible collapse of the nuclear talks...but also for the increased chances of war with Iran,” he said.

But there’s no guarantee at this point whether the bills at the centre of the battle—authored by Republican Mark Kirk and Democrat Bob Menendez, and another by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Corker—will garner the veto-proof majority necessary to become legislation.

With the support of the Democratic leadership in Congress, the administration has so far successfully prevented the Kirk-Menendez bill from coming to the floor since it was introduced in 2013.

A growing number of current and former high-level officials have also voiced opposition to more sanctions at this time.

“Israeli intelligence has told the U.S. that rolling out new sanctions against Iran would amount to ‘throwing a grenade’ into the negotiations process,” Secretary of State John Kerry told CBS News on Jan. 21.

“Why would we want to be the catalyst for the collapse of negotiations before we really know whether there is something we can get out of them?” asked former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton after opposing new sanctions during a forum in Winnipeg, Canada.

“We believe that new sanctions are not needed at this time,” the Under Secretary of Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen told the Wall Street Journal.

“To the contrary, new sanctions at this time, even with a delayed trigger, are more likely to undermine, rather than enhance, the chances of achieving a comprehensive agreement,” he said.

While the battle isn’t over yet, in the wake of Obama’s veto threat and Boehner’s invitation to Bibi, even some of the Democratic co-sponsors of the original Kirk-Menendez bill appear to be moving in the White House’s direction.

“I’m considering very seriously the very cogent points that [Obama’s] made in favour of delaying any congressional action,” Senator Richard Blumenthal told Politico.

“I’m talking to colleagues on both sides of the aisle. And I think they are thinking, and rethinking, their positions in light of the points that the president and his team are making to us,” he said. (IPS | Jan 23, 2015) ❖



President Barack Obama delivers the State of the Union address in the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2015. Credit: Official White House Photo by Pete Souza

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Three Minutes Away From Doomsday

By LEILA LEMGHALEF

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - Unchecked climate change and the nuclear arms race have propelled the minute hand of the Doomsday Clock forward two minutes closer to midnight, from its 2012 placement of five minutes to midnight.

The decision was announced in Washington DC by members of the [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#) (BAS), the body behind the calculations and creation of the 1947 Clock of Doom.

The last time the clock was at three minutes to midnight was in 1984, when U.S.-Soviet relations were described by BAS as having “reached their iciest point in decades”.

Today’s polemic takes into account the immutable laws of science in relation to the “climate catastrophe” as well as the activities of modernisation of massive nuclear arsenals, which come with inadvertent risks.

“The question gets much more complicated than someone with their finger on the button,” said Kennette Benedict, executive director of BAS.

Another major problem is the world’s addiction to fossil fuels, said BAS.

Climate change and nuclear tensions were placed on equal footing in this year’s warning.

“And while fossil-fuel burning technologies may seem like a less kind of abrupt way to ruin the world, they’re doing it in slow motion,” said Benedict.

Citizen’s potential

“Negotiators on the international treaty of climate change or any international treaty are working within the fairly narrow latitude afforded them by their governments. And the governments themselves are working within the latitudes afforded them by their constituencies,” said BAS member of the Science and Security Board Sivan Kartha, senior scientist with the Stockholm Environment Institute.

Real cooperation on the international front, he said, “will rely on there being a demand for that, a mandate for that, from constituencies within countries,” also noting “today’s extremely daunting political opposition to climate action”.

President of the [Global Security Institute](#) Jonathan Granoff described a series of global existential challenges that could accelerate the arrival of doomsday, including the stability of the climate, the acidity of the oceans, and biodiversity, as well as widespread goals of strategic stability and the pursuit of dominance.

“Remember we are extinguishing species at up to one thousand times faster than what would be the normal evolutionary base rate,” he told IPS. “The backdrop of these challenges arising from science, technology, and social organisation is the immature relationship between states in their pursuit of security through the application of the threat or use of force. The most dangerous tool of the pursuit of security through force are the world’s nuclear arsenals.

“...On the other hand, a growing consensus within informed members of global governance and civil society is rapidly coming to understand that no nation can be secure in an insecure world. And the business community has rapidly integrated in such a fashion that they have demonstrated the capacity of cooperation, if driven by recognised self-interests,” he said. ☺

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“I am reminded that in the 17th Century, the world moved from the predominance of the city-state into the modern world of the nation state. Such a phenomena required national identity. National identity occurred largely because of national grammar and language, which rested on the technological innovations of the printing press.

