



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON- PROLIFERATION

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
Act to make it a reality



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This page includes independent news coverage which is part of a project supported by Soka Gakkai International

This newsletter brings you independent news by IPS correspondents, in-depth reports and analyses by partners as well as columns by experts, news from international NGOs and a review of the global media for a glimpse of what is happening on the ground. Join us in helping strengthen awareness about the abolition of nuclear weapons – and encourage your friends and colleagues to subscribe to this free monthly newsletter.

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Public Momentum Builds Against Nukes

UNITED NATIONS - Willing or not, the handful of nations armed with nuclear bombs will likely find it ever more difficult in the next few years to reject growing international opinion in support of complete abolition of nuclear weapons, anti-nukes activists and politicians say. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=55003>

Arab World Protests Could Reignite Anti-Nuke Campaign

UNITED NATIONS - The global civil society campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons could be politically reignited by the phenomenal successes of the grassroots demonstrations in Egypt and Tunisia, shadowed closely by Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Jordan. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=54743>

'Abolish Nukes in the Middle East and Beyond'

BERLIN/TOKYO - As 'people power' topples one Arab regime after another, confronting the international community with an unprecedented volatile situation, an eminent Buddhist leader is urging the world's major powers not to lose sight of the compelling need to bring about a nuclear-weapons-free Middle East as one of the crucial steps towards nuclear abolition.

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=364:abolish-nukes&catid=16:nuclear-abolition-news-and-analysis&Itemid=17

Bridges Could Become Barricades

MOSCOW - Although the ratification of a new strategic arms reduction treaty (START) with the United States is considered a top priority for the Medvedev administration, experts are debating whether such an agreement could threaten to reduce Russian military power in the future. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=54723>

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http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Beyond_Nuclear_Non-Proliferation.pdf

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People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
Act to make "No more nukes" a reality



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Public Momentum Builds Against Nukes

By Haider Rizvi



UNITED NATIONS, Mar 25, 2011 (IPS) - Willing or not, the handful of nations armed with nuclear bombs will likely find it ever more difficult in the next few years to reject growing international opinion in support of complete abolition of nuclear weapons, anti-nukes activists and politicians say.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, the international group Mayors for Peace presented a stack of more than one million signatures from people across the world demanding an end to the nuclear threat.

"This movement brings together mayors and other...like minded citizens and peace groups," U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said at the exhibit's launch Thursday. "They all understand that nuclear weapons make us less safe, not more."

Mayors for Peace, which is active in more than 4,500 cities in 150 countries, has been working with the U.N. since 1991.

Flanked by international peace activists and some of the survivors of the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, Ban called for swift action on nuclear disarmament, an issue that has languished for many years.

"For decades, citizens banded together to campaign against specific weapons, and categories of weapons have succeeded in moving their governments to act," he said. "The landmine ban is a shining example. Now we need progress on the nuclear front."

Ban pointed to major events planned for the next year, including the second nuclear security summit and an international meeting on the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

The event featuring over a million signatures took place at the U.N. just a day after a declaration was released by the Simons Foundation and the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) and endorsed by eminent experts in international law and diplomacy.

According to the Vancouver Declaration, nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction and "incompatible" with international humanitarian law, which clearly defines what is universally prohibited in warfare.

Considering the level of heat and radiation that nuclear weapons release, experts say their possession inherently violates international law forbidding the infliction of indiscriminate and disproportionate harm on civilians.

Entitled "Law's Imperative for the Urgent Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," the declaration calls for governments to swiftly commence and conclude negotiations on the global prohibition and elimination of these weapons.

Citing the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the declaration's signers argue that, "It cannot be lawful to continue indefinitely to possess weapons which are unlawful to use or threaten to use, are already banned for most states, and are subject to an obligation of elimination."

The essence of the 1970 landmark Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was that countries that did not possess nuclear weapons agreed not to acquire them, and states that did possess them agreed to "good faith" negotiations to destroy them.

The United States and Russia are the world's largest nuclear weapon states. They possess 93 percent of the total number of nuclear weapons in the world, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a Sweden-based think tank that tracks weapons production and exports worldwide. ➔



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Among others, China has 400 warheads, France 348, and Israel and Britain about 200 each. India is believed to have more than 80 and Pakistan about 40 nuclear weapons.

However, many critics see the United States as the most irresponsible member of the nuclear club, for not only failing in its NPT obligations, but also going to great lengths to block, and even derail, the international discourse on nuclear disarmament in the past.

The Ronald Reagan administration (1981-89), for example, looked the other way when Pakistan was developing its illegal nuclear programme in the 1980s. Similarly, the George W. Bush administration (2001-09) decided to make a nuclear trade deal with India that remains outside the fold of the NPT.

The Barack Obama administration recently signed a new strategic arms treaty with Russia, but it allows the United States to keep at least 3,500 nuclear weapons in its arsenal even after 2020.

That, as proponents of disarmaments noted at the time, was a step in the positive direction, but not enough.

John Burroughs of the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy believes the U.S. could take the lead on disarmament by reducing its stockpiles to "much lower levels" without undermining its own capability to respond to a nuclear attack.

However, as he witnessed Thursday's permanent installation of over a million signatures in support of the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, he agreed with those who think that the peace movement is now moving forward faster than ever before.

