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## HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES OF NUKES DRAW THE FOCUS



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## Nuclear Abolition News and Analysis

### All Unclear Over Nuclear

Nuclear Abolition News | IPS

By RANJIT DEVRAJ

NEW DELHI (IPS) - When India was admitted to the world's nuclear power industry nearly five years ago, many believed that this country had found a way to quickly wean itself away from dependence on coal and other fossil fuels that power its economic growth. [P]

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Nuclear Abolition News | IPS

By PIERRE KLOCHENDLER

JERUSALEM (IPS) - A meeting between Iran and world powers is tentatively set for the month-end in Istanbul, and might constitute a litmus test over a compromise regarding Iran's uranium enrichment programme. Strangely enough, in Israel, Iran's nuclear quest is now off the public radar.

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The previous talks between Iran and the 'P1+5' (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) took place in June 2012 in Moscow. [P]

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### Abandoning Nukes – Lessons from South Africa

Nuclear Abolition News | IPS

By JOHN FRASER

JOHANNESBURG (IPS) - Not many nice things can be said about the apartheid regime in South Africa. It was racist, violent in the brutal oppression of many of its own citizens, and was despised around the world.

However, in the dying days of apartheid, the South African authorities took a step that has had major implications for the country and for the African continent: it scrapped its nuclear weapons programme. [P] [GERMAN](#) | [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION](#) | [PDF](#)

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A Monthly Newsletter for Strengthening Awareness of Nuclear Abolition

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- April 2012

U.S. Fiscal Cliff Deal Boosts New START

By R. Nastranis | IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

TORONTO (IDN) - The tug of war about the U.S. federal budget 'fiscal cliff' threatened to jeopardise the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty ([New START](#)). But much to the satisfaction of disarmament experts that danger has been removed after a new

legislation passed the U.S. Senate and House.

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In order to strengthen public awareness of the urgent need for nuclear abolition, the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist association, and the Inter Press Service global news agency have initiated a media project which aims to help to shed light on the issue of nuclear abolition from the perspectives of civil society through the global media network of IPS and beyond.

As part of this project, IDN InDepthNews, the news analysis service of the Globalom Media group, in partnership with the Global Cooperation Council, has launched this special website.

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**Global Editors:**  
Ernest Corea and Ramesh Jaura



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## CONSIDER THIS

# 10 Years On: Murder and Mayhem Prevail in Iraq

By Ernest Corea\*

WASHINGTON DC - Anniversaries are usually treated as occasions for celebration. They are given special names as in “golden” for a fiftieth anniversary and “tin” for a tenth. Goodwill is in the air, food and drinks are brought out, and “don’t worry, be happy” is the overarching theme for all concerned. Not so in contemporary Iraq, where the tenth anniversary of the US invasion of that country fell on March 19, 2013. The event was not commemorated with joyous activity. Instead, murder and mayhem prevailed.



International news agencies reported that Baghdad was wracked by death and destruction on the tenth anniversary of the invasion. Over 50 people were reported dead in a wave of bombings that ripped through the capital and its environs.

Sporadic sectarian violence has continued throughout the post-Saddam period. So has corruption, as near-anarchy continues to dominate post-invasion Iraq. The Washington Post comments that “haunted by the ghosts of its brutal past, Iraq is teetering between progress and chaos, a country threatened by local and regional conflicts that could drag it back into the sustained bloodshed its citizens know so well.”

“Mission Accomplished,” President Bush?

## Outcome of “Rash War”

In Iraq as elsewhere, recollections during the tenth anniversary of an invasion that was said to be characterized by “shock and awe” evoked sorrow over deaths and suffering, anger at the launching of a war on false grounds, and baffled introspection over how the US as a whole – the people, politicians, and the press – were bamboozled into supporting a “dumb war” and a “rash war” as then State Senator Barack Obama called it.

Looking back at the US invasion and its aftermath, perhaps the most cogent encapsulation has come from Hans Blix, the distinguished Swedish diplomat who was formerly his country’s foreign minister and who headed the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). In an Iraq retrospective published by CNN to mark the 10th anniversary of a deadly misadventure, Blix wrote:

“-- The war aimed to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, but there weren't any.

-- The war aimed to eliminate al Qaeda in Iraq, but the terrorist group didn't exist in the country until after the invasion.

-- The war aimed to make Iraq a model democracy based on law, but it replaced tyranny with anarchy and led America to practices that violated the laws of war.

-- The war aimed to transform Iraq to a friendly base for U.S. troops capable to act, if needed, against Iran -- but instead it gave Iran a new ally in Baghdad.”

Blix’s pithy summation provides a salutary warning to all those whose reaction to a conflict taking place beyond America’s shores is a yearning for direct intervention.

## WMD were non-existent

Many influential supporters of the US invasion of Iraq remain hawkish, nevertheless. They have not shifted from their original positions and some of them are so committed to their own misadventure that they claim they would “do it all over again” if an opportunity arose.

Moreover, some remain faithful to the dubious proposition that the invasion was justified because at the time it was launched, intelligence agencies all over the world were convinced that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Some national intelligence agencies did, indeed, make this assumption from the safety of distance. UNMOVIC, which had deployed inspectors on the ground in Iraq, was not convinced.

As Blix told the UN Security Council and through it the world on Feb. 14, 2003, well ahead of the invasion:

“How much, if any, is left of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and related proscribed items and programs? So far, UNMOVIC has not found any such weapons, only a small number of empty chemical munitions, which should have been declared and destroyed.”

That was not just a “gut feeling,” or idle speculation. It was an assessment based on actual facts. ☺

\*The writer has served as Sri Lanka's ambassador to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and the USA. He was Chairman of the Commonwealth Select Committee on the media and development, Editor of the Ceylon 'Daily News' and the Ceylon 'Observer', and was for a time Features Editor and Foreign Affairs columnist of the Singapore 'Straits Times'. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of IDN-InDepthNews and a member of its editorial board as well as President of the Media Task Force of Global Cooperation Council.

## Evidence of Absence

Knowing that the Bush Administration was inexorably moving towards war although the justification it claimed did not exist, Blix, as well as others associated with UNMOVIC, sought to avert a disaster. They attempted to persuade Western leaders, among others, that potentially cataclysmic decisions were being approached on the basis of flawed assumptions.

Blix records, for instance, that “during a telephone chat with Tony Blair on February 20, I told the British prime minister that it would be paradoxical and absurd if a quarter of a million troops were to invade Iraq and find very little in the way of weapons. He (i.e. Blair) responded by telling me intelligence was clear that Saddam had reconstituted his weapons of mass destruction program.” (Readers will recall that Blair was as gung ho as President George W. Bush about the invasion.)

Blix shared his misgivings with others in high positions who might have been able to halt or slow down the drift towards war. He writes: “...suspicions are one thing and reality is quite another. U.N. inspectors were asked to search for, report and destroy real weapons.

“As we found no weapons and no evidence supporting the suspicions, we reported this. But U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld dismissed our reports with one of his wittier retorts: “The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.” Verbal dexterity is a helpful trait in a politician but does not supplant the need for realism in the decision-making process. Policy decisions on war and peace require more than comedic talent.

In yet another intervention, Blix writes, “on February 11 -- less than five weeks before the invasion -- I told U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice I wasn't terribly impressed by the intelligence we had received from the U.S., and that there had been no weapons of mass destruction at any of the sites we had been recommended (to inspect) by American forces. Her response was that it was Iraq, and not the intelligence, that was on trial.” Oh, wow.

### Fake premise, Real problems

A war launched on a cooked-up premise is likely, at best, to have mixed results. On the plus side, Iraq has the benefit of



Hans Blix in Vienna 2002. 1st Executive Chairman of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission| March 1, 2000 –June 30, 2003 | Photo: Dean Calma, IAEA

Saddam Hussein's tyrannical – in some situations, brutal – regime having ended. Few but his closest associates mourned his eviction from power. The end of his regime has not, however, been an unmixed blessing for the people of Iraq.

Over 130,000 Iraqis died as a result of the invasion and its consequences. Families were disrupted as they are in any war, and the hope of a “new tomorrow” remains distant for the nation. Stable, democratic governance is yet to be achieved. Corruption has been woven into the fabric of life.

On the US side, over 4,000 deaths have been reported, with so many more injured. Military personnel have lost their limbs and, thereby, their capacity for employment. They, and many others, have become victims of emotional trauma.

A report on the Costs of War compiled by the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University calculates that US war expenditures at over \$2 trillion – yes, with a “t.” This upsurge of unfunded expenditure aggravated the recession from which the US has not fully recovered.

The world's policymakers would be well advised to think deeply on the effects of the Bush Administration's intervention in Iraq as they consider their responses to other regional and global problems that cry out for resolution. □

## CONSIDER THIS

## Obama Retains Audacity of Hope

By Ernest Corea



WASHINGTON DC - Hostile and sometimes potentially humiliating treatment of some of President Barack Obama's nominees or potential nominees for high office by opposing legislators provides a foretaste of what might lie ahead for legislation that will be formulated in line with the national agenda he outlined in his State of the Union Address on February 12.

His proposals cannot simply spring into life and become the law of the land without expert and empathetic management and implementation by senior officials, primarily members of his second term Cabinet that he is now in the process of putting together.

Some weeks ago, Ambassador Susan Rice, the outstanding US Permanent Representative at the UN, who was widely considered to be Obama's first choice to succeed Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, was verbally mauled on the basis of gossip, innuendo, and misrepresentation. Rice withdrew her name from consideration for the position.

More recently, another Obama nominee, (former) Senator Chuck Hagel, a Republican from Nebraska, was subjected to barely concealed enmity – mainly from fellow-Republicans – during the required committee hearing on his suitability to serve as Secretary (Minister) of Defence. Hagel, a scholarly and prescient politician, is a decorated war veteran who served as an enlisted soldier, not from the officer class.

Hagel survived the committee hearing but when his nomination went before the full Senate on February 12 the numbers were stacked against him, and a vote on his confirmation was postponed. This was the first time that a potential Defence Secretary was filibustered, and only the third time that a presidential nominee was subjected to a Senate filibuster.

Speculation on what fate awaits John Brennan, an intelligence professional who is widely respected by his peers, when his nomination as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is put to a vote, is less than upbeat. Brennan has served effectively as a special adviser at the White House for the past four years.

Meanwhile, Obama's national agenda awaits formulation as legislation and submission to the legislature where, it would appear, some legislators are sharpening their claws in anticipation.

Aside from the hostility shown to some of his nominees, an indication of what lie ahead was provided when, a couple of days after the State of the Union Address, the Republican majority in the House of Representatives killed a proposal for a 0.5 per cent increase in pay for federal government employees – the third consecutive pay freeze.

The State of the Union Address is a report from the President to the legislature and, via mass media, to the people. The president's report is mandated by the constitution which states at Article II, Section 3: “He shall from time to time give to Congress information of the State of the Union and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.”

The Address is delivered to a joint session of the House of Representatives and Senate. The president's report was known for many years as the President's Annual Message to Congress. President Roosevelt named it the State of the Union Address in 1934 and that title prevails.

These Addresses range from the mundane to the inspiring, depending on the nation's circumstances as well as the goals of the president delivering the Address and his talent, or lack of it, as a public speaker. Obama came to this Address after a decisive election victory and he very quickly showed that actions do have consequences.

He was at the top of his form both as a speaker and as leader with ideas to share. Pugnacious on some points, assertively impassioned on others, he appeared to be completely at ease, exuding both self-confidence and commitment to the agenda he was spelling out.

In *The Audacity of Hope*, one of the books that helped him lay the groundwork for his first presidential run, Obama articulated the need to create a national constituency who would “see their own self-interest as inextricably linked to the interest of others.”

At the political level, such a constituency emerged during the 2012 presidential election and carried him to victory and office on their shoulders. In his State of the Union Address, he urged that a similar constituency should, using the same fundamental principles, direct its energies to re-creating, renewing, and re-energizing a societal contract that would usher in a period of national renewal. ☞

*Photo (top left column) President Obama delivers the State of the Union address at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Feb. 12, 2013.*

As reported in the official transcript, he said: "It is our generation's task, then, to reignite the true engine of America's economic growth – a rising, thriving middle class. It is our unfinished task to restore the basic bargain that built this country – the idea that if you work hard and meet your responsibilities, you can get ahead, and no matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, or who you love.

"It is our unfinished task to make sure that this government works on behalf of the many, and not just the few; that it encourages free enterprise, rewards individual initiative, and opens the doors of opportunity to every child across this great nation."

### Package of Proposals

Some of the key elements of Obama's national agenda were the return home of 34,000 troops from Afghanistan within the next 12 months; action on comprehensive immigration reform based on the proposals being crafted, separately, in the House of Representatives and the Senate; and science-based correctives in the area of climate change, both by way of mitigation and adaptation.

On climate change, he urged that proposals supported by Republicans including Senator John McCain, whom he trounced at the 2008 presidential election, should be revived. He urged, as well, that a balanced approach be taken to meet the country's energy needs, with both renewable and non-renewable resources being used.

For the benefit of the next generation, he proposed a system of universal, first-rate pre-school education that could be undertaken in partnerships involving the federal and state governments. Moving up the ladder, he sought an investment of \$1 billion to set up 15 new institutes whose research would help to create new manufacturing technologies. The exercise would follow the lines of a pioneering experiment that had already proved itself in the state of Ohio.

Keeping in mind the efforts at voter suppression during the presidential election, the development of suppression techniques that affected working class voters and minorities, and the incredibly long queues in which voters were compelled to wait for several hours to cast their votes – or grow tired of waiting, leave the queue and go home, this being compelled to disenfranchise themselves.

The longest queues were in areas considered favorable to Obama, and he promised to "fix the problem" during his victory speech last November. He will appoint a bi-partisan commission to propose measures that could end or reduce all such electoral anomalies.

### Awaiting a Vote

Obama's most effective use of rhetoric was in his comments on gun violence. He was speaking in the long shadow of the Newtown "baby massacre" where a gunman equipped with a military style weapon killed some 20 chil-

dren and six adults at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

The fact that most of the victims of this wanton act of gun violence created a special kind of outrage and before long several legislative proposals for managing gun ownership without depriving gun owners of their constitutional right to bear arms had been drafted. The gun industry's lobby moved in at that point and up to now none of the proposals including those from Obama had been brought up for a vote in either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Some survivors of gun violence including former Congresswoman Gaby Giffords, as well as grieving family members of those mown down, had special places in the audience when Obama spoke. Referring to them or their family members who were killed by name, and using the technique of incremental repletion Obama urged that draft legislation to control gun violence should be put up for voting.

He said: "Overwhelming majorities of Americans – Americans who believe in the Second Amendment – have come together around common-sense reform, like background checks that will make it harder for criminals to get their hands on a gun. Senators of both parties are working together on tough new laws to prevent anyone from buying guns for resale to criminals. Police chiefs are asking our help to get weapons of war and massive ammunition magazines off our streets, because these police chiefs, they're tired of seeing their guys and gals being outgunned.

"Each of these proposals deserves a vote in Congress. (Applause.) Now, if you want to vote no, that's your choice. But these proposals deserve a vote. Because in the two months since Newtown, more than a thousand birthdays, graduations, anniversaries have been stolen from our lives by a bullet from a gun – more than a thousand.

"One of those we lost was a young girl named Hadiya Pendleton. She was 15 years old. She loved Fig Newtons and lip gloss. She was a majorette. She was so good to her friends they all thought they were her best friend. Just three weeks ago, she was here, in Washington, with her classmates, performing for her country at my inauguration. And a week later, she was shot and killed in a Chicago park after school, just a mile away from my house. Hadiya's parents, Nate and Cleo, are in this chamber tonight, along with more than two dozen Americans whose lives have been torn apart by gun violence.

"They deserve a vote. They deserve a vote. (Applause.) Gabby Giffords deserves a vote. (Applause.) The families of Newtown deserve a vote. (Applause.) The families of Aurora deserve a vote. (Applause.) The families of Oak Creek and Tucson and Blacksburg, and the countless other communities ripped open by gun violence -- they deserve a simple vote. (Applause.)"

True. But will they get what they deserve? ☐

[IDN-InDepthNews – February 16, 2013]

## VIEWPOINT

## Land and Forest Should Ride A Tandem

By Luc Gnacadja\*



There is widespread agreement that sustainable forest management on a global scale is not achievable without halting land degradation. But this view is not shared by the rationale and focus of the tools and mechanisms designed during the past decade to promote and incentivize sustainable forest management.

As if to prove the point, the global coalition of the willing has been putting its money and effort into saying "Yes we can achieve sustainable forest management on a global scale without halting land degradation."

"What if we change this state of affairs?" asks UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja.

"Can the economy and the business community benefit from such a change?" he adds and elaborates "on the nexus of land degradation and sustainable forest management" and highlights the specific case of drylands .

Image credit: IISD.CA

BONN - Land degradation and sustainable forest management: where, why and how do we get it so wrong?

We know, with clear and consistent evidence, that the expansion of agricultural land is the major driver of the depletion of primary tropical and sub-tropical forests.

70 to 80 % of expansion of cropland leads to deforestation. That expansion is driven by poorly-designed agricultural practice, changes in consumption patterns and population dynamics.

From 1980 to 2000, 80% of the additional 100 million ha of agricultural land in tropical regions came from the clearing of primary and secondary forests.

