

BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

2015 IS CRUCIAL FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE WORLD

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

In-Depth Reports

World's Major Powers, in 'Shameful Behaviour', Opt out of Nuclear Resolution

By Rodney Reynolds



When the world's major nuclear powers express their support for nuclear disarmament, their political rhetoric usually fails to match their actions – even as they continue to modernize their arsenals. Undeterred, the UN's Committee on Disarmament and International Security (also known as the First Committee) traditionally adopts a cluster of over 15-20 resolutions every year – mostly on arms control and nuclear disarmament. ➡ Pages 02-04

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Need for Dialogue Among Divides: A Pugwash Perspective ➡ Pages 05-09

By Jayantha Dhanapala



The recent Nagasaki Pugwash Conference coincided with many significant anniversaries in the history of global peace and security – on this occasion with strong links to the host country, Japan.

- It was the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Organization, which underpins the prevailing global system of peace and security with its Charter and the framework of norms and values it upholds;

- It was the 60th anniversary of the Pugwash bedrock document and surely one of the earliest formulations of the “Humanitarian Pledge” of today – the 1955 London Manifesto of the Pugwash founding fathers Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell – one of whose co-signatories was Professor Hideki Yukawa, the Nobel Physics Laureate from Kyoto University, Japan...

Pugwash Conference Warns of the Growing Menace of Nuclear Weapons

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By Maureen McCue and Ira Helfand

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UNITED NATIONS – When the world's major nuclear powers express their support for nuclear disarmament, their political rhetoric usually fails to match their actions – even as they continue to modernize their arsenals. Undeterred, the UN's Committee on Disarmament and International Security (also known as the [First Committee](#)) traditionally adopts a cluster of over 15-20 resolutions every year – mostly on arms control and nuclear disarmament.

This year there was one significant exception: the U.S., Britain and France, three of the world's major nuclear powers, opted to abstain on a resolution, spearheaded by Japan every year, on united action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. All three countries voted in favour of the resolution last year, with U.S. and Britain as co-sponsors. But this year both countries were missing in action – much to the disappointment of Japan, a key Western ally.

The speculation at the UN is that the abstentions were triggered largely by the fact that the resolution included the term *hibakushas*, or survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 70 years ago, underlying the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

The [resolution](#) was adopted on November 2 by a vote of 156 to 3, with 17 abstentions.

The three negative votes came from Russia and China, the other two major nuclear powers, plus North Korea.

Dr M.V. Ramana, a physicist and lecturer at [Princeton University's Programme on Science and Global Security](#) and the [Nuclear Futures Laboratory](#), said: "I think this is shameful behavior on the part of the nuclear weapon states, if they cannot even support a resolution calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons because it mentions the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapon use." ➡ Photo: UN First Committee

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The horrendous effects of a nuclear explosion are well known, and the reluctance of the nuclear weapon states to countenance that reality can only mean that they have dealt so long with nuclear weapons in the abstract that any discussion of what these weapons do is unpalatable to them, he added.

“Military planners and diplomats must be constantly reminded by civil society and activists that what they are dealing with are instruments of mass murder,” said Dr Ramana, author of *The Power of Promise: Examining Nuclear Energy in India* and a former member of the [Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#) and the [International Panel on Fissile Materials](#).

The U.S. abstention was also a surprise considering President Barack Obama’s call for a nuclear weapons-free world, in a historic speech he made in Prague in 2009.

Speaking from Nagasaki, where she has been attending meetings of Pugwash scientists and religious leaders, Dr Rebecca Johnson, a nuclear analyst on the steering group of the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#) said: “Japan is caught between a rock and a hard place.”

This result shows the perils of the Japanese government trying to bridge between incompatible positions, when what is necessary is a decision on where to stand and commit to nuclear disarmament, she noted.

The U.S. is at present a rock, stuck in the 20th century, with its continuing dependence on maintaining and modernizing nuclear arsenals. So Japan cannot please Washington unless it reduces its position to empty rhetoric, she added.

In this situation, said Dr Johnson, the Abe government should stand with the Hibakusha and the Japanese people, who are in the hard place of advocating the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons.

“Seventy years after atomic bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japanese people are tired of hearing their government try to bridge the difference between nuclear disarmament and nuclear modernization by uttering sentimental platitudes and relying on the U.S. to use nuclear weapons in Japan's name, which is what the nuclear alliance requires.”

Dr Johnson also said Japan can be commended for supporting resolutions raising concern about humanitarian consequences.