“Today, the technology that will allow us to have global cultural grammar and identity is being provided by the Internet. And thus, the tools, to move from the dis-functionality of posing national interest against the global common good has the potential to be overcome.”

In light of his analysis, the clock’s minute hand can be influenced for the better or for the worse, and 2015 will present opportunities for progress to be made.

The simple truth

Alyn Ware is a member of the [World Future Council](#) and the coordinator of [Global Wave 2015](#), an initiative on “Global Action to Wave Goodbye to Nukes”.

Ware spoke to IPS ahead of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

“The hundreds of billions of dollars that’s wasted on nuclear weapons is needed in order to shift our economy from a carbon-based economy to an economy based on renewable energy,” he told IPS, also explaining that “the competition and the confrontation and conflicts that are perpetuated by nuclear weapons prevent the type of cooperation that’s required for addressing climate change.

“The simple truth on nuclear weapons is that they are inconsistent with civilisation. Threatening to annihilate cities, innocent people, future generations, is not consistent with humanity,” Ware told IPS.

“And then there’s also a simple truth with climate change,” he added. “The simple truth is we have to move from a carbon-based economy to one that’s focused more on renewable energies.” He also acknowledged the nuances surrounding the implementation of these simple truths.

“At the moment, we don’t have sufficient political commitment to either of them,” he said, addressing vested interests preventing that kind of action, including corporations making nuclear weapons or selling oil, coal or gas.

“What we’re looking at is empowering people,” he said. For that reason, he thinks the Doomsday Clock is very good. “Because it’s simple, it’s really understandable, and it gives the idea that, hey, we can all be involved in this.” (IPS | January 23, 2015) ❖

Global Wave 2015 Community



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2015 Crucial For A Nuclear Weapon Free World

By JAMSHED BARUAH

BERLIN (IDN) - 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and promises to be a crucial year for moving toward a world without nuclear weapons. While indications are that the global movement for banning the bomb is gaining strength, attempts to open a new chapter in nuclear arms race should not be underestimated, a close look at developments in 2014 shows.

A sign of growing awareness of the need to abolish atomic weapons is that 155 governments – more than 80 percent of the members of the United Nations – supported the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons tabled at the General Assembly in October 2014.

The view powerfully expressed in the Joint Statement, that it is “in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances,” expresses the deepening consensus of humankind, [noted](#) Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), an indefatigable champion of a world without nuclear weapons.



Government representatives of 44 out of 158 states, which participated in the December 8-9 Vienna International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, said that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use by design, miscalculation or madness, technical or human error remains real.

States that expressed support for a ban treaty at the Vienna Conference include: Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Holy See, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Echoing worldwide sentiments, Pope Francis called in a message to the conference for nuclear weapons to be “banned once and for all”. In the message, delivered by Archbishop Silvano Maria Tomasi, Pope Francis told nearly 1,000 participants representing 158 states and over 200 civil society organizations that:

“A world without nuclear weapons’ is a goal shared by all nations and echoed by world leaders, as well as the aspiration of millions of men and women. The future and the survival of the human family hinges on moving beyond this ideal and ensuring that it becomes a reality.”

The Vienna conference was the third after the Oslo (Norway) gathering in 2013 and Nayarit (Mexico) early 2014. Unlike the previous conferences, the United States and Britain – two of the five members of the nuclear club, along with France, Russia and China – participated. In addition, an unofficial representative from China attended the meeting. Two other nuclear-armed states, India and Pakistan, who took part in the previous two meetings, were also present in Vienna. ➔

Photo: EU Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini | Credit: PNND

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Responding to the call of 44 states for banning the bomb, Austria delivered the “Austrian pledge” in which it committed to work to “fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons” and pledged, “to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal”.

Kudos for Austria

As a gesture of praise for the Austrian pledge, the Washington-based [Arms Control Association](#) (ACA) designated Austria's Director for Arms Control, Non-proliferation, and Disarmament Ambassador Alexander Kmentt as the 2014 "Arms Control Person of the Year". The ACA announced on January 8 that Kmentt had received the highest number of votes in an online poll.

"Ambassador Kmentt deserves enormous credit for making the third conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons the most inclusive and extensive yet," said Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association. "The Vienna conference has changed the international conversation about nuclear weapons and provided renewed urgency to the effort to move toward a world free of nuclear weapons," he said.