It should be noted that high degradation trends are occurring in 25% of our agricultural land. Overall, more than two thirds of our agricultural land suffers from moderate to high rates of degradation. This compares to only 10% of land where the status is improving, according to the "Status and trends in global land degradation" released by FAO in 2011.

Therefore, and given that state of degradation, we are likely to continue pushing the frontier of agricultural land into the forests. To meet the projected increase in demand for food by 50%, energy by 45% and water by 30% by 2030 an expansion of some 200 million ha of agricultural land will be required.

Degrade – Abandon – Migrate to claim more forest land. We have been perpetuating the depletion of our forests

over decades, sometimes even centuries, in our quest for social and economic development. This must change if we want to preserve our forests and sustainably manage them.

As Paulo Adario from Greenpeace warned, if we do not change the way we do agriculture, even those involved in certified commercial logging might one day be out of business.

What is the alternative? It is mainly about endeavouring to: 1. Avoid soil erosion (we are losing 20 billion tons of fertile soil every year from cropland erosion alone which equivalent 3 tons per capita); 2. Fill the yield gap in production on agricultural land; and 3. Control expansion by restoring already degraded land that still holds potential for restoration or rehabilitation.

### Good news

The good news is that to achieve this, the sustainable management of forests and trees has a key role to play.

That is why schemes and mechanisms such as REDD+, designed to avoid deforestation, should also incentivize that alternative approach.

Today, more than 2 billion hectares of land worldwide are suitable for rehabilitation through forest and landscape restoration. Out of this, 75 percent is best suited for mosaic restoration, where forests and trees can be combined with other land uses, including agroforestry.

What about the specific case of drylands? ➔

\*Luc Gnacadja is Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). This article contains excerpts from his keynote speech at the World Forests Summit, organized by The Economist on March 6 in Stockholm, Sweden.



Agroforestry is essential in addressing the dryland's conundrum – feeding more people, more animals and more trees while the land is becoming thirstier due to global warming causing increased aridity, escalating drought and acceleration of desertification processes.

When land degradation occurs in arid semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas – generically known as drylands – it goes by the name "desertification" because it is a process of transformation that turns productive land into desert like conditions. Globally six million km<sup>2</sup> of drylands carry a legacy of desertification.

Drylands are about one third of the planet's landmass, home to 38% of the world's population, 44% of its food production systems and 50% of its livestock.

Population dynamics here are impressive.

The majority of the projected 2 billion additional people on planet earth will be born in the countries of the developing world, with large proportion to be born in the dry areas. In fact, with an average of more than 3% of growth per year, the population of the Sahel will double in the next two decades, increasing pressure on the natural resources (water and productive land) that all societies heavily depend on. Here, achieving food, water and energy security for all will to a large extent depend on how sustainably the forests are managed.

42 per cent of the earth's tropical and subtropical forest is dry forest. Despite being more extensive than rainforests, public awareness of tropical dry habitats is low and they receive little attention from conservation efforts. At the same time, very little financial investment is allocated for forests in the arid zones compared to other forest ecosystems.

Although suffering from greater degradation than wet forests and being directly impacted by global warming, dry forests have the potential to recover to a mature state more quickly than wet forests, and they may, therefore, be considered more resilient. Managing dryland forests in a sustainable way is key to our global food security in addition to being essential for improving living conditions and building the resilience of people and ecosystems already heavily affected by climate change.

Dry forests are currently neglected under REDD+ initiatives. But they offer a particularly promising opportunity for REDD+ co-benefits.

### **Scaling up attention to dryland forests**

What is needed to scale up attention to dryland forests, given their importance for global sustainability, is innovation, including in our business model. We must design new business models to effectively attract investments, including private ones, in agroforestry and in dry forests. The land rush, which followed the 2008 food crisis, led to massive acquisitions of land by private investors mainly in

dryland countries in the developing world. Those long-term investments might be jeopardized if they are not protected with investments in dry forests.

For instance, we need to innovate under REDD+ by developing an effective Policy Framework for dry forests.

It is not all doom and gloom. In many places in the world, drylands are thriving. I have seen success stories as a result of innovation – policy innovation, private sector investments and grassroots level leadership.

In that regard, good news is even coming from areas of the Sahel in crisis.

For instance, in Niger farmers have adapted and improved traditional woodland management techniques to their farm land, returning degraded croplands and grazing lands to productivity and restoring degraded forests. Over the past two decades 5 million ha, nation-wide, have been brought back to life (attested to by comparative satellite images), feeding more people, more animals and more trees. This is agroforestry and ecological restoration at work. It has been labelled "farmer-managed natural regeneration".

By preserving naturally regenerated trees, farmers are recarbonizing their farm land with indigenous species such as *Fadherbia Albida*.

These trees also fix the soil and help sequester nitrogen, improve crop yields (for example of corn from 1 ton/ha to 4-5 tonnes), increase food security and are contributing to sustainable intensification while building adaptation and resilience to climate change.

### **Re-greening**

Promoting sustainable forest management should also be about incentivizing schemes like this. I would argue those farmers are actually rehabilitating former dryland forest that had been transformed into man-made desert by other more invasive techniques.

The international community needs to address the root causes of the multifold crises in the Sahel. These are often natural resource-based crises, compounded by other factors. The time is ripe to develop a major initiative to up-scale agroforestry schemes, for instance in the context of the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration. This could involve the re-greening of 50 million ha of farm land in the Sahel.

Such an initiative could well fit within the Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative

This is a mega initiative that is still to deliver on its promise. It aims to coordinate efforts in sustainably managing ecosystems across a 5,000 km long belt from Senegal in the west of the continent to Djibouti in the east through sustainable landscape management and restoration/rehabilitation efforts.

*(Continued on page 11) ➔*

## VIEWPOINT

## The Worlds Beyond Darwin's and Hawking's

By Antonio Carlos Silva Rosa\*



PORTO - In regards to the way things are and how they could/should/ought to be, we are cutting ourselves short by concentrating almost exclusively on our intellect, knowledge and intelligence.

I am fascinated with the insights the evolution of science provides, particularly astronomy, cosmology, quantum physics and medicine. Medical research and technology opened the doors to the insides of our brains, considered by ourselves superior and in many ways as complex, dynamic, fascinating as the universe itself. And scientists keep sending those 'intelligent' messages to outer space in hopes that other 'intelligent' beings will pick them up and beam back their replies to them thus completing the human life-changing experience of a close encounter of whatever kind. They assume that beings 'out there' possess minds and intellects like our own.

For the sake of argument: What if extraterrestrial beings – in the event that they do exist – are not interested in intelligence/knowledge but in other qualities from prospective contactees? Like true civilization, true ethics, higher moral codes, evolution of consciousness/conscience, spiritual as opposed to material advancement, absence of aggressiveness, and/or other non-tangible factors not covered by today's human sciences?

A handful of philosophers have addressed such intangibles quite elegantly. But in our pragmatic, empiricist, materialistic, savage, belligerent, utilitarian, realist, scientific, technological, technocratic 21st century world it became a nono. Serious people, who do serious thinking and serious undertakings don't dwell on these – or any other – immaterial aspects. An 'advanced' country must be the one with the greatest military power, economic supremacy, and ability to dominate others by any means necessary. Non-different from beasts, insects, birds in the wild. The name of the game is competition; solidarity being the underdog without a future. It is the survival of the fittest, according to Darwin's theory (not fact) of material evolution.

There is a character defect that must be hidden, or better yet suppressed, if one wants to succeed in modern life: to be perceived as virtuous, meaning, naïve, simpleton, simple minded, low IQ, low class/life, uneducated, stupid, a jerk. Humbleness is for a certain class of people who can afford it (saints for instance); one should not even look humble

not to be stepped over socially. We are socialized, conditioned, educated, governed to believe in such cultural/structural biases from birth to coffin. It is what reasonable people expect from other equally reasonable people. Not evolved. Reasonable.

Scientists theorize and hypothesize about multi dimensional spaces, string theory, brane theory and multiverses that are glimpsed at or imagined in equations and in models born within the boundaries of their collective knowledge and intelligence, which demand respect in our earthly context. But upon closer scrutiny believing those mathematical hypotheses is not very different from believing hypotheses based on spirituality and consciousness. The common dominator being belief.

What if extraterrestrials are not interested in intelligent and knowledgeable savages who, organized in groups, are at the top of their capacity and willingness to exploit, kill, maim, torture, cause pain and suffering to each other and other animals – without remorse – on a planet where they are parasites/predators?

Whose historians focus first and foremost on conquests, wars, battles, invasions, genocides, carnages, bloodshed, slavery, famine, crimes? Exalting military tacticians and strategists, whose business is exclusively to hurt, kill and destroy, as heroes? Where the concept of virtue has been hijacked and distorted by both the religious and the military establishments? ☹

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Picture: The writer | Credit: Transcend

What if they are not impressed with the scientific/technological exploits/inventions born from our superior intelligence but being used primarily for armed conflicts, vendettas and cruelty; to social, cultural and economic control, and the threat of Armageddon if the powerful don't get their way? With nations of peoples lacking any resemblance to the definition of a poetic, idealized, civilized, sapiens, superior 'human being?' What if they are interested in a spiritual rather than in this material evolution (a misnomer)? Would that be the reason that political and military authorities have never been sought or summoned by alleged ET visitors to our planet? Steven Spielberg was perhaps closer to reality with the plot of his Box Office record 1982 movie, ET.

There are tribes in the Amazon still uncontacted even though they are known to be there for decades. We have photos of them. But they show such degree of aggressiveness/ignorance that Brazilian authorities see no point in trying a direct contact lest these native Brazilians get unnecessarily killed – or kill – in the process. They shoot arrows [their technology] at airplanes, which represent their very own UFOs. Ring any bells? We have nuclear weapons ready for the UFOs that keep flying over us without plausible explanations. How dare they? They must be evil.

I have reason to believe that this is where our intelligent, intellectual superiorities are missing the point. We are meant by nature, the universe, life itself (let's leave the gods out of this) to be superior beings, elevated in virtue, goodness, righteousness, integrity, ethics, honesty, morality, uprightness, evolved consciousness, and not merely to get richer, smarter, sexier, more cunning, and more knowl-

edgeable to dominate everything and everybody we contemplate-if possible by force. This is the real danger, the aspect that could prompt these smarter, more aggressive (meaning less civilized) people in power to explode the planet through a nuclear war, thus creating a second asteroid belt.

Yet, I refuse to see that in our future; as much as I disagree with William Goldman in his acclaimed novel, *Lords of the Flies*, portraying English school boys stranded in a deserted island after a plane crash, who descend into savagery and even cannibalism, dividing themselves into 'tribes,' in a few months span. Rather, life's movement is forward, up – if certainly with setbacks. As every Yin encapsulates its Yang – and vice versa – on an eternal, infinite cosmic recycling motion, and energy is never destroyed, only transformed, so is spiritual evolution. There is never a loss.

When I met Fritjof Capra, author of *The Tao of Physics*, at the University of Hawaii in the '80s he told me smiling, "When we, physicists, get to the top of the mountain we will be greeted by mystics and spiritualists, 'what took you so long?'" Today's physicists, astronomers, cosmologists, mathematicians are getting closer to the top with their pursuit of the elusive 'God particle,' aka Higgs boson – but with their biases against spirituality intact. Stephen Hawking, allegedly one of the most intelligent persons on the planet, goes to great lengths to proselytize his belief that the universe "does not need a god;" the subtext being that it is a god in and of itself. Albert Einstein, however, was the exception that proves the rule; as was Carl Jung. And Gandhi, of course, the antithesis of a politician. [*IDN-InDepthNews* – March 27, 2013] □

***(Continued from page 9)***

The initiative has, as an overall objective, "to improve the resilience of human and natural systems in the Sahel-Saharan zone to climate change through a sound ecosystems' management, sustainable development of land resources, protection of rural heritage and improvement of the living conditions and livelihoods of populations living in these areas".

In supporting the initiative from its inception we have endeavoured to support and integrate an entire landscape approach: we cannot achieve sustainable forest management at global scale if we fail to halt land degradation. The solution: addressing land degradation and poverty at the same time, especially in the developing world. The policy template of the UNCCD – The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – is to build effective partnerships among all stakeholders in order to improve the livelihood of the populations and the conditions of their ecosystems affected by land degradation. That is how we can generate global benefits across landscapes.

So what if we change the state of affairs about achieving sustainable forest management? Who will drive it? And how do we make the transition? Change is urgently needed. We must boldly go back to the drawing board and innovate

and, this time, get things right. We can't afford to miss the small window of opportunity leading up to 2015. By then, we are set to design a new post 2015 global development framework learning from the successes and shortcomings of the MDGs; to agree on sustainable development goals which will drive the preservation of natural capital and ecosystem functions we all depend on and to reach a comprehensive global climate change agreement. In all those three areas, we need to reflect and translate the imperative of ecological restoration through landscape approaches.

The only way to achieve food, water and energy security for a growing population and to maintain our forests is to ensure sustainable land use for all and by all. Thankfully, last summer during the Rio+20 Conference, governments recognized "the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation" and committed to "strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development". This is an aspirational goal and a provision that must now be translated into an operational goal and deliverable targets. I believe that zero net land degradation and zero net forest degradation are two sides of the same coin: sustainable land use for all and by all. [*IDN-InDepthNews* – March 20, 2013]

## VIEWPOINT

## Stormy Seas Await New Big Fisherman

By Nimal Fernando\*



WASHINGTON DC - Simon Peter's latest successor is now in place. Argentinian Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now known as Pope Francis I, who had been the archbishop of Buenos Aires, follows 265 other pontiffs as the representative of Jesus Christ on Earth. He will no doubt have to summon all his management skills to deal effectively with more than a few challenges before the Roman Catholic Church.

As the past year and more has made abundantly clear, Catholics worldwide have voiced their unease, if not displeasure, in the church's handling of the sex abuse by clergy. Catholics in the United States, for instance, tend to view the scandal over sex abuse by clergy as the most pressing issue for their church today, as an early-March poll by the Pew Research Centre showed.

Asked what they thought was the Roman Catholic Church's most important problem, 34 percent of U.S. Catholics mentioned sex abuse, paedophilia or some other reference to the scandal. Nine percent of the respondents also

viewed dishonesty, low credibility and low trust, taken together, as another problem that needs to be addressed.

Some of the faithful in the U.S. and Europe have even expressed outrage that a handful of priests, clearly identified as paedophiles, had not been brought to book, but transferred to different parishes. Charges of a general 'cover-up' have even come uncomfortably close to Benedict XVI.

The outrage among some Catholics stems from what they view as the Vatican's decision to put the church's reputation ahead of disciplinary action against a few members of the clergy who had misused what is regarded as the ultimate position of trust.

As some media reports in the U.S. noted, victims of sexual abuse believe that the reckoning has barely begun. They are demanding not just a proper investigation, but also apologies, punishments and – in a few cases – cash. They view Benedict as having exemplified the secretive, cautious response that aggravated the misconduct.

Theologians as well as analysts in the U. S. and elsewhere, are pointing to the erosion of trust, and the concomitant loss of respect, as a mounting concern, especially in the developing world. It has been suggested that falling attendance at mass (even in mostly Catholic Italy, only 39 percent attend on a monthly basis) and in extreme cases, some of the faithful even turning their backs on the church, are indicative of a loss of credibility.

### Not a good position for the church

An inescapable fact is that on Benedict's watch, the church lost sway in Europe, the U.S. and even Latin America. The central bureaucracy in Rome, the Curia, fell more deeply

into dysfunction. Catholic liberals, a few priests among them, are on record as saying that almost all of the church's recent woes can be ascribed to the top-down decision-making which has marked the past two papacies.

This cannot be seen as a good position for the church to be in, given its goal of spreading Christianity worldwide, something the church has achieved with a wide margin of success so far. As demographic studies show, over the past century, the number of Catholics around the world has more than tripled, from an estimated 291 million to 1.2 billion – the world's largest faith denomination.

And even as the world's overall population also rose rapidly over the same period, Catholics have made up a remarkably stable share of all the global population. In 1910, a Pew Research study shows, Catholics comprised about half (48 percent) of all Christians and 17 percent of the world's total population, according to historical estimates from the World Christian Database.

A century later, Catholics still comprise about half (50 percent) of Christians worldwide and 16 percent of the total global population. What has changed substantially over the past century is the geographic distribution of the world's Catholics. In 1910, Europe was home to about two-thirds of all Catholics, and nearly nine-in-ten lived either in Europe (65 percent) or Latin America (24 percent). By 2010, by contrast, only about a quarter of all Catholics (24 percent) were in Europe. Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for the largest share (39 percent). ➔

*\*Nimal Fernando is a freelance writer in the United States.*

*Picture top left: Pope Francis, then Cardinal Bergoglio, celebrating mass in Buenos Aires, 2008 | Credit: Wikimedia Commons*



A girl reacts after the name of the new pope is announced in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. (CNS/Paul Haring)

The election of the first Hispanic pope (also the first non-European in more than 1,200 years) is decidedly a nod to this demographic shift. Following in from this, it is safe to assume that the Vatican will have to look closely at the continuing Italian sway over papal elections (175 Italians have been elevated to the papacy). Brazil has the largest Catholic population in the world, with the share of self-identified Catholics in Brazil put at 65 per cent in 2010. Mexico, the country with the second-largest Catholic population in the world, was 85 percent Catholic in 2010.