"I think over the past few years, there has been change in the elite opinion as well as the general public," he told IPS. "There's a dynamic in the peace movement. [The petitions] will help crystallise that."

In her comments on the declaration, Dr. Jennifer Simons, president of the Simons Foundation, said she hoped that in the debate about "the road to zero, [it] will serve to underline the essential element - the inhumanity and illegality of nuclear weapons - and hasten their elimination."

"The possession of nuclear weapons should be an international crime," she added. ■

Arab World Protests Could Reignite Anti-Nuke Campaign

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 7, 2011 (IPS) - The global civil society campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons could be politically reignited by the phenomenal successes of the grassroots demonstrations in Egypt and Tunisia, shadowed closely by Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Jordan.

"Developments in the Middle East [and North Africa] show how fragile 'stability' is when people's needs and desires are ignored," says Hirotsugu Terasaki, executive director of the Office of Peace Affairs at the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

"There is no more natural desire than to be free from the threat of nuclear weapons. This is something shared widely, universally, among the world's people," he said.

Asked what role global civil society can play in the worldwide campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, Terasaki told IPS: "The mission of civil society is to empower and amplify the voices of ordinary citizens so that we can move the world's policy-makers, insisting they take real and meaningful steps towards nuclear weapons abolition."

Because the threat is so vast and pervasive, he pointed out, "We need a new paradigm of leadership - the leadership exercised by ordinary people who have decided to reject the 'stability' of deterrence, which rests ultimately on the threat of mutual annihilation." ☺



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Act to make the world free of nuclear weapons



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A lay Buddhist organisation with an estimated 12 million members in over 192 countries and territories, SGI has long been active in the growing NGO campaign towards a nuclear weapons-free world.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, one of the strongest proponents of nuclear disarmament, has dismissed the theory of "nuclear deterrence" advocated by most of the world's nuclear powers.

The five "declared" nuclear powers are the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia while the four "undeclared" nuclear states are India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

"It is necessary to thoroughly challenge the theory of deterrence upon which nuclear weapons possession is predicated: the assumption that the maintenance of security is realised through a balance of terror," says Ikeda.

Last month, a coalition of peace activists and civil society organisations meeting in Santa Barbara, California discredited the long-held myth of "nuclear deterrence" and called for its replacement with an "urgent commitment to achieve global nuclear disarmament".

"Nuclear deterrence is a doctrine that is used as a justification by nuclear weapon states and their allies for the continued possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons," the coalition said in a statement.

A declaration adopted by the coalition said: "We call upon people everywhere to join us in demanding that the nuclear weapon states and their allies reject nuclear deterrence and negotiate without delay a Nuclear Weapons Convention for the phased, verifiable, irreversible and transparent elimination of all nuclear weapons."

The civil society participants at the meeting ranged from representatives from the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation to Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Disarmament and Security Centre.

Last year, member states agreed on a proposal for an international conference on a nuclear-free Middle East, scheduled to take place in 2012. Currently, Israel is the only nuclear power in that region and has been long shielded by the United States.

"The enduring regional stability in the Middle East is unthinkable without de-nuclearisation," says Ikeda, who is calling for "conditions propitious to negotiations for a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear weapons".

The WMDs also include biological and chemical weapons which have been banned by the United Nations.

The uncertainty about the 2012 conference underlines the need for further efforts to create the conditions for dialogue, said Ikeda.

The SGI president has laid out three steps towards the goal of nuclear disarmament.

First, the need to establish structures "within which states possessing nuclear weapons will move rapidly toward disarmament".

Secondly, the need to forestall "further nuclear weapons development or modernisation", and thirdly, the need to "comprehensively" outlaw "these inhumane weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention".

Asked how effective a global campaign would be - particularly in the face of growing indifference towards an international convention to ban nuclear weapons - Terasaki told IPS nuclear weapons are not something to which people can be indifferent because they threaten lives and the very existence of the world. "The real choice is whether this indifference will be broken down by proactive human wisdom, or by overwhelming tragedy and horror," he said.

"Our work as a civil society organisation is dedicated to ensuring that the former is the case," Terasaki declared. ■



Articles

'Abolish Nukes in the Middle East and Beyond'

By Jamshed Baruah

BERLIN/TOKYO (IDN) - As 'people power' topples one Arab regime after another, confronting the international community with an unprecedented volatile situation, an eminent Buddhist leader is urging the world's major powers not to lose sight of the compelling need to bring about a nuclear-weapons-free Middle East as one of the crucial steps towards nuclear abolition.

Complete elimination of all atomic weapons -- and not just nuclear disarmament -- with the civil society playing a significant role, is the only absolute guarantee against the threat of nuclear weapons, according to Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) Buddhist organisation.

"It is necessary to thoroughly challenge the theory of deterrence upon which nuclear weapons possession is predicated: the assumption that the maintenance of security is realized through a balance of terror," Ikeda argues in his latest Peace Proposal 2011.

The annual peace proposals have been launched on January 26 every year since 1983, to commemorate the founding of SGI, offering concrete suggestions for resolution of global issues, based on his philosophy of Buddhist humanism.

Ikeda is backed by civil society organisations, which discussed the dangers of nuclear deterrence at a conference on February 16-17, 2011, hosted by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara Declaration describes nuclear deterrence as a "doctrine that is used as a justification by nuclear weapon states and their allies for the continued possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons."