"The majority of states parties to the [NPT](#) (Non-proliferation Treaty) will expect the upcoming Review Conference in May to take into account the findings and conclusions of the Vienna conference and prompt the world's nuclear weapon states to make faster progress on their NPT Article VI commitments," added Kimball.

NPT, which entered into force in March 1970, seeks to inhibit the spread of nuclear weapons. Its 190 states-parties are classified in two categories: nuclear-weapon states (NWS) – consisting of the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom – and non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS). Under the treaty, the five NWS commit to pursue general and complete disarmament, while the NNWS agree to forgo developing or acquiring nuclear weapons.

Article VI commits the NWS 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, and on a treaty on general and complete

disarmament under strict and effective international control."

PNND Council member EU foreign minister

Another important development that boosted the movement for a nuclear weapon free world was the nomination of Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini as the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, replacing Catherine Ashton.

Mogherini has played an active role in [PNND](#) (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament), endorsing a number of PNND member-led initiatives including the [Parliamentarians Declaration Supporting a Nuclear Weapons Convention](#) and the [Joint Parliamentary Statement for a Middle East Free from Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction](#).

She has spoken at several PNND events and led initiatives in the Italian parliament including a [resolution adopted unanimously in June 2009](#) supporting the UN Secretary-General's Five Point Proposal for Nuclear Disarmament. (Read: [Italian Parliament adopts disarmament resolution](#)).

Mogherini has been a member of PNND since she first became a member of the Italian parliament in 2008, and has served on the PNND Council since 2010. She has also become a member of the [European Leadership Network for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation](#), and of the [CTBT Group of Eminent Persons](#).

PNND has also worked with her husband Matteo Rebesani in his role as one of the organisers of the Nobel Peace Summits – in particular to build an active nuclear disarmament program for the Summits and for cooperation between Nobel Peace laureates on nuclear disarmament (Read: [Parliamentarians and Nobel Laureates advance nuclear abolition](#)).

While these and similar development give cause for sanguine optimism that 2015 might turn out to be a milestone on the road to a nuke-free world, tensions in relations between the U.S. and Russia over Ukraine have triggered discussions about the continued relevance of ‘nuclear deterrence’. ☞

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Supporters of this theory hold that nuclear weapons are intended to deter other states from attacking with their nuclear weapons, through the promise of retaliation and possibly mutually assured destruction (MAD).

‘Sputnik’ reported on December 17 that the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, still considers nuclear arsenals as a crucial factor of international security. Such destructive weapons must be prevented from falling into the hands of extremists at all costs, he said in an interview with RT TV channel.

"I do not agree with those who claim that nuclear threat is not a deterrent anymore. We are now far more aware of what nuclear weapons and nuclear power are [capable of]," Gorbachev reportedly said.

Gorbachev cited Russia's R-36M (SS-18 Satan) inter-continental ballistic missile, which he said has an explosive force "of a hundred Chernobyls," as an example of why nuclear weapons are still a crucial factor of international security. He stressed this kind of destructive weapons must be prevented from falling into the hands of extremists at all costs.

Earlier in December, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the importance of maintaining the country's nuclear deterrence capability due to the growing number of security challenges.

As one of his final acts of 2014, on December 26, President Putin signed Russia's [new military doctrine](#). In principle, the doctrine, an official statement on national defence, is regularly updated and made public. Its previous iteration had been in place since February 2010.

Writing in the [National Interest](#) on December 31, Dmitri Trenin said: "In the run-up to the publication of the text, there were gloomy predictions. One suggested that the United States and its NATO allies would be formally designated Russia's likely adversaries. Another one, based on the remarks of a senior serving general, expected Russia to adopt the notion of preventive nuclear strike. Neither of these provisions found its way into the published document. The doctrine does, however, faithfully reflect the sea change that occurred in Russia's foreign policy and security and defense postures in 2014."

Trenin argues that essentially, for Russian Commander-in-Chief Putin and for his generals, admirals and security officials, war in 2014 ceased to be a risk and turned into grim reality. Russia has had to use its military forces in [Ukraine](#), arguably the most important neighbor it has in Europe. The conflict over Ukraine, in Moscow's view, reflects the fundamental reality of an "intensification of global competition" and the "rivalry of value orientations and models of development."