Pope Francis might also have to deal with what has been viewed by other religious denominations and parts of the media, especially in the developing world, as an aggressive strategy of conversions. Some have not shied away from attributing coercion and material incentives for the rapid growth of Catholicism in sub-Saharan Africa, the Catholic population of which is put today at about 171 million (16 per cent), up from an estimated one million (less than 1 percent) in 1910.

Also, what is universally regarded as the Church's greatest contribution globally – its charitable works – has not been immune to attacks by other denominations, especially in countries where Catholics are in a minority. The charge in this instance is that such charitable works, specifically among the poor and marginalised, are being used as a tool in conversions.

Among the other issues demanding Pope Francis's attention, globally in general and specifically in the United States, is the loss of members as a result of religious switching (one-in-ten adults in the United States is a former Catholic, according to the Pew Research Center's 2009 report, "Faith in Flux"); a feeling among large segments of the faithful that the Church is outdated; the shortage of priests; questions about the admission of women to the priesthood; the church's stand on abortion and homosexuality; the challenge from evangelical protestantism in Latin America; persecution of Christians in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Catholics and other Christians comprise religious minorities in many countries where they face discrimination, government interference, and in some instances, growing violence as they practice their faith. Many such cases in Syria, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and China have been highlighted by the media.

Given the onrush of social change and modernity globally, Pope Francis I might conclude that nothing short of a gentle, if decisive, makeover will suffice to sustain the Church's vitality and purpose. To be sure, he'll have over a billion-strong fan base rooting for him urging him on to prove that he could be, today, as big a fisherman as was Simon Peter in his day. [IDN-InDepthNews – March 14, 2013] □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Obama Urges Middle Class-Based Prosperity

By Ernest Corea

WASHINGTON DC – A 19-year-old single mother captured the spirit of hope and change that animated candidate Barack Hussein Obama’s first presidential election campaign with this text message: “Rosa sat, so Martin could walk; Martin walked so Obama could run; Obama is running so our children can fly.” Khari Mosley, a leader of the Democratic Party in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania cited the comment in a newspaper article and it re-surfaced in 2013, reaffirming the sentiments of “hope and change” that helped to propel Obama to the pinnacle of political power in the US.



Now, the crowds who attended Obama’s second inauguration have left town. The celebratory “balls” have ended. Traffic flow in the city is back to almost normal. Public attention has turned to workaday matters, such as an impending snowfall. The young mother’s words will, however, continue to energise “we the people” together with the connected and the inspiring promise of these words from Obama’s assertive Inaugural Address that captured the core of his message:

“We, the people, understand that our country cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it. We believe that America’s prosperity must rest upon the broad shoulders of a rising middle class. We know that America thrives when every person can find independence and pride in their work; when the wages of honest labor liberate families from the brink of hardship. We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else, because she is an American; she is free, and she is equal, not just in the eyes of God but also in our own.”

## Great Affection

Despite the weary pessimism of political soothsayers who speculated that there would be little enthusiasm, and only a smattering of a crowd at Obama’s second inauguration on January 21, 2013, “we the people” joined in the event with fervour – and in large numbers.

Sure, the crowd was smaller than the massive record-breaking multitude of 2009, when Obama was inaugurated as the country’s first African-American president, but it was enormous nevertheless. Unofficial estimates placed it at a million. (Official estimates of the numbers attending such events are not announced.)

From the patience of men, women, and children who turned up as early as they could and lined up to enter the

area demarcated for the event, their festive flag waving, their effervescent mood, and their boisterous response to many of Obama’s key words and phrases, there could be no doubt that they continued to hold him in the highest regard – and in great affection. Time after time, reporters who asked out-of-town visitors in the crowd what made them travel to the inauguration, the answer was “because we love the man.”

Every inch of Washington’s sprawling national mall was packed. It was a formidable spectacle, enough to impress even the blasé. “No-drama Obama” was clearly moved by this outpouring of personal and political support. When leaving the outdoor ceremony at its conclusion, he stopped at the entrance to the congressional building (the Capitol), turned around, looked at the flag waving, hollering crowd, and said: “I want to take another look, one more time. I’m not going to see this again.” Indeed, he won’t, not as a newly inaugurated president. He is bound by the principle and practice of “term limits.”

The more important issue is: How strong will be the influence of what he said to the crowd and the audience beyond in four years or more? How much of the promise of his lofty Inaugural Address will be fulfilled? Those are questions for historians to answer...and many will. Even now, the historic nature of his second inauguration is a fact, and the potential impact of Obama’s “second presidency” is beginning to emerge.

## Money Flowed

Next to Obama’s supporters, nobody was more affected by his victory at the presidential election of November 6, 2012 than his detractors in the Republican Party. Many of them had participated in the election campaign against Obama, directly or indirectly. And what a campaign it was, with weasel words, dog whistle phrases, and barely concealed prejudice in the mix. Money flowed in a tidal bore against him. That he prevailed nevertheless, much to the surprise of his opponents, is in itself historic.

Equally historic is the combined and successful effort of “we the people” to beat back the onslaught unleashed against them. Numerous laws were adopted in state legislatures under Republican control to inconvenience elderly and less mobile voters, who were considered to be Obama supporters. Who is the 90-year-old who can readily ☺

produce documents as proof of his citizenship? Laws inconveniencing “we the people” were clearly a form of voter suppression. At the same time, efforts to intimidate women voters, scare off African Americans and other minorities from voting, and generally make a mockery of the electoral process multiplied. The result of all this trickery turned out to be the opposite of what was intended. Instead of being scared off, the intended victims of laws and malpractices combined in coalitions of voters that carried Obama to victory: 94 percent of African-American voters, 71 percent of Hispanics, and 55 percent of women voted for Obama. Unmarried women gave Obama a 38 percent margin over his opponent.

Thus, Obama was rewarded with two historic elections. The first (2008) was historic per se in bringing an African American into the White House. The second was historic for being the first time that an African-American was re-elected to the presidency. It was historic, as well, given all the forces and resources arrayed against Obama and his supporters that “we the people” prevailed.

So it should come as no surprise that history figured both directly and indirectly in his Inauguration.

### **Due Homage**

In 1963, a member of a white supremacist group murdered Medgar Evers, a Mississippi civil rights activist, 38-years old at the time of his death. He was gunned down on the driveway in his own home. By a cruel irony, the murder was committed on the same day that President John F. Kennedy delivered a stirring civil rights speech.

In 2013, 50 years since the Evers assassination, his wife Myrlie Evers-Williams, a past chair of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and an iconic figure in the civil rights movement, delivered the Invocation at Obama’s second inauguration. She was the first lay person entrusted with this responsibility. The honored place given to Myrlie Evers could not resurrect her husband but it paid memorable homage to his life’s work.

In solemn tones, she said: “As we sing the words of belief, ‘this is my country,’ let us act upon the meaning that everyone is included. May the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of every woman, man, boy and girl be honored. May all your people, especially the least of these, flourish in our blessed nation. One hundred fifty years after the Emancipation Proclamation and 50 years after the March on Washington, we celebrate the spirit of our ancestors, which has allowed us to move from a nation of unborn hopes and a history of disenfranchised (votes) to today’s expression of a more perfect union. We ask, too, Almighty that where our paths seem blanketed by throngs of oppression and riddled by pangs of despair we ask for your guidance toward the light of deliverance. And that the vision of those that came before us and dreamed of this day, that we recognize that their visions still inspire us.”

Her theme of diversity was consistent with two other historic events, both of which she mentioned: The Emancipation Proclamation signed by Abraham Lincoln 150 years, and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom led by Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) 50 years ago. January 21 is, in fact, MLK Day, so it was appropriate that Obama’s Address included an inspiring reference to the assassinated civil rights leader. This is also the 40th anniversary of the “Roe v Wade” judicial decision which declared abortions to be legal in the US.

In the context of these events melding, as part of the Inauguration’s background, nobody should be surprised that Obama chose to intertwine civil rights in this all-encompassing statement:

“We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths – that all of us are created equal – is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls (where a women’s rights convention was organised by women in 1848), and Selma (the scene of civil rights battles), and Stonewall (where gays fought back against police oppression in 1969); just as it guided all those men and women, sung and unsung, who left footprints along this great Mall, to hear a preacher say that we cannot walk alone; to hear a King proclaim that our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth.”

Obama was direct and unambiguous, in dealing with social and economic rights including equal pay for men and women, equal treatment under the laws for all gays, protecting voting rights and clamping down on voter suppression, and compassionate immigration reform. (He is expected to announce an immigration initiative in a matter of days.) He emphasized his policy of ending senseless wars, and committed himself to a foreign policy of engagement. He dealt with climate change, personal and national security, and the dangers of absolutism.

### **Moving On – Or Not**

Ideas, however noble; words, however well chosen; rhetoric, however well used; and proposals, however elegantly crafted; do not of themselves, separately or in combination, create instant effectiveness. That requires collaboration between those selected by the people to manage the country’s affairs and their opponents in transforming words into deeds. “We must act,” as Obama has often said.

Can action take place against the push of obstructionism? Voters looking for Obama’s Inaugural Address to influence at least some of those who have been obdurate in opposing his every move will no doubt find solace in the fact that shortly after Obama spoke, Republicans in the House of Representatives acted. They “passed legislation to suspend the nation’s statutory borrowing limit for three months, without including the dollar-for-dollar spending cuts that Republicans once insisted would have to be part of any debt limit bill,” as the New York Times reported. ➔

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Unfortunately, in other situations, Republicans were less conciliatory. Some party leaders appeared to cower in fear and shudder in anger.

Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives John Boehner lamented that the main focus of the Obama

administration is "to annihilate the Republican Party." To avoid any ambiguity, he added: "And let me just tell you, I do believe that is their goal - to just shove us into the dustbin of history."

Over in the supposedly more sober Upper House, Senator Mitch McConnell, commenting on the inaugural address, said: "It was basically a liberal agenda directed at an America that we still believe is centre-right, and I don't think that's a great way to start off the second term if your idea here is to achieve bipartisan solutions." Yes, that's the same McConnell who said early in Obama's first term that "the single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president."

Fear and its companion, anger, evoke the damndest sentiments. [IDN-InDepthNews - January 26, 2013]

## Media Coverage on Migration Found Faulty

By R. Nastranis

VIENNA - Media coverage of migration issues is far from conducive to promoting better understanding between cultures, religions and peoples around the world, according to a study presented at the Fifth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in Vienna on February 28



The study - a pilot project by the UNAOC and the European Journalism Centre (EJC) - was a highlight of the Global Forum, which

was attended by over 2,000 people from around the world. Participants included youth leaders, representatives from the private sector and civil society, journalists, foundations, alongside governmental and multilateral representatives.

During the two day event, leaders from around the world, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Heinz Fischer of Austria, the Emir of Qatar, Shaikh Hamad Al Thani, Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, Romanian President Traian Basescu and Foreign Minister Margallo of Spain, Foreign Minister Salehi of Iran, and others conducted closed door meetings to address current global issues such as Syria, Mali, Israel-Palestine, and the future of sustainable development.

The Forum outcomes included the Vienna Declaration, a document affirming the commitment of numerous governments and international organizations from around the world to advancing cross-cultural dialogue. Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger said the document was a unique opportunity "to further the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, so that it remains high on the global political agenda".

Outlining his vision to make the Alliance more active in addressing acute interethnic and inter-religious tensions, the incoming High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Nassir Al-Nasser, who served as Qatar's Ambassador to the UN and as President of the UN General Assembly, stated: "We will strive to use the tools at our disposal in the difficult settings around the world. We will not shy away from them."

The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. The UNAOC is an initiative of the UN Secretary-General which aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. Prior to Vienna, it has held four events: in Madrid (Spain) in January 2008; Istanbul (Turkey) in April 2009; Rio (Brazil) in May 2010; and in Doha (Qatar) in December 2011. The sixth Global Forum will be held in Indonesia next year.

The study on media coverage on migration issues is the product of UNAOC and EJC cooperation with the University of King's College (Canada), the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (France), Deutsche Welle Akademie (Germany), Christelijke Hogeschool Ede (The Netherlands), and the University of Missouri (USA). The study received expert advice from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and was co-funded by the Open Society Fund to Counter Xenophobia. ☺

*Photo: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with journalists at UNAOC Forum in Vienna Credit: UNAOC*



The European Journalism Centre is a non-profit international foundation with the remit to improve, strengthen, and underpin journalism and the news media. This mission has two main aspects: On the one hand, it is about safeguarding, enhancing and future-proofing quality journalism in Europe; on the other hand, it concerns initiatives towards press freedom in emerging and developing countries. To these ends, the EJC provides thematic training, professional capacity development, and a wide range of support activities.

### Comparative analysis

The study, which offers a comparative analysis of media coverage of migration issues in Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, finds that

- at face value, mainstream news media are broadly adhering to journalistic standards when covering migration;
- migration is, however, frequently framed and presented in a way that may counteract the spirit of journalism ethics;
- the reporting agenda is strongly influenced by a national focus and has deficits where the big picture of migration is concerned.

Research teams at journalism schools and media research institutions in the five countries took four-week snapshots of migration journalism around recent elections, including the presidential elections in the U.S. and France, the Dutch parliamentary election, and regional polls in Germany and Canada.

They identified and analysed some 650 pertinent articles and categorised them by their framing of migration: which types of migrants were in focus, which related topics were discussed, and what overall tone did the articles adopt towards migrants and migration. The sources primarily represented agenda-setting national as well as regional and local newspapers and news magazines.

The pilot study worked under the assumption that mainstream media provide a window onto the most salient public perceptions of, and issues concerning, migration-related topics in the participating countries.

In order best to work this out and to highlight the most relevant findings, the project adopted a comparative international perspective. The UNAOC and EJC plan to extend this exercise around migration coverage to other parts of the world as well as on related topics such as hate speech, diversity, and religion.

The study was preceded by UNAOC's High-Level Seminar on Migration Coverage convened in Paris on January 25-26,

2013 in which over 35 editors-in-chief and migration experts from 27 countries, across Europe and the Mediterranean took part. Working in tandem, both the editors and migration experts put forward 17 concrete recommendations toward more responsible media coverage of migration.

The outcome document includes recommendations in four areas:

- reporting on migration with a working knowledge of the topic, for instance offering journalists a media-friendly glossary
- involving migrants in migration coverage, such as employing more migrants or individuals of migrant origin in newsrooms;
- media actions, including encouraging timely publication of accurate data and use of data
- governmental and non-governmental actions involvement, for instance forging formal and informal links between journalists and other partners.

"The UNAOC Media and Migration programs are taking a leading role in dispelling stereotypes in media coverage of migration," said UNAOC Director Matthew Hodes.

"For institutions like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations that sees the role of media in shaping public opinions and behaviors as crucial, it is timely to create a platform to further dialogue with media professionals on the issue of migration" said the then UNAOC High Representative President Jorge Sampaio during the meeting.

Discussions over the two-days led to a rich exchange of best practices and ideas on ways to strengthen the role of international organizations, establish partnerships with governmental, intergovernmental and other organizations and groups, and working with civil society and media to heighten awareness and foster responsible media coverage of migration.

The meeting was organized in partnership with the Global Editors' Network and hosted by the Gulbenkian Foundation. Participants included a diversity of media representatives such as the BBC (UK), El Mundo (Spain), Corriere della sera (Italy), NZZ (Switzerland), derStandard.de (Austria), Komsomolskaya Pravda (Russia), Maariv (Israel) and Al Ahram (Egypt), alongside migration experts from intergovernmental organizations, think tanks and academics from the International Organization for Migration, Sciences Po-Ceri, the Ethical Journalism Network, and the Geneva Center for Security Policy, among others.

[IDN-InDepthNews – February 28, 2013]

**"For institutions like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations that sees the role of media in shaping public opinions and behaviors as crucial, it is timely to create a platform to further dialogue with media professionals on the issue of migration" said the then UNAOC High Representative President Jorge Sampaio during the meeting.**

## PERSPECTIVES

**'Drone War Will Trigger New Arms Race'**

By Jaya Ramachandran



LONDON - The increasing resort to drones by President Barack Obama will over the long term usher in "a new arms race and lay the foundations for an international system that is increasingly violent, destabilized and polarized between those who have drones and those who are victims of them", a leading terrorism expert has warned. One of the distinctive elements of President Obama's approach to counterterrorism has been his embrace of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or drones, to target terrorist operatives abroad, says Michael J Boyle in an article for *International Affairs*, a British journal published every two months.

During his first term, President Obama launched more than six times as many drone strikes as President Bush did throughout his eight years in office, all the while keeping the CIA-run drone programme away from the scrutiny of Congress and the courts, writes Boyle, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at La Salle University.

He adds: "The U.S. is now using drone strikes to kill terrorist suspects in at least four states (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia), although drone strikes are rumoured to have been used in other places. The campaigns in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia are run by the CIA, with little congressional oversight, and their existence has even been denied by the Obama administration in the courts. Most Americans remain unaware of the scale of the drone programme operating in these countries and of the destruction it has caused in their name."

The conventional wisdom on drone warfare holds that these weapons are highly effective in killing terrorist operatives and disabling terrorist organizations, while killing fewer civilians than other means of attack, writes Boyle.