The Santa Barbara Declaration notes that nuclear deterrence not only "threatens the murder of many millions of innocent people, along with severe economic, climate, environmental, agricultural and health consequences beyond the area of attack". It also "requires massive commitments of resources to the industrial infrastructures and organizations that make up the world's nuclear weapons establishments, its only beneficiaries," the Declaration adds.

Turning to the Middle East, Ikeda says that "enduring regional stability in the Middle East is unthinkable without denuclearization," and calls for creating "conditions propitious to negotiations for a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons".

Such conditions must be created without any loss of time. The reason: "It is . . . far from certain that the international conference on establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East agreed to by last year's NPT Review Conference will in fact be held as scheduled in 2012, much less that it will produce a successful outcome," argues Ikeda, president of the Tokyo-based SGI, which has 12 million members around the world.

The landmark NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was convened in May 2010 at the UN headquarters in New York.

The uncertainty about the 2012 conference on the Middle East underlines the need for further efforts to create the conditions for dialogue, says Ikeda.

Informal talks aiming at a moratorium on any expansion of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, would be one preparatory step for this conference. Ikeda is of the view that obstacles on the path to a Middle East conference make the support of the international community all the more vital.

"I would particularly hope that Japan, as a country that has experienced the use of nuclear weapons in war and which has actively worked for the entry into force of the CTBT, will push for the denuclearization of Northeast Asia and toward creating conditions propitious to negotiations for a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons." ➔



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The Buddhist leader pleads for a bilateral commitment to be signed by India and Pakistan, and a tripartite agreement for mutual ratification by Egypt, Iran and Israel.

In Northeast Asia, he adds, negotiations could be pursued through the Six-Party Talks for an agreement by which the United States and China ratify the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty), a zone is established in which all parties pledge the non-use of nuclear weapons, and North Korea abandons its nuclear weapons programmes and signs and ratifies the CTBT.

The Six-Party Talks include besides the United States, China and North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Russia.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula heightened greatly in 2010 with the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan and the North Korean shelling of Yeonpyeong Island.

While there is an urgent need to use all available diplomatic means to defuse the situation, says Ikeda, "the long-term peace and stability of the region clearly hinges on an early resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue".

NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION

In its final statement, the NPT Review Conference made a reference, albeit indirect, to a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC), which is seen to provide an opening that, Ikeda says, should be pursued in order to create a world free from nuclear weapons.

To that end, the SGI president proposes the early convening of an NWC preparatory conference through the joint initiative of states and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that seek the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

"Even if governmental participation is limited at first, priority should be given to creating a venue for treaty negotiations. The work of the conference should focus on developing a clear prohibitory norm that acknowledges no exceptions and a clear timeline for implementation. Through repeated convening of this conference and as more governments and NGOs join in, the way will be opened for the early start of official negotiations," explains Ikeda

The proposal, titled 'Toward a World of Dignity for All: The Triumph of the Creative Life', has been commended by the Global Cooperation Council (GCC), a Berlin-based organisation devoted to culture of peace. The Council's senior adviser Roberto Savio says: "Nuclear weapons embody some of the most brute and inhumane tools that in the name of deterrence threaten the extinction of all life on planet Earth."

The most befitting alternative to encouraging forces of annihilation is reinforcing energies that build "a world of dignity for all", therefore is a world in which the creative human spirit and creative life get an upper hand.

"Dr. Ikeda very rightly goes beyond the philosophical plane and suggests concrete steps that governments, particularly of countries which are in possession of atomic arsenal, should be pressurised to undertake," says Savio, who is founder and chair of the board of trustees of the Inter Press Service news agency.

The SGI president's three steps include establishing "the structures within which states possessing nuclear weapons will move rapidly toward disarmament", forestalling "further nuclear weapons development or modernization", and "comprehensively" outlawing "these inhumane weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention".

Such a convention should indeed go beyond treaties negotiated solely among governments. It should represent a qualitative transformation from traditional international law to "a form of law that derives its ultimate authority from the expressed will of the world's peoples", notes GCC senior adviser Savio, who is also external affairs director of the World Political Forum (WPF), chaired by Nobel Laureate Mikhail Gorbachev, the last president of the now defunct Soviet Union.

The United Nations, essentially an inter-governmental organisation, has long recognised the need to liberate itself from the confines defined by the interests of individual states that do not always take into account the interests of their citizens and the larger interests of humankind. ➡



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Act to make "No one has the right to threaten the life of others"



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Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 'In Larger Freedom' was a milestone on the road his successor Ban Ki-moon is traversing in regard to nuclear disarmament.

It is necessary, therefore, to strengthen the civil society around the world and, as Ikeda says, build "a global culture of human rights", a culture based on universal values that are enshrined in all religions, the kernel of which is respect for life.

"Just as I support Ban Ki-moon's call for the regular holding of UN Security Council summits on nuclear disarmament I agree with Dr. Ikeda that states that have relinquished nuclear weapons should be regular participants in those summits. Also, experts and NGO representatives should be invited to address those high-level conferences," says Savio,

Besides, it is self-evident that Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which are the only cities to have suffered the horror of atomic bombings, should host the 2015 NPT Review Conference, and that it should serve as a nuclear abolition summit.