Now that Mexico's resolution for an Open-ended working group next year has been overwhelmingly adopted by the First Committee, Japan should engage constructively to “substantively address effective legal measures”.

The Hibakusha and Japanese people will expect their government to stop pandering to the P5 (in the UN Security Council) who want to keep nuclear weapons, and to work for a legally binding instrument to prohibit the use, deployment and possession of nuclear weapons, and require their total elimination,” declared Dr Johnson.

Bob Rigg, a former chair of the [New Zealand Consultative Committee on Disarmament](#), who writes on chemical and nuclear weapons-related issues and on U.S. foreign policy, said although Japan was the victim of two devastating U.S. atomic attacks at the end of World War II, subsequent conservative Japanese governments have, ironically enough, tried to benefit strategically from the American nuclear umbrella by playing down this issue.

In return for this, he said, the Washington has been only too willing to support bland Japanese resolutions paying lip service to nuclear disarmament in very general terms.

The decision of the U.S., the UK, and France to abstain from Japan's First Committee resolution can only be attributed to their disquiet with the growing wave of international impatience with their implacable opposition to anything that could even be interpreted as a tentative commitment to practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, said Rigg. ➡

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“Although Russia and China frequently allow the U.S. to take the flak for not supporting disarmament, on this occasion they came out of the closet and voted against the Japanese resolution.”

All nuclear possessors have the bomb, and are hell-bent on hanging on to it. The non-possessors can neither persuade nor force the possessors to disarm, said Rigg, a former senior editor with the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons \(OPCW\)](#) in The Hague.

He said President Obama’s Prague speech of April 2009 was over-hyped by international media and quietly ignored by the U.S. military/industrial establishment.

“The very same Obama collapsed like a pricked balloon, and is now increasing expenditure on upgrading the U.S. nuclear arsenal, to improve its strike capability.”

In the current run up to the 2016 U.S. presidential election, he pointed out, not a single candidate has dared to advocate reduced military expenditure, let alone steps towards nuclear disarmament.

“The [UN Conference on Disarmament](#) and the [UN First Committee](#) have degenerated into graveyards where the hopes of the people of Japan, who are not represented by their own government, and of a war-weary world are buried beneath mountains of repetitive, redundant resolutions, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” [IDN-InDepthNews – 08 November 2015]

Read in Japanese

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/605-world-s-major-powers-in-shameful-behaviour-opt-out-of-nuclear-resolution-japanese>

http://www.nuclearabolition.info/documents/Japanese/Japanese_World%E2%80%99s_Major_Powers_in_%E2%80%98Shameful_Behaviour%E2%80%99_Opt_out_of_Nuclear_Resolution_40.pdf

Read in Chinese

http://www.nuclearabolition.info/documents/Chinese_World%E2%80%99s_Major_Powers_in_%E2%80%98Shameful_Behaviour%E2%80%99_Opt_out_of_Nuclear_Resolution_40.pdf

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/608-world-s-major-powers-in-shameful-behaviour-opt-out-of-nuclear-resolution-chinese>

世界主流大国退出核决议的“可耻行径”

【IDN于联合国 = Rodney Reynolds】

每当世界主要有核强国表示支持核裁军时，它们往往言行不一——

它们甚至还一意孤行的持续更新自己的核武库。联合国裁军和国际安全委员会（也称第一委员会）过去每年都引进15-20项决议，这其中大部分都是武器控制和核裁军相关。

今年却出现了巨大的变化：美国、英国和法国这三大主要有核国选择不参与每年由日本带头的关于全面消除核武器的联合行动的决议。三国去年都对决议投了支持票，美国和英国还是共同提案国。而今年两国均选择了不再参与，作为西方主要盟国的日本表示非常失望。

联合国内部推测造成此次弃权事件的原因大部分来自于决议中包含的广岛和长崎70年前核袭击的幸存者。

彰显使用核武器的人道主义后果。

该项决议于11月2日以156票支持，3票反对和17票弃权通过。

3票反对来自于同为核武大国的俄罗斯和中国，再加上朝鲜。◆

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Need for Dialogue Among Divides: A Pugwash Perspective

By Jayantha Dhanapala*



NAGASAKI - The recent Nagasaki Pugwash Conference coincided with many significant anniversaries in the history of global peace and security – on this occasion with strong links to the host country, Japan.