He argues that much of the existing debate on drones operates with an attenuated notion of effectiveness that discounts the political and strategic dynamics – such as the corrosion of the perceptions of competence and legitimacy of governments where drone strikes take place, growing anti-Americanism and fresh recruitment of militant networks – that reveal the costs of drone warfare.

Boyle substantiates his view by recalling that on June 21, 2010, Pakistani American Faisal Shahzad told a judge in a Manhattan federal court that he placed a bomb at a busy intersection in Times Square as payback for the U.S. occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq and for its worldwide use of drone strikes.

When the judge asked how Shahzad could be comfortable killing innocent people, including women and children, he responded: "Well, the drone hits in Afghanistan and Iraq, they don't see children, they don't see anybody. They kill women, children, they kill everybody. It's a war and in war, they kill people. They're killing all Muslims."

In a videotape released after his arrest, writes Boyle, Shahzad revealed that among his motives for the attack on New York City was revenge for the death of Baitullah Mehsud, a Pakistani Taliban leader killed in a drone strike in August 2009.

While his comments were reported in the American press, the Obama administration never acknowledged that it was revulsion over drone strikes – which Shahzad was rumoured to have seen at first hand when training with militant groups in Pakistan – that prompted his attack.

"In his official statement on the attack," writes Boyle, "President Obama fell back on language reminiscent of his predecessor to describe Shahzad as just another of those 'who would attack our citizens and who would slaughter innocent men, women and children in pursuit of their murderous agenda' and 'will stop at nothing to kill and disrupt our way of life'. That the Times Square attack was blowback from the growing use of drone strikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere was never admitted."

The failed Times Square bombing marked the first arrival of blowback from President Obama's embrace of a drones-first counterterrorism policy on American soil. Boyle sees no reason to believe it will be the last. When President Obama came into office, he pledged to end the 'war on terror' and to restore respect for the rule of law to America's counterterrorism policies.

Instead, he has been just as ruthless and indifferent to the rule of law as his predecessor, avers Boyle, adding: "The basic dimensions of American counterterrorism policy have barely changed between the two administrations, though there has been a shift in tone and emphasis. ☹"

Image above: Predator drone firing missile | Credit: Drone Wars UK

While President Bush issued a call to arms to defend 'civilization' against the threat of terrorism, President Obama has waged his war on terror in the shadows, using drone strikes, special operations and sophisticated surveillance to fight a brutal covert war against Al-Qaeda and other Islamist networks.

"The Obama approach, which emphasizes relatively few 'boots on the ground' and avoids nation-building missions, has been described by members of his administration as efficient, and even morally necessary, given the state of the U.S. economy and the war-weariness of the American people."

### Legality

Much of the existing debate on drones has focused on their legality under international and domestic law and their ethical use as a weapon of war. Setting these issues largely aside, Boyle makes a different case: that the Obama administration's growing reliance on drone strikes has adverse strategic effects that have not been properly weighed against the tactical gains associated with killing terrorists.

The article focuses primarily on the strategic costs of the CIA-run drone campaigns outside active theatres of war (specifically, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia) and does not examine the benefits and costs of drones in active theatres of war such as Afghanistan.

But it challenges the conventional wisdom that drone strikes in the ungoverned spaces of these countries are highly effective by contrasting claims about their relative efficiency at killing 'bad guys' with their political effects in the states where they are used. It argues that drone strikes

"corrode the stability and legitimacy of local governments, deepen anti-American sentiment and create new recruits for Islamist networks aiming to overthrow these governments."

Despite the fact that drone strikes are often employed against local enemies of the governments in Pakistan and Yemen, they serve as powerful signals of these governments' helplessness and subservience to the United States and undermine the claim that these governments can be credible competitors for the loyalties of the population, says Boyle.

"This dynamic makes the establishment of a stable set of partnerships for counterterrorism cooperation difficult, if not impossible, because these partnerships depend upon the presence of capable and legitimate governments that can police their territory and efficiently cooperate with the United States," cautions Boyle.

"In this respect, American counterterrorism policy operates at cross-purposes: it provides a steady flow of arms and financial resources to governments whose legitimacy it systematically undermines by conducting unilateral drone strikes on their territory," the writer adds.

This article will further argue that a drones-first counterterrorism policy is a losing strategic proposition over the long term. The Obama administration's embrace of drones is encouraging a new arms race for drones that will empower current and future rivals and lay the foundations for an international system that is increasingly violent, destabilized and polarized between those who have drones and those who are victims of them.

[IDN-InDepthNews - January 18, 2013]



In 1927, Doolittle was the first person to successfully execute an outside loop — previously thought to be a fatal maneuver. Carried out in a Curtiss fighter at Wright Field in Ohio, Doolittle executed the dive from 10,000 feet, reached 280 miles per hour. <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1691.htm>

## PERSPECTIVES

# Robots Changing Modern Battlefields

By Chas Henry

*This report, by Washington-based national security correspondent Chas Henry, was broadcast during December 2012 on All News 99.1 WNEW, a CBS Radio station in Washington DC. You can hear Chas Henry's' audio documentary here: [www.chashenry.com/robot-wars-2/](http://www.chashenry.com/robot-wars-2/)*

Washington DC - When we humans go to war, our least favorite way is hand to hand, face to face.



"It speaks to human nature," says Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Missy Cummings, a former Navy fighter pilot. "We don't

really like to kill, and if we are going to kill, we like to do it from far away."

Over centuries that has led to creation of weapons that allowed us to separate ourselves from our adversaries – first by yards, then miles. Now, technology allows attacks half a world away.

Until a decade ago, most of the remote engagement capability was owned by the U. S. or Israel. Not anymore.

Unmanned platforms – in the air, on the ground, and on or under the water – are becoming less and less expensive. So are the sensors that help guide them. And nanotechnology is making them smaller.

Today, U. S. soldiers in Afghanistan launch throw-bots into the air by hand, and mini-helicopters deliver frontline supplies by remote control. Adding artificial intelligence to the mix, we are now seeing some platforms operating without even remote human control. An unmanned aircraft flown by an onboard computer recently refueled another unmanned plane – in the air – as it, too, flew completely on its own.

These tools of remote engagement are already changing modern battlefields. And some people worry we may not be giving enough thought to how much they're going to change things.

Simon Ramo has been thinking about this sort of thing for a long time. 99 years old, he knows something about national security. Remember the defense firm TRW? He's the R.

"A huge revolution in cost, in loss of lives, takes place," says Ramo, "if you go to the partnership of man and machine – and let the robots do the dying."

Such a partnership, he says, does more than save life and limb. It also saves the huge expense of maintaining a big military presence overseas.

Peter Singer of the Brookings Institution agrees that remote engagement allows modern military forces to "go out and blow things up, but not have to send people into harm's way."

But he says robot wars are much more complex than that.

"Every other previous revolution in war has been about a weapon that changed the how," says Singer. "That is, a machine or system where it either went further, faster, or had a bigger boom."

Robots, he says, fundamentally change who goes out to fight very human wars.

"It doesn't change the nature of war," says General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "But it does in some ways affect the character of war."

## Contest of human will

The nature of war, says Dempsey, is a contest of human will. The character, on the other hand: "What do you intend? How do you behave with it? And then what's the outcome you produce?"

"This is not a system which we've just simply turned loose," says the general. "It's very precisely managed, and the decisions made are made by human beings, not by algorithms."

What capability are those humans managing? Battlefield commanders say – most importantly: an ability to provide persistent surveillance and the intelligence that comes from it.

"When you have an aircraft that can fly over an evolving battlefield, and in an unblinking way observe the battlefield," says Air Force Lieutenant General Frank Gorenc, "they have the ability to describe to manned aircraft that are coming in, that can provide the firepower, much more accurate data."

In military terminology, drones are dumbed-down vehicles capable of following only a predetermined path. In the air, pilots in smart planes used drones as targets. So while most people around the world have come to call them drones, the people operating them prefer the term unmanned systems. ☺

Well, some of them. General Gorenc says even if there is no one in the driver's seat, it takes a lot of humans to keep the systems working. "There's hardly anything unmanned about it," he says, "even in the most cursory of analysis. So it takes significant resources to do that mission."

A mission that is possible because as the vehicles have developed, so too have the sensors providing them an understanding of precisely where they are at any given time, and optics that have improved the images they collect and send back.

Besides loitering for hours or days over places commanders want to keep an eye on, what can these systems do? We will likely see more unmanned craft delivering supplies – meaning air crews or truck convoys will be put in less danger.

Dempsey says it is possible, too, that a wounded soldier could soon be bundled inside a remotely piloted aircraft for evacuation to a field hospital.

"Logistics resupply and casualty evac could certainly be a place where we could leverage technology and remote platforms," he says.

And of course, as Georgetown University Professor Daniel Byman notes, some unmanned systems — most notably the Predator drone – can kill.

"It's that persistent intelligence capability, to me," says Byman, "that enables the targeting of individuals – where before you wouldn't – in part because of the risk to the pilot, but also in part because you weren't sure what else you might hit. And now you can be, not a hundred percent confident, but more confident than you were."

There has been controversy about the two ways those drones deal death – by targeted or signature strikes.

"A targeted strike is based on a positive identification of a particular individual or particular group of individuals," says Christopher Swift of the University of Virginia's Center for National Security Law, "whether they're moving in a convoy, or whether they're at a fixed location, or whether they're out on the battlefield."

Signature strikes, on the other hand, use sensors to watch for trends of behavior that seem suspicious then launch an attack when it appears – to a computer algorithm – that the series of behaviors point to bad guys doing, or getting ready to do, bad things.

Signature strikes bring with them a greater risk of killing or wounding people seen as innocents. And death by remote control can be perceived as callous, prompting a backlash.

While recently in Yemen, Swift talked with a number of tribal leaders about the unmanned system attack that killed terrorist provocateur Anwar al-Aulaqi.

"They were more concerned about the drone strike on his 16-year-old son," says Swift, "because they saw him as a minor, rather than as a militant, and there was some sympathy for him" – even though Swift says many of the same people thought the boy's father got what he deserved.

### **The legality**

Some civil liberties groups challenge the legality of both targeted and signature strikes. But Swift says he believes that "international law is not a restraint on our ability to do it. It's a series of guidelines that tell us the things we should avoid in order to do these kinds of operations better."

A key aspect of better, says Swift, is ensuring that remote engagement is always paired with human contact.

"You can't get to the human dimension of managing these political and social relationships at a local level," he says, "and understanding how local people see their own security issues if we're just fighting these wars using drones, if we're fighting from over the horizon."

Not everyone acquiring unmanned craft will be concerned about tactical nuance. Reports in early October, for instance, indicated that Hezbollah fighters may have begun using an unmanned surveillance craft – flying it over sensitive sites in Israel.

### **China in the game**

Who is selling to customers on U. S. and Israeli "no sale" lists? China is in the game.

"They have imported, and actually stolen, a lot from Russia," says Siemon Wezeman, who researches proliferation of unmanned systems at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. "They are now really on the way of developing technology which is getting on par with what you would expect from Western European countries."

And Wezeman says more and more nations and groups are shopping for the technology. "You see in the last few years even poor and underdeveloped countries in Africa getting involved in acquiring them, and in some cases even thinking about producing them."

According to Wezeman, the majority of presently-available unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are the sort used for surveillance. "Most of them still are unarmed. There are very few armed UAVs in service. But the development is in the direction of armed UAVs."

In some ways, remote controlled war could prove a more effective tactic for small groups of bad guys, says National War College Professor Mike Mazarr – offering personal opinions on the topic, not necessarily those of the Defense Department. "I think very often the U. S. is going to be trying to use them to achieve big national-level goals that are very challenging and difficult," says Mazarr. "And other actors are going to be trying to achieve much more limited, discrete goals – to keep us from doing certain things." ☺

The use of any robots scares some people who worry about machines making potentially disastrous mistakes. Advocates of the technology offer the reminder that to err is human.

“Who makes more mistakes: humans or machines?” asks Byman. “The answer, of course, is: it depends. But often machines can avoid mistakes that humans would otherwise make.”

“It may take a human to do a final check on an engine, or turning the last centimeters on a screw,” says Dean Cheng, an analyst at the Heritage Foundation, “but getting the screws to that mechanic could well become a robotic function. And it would be faster, and probably more accurate.”

Robotic accuracy could bring improved safety to even manned aircraft when it comes to taking off and landing.

Retired Rear Admiral Bill Shannon, who until recently oversaw unmanned aircraft initiatives in the U. S. Navy, says, when onboard robotic systems interact with GPS and other sensor data, planes automatically “know their geodetic position over the ground. They land with precision, repeatable precision, regardless of reference to the visual horizon.”

Cummings adds that the U. S. Air Force, at first, insisted that human operators control the take-offs and landings of its remote aircraft. They turned out to be more accident-prone than robotic systems. “From Day One,” she notes, “all the Army’s UAVs had auto land and take-off capability. And as a consequence they haven’t lost nearly as many due to human error in these areas.”

Still, after watching failures in some other supposedly smart systems — automated trading software on Wall Street, for instance — many say they fear movement toward unmanned systems that think for themselves.

“If you optimize [these systems] to work very quickly,” says Byman, “to try to take shots that we’d otherwise miss — you’ll make more mistakes. If you optimize them to be very careful, you’ll miss opportunities. So there are going to be costs either way.”

The U. S. Army is funding research at Georgia Tech into whether it is possible to create an “artificial conscience” that could be installed in robots operating independently on a battlefield.

“There’s nothing in artificial intelligence or robotics that could discriminate between a combatant and a civilian,” says Noel Sharkey, a professor at the University of Sheffield, in the UK. “It would be impossible to tell the difference between a little girl pointing an ice cream at a robot, or someone pointing a rifle at it.”

“As you begin to consider the application of lethal force,” Dempsey adds, “I think you have to pause, and understand how to keep the man in the loop in those systems.”

So what if a battlefield robot does go haywire. Who is responsible?

“How do you do legal accountability when you don’t have someone in the machine?” worries Singer. “Or what about when it’s not the human that’s making the mistake, but you have a software glitch? Who do you hold responsible for these incidents of ‘unmanned slaughter,’ so to speak?”

“It could be the commander who sent it off,” speculates Sharkey. “It could be the manufacturer, it could be the programmer who programmed the mission. The robot could take a bullet in its computer and go berserk. So there’s no way of really determining who’s accountable, and that’s very important for the laws of war.”

That is why Cummings thinks we will not soon see the fielding of lethal autonomous systems. “Wherever you require knowledge,” she observes, “decisions being made that require a judgment, require the use of experience — computers are not good at that, and will likely not be good at that for a long time.”

### Robots and Human Beings

Those who chafe at what they call a lack of imagination in the use of robots, though, say that should not stop or slow the integration of such systems in areas where they can do better than humans.

“There are some generals who assume that the role of robots is to help the human being that they assume is still going to be there,” says Ramo. “We’re talking about warfare being changed so that you should quit thinking about the soldier. He shouldn’t be there in the first place.”

Too, say critics, robots should not necessarily look like people — pointing to a robot being created to fight fires onboard Navy ships. It walks around on two legs, about the height of a sailor carrying a fire hose.

Shannon says problems sometime result when people who built manned systems try to create something similar, just minus the human. He encountered the phenomenon with designers determining what visual information would be available to those piloting unmanned aircraft from the ground.

“They don’t need to give the operator the pilot’s view,” he says. “They can give them, for example, a God’s-eye view of the air vehicle and the sensors interacting with the environment — as opposed to a very, very narrow view of what a pilot might see as they look out their windscreen.”

Shannon says he would frequently look for innovative design ideas from people not tied to systems built around human pilots. “Often I see it when I get someone who’s come from outside of aviation,” he says — someone with experience “for example, creating that environment in the gaming industry.”

The brave new world of robot wars could well require the nation to field a new type of warrior, as well. ☺

“The person who is physically capable and mentally capable of engaging in high-risk dogfights,” notes Byman, “may be very different from the person who is a very good drone pilot.”

Cummings anticipates some in the military will find it difficult to accept such a shift. “Fundamentally, it raises that question about value of self,” she says. “If that computer can do it, what does that make me?”

In the end, robots thrown into war efforts are put there for one reason: to win. Would it be possible to win a war by remote control?

“You could put together an elaborate strategy,” muses Mazarr, “that would affect the society, the economy, the national willpower of a country that, I could certainly imagine — depending on what was at stake, the legitimacy of its government, a variety of other things — of absolutely winning a war in these ways.”

The nation’s top military officer is not so sure. “It’s almost inconceivable to me,” says Dempsey, “that we would ever be able to wage war remotely. And I’m not sure we should aspire to that. There are some ethical issues there, I think.”

Another ethical consideration is raised by those who worry that remote engagement seems “bloodless” to those employing it.

“It always creates the risk that you’ll use it too quickly,” notes Byman. “Because it’s relatively low cost, and relatively low risk from an American point of view, [it’s possible] that you’ll be likely to use it before thinking it through. Use it even though some of the long term consequences might be negative.”

“You could increasingly be in a world where states are constantly attacking each other,” suggests Mazarr — “in effect, in ways that some people brush off and say, ‘well, that’s just economic warfare,’ or ‘it’s just harassment,’ but others increasingly see as actually a form of conflict.”