Savio agrees with Ikeda that human rights do not become a reality only by treaties or laws, but require also the efforts of ordinary people to correct the injustices they experience or see in the world around them." (IDN-InDepthNews/01.03.2011) ■

Bridges Could Become Barricades

Analysis by Kester Kenn Klomegah

MOSCOW, Mar 5, 2011 (IPS) - Although the ratification of a new strategic arms reduction treaty (START) with the United States is considered a top priority for the Medvedev administration, experts are debating whether such an agreement could threaten to reduce Russian military power in the future.



Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ratified the treaty on Feb 5, 2011. The document slashes the maximum amount of Russian and U.S. strategic nuclear arsenals to 1,550 warheads, down from the current ceiling of 2,200.

One expert, Alexander Fomenko, a member of the foreign relations and security committee at the Russian State Duma, does not believe that the agreement will result in weakening Russian military might.

"The reduction of strategic offensive weapons is quite understandable today, as the strategic arsenals were created during the cold war time," Fomenko told IPS.

"Today, we see that real modern war is special operations war - it is something new," he explained.

Fomenko added that the strategic weapons serve as a guarantor of non-use of nuclear weapons, and that Russia currently possesses new Topol-M and Iskander missiles, as well as other weapons capable of responding to an aggressive move.

Tom Collina, of the Washington-based Arms Control Organisation, told IPS that the signing of the new START treaty will greatly strengthen U.S.-Russian relations and build trust between the two nations, as well as make the citizens of both countries safer.

"The treaty is in the interests of both nations, and increases the security of both sides by reducing nuclear forces, resuming inspections, and increasing trust," he explained. "It is now time to build on this success by moving on to the next treaty that should cover long-range, as well as short-range (tactical), nuclear weapons," he said.

But Russia also has its critics of the treaty: Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy claimed that the treaty substantially weakens Russia's military power. Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov said any reduction of nuclear potential will undermine Russia's security. And retired general Leonid Ivashov warned that the treaty is disastrous for Russia because it does not address the U.S.'s superiority in conventional arms. ➡



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Chairman of the State Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev explained the Duma's position to local media: "Its key idea is that the U.S.'s unilateral understanding of certain provisions of the new treaty does not impose any new commitments on Russia."

"The document stipulates significant cuts in both sides' nuclear arsenals, but will not affect the development of strategic components of their armed forces," Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov pointed out.

"This treaty does not envision any duties from Russia except the necessity of observing the limits it stipulates. Russia, like the United States, reserves the right to continue to develop its strategic forces in the future," he said.

"In this regard," Ivanov added, "the new START treaty slaps no restrictions on the two sides' strategic offensive arms levels. The plans we earlier mapped out to develop the strategic component of the armed forces remain in full force."

This means that Russia will continue to develop the Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile and the Yars RS-24 missiles, among other sophisticated weaponry. The U.S. will undoubtedly pursue similar aims.

Evgeny Bazhanov, vice chancellor of research and international relations at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told IPS, "Russia and the West came together and had a very good discussion."

According to Bazhanov, the conference signaled to other countries that have or are seeking to acquire nuclear weapons that Russia and the U.S. are ready to continue the process of disarmament, and that others should join them in this effort.

Many people believe that the treaty will lead to a significant improvement in U.S.-Russian relations and to greater opportunities for cooperation between them. Proponents claim that it paves the way for further talks between Moscow and Washington on military issues, particularly the thorny question of a joint missile defense system.

"If an agreement can ultimately be reached on joint missile defense, Russia, the United States and NATO will become true partners," said Bazhanov.

"(One) positive result of the agreement is that it helps ease tensions on a global scale," he concluded. (END)

"Dr. Ikeda very rightly goes beyond the philosophical plane and suggests concrete steps that governments, particularly of countries which are in possession of atomic arsenal, should be pressurised to undertake," says Roberto Savio, who is founder and chair of the board of trustees of the Inter Press Service news agency.

The SGI president's three steps include establishing "the structures within which states possessing nuclear weapons will move rapidly toward disarmament", forestalling "further nuclear weapons development or modernization", and "comprehensively" outlawing "these inhumane weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention".



Translations | Adaptations

Arab World Protests Could Reignite Anti-Nuke Campaign

Arabic

<http://www.ipsinternational.org/arabic/nota.asp?idnews=2121>

Finnish

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=380:t-deen&catid=12:finnish&Itemid=13

Italian

<http://www.ipsnotizie.it/nota.php?idnews=1724>

JAPANESE

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=386:arab-world&catid=2:japanese&Itemid=3

Portuguese

<http://www.ips.org/ipsbrasil.net/nota.php?idnews=6859>

'Abolish Nukes in the Middle East and Beyond'

German

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=367:nahost-kernwaffen&catid=5:german&Itemid=6

Japanese

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=371:abolishnuclear&catid=2:japanese&Itemid=3

Bridges Could Become Barricades

Japanese

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=383:disarmament-bridges&catid=2:japanese&Itemid=3



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Civil Society's Perspective

ICAN Marks Bravo Anniversary



1 March 2011

By Alison Kelen

March 1 marked the 57th anniversary of the Bravo shot – the largest US nuclear test in history and one that brought the United States and Japan in conflict again less than 10 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is a sad anniversary for us, for our friends and relatives in the Marshall Islands, and for the people of Japan. That test, and that day – like radiation itself – still lingers in the Marshall Islands after 57 years, and it will not go away.