- It was the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Organization, which underpins the prevailing global system of peace and security with its Charter and the framework of norms and values it upholds;

- It was the 60th anniversary of the Pugwash bedrock document and surely one of the earliest formulations of the “Humanitarian Pledge” of today – the 1955 London Manifesto of the Pugwash founding fathers Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell – one of whose co-signatories was Professor Hideki Yukawa, the Nobel Physics Laureate from Kyoto University, Japan; ☺

*Jayantha Dhanapala, a former UN Under-Secretary-General and former Sri Lankan Ambassador, is the 11th President of the Nobel Peace Prize winning Pugwash Conferences on Science & World Affairs. This article is adapted from his Presidential Address at the Nagasaki Conference.

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- And it was the 20th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize jointly to Pugwash and to one of its founders Sir Joseph Rotblat three months after the Pugwash Conference was held in Hiroshima in that year.

Anniversaries are not merely sentimental occasions. They are valuable opportunities for stocktaking – surveying the road traversed and preparing for the journey ahead.

On a more sombre note, it was the 70th anniversary year of the dropping of the plutonium bomb “Fat Man” by the USA on the city of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 killing 35,000–40,000 people outright with an eventual total of 60,000–80,000 fatalities, colossal property damage and environmental pollution. While paying homage to the memory of those who were killed, the survivors of both Nagasaki and Hiroshima – the “hibakusha” – must be recognized for their tireless efforts to ensure that never again will the world witness the use of a nuclear bomb.

On the morning the Conference opened, officials of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs presented gold-plated official copies of the Pugwash Nobel Peace Prize medal for display in the atomic bomb museums in Nagasaki and Hiroshima together with copies of the Nobel diploma reaffirming a continuing commitment to work actively for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Disarmament

Together with the Bomb dropped on Hiroshima earlier, on August 6, we have grim reminders of the *raison d'être* of Pugwash and its origins in the Cold War years when the horror of a nuclear holocaust hung over our heads. That spectre, with almost 16,000 nuclear warheads being held today among nine nuclear weapon armed countries, remains perhaps even more ominous and immediate than ever before. Conflicts rage in various parts of the world with new anarchic non-state actors – some of them with medieval mindsets – seeking to acquire this most destructive and inhumane weapon ever invented.

Nuclear disarmament, therefore, remains a central task. The gulf between the two major nuclear weapon armed nations – the USA and Russian Federation who possess 93% of all the nuclear weapons in the world – has frozen progress in bilateral arms control and disarmament imperiling even the agreements reached in the past such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) of 1987.

The goal of a nuclear weapon free world in President Obama's Prague Speech of 2009 has now, alas, become a mirage. Only international civil society maintains pressure for a Nuclear Weapons Convention supported by the UN Secretary-General and His Holiness the Pope.

The global situation and the Thucydides Trap

In his most recent book, *World Order*, published at the end of 2014, Dr. Henry Kissinger provided a historical analysis of a quest for a rule based global order. That quest has to be undertaken today in a world where in Kissinger's words:

“Chaos threatens side by side with unprecedented interdependence; in the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the disintegration of states, the impact of environmental depredations, the persistence of genocidal practices and the spread of new technologies threatening to drive conflict beyond human control or comprehension.”

Thus in today's world a rule based world order seems even more remote considering the diversity of emerging players and problems with no apparent centre of gravity. Even as the slowing down of the Chinese economy has its ripple effects globally proving how interconnected we all are, fatalistic predictions are made by commentators on the “Thucydides Trap” – referring to *The History of the Peloponnesian War* on the inevitability of war between the then established power Sparta and the aspiring power Athens – as if we are destined to repeat the mistakes of history. ☹

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The recent visit of President Xi Jinping to the UK and the entry of Russia in the battle against ISIS in Syria are two examples of the co-operation that is possible among the Great Powers in the interest of world peace and stability. Pugwashites, recalling the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, can never accept the inevitability of war.

In the face of the stark realities of the contemporary world situation a Pugwash perspective on world affairs, stressing Dialogue among Divides, and the common bond of humanity that binds us all, must be pursued vigorously in traditional areas of activity and in the new areas that today's political, economic and technological developments have created – climate change, cyber security, terrorism, inequalities, the refugee crisis and other challenges.

If Pugwash functions as a confederation of autonomous national groups interacting with each other at the regional level and with Pugwash International at the global level on specific initiatives its collective impact can be enhanced.

Quiet Diplomacy: Afghanistan, Cuba and Beyond

Despite enormous odds Pugwash has persisted with quiet diplomacy very rarely publicized. In May this year the international media reported that Afghan government officials and Taliban militants began two days of meetings in Qatar.