Finally, it is worth noting that the sensor information, so important to controlling unmanned systems, flows through data networks — webs susceptible, at least in theory, to being hacked.

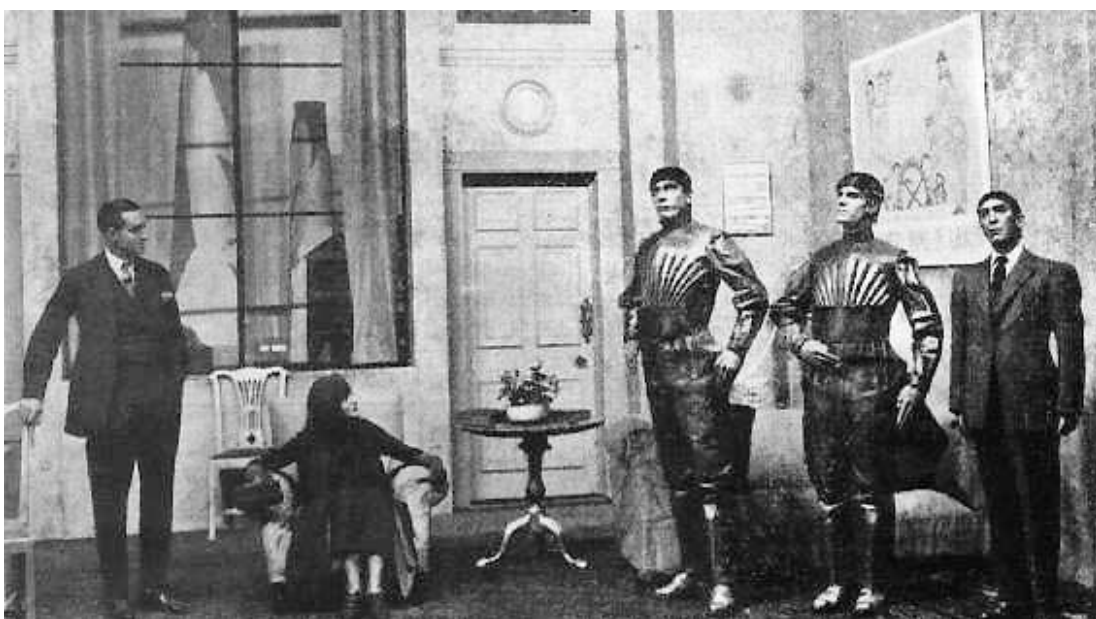
“When you’re in the creation of the partnership of human beings and robots, you’re into cyber warfare,” says Ramo, “and you’ve got to be better than your enemies at that, or your robotic operations will not do you very much good.”

Susceptibility to being attacked with remote systems leads Mazarr to ask if the U. S. — with its highly interlinked, interdependent economy — might do better to try to limit the use of remote controlled systems, rather than expanding their use.

“Given the likely proliferation of these kind of things to more and more actors,” he says, “given the vulnerability of the U. S. homeland, given the difficulty we have as a society in taking the actions necessary to make ourselves resilient against these kind of attacks — would it be better to move in the direction of an international regime to control, or limit, or eliminate the use of some of these things?”

Jody Williams thinks so. In 1997 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for a campaign that created an anti-landmine treaty. “I know we can do the same thing with killer robots,” says Williams. “I know we can stop them before they ever hit the battlefield.” She’s working with the group Human Rights Watch in an effort to do so.

*[IDN-InDepthNews – January 09, 2013]*



A scene from Karel Čapek’s 1920 play R.U.R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots), showing three robots

## PERSPECTIVES

## Arms Aid to Fragile States Can Backfire

By Eva Weiler

STOCKHOLM - The need for security forces in a fragile state to be adequately trained and equipped is recognized as a precondition for stability and development. However, supplying arms to security forces in fragile states can contribute to armed conflict and instability, warns a new report by the eminent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)



"The risks associated with supplying arms and ammunition to fragile states include the risk that the arms will

be diverted to actors seeking to undermine stabilization efforts; the risk that the arms will contribute to the renewal or intensification of armed conflict; and the risk of corruption in the transaction," argues the study *Transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons to Fragile States: Strengthening Oversight And Control*.

The report notes that a number of European Union, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) states have undertaken risk mitigation measures, sometimes in cooperation with recipients as part of security sector reform (SSR) programmes.

These measures include supporting multilateral notification systems for arms transfers; increasing control and oversight of the delivery of arms and ammunition; ensuring good standards for stockpile management, marking on import and surplus destruction; and improving the recipient states' standards in arms procurement.

But the challenge for the international community is to ensure that fragile states receive the arms that they require, while limiting the negative impacts on conflict dynamics, stabilization efforts and governance, cautions the report co-authored by Mark Bromley, Lawrence Dermody, Hugh Griffiths, Paul Holtom and Michael Jenks.

The paper focuses on international transfers of conventional arms supplied to the national security forces of eight fragile states in the period 2002-12: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Somalia and South Sudan. While many of these states were affected by armed conflict dur-

ing this period, this factor did not determine their inclusion in this study, authors of the report say.

Although Afghanistan and Iraq are the most notable examples of the risks associated with the supply of arms and ammunition to nascent security forces in fragile states, similar issues have been highlighted in the six other states. The paper identifies lessons learned from these cases for application in ongoing and future efforts to support security forces in fragile states such as Libya and Mali.

The study further outlines the risks entailed in supplying arms and ammunition to fragile states, using examples from the eight case study countries. In many of the examples, member states of the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or the Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development were providing financial and technical support for SSR programmes at the time the arms transfers took place, finds the report.

"However, EU, NATO and OECD states are often unable to directly supply equipment due to constraints imposed by their national laws and regulations or their lack of appropriate materiel. As a result, the supply of arms, ammunition and military equipment is often carried out by states that pay less attention to the risks of diversion or misuse and are therefore more ready to issue an export licence.

In other cases, the problems associated with accessing and delivering materiel has meant that transfers can involve private suppliers, brokers or transport providers that have also been involved in transfers to embargoed destinations," says the report. It explains that those EU, NATO and OECD states that do supply arms and ammunition to security forces in fragile states also take measures to mitigate risks.

### Risk mitigation

The authors also examine risk-mitigation measures that have been used in several of the eight cases studied, noting their strengths and weaknesses, and consider ways to build on lessons learned.

Overcoming the legacies of conflict while providing equipment and training for national security forces was a common challenge found in all the fragile states examined in the study. "There were also evident dilemmas of choosing when to deliver arms and ammunition to nascent security forces so as not to contribute directly to conflict dynamics, and of avoiding providing items that risk being misused or diverted after delivery," notes the report ➔.

Image above: A group photo of aerial demonstrators at the 2005 Naval Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Air Demo.  
Credit: Wikimedia Commons



For each arms transfer, an overarching question was whether it would contribute to or threaten security. If states that are providing military equipment, training or other forms of support for a fragile state's security sector have troops on the ground in the fragile state, these troops can provide oversight and perhaps control over the delivery and subsequent use of the arms.

However, the study confesses that in many cases such close oversight of the delivery process is neither practically feasible nor politically desirable. It therefore says: "For states that are interested in assisting the stabilization processes in fragile states, and can therefore also be considered to be potential suppliers of arms and ammunition, finding ways to limit the risk that a transfer will contribute to conflict, instability or poor governance is paramount."

This entails making difficult decisions to meet urgent needs and requires access to reliable and up-to-date information when making risk assessments and confidence that the right elements are contained in the procedures for making such assessments.

Steps that can be taken to mitigate risks of misuse or diversion after delivery include: (a) training programmes; (b) clauses in delivery agreements imposing conditions on storage or the supplier directly providing assistance in safe storage; (c) clauses in delivery agreements requiring destruction of surpluses; and (d) assistance in calculating the quantities of arms and ammunition that should be delivered relative to the recipient's legitimate security needs.

Most of the examples presented in the report highlight the need for multilateral measures on the supply side to minimize the risk that arms transfers will contribute to conflict, instability and poor governance. The notification system connected with certain UN arms embargoes and the sharing of information by some major arms suppliers via the Wassenaar Arrangement are two existing examples.

However, these practices could be strengthened for states that are recognized as having high risks of conflict or instability. But such an approach impinges on the national sovereignty of the recipient state and so is sensitive, as shown by the responses of sections of the governments of the DRC and Somalia to the UN arms embargo notification system.

"Therefore, where possible, suppliers should consider not only sharing information among themselves but also consulting with fragile states to exchange information on recipient holdings, storage conditions and needs. Information on export licences granted and denied, shipments made and, where applicable, brokering and transit could be exchanged between suppliers and between suppliers and recipients in a timely manner for high-risk cases," urges the study.

It adds: Steps could also be taken to strengthen and implement nascent recipient state information-exchange mechanisms, particularly those attached to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the Kinshasa Convention. Although particularly sensitive, sharing information on watch lists of brokers and transport providers could also help limit diversion risks. Providing assistance on such issues to recipient states could also help to eliminate some of the concerns identified above, argues the report. [*IDN-InDepthNews* – February 4, 2013]



## DEVELOPMENT

## Experts Urge Overhaul of Global Aid Policies

By Ramesh Jaura



BERLIN - Two former German policy-makers and practitioners of international development cooperation have decided to break taboos and call in a joint paper for an overhaul of national, European and international aid policies as a befitting response to rapid globalization that "has changed the world more than many in the field of development policy cooperation would like to believe". They also cast a rather critical look at the 0.7 percent aid target, generally considered as development community's 'holy cow'

"The (present) global development structures and programs are lagging behind the new realities of economic and political needs. There is no longer a 'North/South' or 'donor/recipient' structure. Developmental paternalism that 'donors' continue to practice must therefore give way to genuine partnership and ownership by partners," say authors of the paper, Eckhard Deutscher and Erich Stather, made available to IDN.

Deutscher is a former President of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the 34-nation Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which comprises major 'traditional' donors. Stather is a former Secretary of State in Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Deutscher and Stather are of the view that the forthcoming development policy challenges in the face of profound political and global change call for fundamental structural reforms in the European Union where 27 national development policies plus the EU are a development obstacle in itself. These should be "Europeanized" as part of a European foreign policy, they say.

"The labyrinth and bureaucratic inefficiencies of the EU development policy structures should be reformed. Also the German development policy needs much more orientation to multilateralism," Deutscher and Stather emphasize.

They are of the view that "a classification of the world in developed and developing countries, in Western leadership roles or a classification of countries in North and South is now completely out of touch with reality." Content and objectives of development policies however do not require a fundamental reorientation. These are broadly defined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other relevant international agreements.

"But there are negative structures in the global 'aid system', which are not responding to global changes. On the one hand, the development policies of OECD countries continue to be focused on national self-reference; internationally agreed reforms are yet to be implemented.

"On the other hand, new donors like China, India or Brazil, have challenged the OECD rules of the game successfully with quite demonstrable political results. Many developing countries are criticizing the existing development coopera-

tion more and more openly. This paper wants to point the way to a future of success, efficiency and effectiveness," says the paper.

The paper pleads for continuing traditional development cooperation with poorer developing countries while their economic integration (especially that of African countries) into the regional and world markets gets better. But "development policy should in no case remain solely focused on poverty reduction." The paper sees the future of development cooperation in more strategic investments to foster economic growth. At the same time, these must address risks where global public goods are in danger, such as climate, environment, energy, human rights, good governance and the fight against corruption.

### Reform should begin in Europe

"The need for reform is of particular importance for Europe," says the paper, adding: "The ever-increasing fragmentation of international cooperation today is anachronistic, inefficient and costly: More than 300 governmental implementing organizations, 24 development banks, multilateral programs 270, 40 UN entities painting a picture of self-interest and confusion."

In order to reverse that trend, the paper pleads for the need to begin necessary reforms in Europe: instead of national flags, Europe should have a voice that carries weight in multilateral organizations like the UN and other international bodies such as the World Bank and IMF, all EU policies should be coherent; bilateral official development assistance (ODA) should be managed in Brussels; and as proposed by former IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, a European Development Bank should replace the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). ➔

Picture credit: IFAD

## DEVELOPMENT

## Poor Countries Robbed Of 6 Trillion Dollars

By Jaya Ramachandran

BERLIN - Crime, corruption, and tax evasion recorded near-historic highs in 2010, with illicit financial outflows costing the developing world \$859 billion in 2010, just below the all-time high of \$871.3 billion in 2008, the year preceding the global financial crisis. Besides, nearly \$6 trillion (6000 000 000 000 000 U.S. dollars) were stolen from poor countries in the decade between 2001 and 2010, says a new report and urges world leaders to increase transparency in the international financial system.

"Astronomical sums of dirty money continue to flow out of the developing world and into offshore tax havens and developed country banks," said Raymond Baker, Director of the Washington-based advocacy organization, Global Financial Integrity (GFI).

"Regardless of the methodology, it's clear: developing economies are hemorrhaging more and more money at a time when rich and poor nations alike are struggling to spur economic growth. This report should be a wake-up

call to world leaders that more must be done to address these harmful outflow," he adds.

Co-authored by GFI's lead economist Dr Dev Kar and economist Sarah Freitas, the study, *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2001-2010* points out that as developing countries begin to relax capital controls, the possibility exists that the methodology utilized in previous GFI reports – known as the World Bank Residual Plus Trade Mispricing method – could increasingly pick-up some licit capital flows. ➔ **(Continued on page 28)**



### Continued from page 26

Further, development agencies in EU countries should be no longer the grant recipients of governments, but apply to public tenders for the implementation of international cooperation projects. This would increase competitiveness and quality in equal measure.

For Germany this would mean setting up a Ministry of International Cooperation and Development, which is no longer limited solely to economic cooperation in the strict sense, but also promotes international investment policies, says the paper.

As a common European foreign policy and a European diplomatic service are put in place, and national European foreign policies become increasingly irrelevant, the existing Foreign Office (AA) and Economic Cooperation and Development Ministry (BMZ) would be replaced by a new Ministry, Deutscher and Stather say.

The Ministry would be responsible for coordinating all national and global issues, will have overall responsibility for all ODA, and the residual powers of the traditional national foreign policy. Responsibilities for co-operation with civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will also lie with this Ministry.

The authors of the paper are of the view that effectiveness and efficiency are more important than the volume of ODA funds. "The fixation on the ODA target of 0.7% of gross domestic product, with highly questionable criteria and standards, should be replaced by a commitment by the

donor countries, including emerging markets as 'new donors', to allocate an annual 5 percent of their national budgets for investment cooperation and international projects, especially in order to protect global public goods.

"At the same time, the impacts of development cooperation need to be better measured and evaluated. Instead of using questionable methods to evaluate themselves and to celebrate their own projects, development partners and independent international NGOs should analyse the impact of development programs carried out in accordance with uniform standards," the paper says.

It also calls for "replacing developmental paternalism on the part of donors" by "real partnership and ownership". In development cooperation of the OECD countries structures exist that are increasingly rejected by the partner countries vehemently. "At times bureaucrats (of aid-giving countries) exercise more influence on the development of a country than the government.

Deutscher and Stather plead for budget support, in particular sectoral aid and basket financing, which in their view should have priority over traditional programs or project aid. "This must be combined with greater transparency and accountability. Evaluations of the effectiveness of development investments must be regularly carried out in accordance with commonly agreed criteria with the partners," aver the paper's authors who have experience both as policy-makers and practitioners.

[IDN-InDepthNews – March 28, 2013]

*(Continued from page 27)*

The methodology introduced in this report – the Hot Money Narrow Plus Trade Mispricing method – ensures that all flow estimates are strictly illicit moving forward, but may omit some illicit financial flows detected in the previous methodology, the study's authors say.

"The estimates provided . . . are still likely to be extremely conservative as they do not include trade mispricing in services, same-invoice trade mispricing, hawala transactions, and dealings conducted in bulk cash," explained Dr Kar, who previously served as a senior economist at the International Monetary Fund.

"This means that much of the proceeds of drug trafficking, human smuggling, and other criminal activities, which are often settled in cash, are not included in these estimates," he added.

The study, released on December 17, 2012, finds that the \$858.8 billion of illicit outflows lost in 2010 is "a significant uptick" from 2009, which saw developing countries lose \$776.0 billion under the new methodology. It estimates the developing world lost a total of \$5.86 trillion over the decade spanning 2001 through 2010.

"This has very big consequences for developing economies," explained the report's co-author Freitas. "Poor countries lost nearly a trillion dollars that could have been used to invest in healthcare, education, and infrastructure. It's nearly a trillion dollars that could have been used to pull people out of poverty and save lives."

The authors' research tracks the amount of illegal capital flowing out of 150 different developing countries from 2001 through 2010, and it ranks the countries by magnitude of illicit outflows. According to the report, among the 20 biggest exporters of illicit financial flows over the decade are:

China recording unlawful outflows of \$274 billion average (\$2.74 trillion cumulative); Mexico (\$47.6 billion average and \$476 billion cumulative); Malaysia (\$28.5 billion average and \$285 billion cumulative); Saudi Arabia (\$21.0 billion avg. and \$210 billion cum.); Russia (\$15.2 billion avg. and \$152 billion cum.); Philippines (\$13.8 billion avg. and \$138 billion cum.); Nigeria (\$12.9 billion avg. and \$129 billion cum.); India (\$12.3 billion avg. and \$123 billion cum.); Indonesia (\$10.9 billion avg. and \$109 billion cum.); and United Arab Emirates (\$10.7 billion avg. and \$107 billion cum.)