Bravo was not our first experience with nuclear weapons. Next Sunday, March 6, will mark the 65th anniversary of the day that we were moved off our islands by the US government for its atomic weapons testing program. The US moved us three times in two years. At one atoll, Rongerik, we nearly starved to death. Our final move, in 1948, was to Kili Island – 400 miles away from Bikini. Sadly, Kili remains home to most Bikinians, and life there remains difficult.

Kili is a single island, while Bikini Atoll has 23 islands and a huge lagoon. Kili has no sheltered fishing grounds, so our skills for lagoon life are useless on Kili. In the past, we sailed our outrigger canoes to lands, fish and islands in Bikini atoll as far as the eye could see. Today, we are prisoners, trapped on one small island, with no reef and no lagoon. To make matters worse, our population is almost 20 times larger today than what it was in 1946.

Between 1946 and 1958, the United States tested 23 atomic and hydrogen bombs at Bikini. It is hard to imagine the deadly force of the Bravo shot. It was equal to the force of nearly 1000 Hiroshima bombs. It created a fireball four miles wide that vaporized the entire test island and parts of two others. It was so powerful that it destroyed the buildings on an island 14 miles across the lagoon and caused the concrete detonation bunker on Eneu Island, 24 miles away, to move off its foundation.

At Kwajalein, 250 miles away, there were high winds and the buildings shook as if there had been an earthquake. And, as we all know, there was a so-called “unexpected” shift in the winds, sending fallout east instead of north, right over Bikini Island, downwind to Rongelap and Utrik, and right over the Japanese fishing vessel, Lucky Dragon. Even President Eisenhower said that US scientists were “surprised and astonished” at the size of the Bravo shot.

To make matters worse, the US covered up the Bravo shot immediately, and it has never been held accountable. The US secretly evacuated the people of Rongelap and Utrik until a newspaper reporter broke the story a week later. At that point, the Atomic Energy Commission described Bravo as “a routine atomic test”, stated that some Marshall Islanders were “exposed to some radioactivity”, that they were moved “according to plan”, but that “there were no burns” and “all were reported well”.

That “some radioactivity” the Marshallese were exposed to equalled the amount of radioactivity received by Japanese less than three kilometers from ground zero at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All were reported well? Not true. Virtually all the Rongelapese were already displaying the classic symptoms of radiation poisoning – hair loss, skin lesions, and lowered white blood cell counts. There was later one leukemia death, and 19 of the 21 Rongelap children developed abnormal thyroid nodules.

What did the US Government say about the Lucky Dragon? The AEC chairman, Lewis Strauss, accused it of trespassing, privately called it a Communist “spy outfit”, and publicly stated that the crew’s injuries were “due to chemical activity of the ... coral rather than to radioactivity”. He added that “the facts do not confirm” stories about “the widespread contamination of tuna and other fish”, even though tuna on the Lucky Dragon registered over 10,000 counts per minute on Geiger counters. ☹



Civil Society's Perspective

But the real crime of Bravo is that there was no last-minute accidental wind shift. Documents on Bikini that got declassified in 1982 showed that the US government knew full well that the winds were headed the wrong way. The midnight weather briefing six hours before the shot stated that winds were “headed for Rongelap to the east” and “it was recognized that . . . Bikini . . . would probably be contaminated”. With full knowledge that the wind was not headed north to the open sea but due east over Bikini, Rongelap and Utrik, the AEC proceeded to detonate the Bravo bomb.

The tragedy of Bravo continues to haunt our people today. In a government-to-government agreement between the US and Marshall Islands, the United States “accepte[d] responsibility for compensation owing to” the people of Bikini and established a Nuclear Claims Tribunal to render “final determination upon all claims” arising out of the nuclear testing program. After more than seven years of litigation, our people received an award of more than \$560 million. However, the US government never funded the tribunal adequately, so it was only able to pay the Bikinians \$2 million, or less than one-half of one per cent of their award. The Bikinians’ efforts to get the US courts or Congress to remedy this situation have fallen on deaf ears.

Fifty-seven years have gone by, but Bravo is still with us. From March 1, 1954, until today, our islands remain heavily contaminated with radiation. We wait and we wait, not knowing when we can return home.

Remarks by Alson Kelen, Mayor of Kili/Bikini/Ejit Local Government Council, at a conference in Japan, organized by Gensuikyo, to mark the 57th anniversary of the Bravo test.

MP Questions Cameron’s Policy Change On Depleted Uranium Weapons In Libya

Thursday, 31 March 2011

Following concerns that US aircraft may be firing depleted uranium ammunition in Libya, John McDonnell MP has today written to the Prime Minister, after an apparent change of government policy on the weapons made on the floor of the House of Commons.

Last week the Prime Minister appeared to improvise a new British policy on depleted uranium during the debate on military action in Libya, when he stated that British forces: “...do not use those weapons and are not going to use those weapons”. However, the MoD website still displays the previous policy position that: “DU anti-armour munitions will remain part of our arsenal for the foreseeable future because we have a duty to provide our troops with the best available equipment with which to protect them and succeed in conflict.” MoD spokespeople have confirm this remains the position.