This was the subject of a New York Times Editorial on May 6, which expressed satisfaction over the modest results of a meeting brokered by Pugwash. The Editorial concluded: "The tone of the meeting offered a sense of promise ... The killing by the Taliban and the government hasn't stopped. But informal talks can, over time, pave the way to formal negotiations and possibly peace."

Pugwash USA also played an unpublicized but significant role in the normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations by helping to organize a U.S.-Cuba Hemingway Commemorative trip to Cuba that involved John and Patrick Hemingway, grandsons of Ernest Hemingway, and several prominent U.S. marine biologists and environmental scientists.

Iran and 'Five plus One'

One area where Pugwash's long-standing efforts finally bore fruit is with the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the "Five plus One" on Iran's nuclear programme.

Over the years Pugwash had worked patiently and painstakingly for this result through consultations and discreet meetings at times when such meetings were unthinkable and could have caused their participants some discomfort if disclosed.

All who contributed to the final result deserve congratulations and good faith implementation of the JCPOA in all its aspects is what is needed now. As the Pugwash leadership stated in a Press release issued on July 14 this year:

"The agreement strengthens the Non Proliferation Treaty, and contributes in important ways to security and stability in the Middle East region.

It shows that there is no alternative to negotiations based on mutual respect, reciprocity and recognition of each other's security concerns and legal rights. Attempting to "solve" the Iranian nuclear problem by military means would have had gravely negative consequences for the already troubled Middle East and for the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

What is important now is:

a) to ensure constructive, businesslike and comprehensive implementation of the new agreement by all parties, while resisting attempts to derail it, and ☺

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b) to take advantage of this diplomatic success to improve as much as possible political, diplomatic, and economic relations with Iran, and to contribute to building trust and improving relations among all States in the Middle Eastern region.”

A direct sequel to JCPOA should be the dismantling of the NATO BMD (Ballistic Missile Defence) system in Europe, which used, as its rationale, the threat from Iran thereby provoking the Russian Federation. We expect also to see Iran playing a constructive role in Middle East conflicts in the future and its invitation to Vienna for talks on Syria must be welcomed.

The NPT

While this aspect of non-proliferation was a success, 45 years after the entry into force of Treaty for the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and 20 years after the Treaty was extended under my Presidency by the adoption, without a vote, of a package of Three Decision and a Resolution on the Middle East, the 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to adopt a consensus final document.

Apart from persistent differences between the nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapon states, the failure to have any progress on achieving a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (MEWMDZFZ) and the refusal to acknowledge the burgeoning “Humanitarian Initiative” were the main reasons. Inevitably questions are raised on whether the NPT can survive with such failures on fundamental issues.

With all nuclear weapon states modernizing their nuclear weapons the prospects for nuclear disarmament are bleak and non-nuclear weapon states that depend on nuclear deterrence are equally culpable. There are rumours of a U.S.-Pakistan civilian nuclear co-operation deal to parallel the U.S.-India civilian nuclear co-operation agreement. Reports also claim that new U.S. nuclear weapons are to be based in Germany. Meanwhile eight states have still to ratify the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) for it to enter into force and convert the fragile de facto moratorium on testing into a permanent legal norm.

Refugee flows, Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Global peace and security rests on a tripod of military security commensurate with the self-defence needs of nations as permitted by Article 51 of the UN Charter; sustainable development; and human rights.

The sad media images of thousand of displaced by conflicts streaming across Europe after braving hazardous sea voyages vividly proved that we have had the largest numbers of displaced following conflict since World War II. And yet on their arrival they are met with discrimination in the countries of temporary refuge they seek. The generosity of German Chancellor Angela Merkel stands out as a shining example of leadership, compassion and our common humanity.

The failure of the major powers and regional powers to agree on a settlement of the crises in Syria, Yemen and other countries in the Middle East and stop the flow of arms that is fuelling them is unconscionable.

Greed for power and profits for the arms industry are the obvious drivers of conflict with global military expenditure estimated at \$1.8 trillion in 2014 – a sad contrast to the one billion of our fellow human beings living on under \$1.25 per day the acknowledged benchmark for absolute poverty.

Annual expenditure on nuclear weapons alone is estimated at \$105 billion or \$12 million per hour. This is scarcely what Article 26 of the UN Charter held up as an ideal “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources”.

On economic development after the commendable progress achieved in meeting targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 we have now to address the gaps. ☞

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The proposed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets developed by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals will be at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. Coming from a developing country I see the transformational impact of these goals and the human dignity that comes with it.