Others include: Iraq (\$10.6 billion avg. and \$63.6 billion cum.); South Africa (\$8.39 billion avg. and \$83.9 billion cum.); Thailand (\$6.43 billion avg. and \$64.3 billion cum.); Costa Rica (\$6.37 billion avg. \$63.7 billion cum.); Qatar (\$5.61 billion avg. and \$56.1 billion cum.); Serbia (\$5.14 billion avg. and \$51.4 billion cum.); Poland (\$4.08 billion avg. and \$40.8 billion cum.); Panama (\$3.99 billion avg. and \$39.9 billion cum.); Venezuela (\$3.79 billion avg. and \$37.9 billion cum.); and Brunei (\$3.70 billion avg. \$37.0 billion cum.).

The report, funded by the Ford Foundation, also reveals the top exporters of illegal capital in 2010: China (\$420.36 billion); Malaysia (\$64.38 billion); Mexico (\$51.17 billion); Russia (\$43.64 billion); Saudi Arabia (\$38.30 billion); Iraq (\$22.21 billion); Nigeria (\$19.66 billion); Costa Rica (\$17.51 billion); Philippines (\$16.62 billion); Thailand (\$12.37 billion); Qatar (\$12.36 billion); Poland (\$10.46 billion); Sudan (\$8.58 billion); United Arab Emirates (\$7.60 billion); Ethiopia (\$5.64 billion); Panama (\$5.34 billion); Indonesia (\$5.21 billion); Dominican Republic (\$5.03 billion); Trinidad and Tobago (\$4.33 billion); and Brazil (\$4.29 billion).

China, the largest cumulative exporter of illegal capital flight, as well as the largest victim in 2010, was the topic of an October 2012 country-specific report by Dr Kar and Freitas. Using the older methodology, 'Illicit Financial Flows from China and the Role of Trade Mispricing,' found that the Chinese economy suffered \$3.79 trillion in illicit financial outflows between 2000 and 2011.

"Our reports continue to demonstrate that the Chinese economy is a ticking time bomb," said Dr Kar. "The social, political, and economic order in that country is not sustainable in the long-run given such massive illicit outflows."

Mexico, the second-largest cumulative exporter of illicit capital over the decade, was also the topic of a January 2011 GFI report by Dr. Kar. The study, 'Mexico: Illicit Financial Flows, Macroeconomic Imbalances, and the Underground Economy', found that the country lost a total of \$872 billion in illicit financial flows over the 41-year period from 1970 to 2010. Furthermore, illicit outflows were found to drive Mexico's domestic underground economy, which includes – among other things – drug smuggling, arms trafficking and human trafficking.

Global Financial Integrity report urges world leaders to increase the transparency in the international financial system as a means to curtail the illicit flow of money highlighted by the organization's research.

In particular it stresses the need for addressing the problems posed by anonymous shell companies, foundations, and trusts by requiring confirmation of beneficial ownership in all banking and securities accounts, and demanding that information on the true, human owner of all corporations, trusts, and foundations be disclosed upon formation and be available to law enforcement.

The report also calls for reforming customs and trade protocols to detect and curtail trade mispricing; requiring the country-by-country reporting of sales, profits and taxes paid by multinational corporations; requiring the automatic cross-border exchange of tax information on personal and business accounts; harmonizing predicate offenses under anti-money laundering laws across all Financial Action Task Force cooperating countries; and ensuring that the anti-money laundering regulations already on the books are strongly enforced.

*[IDN-InDepthNews – February 2, 2013]*

## DEVELOPMENT

## The Longest War is the War on Global Poverty

By Nimal Fernando\*

WASHINGTON DC - The 'new year' is already three months old and all pointers are that at least one very old global issue is only that much older.

There is much reference to the 'longest' wars of the fiery kind, but less, perhaps, to the often silent, near-Sisyphian struggle against global poverty. Many concerned voices would argue that 2013 could be among the worst years in which to even embark on any kind of lasting progress on this front.

Four decades after development warrior Robert McNamara launched his attack on global poverty in his capacity as World Bank president, there are still 1.2 billion people in the world barely surviving on \$1 a day and two billion living on \$2 a day. Another concerned American, James Baker, U.S. treasury secretary in the late eighties, argued for just \$20 billion then, to put "a floor under poverty".

That proved to be a non-starter because the Baker plan involved the bulk of that money coming from commercial banks. But given the Latin American loan default some months earlier, commercial bankers refused to come aboard. The world simply added that to its list of failed initiatives.

And a decade has passed since another World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, spoke with great passion at a global conference in Dubai, that this world was out of balance and something needed to be done urgently "or we would all suffer".

The world's poor have also long lost two of their most passionate spokespersons – Germany's Nobel Laureate Willy Brandt and Sweden's Olaf Palme. Along with McNamara and former Commonwealth Secretary General Shridath Ramphal, they were tireless advocates of an interdependent world. Among some new voices, thankfully, that have taken their place roughly over the past decade and more, are Britain's Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Claire Short.

The lead nation throughout this concerted drive against the many causes that contribute to global poverty has been the United States. What's worrisome right now is America's willingness, really its ability, to spearhead this initiative and remain among the large donors of development aid. The research world, replete with data often of the sobering kind, puts the number of Americans living in poverty at 46.1 million or just over 15 percent of the population.

Yet, the reaction to such distressing data particularly among some Republicans in a dysfunctional congress, in recent months, has been an attack on the Food Stamp programme, with presidential hopeful and former speaker Newt Gingrich calling President Barack Obama the "Food Stamp president". Even as the richest nation in the world battles its own near-alarming crises such as the fiscal default and stubborn unemployment, it wouldn't be out of



place to suggest that the 'enthusiasm' for more aid to the world's impoverished would be much diminished.

Those arguing for far larger amounts of net aid complain that foreign aid is not all that it's cracked up to be; that the sums are far shorter than the UN target of 0.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Given that it's generally accepted that the best way to measure aid generosity is to look at it as a percentage of GDP, the rest of the field trails Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Luxembourg. All these nations have far exceeded the 0.7 percent UN target.

The United States is the biggest donor in absolute terms, but the ODA-GDP ratio in percentage terms in 2010 was about 0.2 percent. If Congress passes President Obama's proposal to double giving, however, America will be able to strike a more relaxed stance among the heavy-hitters.

Regular – almost always grim – reports from international aid agencies seem to suggest that nothing short of a magic wand would do - and that one indeed exists.

### World's richest could end poverty

The international aid agency, Oxfam International, said in a recent such report that the world's 100 richest people could essentially end poverty with their earnings in 2012. They earned \$240 billion last year – a figure that Oxfam, an international coalition of 17 organizations working in 90 countries focusing on inequality and the poor, said could end poverty around four times over.

It added in a press release: "The richest one per cent has increased its income by 60 percent in the last 20 years with the financial crisis accelerating rather than slowing the process." ☺

*\*Nimal Fernando, former 'Ceylon Observer' (Sri Lanka) and 'Gulf News' (United Arab Emirates) journalist, is a freelance writer in the United States. | Image above: EuropeAid*

In 14 of the 19 leading wealthy and developing nations of the Group of 20, inequality has increased since 1990, the aid group said, adding that economic growth has rarely provided benefit to poor people.

Oxfam warned that "extreme wealth and income is not only unethical, it is also economically inefficient, politically corrosive, socially divisive and environmentally destructive."

Absent from among all these compelling reports, however, is what could well prove to be the most pressing issue that will have a direct impact on foreign aid: the expanding war on terrorism. And what is most worrisome in recent reports on the 'War on Terror' is the disproportionate sums spent on a "declining threat".

There are suggestions among battle-hardened experts that Al Qaeda and lesser known terror groups are succeeding, even beyond their wildest expectations, in bleeding not just the American exchequer, but those of a few other western nations as well.

The New York Times, which had conducted a recent survey of estimated counter-terrorism expenditure, reports that while Al Qaeda spent roughly half a million dollars to destroy the World Trade Center and cripple the Pentagon, the

cost to the United States in counter measures has been \$3.3 trillion, or about \$7 million for every dollar Al Qaeda spent planning and executing the attacks. The report adds that while not all of the costs have been borne by the government — and some are still to come — this total equals one-fifth of the current national debt.

The most recent issue of the National Counter Terrorism Center's annual Report on Terrorism covering the year 2011, says that worldwide terrorist attacks in 2011 were down 12 percent from 2010 and 29 percent from 2007. Most attacks, and most victims, roughly 65 percent, came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia.

It says Al-Qaeda, the gold-standard terrorist group, is in sharp decline, staging far fewer attacks worldwide except in one country, Somalia.

Americans are hearing many of their elected leaders, from Congress down to rural mayors, emphasising both a need for, and possibility of, doing more with less.

Hopefully, a more sensible strategy, which will translate to huge savings on the counter-terror front, will see far more being done with more – both at home and in far flung, dirt poor places of the global village.' [IDN-InDepthNews]



A mother and her baby. Photo Credit: USAID



Credit: USAID

## SPECIAL

## Sanctions Do Not Lead To Nuke Abolition in Asia

By Kalinga Seneviratne

SINGAPORE - North Korea's response to the United Nations Security Council's expanded sanctions on January 22 by threatening to resume nuclear tests and failure last November of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to persuade the five recalcitrant nuclear powers to sign the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) have focused attention on the atomic threat facing the Asian region that is fast emerging as the centre of the global economy.

Posited very much in the midst of these developments is the Obama Administration's so-called US "pivot" or "re-balance" policy towards Asia, which is increasingly seen in the region as a security issue rather than an economic or political re-engagement.

Since this policy announcement two years ago there has been increased tension in the region with regard to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea that has prompted some analysts in Asia to question whether the US is trying to provoke Asian countries like Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam into confrontation with China.

With North Korea's recent posturing, the threat of a nuclear confrontation – though remote – is rather worrisome to Asia that is emerging from centuries of economic subjugation by the West.

A looming confrontation with China in Asia may be one of the major reasons why the three nuclear powered states Russia, France and Britain could not agree to sign the SEANWFZ as planned at the 21st ASEAN Summit in Cambodia in November 2012. France voiced its reservations on the right of self-defence, United Kingdom on "new threat and development", and Russia on the right of foreign ships and aircraft to pass into the nuclear free zone, a concern similar to that of the US.

The notion of a SEANWFZ dates back to November 27, 1971, when the original five members of ASEAN signed a Declaration on a (ASEAN) Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Kuala Lumpur. The first major component of the ZOPFAN pursued by ASEAN was the establishment of a SEANWFZ.

However, due to the unfavourable political environment in the region, the formal proposal for the establishment of such a zone was tabled only in the mid-1980s. After a decade of negotiating and drafting efforts by the ASEAN Working Group on a ZOPFAN, the SEANWFZ Treaty was signed by the heads of states of all 10 ASEAN member countries in Bangkok on December 15, 1995 and it took effect two years later. The negotiations between ASEAN and the five

nuclear powers on the protocol have been under way since May 2001 with no progress achieved.

Among a number of rules and conditions laid

out by the treaty, the main components are that signatory States are obliged not to develop, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over nuclear weapons; station nuclear weapons; or test or use nuclear weapons anywhere inside or outside the treaty zone.

The protocol also stipulates that Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) must abide by articles of the Treaty and not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States parties. China has previously expressed its willingness to ratify the protocol, but the other four NWS cite the geographical scope of the Treaty as an obstacle. The treaty zone covers the territories, continental shelves, and exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of the States Parties within the zone.

Malaysian political scientist, Dr Chandra Muzaffar, Executive Director of the International Movement for a Just World says that while ASEAN states must be commended for drafting and signing the SEANWFZ, at the same time "all the five nuclear weapons states are determined to ensure that their nuclear advantage is preserved at all costs, 'self-defence' is just a camouflage".

"Britain and France are US allies and the US through various military and diplomatic moves is reinforcing its agenda of containing China. So it should not surprise anyone if its two European allies are seeking to bolster the US position in the region," he said in an interview with IDN- InDepthNews.

Asked if the Asian countries should make US access to their markets conditional on the nuclear powers signing the treaty, Dr Muzaffar said: "ASEAN and other countries in Asia should first demonstrate a strong collective commitment towards the control and abolition of nuclear weapons before they make demands upon outside powers. Such a commitment does not exist at the moment. This is why I do not see them asking these powers to sign the Bangkok Treaty as a condition for access to the expanding markets in Asia." ☞



Dr Muzzafar is of the view that governments in the region will not be able to persuade the nuclear powers to sign the treaty and it will have to be non-governmental actors that need to mount a concerted campaign for it to happen. "In the ultimate analysis, it is only a powerful citizens' movement that can rid the continent of present and future nuclear weapons", he argues.

In a speech at the University of Iceland in October 2012, Dr Gareth Evans, the former Australian Foreign Minister and the Convener of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN), regretted that the spirit of optimism some three years ago that nuclear disarmament could be achieved in the Asia-Pacific region has evaporated.

"If the existing nuclear-armed states are serious about non-proliferation, as they all claim to be, and sincerely want to prevent others from joining their club, they cannot keep justifying the possession of nuclear weapons as a means of protection for themselves or their allies against other weapons of mass destruction, especially biological weapons, or conventional weapons," he argued. "All the world hates a hypocrite, and in arms control as in life generally, demanding that others do as I say is not nearly as compelling as asking them to do as I do."

Dr Evans also pointed out that nuclear weapons would not deter terrorists, as many nuclear weapons states tend to argue. "Terrorists don't usually have territory, industry, a population or a regular army which could be targeted with nuclear weapons," he said.

On September 13, 2012, APLN expressed deep disappointment at the evaporation of political will evident in global and regional efforts toward nuclear disarmament over the previous year. The statement was signed by 25 political, diplomatic, military and scientific leaders from 14 Asia Pacific countries.

Professor Ramesh Thakur, Director of the Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament at the Australian National University, writing in Japan Times noted that plans for upgrades, modernization or increased numbers and destructive power of nuclear arsenals by all the nuclear-armed states indicate that none is serious about nuclear disarmament.

"All countries that have and seek nuclear weapons, or are increasing the size and modernizing the quality of their arsenals, should be subjected to international opprobrium," he wrote.

### **Tactical Nukes**

Rather than subjecting nukes to international scorn, several commentators in regional publications in recent months have argued that the US may need to be persuaded to re-

deploy tactical weapons in the Korean peninsula, which the Bush administration withdrew in 1991 – in order to respond to the North Korean threat.

"Tactical nukes on South Korean soil would enhance the credibility of the US nuclear umbrella against North Korea and also reassure the South Korean public of the US security commitment" argues Seongwhun Cheon, a Senior Research Fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification in a commentary published by GlobalAsia.

"As North Korea continues to develop long-range missiles, alliance dynamics in Northeast Asia will come to resemble that of Europe in the late 1950s." he says. "When the Soviet Union first fired its Sputnik missile and opened the inter-continental missile age, Western European allies began to worry that America might decouple its own security from alliance security in fear of a Soviet attack on the US mainland. Similar concerns on decoupling will become widespread in South Korea, and cause ripple effects in Japan. To allay looming concerns about such a possible decoupling, redeploying tactical nukes in South Korea is essential," writes Cheon.

Yet, China may play a crucial role in decreasing tension in the region. Ties are expected to become warmer between China and South Korea under the new leaderships. The newly elected South Korean President Park Geun-Hye has already sent a special envoy to Beijing and China's new Communist party chief Xi Jinping has called for a resumption of the six-party talks on North Korea.

While Park has indicated that she would take a more conciliatory stance towards North Korea compared to her hawkish predecessor, China's Jinping was reported by the Korean Times as saying that he opposes the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea.

Professor Shen Dingli, Director of the Centre for American Studies at the Fudan University in Shanghai says that if the US wants stability and peace in the Asia-Pacific region it should work with China to achieve.

"Rebalancing by ganging up on China will undermine stability in East Asia, and may ultimately backfire and cause damage to the US' own interests," he argues in a commentary published by China Daily. "So far the US has insisted on ignoring the facts, confusing right and wrong and taking sides in disputes that don't directly concern it," Dingli writes.

He urges the new Obama administration to recognize that "the power shift in the Asia-Pacific region is unstoppable, and the US can only go with the flow, respect the legitimate and reasonable demands of the emerging powers, and help seek a fair and proper settlement of major disputes in the region". [IDN-InDepthNews – January 29, 2013]

**"All the world hates a hypocrite, and in arms control as in life generally, demanding that others do as I say is not nearly as compelling as asking them to do as I do."**



## SPECIAL

# High-Alert Nukes As If the Cold War Didn't End

By Jamshed Baruah

BERLIN - A new report by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has come to a worrisome conclusion that the United States and Russia continue to maintain large numbers of nuclear forces on high levels of alert, ready to launch within minutes, as if the Cold War – which is believed to have ended more than two decades ago – was going on unabated.

Together with France and Britain, the four countries deploy approximately 2000 warheads ready for use on short notice – more nuclear warheads than held by all the other states in possession of nuclear weapons combined, finds the report titled Reducing Alert Rates of Nuclear Weapons, co-authored by Hans M. Kristensen, Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and Matthew McKinzie from the Natural Resources of Defense Council.