The clarification is being sought after confirmation that US A-10 aircraft were in action over Libya during the weekend. The A-10 can fire depleted uranium armour piercing ammunition from its rotary gun, and it has been confirmed that this gun was used to attack two Libyan boats which were reported to be firing at merchant vessels. Their use over Libya itself threatens both Libyan opposition forces and civilians.

John McDonnell, Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, today asked the Prime Minister to give assurances that these planes were not using depleted uranium and to put pressure on the US administration to ensure it would not be used. He ends his letter with: “The stated purpose of our actions in Libya is to protect civilians. This will not be accomplished if we, or our allies, use depleted uranium weapons.”

For the full letter text, see <http://uwnetwork.wordpress.com/2011/03/30/letter-from-john-mcdonnell-mp-to-david-cameron-over-du-weapon-use-in-libya/>

The use of radioactive and chemically toxic depleted uranium ammunition poses a long-term threat to the health of civilians in areas where they are used. Sharp increases in the rates of cancers and birth defects have been reported following their use in Iraq in 1991 and 2003. ■



Civil Society's Perspective

Vancouver Declaration Affirms the Incompatibility of Nuclear Weapons with International Humanitarian Law

March 24, 2011

Released today by The Simons Foundation and the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) and signed by eminent experts in international law and diplomacy, the [Vancouver Declaration](#) affirms that nuclear weapons are incompatible with international humanitarian law, the law stating what is universally prohibited in warfare. The declaration observes that with their uncontrollable blast, heat, and radiation effects, nuclear weapons are indeed weapons of mass destruction that by their nature cannot comply with fundamental rules forbidding the infliction of indiscriminate and disproportionate harm.

Entitled "Law's Imperative for the Urgent Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," the declaration concludes by calling on states to commence and conclude negotiations on the global prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons as mandated by the legal obligation unanimously proclaimed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996. An annex to the declaration specifying the applicable law states: "It cannot be lawful to continue indefinitely to possess weapons which are unlawful to use or threaten to use, are already banned for most states, and are subject to an obligation of elimination."

The many [signatories](#) include Christopher G. Weeramantry, former Vice President of the ICJ and current President of IALANA; Mohammed Bedjaoui, who was ICJ President when it handed down its advisory opinion on nuclear weapons; Louise Doswald-Beck, Professor of International Law, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, and co-author of a major International Committee of the Red Cross study of international humanitarian law; Ved Nanda, Evans University Professor, Nanda Center for International and Comparative Law, University of Denver Sturm College of Law; Jayantha Dhanapala, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs; and Gareth Evans, QC, former Foreign Minister of Australia who recently served as Co-Chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

The Simons Foundation and IALANA developed the declaration with the input of a conference convened by the two organizations in Vancouver, Canada, on February 10-11, 2011, that brought together some 30 experts in international law, diplomacy, and nuclear weapons.

Dr. Jennifer Simons, President of The Simons Foundation, said: "It is my hope, shared by IALANA, that in the debate about the road to zero, the Vancouver Declaration will serve to underline the essential element - the inhumanity and illegality of nuclear weapons - and hasten their elimination. The possession of nuclear weapons should be an international crime."

Peter Weiss, IALANA Vice President, who has litigated international human rights cases in U.S. and other courts and advised governments on their submissions to the ICJ in the nuclear weapons case, commented: "Overwhelming problems, like ensuring the survival of the planet, cannot be resolved by law alone. But nor can they be dealt with by ignoring the law altogether. The drafters of the declaration, and those who have signed and will sign it, offer it to governments and civil society as a contribution to the debate. The horrific events occurring in Japan serve to accentuate the danger of continuing to live with the risk of exposing humanity to nuclear radiation, whether emanating from nuclear meltdown or nuclear bombs."

Dr. John Burroughs, Executive Director of the New York-based Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, the UN Office of IALANA, said: "President Obama and Prime Minister Singh last year jointly stated their support for 'strengthening the six decade-old international norm of non-use of nuclear weapons.' The Vancouver Declaration demonstrates that the non-use of nuclear weapons is not only wise policy; it is required by law."

The declaration and a list of initial signatories are online at <http://www.lcnp.org> and <http://www.<WBR>thesimonsfoundation.ca>. ■



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION
People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
Act to make "Nuclear-Free"



What Others Say

Alternative Laureates Want Nuclear Plants and Weapons Abolished

By Jutta Wolf

BERLIN (IDN) - Laureates of the Right Livelihood Award and members of the World Future Council have called for a global phase-out of atomic power reactors as well as the abolition of nuclear weapons. In a joint statement, fifty laureates said the Japanese nuclear disaster had raised global awareness of the extreme dangers that can result from nuclear power generation.

"Grave as these dangers are, however, they are not as great as those arising from the possession, threat and use of nuclear weapons -- weapons that have the capacity to destroy civilization and end most life on the planet," laureates of what is also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize warn.

The conclusion they draw from the nuclear power plant accident in Japan is "that the human community, acting for itself and as trustees for future generations, must exercise a far higher level of care globally in dealing with technologies capable of causing mass annihilation, and should phase out, abolish and replace such technologies with alternatives that do not threaten present and future generations".

This, the statement published on March 29, 2011 says, applies to nuclear weapons as well as to nuclear power reactors.