"There was a time when nuclear weapons were seen as the best way to prevent world war. Not anymore," says an observer of the Vienna conference. "Supporters of disarmament – including the Red Cross, [Pope Francis](#), and, believe it or not, [Henry Kissinger](#) – say that's wrong" and that deterrence does not work in a multipolar world. Instead, the presence of nuclear weapons just creates an incentive for more proliferation, as small countries try to one-up their regional adversaries.

Addressing experts in Geneva on December 17, Robert Wood, the U.S. Special Representative to the Conference on Disarmament said: "Looking ahead, it remains the policy of the United States to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. And we are facing new challenges as we consider how to responsibly eliminate the last 15% of those weapons. As we move to smaller and smaller numbers, leading to zero globally, we must in turn become rigorously more and more confident and trusting that all are fulfilling their commitments."

He added: "In considering future reductions, the United States believes that the focus must be on responsible measures that can be trusted and verified. We will learn from our past experience and continue to move ahead with each step building on the last. While there is no pre-determined sequence of steps, and indeed we should pursue progress on multiple paths, there is no way to skip to the end and forgo the hard work of preparing for the technical and political disarmament challenges that lie ahead. Patience and persistence are needed from all NPT parties both among and beyond the P5 (USA, Russia, France, UK and China)." [IDN-InDepthNews – January 9, 2015] ❖

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What Others Say

Where's America's Commitment To Seek A World Without Nuclear Weapons?

By David Krieger | President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (www.wagingpeace.org)

Nuclear weapons do not make Americans safer. Rather, they threaten us all with their uncontrollable and unforgiving power. They are weapons of mass annihilation, indiscriminate in nature, threatening combatants and civilians alike. They kill and maim. They cause unnecessary suffering. They are immoral and their use would violate the humanitarian laws of warfare. No country should be allowed to possess weaponry that is capable of destroying civilization and ending most life on the planet, including the human species.

Nuclear weapons and human fallibility are a most dangerous mix. As long as nuclear weapons exist in the world, civilization and the human species are threatened. Nuclear deterrence is not foolproof, and time is not our friend. We must approach this task with the urgency it demands. We must confront nuclear weapons and those countries that possess and rely upon them with what Martin Luther King, Jr. called "the fierce urgency of now."

There are still more than 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world, most in the arsenals of the United States and Russia. However, seven other countries also possess these annihilators. These countries are: the UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea. Even one of these weapons can destroy a city, a few can destroy a country, and an exchange of 100 of them between India and Pakistan on the other side's cities could trigger a nuclear famine resulting in the deaths of some two billion people globally. A larger nuclear exchange between the US and Russia could return the planet to an ice age, resulting in nearly universal death.

What is needed today is for the countries of the world to engage in negotiations in good faith to end the nuclear arms race and to achieve total nuclear disarmament. That is what is required of us and the other countries of the world under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and customary international law. Unfortunately, rather than negotiating in good faith for these ends, the nuclear-armed countries are engaged in expensive programs to modernize their nuclear arsenals.

The goal of negotiations should be a universal agreement for all the nuclear-armed countries to give up their nu-

clear arsenals in a phased, verifiable, irreversible and transparent manner. It will require the participation of all countries, but some country will need to lead in convening these negotiations. That country should be the United States of America, given its background in developing, using and testing nuclear weapons. But, if history is a guide, that won't happen until the people of the United States demand it of their government.

The country that has stepped up to take a leadership role in calling on the nuclear-armed nations to fulfill their obligations for nuclear disarmament is a small, courageous Pacific Island state, the Republic of the Marshall Islands. It is suing the nine nuclear-armed nations to require them to do what they are obligated to do under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and customary international law; that is, to negotiate in good faith to end the nuclear arms race and for nuclear disarmament.

The Nuclear Zero initiative of the Marshall Islands falls in this 70th anniversary year of the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States. Enough people have already suffered from nuclear weapons – those in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, those in the Marshall Islands, the Nevada Test Site, Semipalatinsk, Lop Nor and other nuclear weapon test sites around the world. It is time for humanity to take charge of its own destiny. In the Nuclear Age, ridding the world of nuclear weapons is an imperative. Our common future depends upon our shared success.

Of course, the perspective expressed above is my own. It is tragic, though, that such a perspective did not make it into the President's 2015 State of the Union Message to the Congress and People of the United States. It was an opportunity to teach and lead that was missed by the President. Why, we might ask, is he engaged in modernizing the US nuclear arsenal, a trillion dollar project, instead of negotiating for the elimination of nuclear weapons? After all, in Prague in 2009, the president expressed boldly, "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." What has happened to that commitment?