The international community has a historic opportunity to finalize a meaningful, universal climate agreement in Paris in December 2015. In so doing, we will build a safer, healthier, more equitable world for present and future generations.

Issuing its “Nagasaki Declaration” at the Conference the Pugwash Council said: “Human beings cannot survive without a strong sense of morality and ethics. It is crucially important that the experiences of the Hibakusha from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and nuclear test sites around the world should be transferred to the next generation.

„As long as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction exist, their catastrophic consequences cannot be avoided. Recalling the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, sharing the voices of Nagasaki citizens and Hibakusha, standing in the middle of this city with its deep-rooted memory of devastation under the mushroom cloud, the Pugwash Council appeals again as human beings to human beings, “Remember your humanity, and forget the rest.” [IDN-InDepthNews – 07 November 2015]

Pugwash Conference Warns of the Growing Menace of Nuclear Weapons

TOKYO - The Pugwash Conference, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995, has urged all nuclear weapon states to abandon nuclear-weapon system modernization programmes, and spend the billions of dollars earmarked for those programs on minimizing nuclear risks, preventing accidental launches and cyber attacks, and promoting disarmament.

Scientists and nuclear experts from around the world concluded their five-day meeting in Nagasaki, which along with Hiroshima suffered atomic bombings 70 years ago, issued a the 2015 Nagasaki Declaration on November 5 pleading with the nuclear weapons states to “commit themselves not only to reduce but also to eliminate nuclear weapons”.

They also stressed the need for speedy Entry-Into-Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. “Non-nuclear-weapon states that depend on extended nuclear deterrence also must support nuclear disarmament and change their security policies, for example by joining or establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones,” the 2015 Nagasaki Declaration said.

Following is the complete text of the Declaration:

‘Let Nagasaki be the last.’ Seventy years after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are still faced with the imminent dangers posed by thousands of nuclear warheads. Atomic bomb survivors (Hibakusha) are on average above 80 years old. To this day they suffer from the effects of the nuclear attacks that devastated their lives. The Pugwash Council hears the voices of the Hibakusha calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We urge world leaders to heed their call now.

The menace of nuclear weapons is still growing. Nuclear disarmament is stalled. Conflicts are multiplying. Stockpiles of weapon-usable materials are increasing worldwide. The risks of intentional or accidental nuclear weapons use will always exist until nuclear weapons are legally banned and eliminated and weapon-usable materials are disposed of safely. ☞

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All states with nuclear weapons must abandon nuclear-weapon system modernization programs. They should spend the billions of dollars earmarked for those programs on minimizing nuclear risks, preventing accidental launches and cyber attacks, and promoting disarmament. Most importantly, they must commit themselves not only to reduce but also to eliminate nuclear weapons. The speedy Entry-Into-Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty is essential. Non-nuclear-weapon states that depend on extended nuclear deterrence also must support nuclear disarmament and change their security policies, for example by joining or establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.

Current international disarmament and non-proliferation fora, such as the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process as well as the Conference on Disarmament (CD), are important but also have shown limitations. Global initiatives aimed at legally banning nuclear weapons through coalition among states, civil society, and international organizations can play a significant role in eliminating nuclear threats.

The 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster reminded us of the importance of nuclear safety and the containment of nuclear technology risks. Modern technology is progressing rapidly in many fields. Without sufficient attention paid to its ultimate effects on humanity, further dangers may arise. The social responsibility of scientists is perhaps today more critically important than ever.

“Dialogue across divides” is the spirit of the Pugwash movement. Regional tensions that might trigger nuclear conflicts should be addressed through diplomatic measures. All parties must avoid military conflicts at all costs. Unless war is eventually eliminated, the survival of human beings will continue to be threatened by present and new ☹

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generations of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate the essence of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, we must abolish nuclear weapons and ultimately eliminate war itself from our planet.

Human beings cannot survive without a strong sense of morality and ethics. It is crucially important that the experiences of the Hibakusha from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and nuclear test sites around the world should be transferred to the next generation. As long as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction exist, their catastrophic consequences cannot be avoided. Recalling the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, sharing the voices of Nagasaki citizens and Hibakusha, standing in the middle of this city with its deep-rooted memory of devastation under the mushroom cloud, the Pugwash Council appeals again as human beings to human beings, “Remember your humanity, and forget the rest.” [IDN-InDepthNews – 05 November 2015] ◆

Why Aren't The Candidates Talking About Nuclear War?