While extending their "deepest sympathies" to the people of Japan who have experienced a devastating earthquake and tsunami followed by severe damage to the Fukushima nuclear power station, the laureates say, the disaster in Japan has demonstrated "once again the limits of human capability to keep dangerous technologies free from accidents with catastrophic results".

They argue that natural disasters combined with human error have proven a potent force for undermining even the best laid plans. Reliance on human perfection, they add, reflects a hubris that has led to other major failures of dangerous technologies in the past, and will do so in the future.

"What has occurred as a result of the confluence of natural disaster and human error in Japan could also be triggered purposefully by means of terrorism or acts of war."

The joint statement says that in addition to accidental or purposeful destruction, nuclear power plants pose other threats to humanity and to the human future.

The laureates warn that the large amounts of radioactive wastes that are created by nuclear power generation will remain highly toxic for many times longer than human civilization has existed. This is because there is currently no long-term solution to dealing with the threats these radioactive wastes pose to the environment and human health.

"Further, nuclear power plants, with their large societal subsidies, have diverted financial and human resources from the development of safe and reliable forms of renewable energy."

Establishing a linkage between atomic energy and nuclear weapons of mass destruction, the statement explains: "Nuclear power programs use and create fissile materials that can be used to make nuclear weapons, and thus provide a proven pathway to nuclear weapons proliferation."

This is evidenced by the fact that several countries have already used civilian nuclear programs to provide the fissile materials to produce nuclear weapons. Other countries, particularly those with plutonium reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities, could easily follow suit if they decided to do so, the laureates say.

"The spread of nuclear power plants will not only make the world more dangerous, but will make more difficult, if not impossible, the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world," asserts the statement issued by experts, activists, politicians, clergy, entrepreneurs and scientists from 26 countries. ➡



What Others Say

Countering the widespread argument that atomic energy helps tackle climate change, the joint statement argues: "Nuclear power is neither the answer to modern energy problems nor a panacea for climate change challenges. There is no solution of problems by creating more problems."

In fact, nuclear power does not add up economically, environmentally or socially, the laureates say. "Of all the energy options, nuclear is the most capital intensive to establish, decommissioning is prohibitively expensive and the financial burden continues long after the plant is closed."

Jakob von Uekull, founder of the Right Livelihood Award and the World Future Council, says: "To get a grip on climate change and on nuclear threats is not a technological challenge. It is a psychological and political challenge."

He adds: "With this declaration we want to demonstrate how strong the worldwide support for a global nuclear phase out is. We believe that a crisis can always be a chance for change."

Among the signatories of the declaration are: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai from Kenya, environmental activist Vandana Shiva and Ashok Khosla, Co-President of the Club of Rome, both from India, Maude Barlow, UN Consultant from Canada, Hafsat Abiola-Costello, human rights activist from Nigeria, Alexander Likhotal from Russia, President of the Green Cross International, Francisco Whitaker Ferreira from Brazil, Co-Founder of the World Social Forum and Erwin Kräutler, Austrian and bishop in Brazil. (IDN-InDepthNews/30.03.2011) ■

Two Grandmothers, Two Priests and a Nun go to Prison for Peace

Bill Quigley

Legal Director, Center for Constitutional Rights; Professor, Loyola New Orleans
The Huffington Post, March 28, 2011

Two grandmothers, two priests and a nun were sentenced in federal court in Tacoma, WA Monday March 28, 2011, for confronting hundreds of US nuclear weapons stockpiled for use by the deadly Trident submarines.

Sentenced were: Sr. Anne Montgomery, 83, a Sacred Heart sister from New York, who was ordered to serve 2 months in federal prison and 4 months electronic home confinement; Fr. Bill Bischel, 81, a Jesuit priest from Tacoma Washington, ordered to serve 3 months in prison and 6 months electronic home confinement; Susan Crane, 67, a member of the Jonah House community in Baltimore, Maryland, ordered to serve 15 months in federal prison; Lynne Greenwald, 60, a nurse from Bremerton Washington, ordered to serve 6 months in federal prison; and Fr. Steve Kelly, 60, a Jesuit priest from Oakland California, ordered to serve 15 months in federal prison. They were also ordered to pay \$5300 each and serve an additional year in supervised probation. Bischel and Greenwald are active members of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, a community resisting Trident nuclear weapons since 1977.

What did they do?

In the darkness of All Souls night, November 2, 2009, the five quietly cut through a chain link perimeter fence topped with barbed wire.

Carefully stepping through the hole in the fence, they entered into the Kitsap-Bangor Navy Base outside of Tacoma Washington - home to hundreds of nuclear warheads used in the eight Trident submarines based there.

Walking undetected through the heavily guarded base for hours, they covered nearly four miles before they came to where the nuclear missiles are stored.

The storage area was lit up by floodlights. Dozens of small gray bunkers -- about the size of double car garages -- were ringed by two more chain link fences topped with taut barbed wire. ➡



What Others Say

USE OF DEADLY FORCE AUTHORIZED, one sign boldly proclaimed. Another said WARNING RESTRICTED AREA, and was decorated with skull and crossbones.

This was it -- the heart of the US Trident Pacific nuclear weapon program. Nuclear weapons were stored in the bunkers inside the double fence line.

Wire cutters cut through these fences as well. There they unfurled hand painted banners which said "Disarm Now Plowshares: Trident Illegal and Immoral", knelt to pray and waited to be arrested as dawn broke.