"These current alert levels – which are deeply rooted in Cold War thinking, vastly exceed current and foreseeable security needs, and undercut efforts to reduce the salience and role of nuclear weapons – are sustained by a circular (though flawed) logic, whereby U.S. nuclear forces are maintained on alert because Russian nuclear forces are on alert, and vice versa for Russian forces. Put in another way, if nuclear forces were not on alert, there would be no requirement to keep nuclear forces on alert," says the report.

As the authors of the report point out, the international community favours reducing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons and many retired military officials argue that doing so is possible with proper care and planning.

"Yet the nuclear establishments of the four nuclear-alert countries oppose de-alerting nuclear forces and argue that doing so would create crisis instability and be difficult and expensive to verify. Their arguments have so far largely managed to hold proponents of nuclear de-alerting at bay from effecting changes to alert nuclear postures," notes the report.

According to the study, the very name of the current U.S. strategic nuclear war plan – Strategic Deterrence and Global Strike (Operational Plan 8010-08 – reflects this dual mission of U.S. nuclear forces.

The strategic deterrence part of the U.S. plan is focused on deploying a secure retaliatory capability to deter an adversary from attacking the United States and its allies. The global strike part of the plan is focused on a myriad of war-fighting scenarios including the failure of deterrence.

The Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy on which this plan is based – NUWEP-04, signed by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on April 19, 2004 – states in part: "U.S.

nuclear forces must be capable of, and be seen to be capable of, destroying those critical war-making and war-supporting assets and capabilities that a potential enemy leadership values most and that it would rely on to achieve its own objectives in a post-war world".

According to the report, this dual mission is also reflected by the Obama administration's ongoing post-NPR (Nuclear Posture Review), which is intended to ask, in the words of a senior Pentagon official: "What are the guiding concepts for employing nuclear weapons to deter adversaries, and what are the guiding concepts for ending a nuclear conflict on the least catastrophic terms if one has already started?". The fact is that current U.S. nuclear weapons planning is based upon two interrelated but nonetheless different objectives: deterrence and war-fighting.

## De-alerting

The report's authors caution advocates of de-alerting to be clear about the distinctions between these two objectives, otherwise they will not address detractors' concerns. "Crisis escalation control is central to the arguments of de-alerting opponents and evident in a series of limited-strike options embedded in the strategic war plan for selective and adaptive targeting of adversary forces and infrastructure to stop escalation and win the war. It is at this stage in a crisis, they argue, after non-nuclear hostilities have broken out, that a nuclear re-alerting race would be most dangerous because it could prompt a nuclear-weapon state to launch its nuclear weapons first.

As a hypothetical example, notes the report, as Russian ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) return to a state of alert, there would be a strong incentive for Russia to strike immediately at U.S. nuclear submarine bases, thereby potentially destroying large numbers of the adversary's strategic nuclear weapons with only a few attacking warheads, as both sides desperately race to alert status. ☹



Image above: The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Wyoming (SSBN 742)

SPECIAL

## Aiming at Global Disarmament by 2030

By Ramesh Jaura



BERLIN - An eminent Buddhist leader Daisaku Ikeda is calling for an "expanded nuclear summit" in 2015 to solidify momentum toward a world free from nuclear weapons and become the launching point for a larger effort for global disarmament aiming toward the year 2030.

With this in view, he hopes that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and forward-looking governments will establish an action group to initiate before year's end the process of drafting a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) outlawing nuclear weapons, which are not only inhumane but also swallow some \$105 billion year after year

"A key factor . . . will be the stance taken by those countries which have relied on the extended deterrence of nuclear-weapon states, the so-called nuclear umbrella," writes Ikeda, who heads Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Tokyo-based lay Buddhist organization spanning the globe.

SGI President Ikeda notes with great satisfaction that signatories to the statements so far, urging putting a halt to proliferation and calling for abolition of atomic weapons of mass destruction, "include not only countries belonging to Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) and neutral countries, but also Norway and Denmark, which are members of NATO and thus come under that organization's nuclear umbrella. And yet these two countries have not only signed these statements but have played a key role in their drafting."

On the other hand, Japan, which also relies on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, has refrained from signing some of the important statements, he adds and implores Tokyo to "join with other countries seeking the prohibition of nuclear weapons as inhumane and work for the earliest realization of a world free from the threat of these weapons". In his 2013 Peace Proposal 'Compassion, Wisdom and Courage: Building a Global Society of Peace and Creative,' Ikeda explores "the prospects for constructing a global society of peace and creative coexistence looking toward the year 2030". ➔ **page 35**

Picture: SGI President drafting 2013 Peace Proposal | Credit: SGI

**[Continued from page 33]**

There would certainly be risks of any crisis escalating – alert forces are no guarantee against that. But the re-alerting race argument is a "straw man". First, it ignores that U.S. and Russian nuclear postures today already include plans to "generate" forces in a crisis, surging and dispersing forces, and increasing alert rates and warhead loading.

Although not re-alerting from a completely de-alerted state, those strategic force generation plans would, if executed, have a high probability of being interpreted by the opponent as preparations of strike and thus trigger nuclear force generation on the other side. Therefore, if a re-alerting race is destabilizing in future de-alerted nuclear postures, logically it is also destabilizing today.

Second, nuclear forces can be structured to prevent a re-alerting race, unlike in the previous example, which indeed is a less desirable situation. In fact the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and Russ can be structured in

such a way that a stable deterrent whole is built from vulnerable, de-alerted parts.

But the idea that nuclear conflict can somehow be managed once it starts is highly dubious, the report points out. For two large nuclear powers it is a fallacy to expect that either side would back down if the other side started using nuclear weapons in order to dictate its terms for ending hostilities.

"Maintaining alert forces against a smaller nuclear adversary that does not have nuclear forces on alert could push such an adversary toward adopting an alert posture or, as in the case of China, lead to development of more capable mobile nuclear systems in an attempt to reduce vulnerability to an opponent's alert nuclear forces. A smaller adversary would not be able to 'win' but could still inflict considerable damage with a limited number of weapons," states the report. *[IDN-InDepthNews – February 18, 2013]*

Originally inspired by second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's 1957 anti-nuclear weapons declaration, Ikeda publishes a peace proposal every year which casts a close look at the interrelation between core Buddhist concepts and the diverse challenges global society faces in the effort to realize peace and human security. He has also made proposals touching on issues such as education reform, the environment, the United Nations and nuclear abolition.

The 2013 Peace Proposal comes in run-up to two significant events this year: The Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons organized by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry on March 4-5 in Oslo – to be preceded by a civil society forum for a global ban on nukes, and a high level meeting in September of the UN General Assembly on nuclear disarmament.

Ikeda's 2013 Peace Proposal states that the huge annual aggregate expenditure on nuclear weapons globally underlines "the enormity of the burden placed on societies simply by the continued possession of these weapons". It adds: "If these financial resources were redirected domestically to health, social welfare and education programs or to development aid for other countries, the positive impact on people's lives and dignity would be incalculable."

### Backdrop

The backdrop to the latest peace proposal is that since the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), there has been a growing, if still nascent, movement to outlaw nuclear weapons based on the premise that they are inhumane.

The Final Document of the Review Conference notes a "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and reaffirms "the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law."

This ground breaking statement was followed by a resolution by the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in November 2011, strongly appealing to all states "to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement."

Subsequently, at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference held in May 2012, sixteen countries led by Norway and Switzerland issued a joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, stating that "it is of great concern that, even after the end of the Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation remains part of the 21st century international security environment."

They stressed: "it is of utmost importance that these weapons never be used again, under any circumstances. . . . All States must intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weap-

ons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons." In October 2012, this statement, with minor revisions, was presented to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly by thirty-five member and observer states.

Ikeda refers to important new research on the effects of nuclear war on the environment announced in April 2012 in the report 'Nuclear Famine'. Issued by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), the study predicts that even a relatively small-scale nuclear exchange could cause major climate change and that the impact on countries far-distant from the combatant nations would result in famine affecting more than a billion people.

According to Ikeda, the SGI's efforts to grapple with the nuclear weapons issue are based on the recognition that the very existence of these weapons represents the ultimate negation of the dignity of life.

"It is necessary to challenge the underlying inhumanity of the idea that the needs of states can justify the sacrifice of untold numbers of human lives and disruption of the global ecology. At the same time, we feel that nuclear weapons serve as a prism through which to bring into sharper focus ecological integrity, economic development and human rights – issues that our contemporary world cannot afford to ignore. This in turn helps us identify the elements that will shape the contours of a new, sustainable society, one in which all people can live in dignity."

### Three proposals

With this in view, the SGI President has tabled three concrete proposals:

First, to make disarmament a key theme of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Specifically, he proposes that halving world military expenditures relative to 2010 levels and abolishing nuclear weapons and all other weapons judged inhumane under international law be included as targets for achievement by the year 2030. In the proposal I issued on the occasion of the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012, Ikeda urged that targets related to the green economy, renewable energy and disaster prevention and mitigation be included in the SDGs, and I believe that disarmament targets should also be taken into consideration.

The International Peace Bureau (IPB), the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and other civil society organizations are currently advocating the global reduction of military spending, and the SGI supports this out of the awareness that disarmament is humanitarian action.

Second, to initiate the negotiation process for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, with the goal of agreement on an initial draft by 2015: "To this end, we must engage in active and multifaceted debate – cantered on the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons – to broadly shape international public opinion," says Ikeda. ☺



Third, to hold an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world: The G8 Summit in 2015, the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would be an appropriate opportunity for such a summit, which should include the additional participation of representatives of the United Nations and non-G8 states in possession of nuclear weapons, as well as members of the five existing NWFZs – Antarctic Treaty, Latin American NWFZ (Tlatelolco Treaty), South Pacific NWFZ (Rarotonga Treaty), Southeast Asia NWFZ (Bangkok treaty), and African NWFZ (Pelindaba Treaty) – and those states which have taken a lead in calling for nuclear abolition, explains the SGI President.

"If possible, Germany and Japan, which are the scheduled G8 host countries for 2015 and 2016 respectively, should agree to reverse that order, enabling the convening of this meeting in Hiroshima or Nagasaki," adds Ikeda.

In past peace proposals, he urged that the 2015 NPT Review Conference be held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a vehicle for realizing a nuclear abolition summit. He still hopes that such a meeting can be held.

"Nevertheless, the logistical issues involved in bringing together the representatives of almost 190 countries may

dictate that the meeting be held at the UN Headquarters in New York as is customary. In that event, the G8 Summit scheduled to be held several months after the NPT Review Conference would provide an excellent opportunity for an expanded group of world leaders to grapple with this critical issue." argues Ikeda.

In this regard, he feels encouraged by President Barack Obama's speech at Hankuk University in Seoul on March 26, 2012: "My administration's nuclear posture recognizes that the massive nuclear arsenal we inherited from the Cold War is poorly suited to today's threats, including nuclear terrorism. . . .But I believe the United States has a unique responsibility to act-- indeed, we have a moral obligation. I say this as President of the only nation ever to use nuclear weapons."

This, of course, restates the conviction he first expressed in his April 2009 Prague speech. President Obama then went on to say: "Most of all, I say it as a father, who wants my two young daughters to grow up in a world where everything they know and love can't be instantly wiped out."

Ikeda says: "These words express a yearning for the world as it should be, a yearning that cannot be subsumed even after all political elements and security requirements have been taken fully into consideration. It is the statement of a single human being rising above the differences of national interest or ideological stance. Such a way of thinking can help us 'untie' the Gordian Knot that has too long bound together the ideas of national security and nuclear weapons possession."

He adds: "There is no place more conducive to considering the full significance of life in the nuclear age than Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was seen when the G8 Summit of Lower House Speakers was convened in Hiroshima in 2008. The kind of expanded summit I am calling for would inherit that spirit and solidify momentum toward a world free from nuclear weapons. It would become the launching point for a larger effort for global disarmament aiming toward the year 2030."

*[IDN-InDepthNews – February 12, 2013]*

Picture top left: The antinuclear exhibition "Everything You Treasure–For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons," a joint initiative by Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), opened on April 23 at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the Second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held from April 22 to May 3.

### Three concrete proposals:

**Making disarmament a key theme of the Sustainable Development Goals. Halving world military expenditures relative to 2010 levels and abolishing nuclear weapons and all other weapons judged inhumane under international law should be included as targets for achievement by the year 2030.**

**Initiating the negotiation process of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The international community should engage in active debate to broadly shape international public opinion, with the goal of agreement on an initial draft by 2015.**

**Holding an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world. The G8 Summit in 2015, the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would be an appropriate opportunity for such a summit.**

## SPECIAL

## ICAN Resolved to Ban Nukes

By Ramesh Jaura

OSLO - A global movement to outlaw nuclear weapons is in the making with significant support from Norway, which is protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella as a member of the 28-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This emerged from a two-day ICAN Civil Society Forum in Oslo.

Some 400 youthful participants gathered in the Norwegian capital on March 2 and 3 ahead of an 'international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons', which the five 'official' nuclear powers that are also permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council – United States, Russia, China, France and U.K. – have boycotted in a concerted move that surprised officials and non-governmental organizations at the ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) Forum.

The Forum concluded with a selection of young ICAN campaigners – from Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany and Sweden – vowing to mobilize massive public support to “ban the bomb”.

Their resolve was strengthened, they said, particularly after listening to harrowing testimonies of the survivors of the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. They also received a crash course on the medical, social, climate and nuclear famine consequences of nuclear weapons.

Dr Alan Robock explained that a small exchange of a few bombs between India and Pakistan would throw up enough smoke into the atmosphere to effectively block out the sun for a decade, mostly in the Northern Hemisphere, reduce global temperatures to create a nuclear winter and cause famine for billions.

Dr Ira Helfand from Nobel Laureate International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) described the stark consequences of a bomb on New York, for a three kilometre radius around ground zero, temperatures would be greater than the surface of the sun after a millionth of a second, for the next 3 km the shock wave would cause destruction and death of everything living, the next zone of 3 km would experience a fireball as all flammable material would instantaneously combust and suck up all the available oxygen.

Further out the devastation would be less but still significant. These would be the immediate effects without the subsequent radiation poisoning and climate effects, he said.

Tony Robinson, international spokesperson for the organisation World without Wars and Violence, noted that the scientists' models were just that, models, but as they had stressed, their numbers were always underestimates of what the reality could be.

There was no doubt however that planet Earth will experience a nuclear winter, crops will fail for years, and humanity will be brought to the edge of disaster. And in their mod-



els they work with the detonation of a small fraction of the world's 19,000 nuclear warheads.

Wrapping up the Forum, Thomas Nash, a member of the steering group of ICAN said: “The government meeting hasn't started yet but I feel like we have already achieved a lot. We've all been saying that governments need to focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and now 130 governments are gathering in this city to talk about just that.

“We made this happen. No matter what goes down during the conference we should remember that. We've also got the P5 on the run.”

Nash, now working at Article 36, which is part of ICAN UK, was an active campaigner for banning cluster munitions. A Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) was signed in Oslo in 2008 – underlining an important role played by Norway in preparing the ground for this international treaty.

The convention addresses the humanitarian consequences and unacceptable harm to civilians caused by cluster bombs, through a categorical prohibition and a framework for action. One third of all recorded cluster munitions casualties are children. 60% of cluster bomb casualties are injured while undertaking their normal activities.

### Civil society mobilisation

Nash said the ICAN Forum had “felt like just the latest step in a history of effective civil society mobilisation to outlaw and eliminate weapons of mass destruction”. It had already prohibited two out of the three types of weapons of mass destruction, through the ban treaties on chemical and biological weapons. Nuclear testing had been banned as well.

“In these initiatives, civil society mobilised on the basis of the unacceptability of the humanitarian and health consequences of these weapons,” added Nash. He recalled that some 20 years ago as a young New Zealand high school student he took part in a delegation of activists who travelled to France to protest against French nuclear testing in the Pacific, hosted by Mouvement de la Paix. ☺



The Forum also heard ICAN co-chair and director of Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, Dr Rebecca Johnson, set out why a ban treaty is practical, achievable and doable.

Gry Larsen, Norway's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, told participants that the elimination of nuclear weapons is not a utopia and that disarmament is about real people.

Martin Sheen, veteran actor and former President of the United States on TV's *The West Wing*, told the Civil Society Forum that if Gandhi and Martin Luther King were alive today they would be part of ICAN. Sheen has been donating time and money to many charities and has received two awards for his humanitarian work.

Nash appeared to be expressing the predominant view at the Forum, when he said: "The only thing that can prevent us from getting a ban on nuclear weapons is if we don't believe it is possible."

But, he added: "If we stick together and build our campaign respectfully and inclusively over the coming weeks and months we will find ourselves in the midst of a process to negotiate a ban on nuclear weapons before we know it. I think once we get going in that process, we could be pretty hard to stop."

ICAN representatives said they will be working with governments, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other partners towards a new treaty banning nuclear weapons. In this context, ICAN project manager Magnus Lovold welcomed the 2013 Peace Proposal by Dr Daisaku Ikeda, President of the Tokyo-based lay Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

Dr Ikeda expressed the hope that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and forward-looking governments will establish an action group to initiate before year's end the process of drafting a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) outlawing nuclear weapons, which are not only inhumane but also swallow some \$105 billion year after year.