Source: The Hill, Jan. 30, 2015 ❖

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What Others Say

Can Japan Jumpstart Action on Nuclear Disarmament?

By Daryl G. Kimball*

Nuclear weapons continue to pose global dangers. Their elimination is a global enterprise that requires renewed leadership, dialogue, and action on the part of all the world's nations.

Unfortunately, 70 years after the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, progress on disarmament is stalled and several states are expanding or modernizing their nuclear arsenals.

China, India, and Pakistan are all pursuing new ballistic missile, cruise missile, and sea-based nuclear delivery systems. North Korea continues its nuclear pursuits in violation of its earlier denuclearization pledges.

These arsenals, although smaller in number, are dangerous and destabilizing. Leaders in Beijing, New Delhi, and Islamabad profess support for disarmament and "minimum" deterrence, but their actions suggest otherwise. Chinese officials suggest they will act only if and when there are deeper U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons cuts.

Clearly, Washington and Moscow can and must do more to reduce their bloated nuclear stockpiles. Each deploys about 1,600 strategic warheads -- far more than needed to deter a nuclear attack. If used even in a "limited" way, the result would be global nuclear devastation.

In 2013, President Barack Obama announced he is prepared to cut the U.S. arsenal by an additional one-third, but Russian President Vladimir Putin's answer, so far, is "Nyet."

Meanwhile, progress on the nuclear test ban treaty and other initiatives is negligible.

Frustrated by the slow pace of progress, more than 150 states have convened conferences on the catastrophic humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, these efforts have not yet halted nuclear competition or led to multilateral disarmament talks.

Creative ideas are needed to overcome the obstacles and excuses. A new nuclear disarmament dialogue is needed.

Now is the time for Japan and the other members of the 11-nation Nonproliferation and Disarmament Initiative to provide much-needed leadership by inviting the leaders of a representative group of 20 to 30 nuclear and nonnuclear weapon states to a one- or two-day summit on steps to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

The high-level meeting -- ideally to be held around the Aug. 6 and 9, 2015 anniversaries -- could be a starting point for ongoing disarmament discussions. Such a dialogue should be based on a clear understanding of the impact of nuclear weapons use and an objective assessment of the security concerns of states.

Participants should be asked to bring "house gifts" -- specific actions by states that would concretely reduce nuclear risks, freeze or reduce numbers of nuclear weapons, and/or make nuclear programs more transparent.

Such a summit would complement an ongoing dialogue on nuclear terms and concepts involving the P5 nuclear-armed states, the humanitarian impacts conferences, and provide new momentum on disarmament.

For example, cutting U.S.-Russian arsenals to 1,000 strategic warheads each, combined with a nuclear weapons freeze by China, India, and Pakistan, could help create the conditions for multilateral talks on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

To reinvigorate the disarmament system and make the 2015 NPT Review Conference a success, Japan and other key states must do more than simply repeat previous calls for action. They must take action.

Source <http://english.kyodonews.jp/news/2015/01/333766.html> ❖

*Daryl G. Kimball is executive director of the independent, U.S.-based Arms Control Association.

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What Others Say

The Nuclear Weapons “Procurement Holiday”

By Hans M. Kristensen*



It has become popular among military and congressional leaders to argue that the United States has had a “procurement holiday” in nuclear force planning for the past two decades.

“Over the past 20-25 years, we took a procurement holiday” in modernizing U.S. nuclear forces, Major General Garrett Harencak, the Air Force’s assistant chief of staff for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration, said in a [speech](#) yesterday (Jan. 20).

Harencak’s claim strongly resembles the [statement](#) made by then-commander of US Air Force Global Strike Command, Lt. General Jim Kowalski, that the United States had “taken about a 20 year procurement holiday since the Soviet Union dissolved.”

Kowalski, who is now deputy commander at US Strategic Command, [made a similar claim](#) in May 2012: “Our nation has enjoyed an extended procurement holiday as we’ve deferred vigorous modernization of our nuclear deterrent forces for almost 20 years.”

One can always want more, but the “procurement holiday” claim glosses over the busy nuclear modernization and maintenance efforts of the past two decades.

About That Holiday...

If “holiday” [generally refers](#) to “a day of festivity or recreation when no work is done,” then its been

en a bad holiday. For during the “procurement holiday” described by Harencak, the United States has been busy fielding and upgrading submarines, bombers, missiles, cruise missiles, gravity bombs, reentry vehicles, command and control satellites, warhead surveillance and production facilities .