What were they protesting against?

Each of the eight Trident submarines has 24 nuclear missiles on it. The Ground Zero community explains that each of the 24 missiles on one submarine have multiple warheads in it and each warhead has thirty times the destructive power of the weapon used on Hiroshima. One fully loaded Trident submarine carries 192 warheads, each designed to explode with the power of 475 kilotons of TNT force. If detonated at ground level each would blow out a crater nearly half a mile wide and several hundred feet deep.

The bunker area where they were arrested is where the extra missiles are stored.

In December 2010, the five went on trial before a jury in federal court in Tacoma charged with felony damage to government property, conspiracy and trespass.

But before the trial began the court told the defendants what they could and could not do in court. Evidence of the medical consequences of nuclear weapons? Not allowed. Evidence that first strike nuclear weapons are illegal under US and international law? Not allowed. Evidence that there were massive international nonviolent action campaigns against Trident missiles where juries acquitted protestors? Not allowed. The defense of necessity where violating a small law, like breaking down a door, is allowed where the actions are taken to prevent a greater harm, like saving a child trapped in a burning building? Not allowed.

Most of the jurors appeared baffled when defendants admitted what they did in their opening statements. They remained baffled when questions about nuclear weapons were objected to by the prosecutor and excluded by the court. The court and the prosecutor repeatedly focused the jury on their position that this was a trial about a fence. Defendants tried valiantly to point to the elephant in the room -- the hundreds of nuclear weapons.

Each defendant gave an opening and closing statement explaining, as much as they were allowed, why they risked deadly force to expose the US nuclear arsenal.

Sojourner Truth was discussed as were Rosa Parks, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. The resistance of the defendants was in the spirit of the civil rights movement, the labor movement, the suffragist movement, the abolition of slavery movement.

Crowds packed the courtroom each of the five days of trial. Each night there was a potluck and a discussion of nuclear weapons by medical, legal and international experts who came for the trial but who were largely muted by the prosecution and the court.

While the jury held out over the weekend, ultimately, the activists were convicted. Hundreds packed the courthouse today supporting the defendants. The judge acknowledged the good work of each defendant, admitted that prison was unlikely to deter them from further actions, but said he was bound to uphold the law otherwise anarchy would break out and take down society.

The prosecutors asked the judge to send all the defendants to federal prison plus three years supervised probation plus pay over five thousand dollars. The specific jail time asked for ranged from 3 years for Fr. Kelly, 30 months for Susan Crane, Lynne Greenwald, 7 months in jail plus 7 months home confinement, Sr. Anne Montgomery and Fr. Bill Bichsel, 6 months jail plus 6 months home confinement. Each of the defendants went right into prison from the courtroom as the spectators sang to them. Outside the courthouse, other activists pledged to confront the Trident in whatever way is necessary to stop the illegal and immoral weapons of mass destruction. ■



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
Act to make the world safer



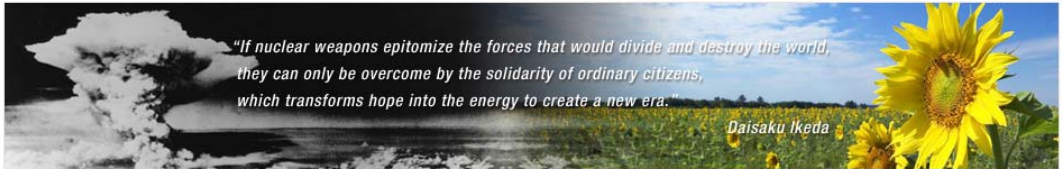
http://www.peoplesdecade.org

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition

Building Global Solidarity toward a World without Nuclear Weapons

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Site Updates

Apr. 8, 2011 **NEW**

Northwest Florida State College hosts THS exhibit from April 2nd through April 22nd in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center Music Wing classroom building on the Niceville campus. (NWESC)

Post comments (0)

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Get Involved

Support Nuclear Weapons Convention

Learn about the NWC in 3 mins

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UPLOAD YOUR PLEA For a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

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SGI Initiatives

The People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition initiative created by SGI aims to rouse public opinion and help create a global grassroots network of people dedicated to abolishing nuclear weapons.

- SGI-Italy Launched a Campaign in Collaboration with Eminent NGOs **NEW**
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico Hosts SGI Exhibition **NEW**
- SGI Exhibition and Youth Forum on Nuclear Disarmament Held at Roehampton University in London


[more](#)

Movies

- SGI Exhibition on Nuclear Abolition Shown in Vienna | 2min 25sec
- THS Exhibition and Youth Forum at SOAS of London University | 3min 8sec
- What is NWC? | 3min

[more](#)

Survivors Speak



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Explore the Issue

- Facts
- Study tools
- Action tools
- Exhibition

Poll

Fukushima Nuclear Accident caused by the earthquake and following tsunami have triggered debates on nuclear power plants in many parts of the world. Do you think how much does your country's electricity derive from nuclear plants?

Yes No

Vote View

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Radiation Scanner Gear Deployed in Ukraine **NEW**

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Call For Banning Radioactive Weapons Gathers Momentum **NEW**

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Experts Say

July 2007
Hope for a Nuclear Thaw
With Jayantha Dhanapala

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