By Maureen McCue and Ira Helfand*

When the Cold War ended, we pretty much stopped worrying about nuclear war, but the weapons didn't go away. More than 15,000 are left in the world today, 95 percent in the arsenals of the U.S. and Russia. Seven other countries have nuclear arsenals as well.

We know of at least five major incidents in the last 35 years when either Washington or Moscow prepared to launch nuclear war in the mistaken belief that it was under attack by the other side. Now, for the first time in 25 years, rising tensions between the U.S. and Russia have been accompanied by nuclear saber-rattling. In defense circles, concern is growing that we could stumble into a direct armed conflict with Russia. Such a conflict could escalate out of control and nuclear weapons could be used. Clearly, we should not be complacent about nuclear war. So why aren't the candidates talking about nuclear war? Here are a few questions we should ask them:

Under what conditions would you, as commander-in-chief, order the use of nuclear weapons?

This question is particularly important because of new scientific research that shows that even a very limited nuclear war would cause catastrophic effects across the globe. Just 100 “small” nuclear weapons, less than 1 percent of the world's nuclear arsenals, would, if detonated over urban targets, disrupt climate worldwide and trigger a global famine that could kill up to 2 billion people. No civilization in human history has withstood a shock of this magnitude and there is no reason to expect that ours would. The use of our nuclear arsenal would essentially be an act of suicide. We have a right to know if the men and women who would be president contemplate using these weapons.

Do you support current efforts to negotiate a new treaty banning nuclear weapons?

The United States is legally obliged, under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to negotiate in good faith for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. This month, 128 nations voted at the UN to begin a process to prohibit nuclear weapons under international law. The U.S. voted against. This policy has to change. The United States should not disarm unilaterally. But it can and must lead a process that brings together all nine nuclear weapons states to negotiate a verifiable, enforceable nuclear weapons convention with a plan and timeline for dismantling all of them. ☺

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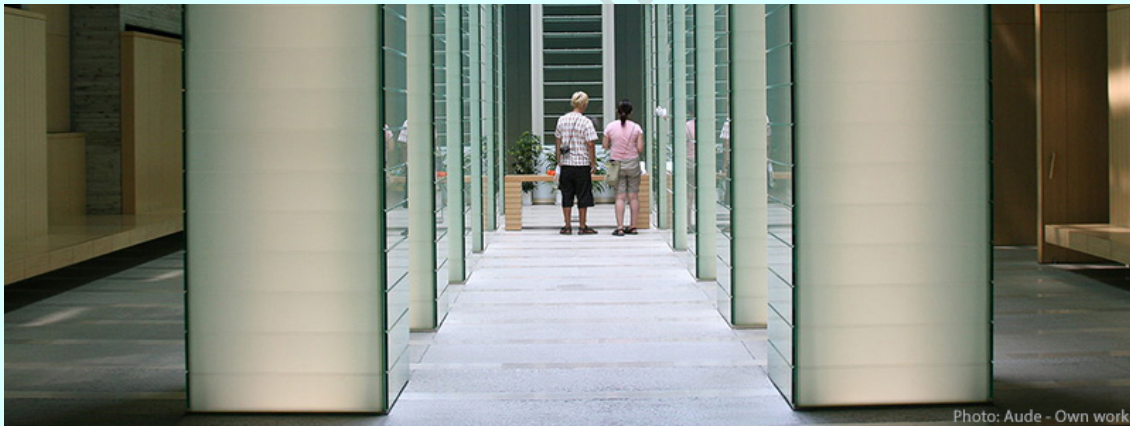
Do you think the U.S. should spend \$350 billion dollars over the next decade to modernize and maintain our nuclear forces?

The Obama administration has proposed that we spend this enormous sum, and independent sources suggest the total for maintaining and modernizing the nuclear arsenal will top \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. We already have over 7,000 nuclear weapons, 1,000 of them deployed on hair-trigger alert. One hundred of these warheads will destroy our civilization. Wouldn't it make more sense to spend that money on the real needs of our people, to improve health care and education, to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, and create a sustainable economy for our children?

It is in America's national security interest to eliminate the nuclear arsenals of all other countries. To do this, we must be willing to lay down our nuclear weapons along with everyone else.

Negotiating a nuclear weapons convention will not be easy, but we have no alternative. We have been living on borrowed time since the beginning of the nuclear era. Our luck will not hold out forever.

This is the greatest challenge before the United States today. Let's make sure the candidates for president tell us how they will handle it. ◆



People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
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