Despite claims about a two-decade long nuclear weapons “procurement holiday,” the United States has actually been busy modernizing and maintaining its nuclear forces.

*Hans M. Kristensen is the director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists where he provides the public with analysis and background information about the status of nuclear forces and the role of nuclear weapons.

Photo above: Major General Garrett Harencak | Source: FAS Blog, Jan. 21, 2015 ➔

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The not-so-procurement-holiday includes fielding of eight of 14 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines (the last in 1997), fielding of the Trident II sea-launched ballistic missile (the world's most reliable nuclear missile), all 21 B-2A stealth bombers (the last in 2000), an \$8 billion-plus complete overhaul of the entire Minuteman III ICBM force including back-fitting it with the W87 warhead, five B61 bomb modifications, one modification of the B83 bomb, a nuclear cruise missile, the W88 warhead, completed three smaller life-extensions of the W87 ICBM warhead and two B61 modifications, and developed and commenced full-scale production of the modified W76-1 warhead.

Harencak's job obviously is to advocate nuclear modernization but glossing over the considerable efforts that have been done to maintain the nuclear deterrent for the past two decades is, well, kind of embarrassing.

Russia and China have continued to introduce new weapons and the United States is falling behind, so the warning from Harencak and others goes. But modernizations happen in cycles. Generally speaking, the previous Russian strategic modernization happened in the 1970s and 1980s (the country was down on its knees much of the 1990s), so now we're seeing their next round of modernizations. Similarly, China modernized in the 1970s and 1980s so now we're seeing their next cycle. (For an overview about worldwide nuclear weapons modernization programs, see [this article](#).)

The United States modernized later (1980s-2000s), and since then has focused more on refurbishing and life-extending existing weapons instead of wasting money on mindlessly deploying new systems.

What the next cycle of U.S. nuclear modernizations should look like, how much is needed and with what kinds of capabilities, requires a calm and intelligent assessment.

Comparing Nuclear Apples and Oranges With a Vengeance

"Once you strip away all the emotions, once you strip away all the 'I just don't like nuclear weapons,' OK fine. Alright. And I would love to live in a world that

doesn't have it. But you live in this world. And in this world there still is a nuclear threat," Harencak said yesterday in an apparent rejection of at least part of his Commander-in-Chief's 2009 [Prague speech](#).

"This nuclear deterrent, here in January 2015, I'm here to tell you, is relevant and is as needed today as it was in January 1965, and 1975, and 1985, and 1995. And it will be till that happy day comes when we rid the world of nuclear weapons. It will be just as relevant in 2025, ten years from now...it will still be as relevant," he claimed.

God forbid we have emotions when assessing the nuclear mission, but I fear Harencak may be doing the deterrent mission a disservice with his over-zealous nuclear advocacy that belittles other views and time-jumps from Cold War relevance to today's world.

Whether or not one believes that nuclear weapons are relevant and needed (or to what extent) in today's world, to suggest that they are as relevant and as needed today as during the nail-biting and gong-ho conditions that characterized the Cold War demonstrates a surprising lack of understanding and perspective. Remember: the Cold War that held the world hostage at gunpoint with tens of thousands of nuclear weapons deployed around the world only minutes from global annihilation?

Even with Russian and Chinese nuclear modernizations, there is no indication that today's threats or challenges are even remotely as dire or as intense as the Cold War.

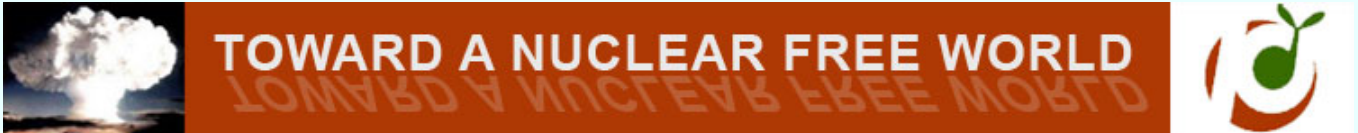
Instead of false claims about "procurement holiday" and demonization of other views – [listen](#) for example to Harencak's new bomber argument: if you don't want to pay for my grand child to destroy enemy targets with the next-generation bomber, then send your own grandchild! – how about an intelligent debate about how much is needed, for what purpose, and at what cost?

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