SGI participated in the Forum with an exhibition titled 'Everything You Treasure – For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons', which was launched in Hiroshima in August 2012 at the 20th World Congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The exhibition has been jointly created by SGI and ICAN.

It consists of a total of 40 panels that cover nuclear weapons issues from 12 perspectives: humanitarian, environmental, medical, economic, human rights, energy, scientific, political, spiritual, gender, generational and security.

SGI Vice President and Executive Director for Peace Affairs Hiroto Terasaki, who was accompanied by Program Director for Peace Affairs Kimiaki Kawai, said the exhibition also intended to commemorate the 55th anniversary of second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons made on September 8, 1957. [*IDN-InDepthNews – March 3, 2013*]



Image credit: ICAN

## SPECIAL

## 'Humanitarian Diplomacy' Fights Nukes

By Jamshed Baruah

OSLO - For the first time, 'humanitarian diplomacy' is being deployed to drive home the need for banning nukes – though under the self-imposed exclusion of the P5, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who own a crushing majority of the 19,000 nuclear weapons capable of destroying the world many times over.

A first step toward humanitarian diplomacy was taken in Oslo at a Mar. 4-5 conference convened by the government of Norway. Mexico will host a follow-up meeting "in due course" and "after necessary preparations," Juan José Gómez Camacho, the country's ambassador to the UN announced.

Participants in the conference included representatives of 127 states, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and civil society, with the International Campaign for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in the forefront.

ICAN organised a Civil Society Forum on Mar. 2-3 with the Norwegian government's support. Some 500 campaigners, scientists, physicians and other experts attended. The forum lent a vigorous dimension to a global campaign for outlawing all nuclear weapons.

ICAN representatives said they will work with governments, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other partners towards a new treaty banning nuclear weapons. ICAN project manager Magnus Lovold welcomed the 2013 Peace Proposal by Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Tokyo-based Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

Ikeda proposed that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and forward-looking governments establish an action group to draft a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) outlawing nuclear weapons – which apart from being inhumane swallow some 105 billion dollars a year at current spending.

SGI executive director for peace affairs Hiroto Terasaki said that both the ICAN forum and the Oslo government conference had lent significant momentum to ushering in a world without nuclear weapons.

SGI hopes that the G8 Summit in 2015 and the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would serve as milestones towards an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

A broad section of participants at the government conference expressed dismay at the decision of the P5 – the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France – to stay away from the meeting without giving any reasons.

But many nevertheless expressed interest in further exploring the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons "in ways that ensure global participation," said Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, summarising the outcome



of the conference. "States expressed their interest in continuing the discussions, and to broaden the discourse on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons."

Avoiding any caustic comments on P5's decision to boycott the conference, Eide asserted: "It is the chair's view that . . . broad participation (in the conference) reflects the increasing global concern regarding the effects of nuclear weapons detonations, as well as the recognition that this is an issue of fundamental significance to us all."

These remarks were significant considering that Norway is a founding member of the U.S.-led 28-nation transatlantic military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). NATO announced a "strategic concept" at its Lisbon meeting in November 2010, which "commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance."

Answering a question by this correspondent, Eide insisted that Norway was committed to "creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons." In his view, concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation have brought awareness of the continued risks all nukes pose more to the fore than at any time since the vast majority of states signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968.

Since the 2010 review conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), there has been a growing, if still nascent, movement to outlaw nuclear weapons.

Some key points that emerge from scientific presentations and general discussions in Oslo are:

No state or international body would be in a position to adequately address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation and provide sufficient assistance to those affected. It might not be possible to establish such capacities, even if it were attempted. The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of cause, will not be constrained by national borders, and will affect states and people in significant ways, regionally as well as globally. ☺

Dr Ira Helfand from International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) explained that the widespread radioactive contamination would affect housing, food and water supplies. He said the financial costs in terms of property damage, disruption to global trade and general economic activity, and the impact on development in terms of the creation of refugees would be enormous.

The final document of the review conference notes “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” and reaffirms “the need for all states at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”

This was followed by a resolution by the council of delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in November 2011, strongly appealing to all states “to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement.”

Subsequently, at the first session of the preparatory committee for the 2015 NPT review conference held in May

2012, 16 countries led by Norway and Switzerland issued a joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, stating that “it is of great concern that, even after the end of the Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation remains part of the 21st century international security environment.”

They stressed: “It is of utmost importance that these weapons never be used again, under any circumstances. . . . All States must intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.” In October 2012, this statement, with minor revisions, was presented to the first committee of the UN General Assembly by 35 member and observer states.

In line with broad sentiment, ICRC president Peter Maurer welcomed the Norwegian government’s initiative to convene the conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Although nuclear weapons have been debated in military, technical and geopolitical terms for decades, it is astounding that states have never before come together to address their humanitarian consequences, he said.

[IPS | March 7, 2013]

## Trailblazing Conference Urges Ban On Nukes

By Ramesh Jaura



BERLIN | OSLO - There are miles and miles to go before a world without nuclear weapons becomes a reality. But a significant step towards banning atomic arsenal capable of mass annihilation has been taken in Oslo, the capital of Norway, which is an ardent member of the 28-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Responding to President Barack Obama’s Prague speech in April 2009, NATO committed itself to “the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons”. But as part of a “strategic concept” endorsed at its Lisbon meeting in November 2010, it reconfirmed that, “as long as there are nuclear

weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance”.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide does not perceive any contradiction between the NATO strategic concept and a ground-breaking intergovernmental conference he convened in Oslo on March 4-5 to focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. In fact, he is of the view that concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation have brought awareness of the continued risks all nukes pose more to the fore than at any time since the vast majority of states signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968.

Since the 2010 review conference of the parties to the NPT, there has been a growing, if still nascent, movement to outlaw nuclear weapons. The final document of the review conference notes “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” and reaffirms “the need for all states at all times to comply with

applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”

This was followed by a resolution by the council of delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in November 2011, strongly appealing to all states “to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement.”

Subsequently, at the first session of the preparatory committee for the 2015 NPT review conference held in May 2012, 16 countries led by Norway and Switzerland issued a joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, stating that “it is of great concern that, even after the end of the Cold War, the threat of nuclear anni-☪



annihilation remains part of the 21st century international security environment.”

The significance of the gathering in Oslo lies in the fact that for the first time in the 67-year old history of official and informal discussions on nuclear disarmament, representatives of 127 nations met to discuss the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. They were joined by various UN agencies, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent movement as well as civil society and faith organizations such as the International Campaign for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

The urgency of the humanitarian impact is underlined by the fact that 19,000 nukes which official and unofficial nuclear nations have accumulated since 1945, when the U.S. dropped the first atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are capable of destroying the world many times over.

This shocking fact motivated ICAN to organize a Civil Society Forum on March 2-3 with the Norwegian government's support. Some 500 campaigners, scientists, physicians and other experts attended. The forum lent a vigorous dimension to a global campaign for outlawing all nuclear weapons.

ICAN representatives said they will work with governments, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other partners such as the Tokyo-based lay Buddhist organization SGI towards a new treaty banning nuclear weapons.

All the more so because SGI has been consistently pleading for abolition of all nuclear weapons. Originally inspired by second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda's 1957 anti-nuclear weapons declaration, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda publishes a peace proposal every year which casts a close look at the interrelation between core Buddhist concepts and the diverse challenges global society faces in the effort to realize peace and human security. He has also made proposals touching on issues such as education reform, the environment, and the United Nations.

In the 2013 Peace Proposal Ikeda urged non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and forward-looking governments to establish an action group to draft a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) outlawing nuclear weapons – which apart from being inhumane swallow some 105 billion dollars a year at current spending.

SGI vice president and executive director for peace affairs Hirotugu Terasaki, who attended the Oslo conference, said that both the ICAN forum and the Oslo government conference had lent significant momentum to ushering in a world without nuclear weapons. SGI hopes that the G8 Summit in 2015 and the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would serve as milestones towards an expanded summit for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Oslo conference took place outside of the framework of the 65-member United Nations Conference on Disarmament. Though the ‘official’ nuclear powers USA, Russia, China, UK and France as well as the non-official nuke states Israel and North Korea refused to attend, India and Pakistan – said to be in possession of atomic weapons – and Iran, suspected of working on a bomb, joined.

The conference was a success not the least because Mexico announced that it would host the next meeting. A wide range of states and organisations agreed that an understanding of the global humanitarian consequences of nuclear detonations should be the starting point for urgent action to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

As Dr Rebecca Johnson, co-chair of ICAN points out, the significance of this announcement should not be underestimated. “In 1967, at the height of the Cold War, Mexico was the driving force behind the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which prohibited nuclear weapons across the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, she says. This “nuclear-weapon-free zone” led to further prohibition zones being established in Africa, the South Pacific, South-East Asia and Central Asia,” avers Johnson.

These zones, she adds, have proved more of a success than the painfully slow pigeon steps undertaken by some nuclear-armed states, which in recent years are constantly undermined by massive governmental investments to modernise, refine and renew the sizeable arsenals that they retain.

Some key points that emerged from scientific presentations and general discussions in Oslo are: No state or international body would be in a position to adequately address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation and provide sufficient assistance to those affected. In fact, it might not be possible to establish such capacities, even if it were attempted.

The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of cause, will not be constrained by national borders, and will affect states and people in significant ways, regionally as well as globally.

As Dr Ira Helfand of ICAN and Physicians for Social Responsibility, who is author of a recent study on nuclear-induced famine, explained that a billion people could die of starvation following a limited regional use of nuclear weapons. The most vulnerable, mainly women and children, would suffer first.

Building on research by renowned climate scientist Alan Robock and others on the climate disruption and “nuclear winter” effects likely to follow a “small” or “limited” nuclear war, Dr Helfand said the widespread radioactive contamination would affect housing, food and water supplies. The financial costs in terms of property damage, disruption to global trade and general economic activity, and the impact on development in terms of the creation of refugees would enormous. [IDN-InDepthNews – March 10, 2013]

## SPECIAL

## Anti-Nuke Movement Goes to the Gulf

By Baher Kamal



MANAMA - After a week of activities in Oslo during the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, major anti-nuclear campaigners moved on March 10 to the Bahraini capital, Manama, in yet another step towards the abolition of atomic weapons.

“Nuclear weapons – the most inhuman and destructive of all tools of war – are at the peak of a pyramid of violence in this increasingly interdependent world,” said campaigners during a joint press conference on March 12 in Manama. “The threat of atomic weapons is not in the past,” the organisers

said. “It is a major crisis today.”

Co-organised by the Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat), Soka Gakkai International (SGI), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the United Nations Information Center (UNIC) and Inter Press Service (IPS), the exhibition — “From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Towards a World Free from Nuclear Weapons” — is being held in Manama from March 12 to March 23.

Organised by the Tokyo-based non-governmental civil society association Soka Gakkai International (SGI), with the support of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), together with the United Nations Information Centre in Manama as well as the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat), and Inter Press Service (IPS), the exhibition — “From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Towards a World Free from Nuclear Weapons” — is being shown from Mar 13 to 23.

“This exhibition – the first ever in an Arab country – (represents another) step toward making the human aspiration to live in a world free from nuclear weapons a reality,” SGI’s executive director for peace affairs, Hirotsugu Terasaki, told IPS.

“The very existence of these weapons – the most inhuman of all – implies a major danger,” said Terasaki, a high-level official of Soka Gakkai Buddhist organisation that promotes international peace and security, with more than 12 million members globally.

Asked about the argument used by nuclear powers that the possession of such weapons is a guarantee of safety and security – the so-called “deterrence doctrine” – Terasaki said, “The world should now move beyond this myth.”

“Security”, he said, begins with basic human needs: shelter, clean air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat. People need to work, to care for their health, to be protected from violence, according to the SGI exhibition.

Terasaki believes nuclear weapons differ from “conventional” weapons in two main regards.

“First is their overwhelming destructive power. The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 delivered a blast equivalent to about 13 kilotons of TNT,” he said.

Some 140,000 people lost their lives just at the end of that year, he said.

“Since then nuclear weapons with yields of more than 50 megatons have been developed, several thousand times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.”

Whereas conventional weapons can, at least to some degree, distinguish between military and civilian targets, nuclear weapons kill indiscriminately, destroying all life on a massive scale, Terasaki averred.

“The second point to emphasise is the radioactivity they leave behind. After fires caused by the explosion are extinguished and silence returns, radioactivity (lingers on) for months and can cause leukaemia or other diseases, even affecting people who only enter the area after the bombing. These diseases are often inherited by sufferers’ offspring.”

Before moving to Bahrain, the SGI exhibition had been shown in more than 230 venues in 29 countries and territories. Manama is the first city in the Middle East region to host it. The contents of the exhibition have been translated into eight languages including Arabic now.

Among its key objectives in Bahrain is to contribute to the discussion on a Middle East nuclear weapons free zone.

“What we celebrate today reflects a sincere expression of the true spirit of Islam,” Bahraini Minister for Foreign Affairs Ghanim bin-Fadl Al-Buainain said at a press conference on March 10.

“The pure meaning of Islam is ‘peace’,” he said, “but unfortunately Islam’s image and principles have (today) been distorted...”

Al-Buainain also referred to the third nuclear test carried out by North Korea in February, saying that the biggest threat to “international peace and security is the global and regional arms race, especially nuclear arms”. ☺

He also called attention to Iran's nuclear programme, "which maintains its peaceful functions". However, this programme has "far-reaching effects on the environment, wildlife and marine life...as well as security risks in the Gulf region if it transforms into a militaristic nuclear programme," added the Bahraini minister.

Speaking at the same press conference, Japan's ambassador in Manama, Shigeki Sumi, reaffirmed Japan's commitment to abolishing nuclear weapons, since "Japan has been the sole country that suffered from the catastrophic human consequences of nuclear bombing during World War II".

Nasser Burdestani, ICAN's regional campaigner in Bahrain who played a key role in organising the anti-nuclear exhibition, stressed the need to advance the effort of so-called "human diplomacy".

"Biological weapons were prohibited in 1975; chemical weapons in 1997; land mines in 1999, and cluster bombs in 2010. It is now time to abolish nuclear weapons," said Burdestani.

Two major anti-nuclear events in Oslo preceded this historic exhibition: the ICAN Civil Society Forum (March 2-3) that brought together more than 500 cam-

paginers, experts, scientists and physicians, followed by an inter-governmental conference (March 4-5), organised by Norway's Foreign Affairs ministry, which drew representatives from 127 states, the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in addition to civil society.

Notable at the Oslo conference was the complete absence of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

At the start of 2012 eight states possessed approximately 4,400 operational nuclear weapons, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

"Nearly 2,000 of these are kept in a state of high operational alert. If all nuclear warheads are counted - operational warheads, spares, those in both active and inactive storage, and intact warheads scheduled for dismantlement the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and Israel together possess a total of approximately 19,000 nuclear weapons," SIPRI reported.

Meanwhile, SGI's president and eminent Buddhist leader, Daisaku Ikeda, has launched a global peace proposal, a blueprint consisting of three major proposals that will serve as a launching point for the larger goal of total global disarmament by the year 2030.

The proposal expresses the hope that NGOs and forward-looking governments will establish an action group to initiate, before the year's end, the process of drafting a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) outlawing nuclear weapons, which swallow some 105 billion dollars annually.

In a study entitled 'Don't Bank on the Bomb', ICAN reported that more than 300 banks, pension funds, insurance companies and asset managers in 30 countries have invested heavily in nuclear arms producers, while 20 companies are involved in the manufacture, maintenance and modernisation of U.S., British, French and Indian nuclear forces. [IPS | March 11, 2013]



Exhibition opening with Bahrain's foreign minister Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa

## SPECIAL

## Fighting Nukes in Israel is An Uphill Battle

By Sharon Dolev\*

BINYAMINA-GIV'AT ADA - Around the world, when it comes to nuclear weapons, it is a well know "secret" that Israel is a Nuclear Armed State. Just like India and Pakistan, Israel has developed a nuclear arsenal, but unlike the two, Israel's arsenal remains a secret. Israel doesn't talk about its arsenal and usually, doesn't take part in any international or regional discourse about it .

The Israeli ambiguity, or opacity affects mostly the Israeli society. Not just the civil society but also most parliamentarians and even some ministers. As a society, we learned not to talk or even think about the Israeli bomb. Keeping the secret by not thinking about it became some sort of a patriotic act. As a society we keep Israel safe by not thinking of an Israeli nuke, asking about it, or campaigning against it.



The words 'Nuclear Bomb' are on the news daily, but only in connection with Iran. Maybe, from time to time – North Korea.

Under those tough conditions "The Israeli Disarmament movement" (IDM) is striving to change the attitude of the Israeli society towards nuclear issues and to promote the idea of a global nuclear ban and a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Israeli Disarmament movement is a grassroots organization that was established in 2007, as a Greenpeace project and was registered as an independent NGO in 2011. The first ever NGO in Israel to deal with disarmament of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

In order to reach the media, without which greater exposure is not possible, we hold media events, protests, and more provocative activities such as stripping at a conference in front of President Peres while calling for the Middle East to be stripped of WMD, placing giant notes calling for a world free of nuclear weapons at the Western Wall site (following the religious tradition of inserting notes with prayers or wishes in the wall crevices), or enacting a massive "death scene" in front of the Ministry of Defense calling for "No More Hiroshima" and opposing an attack on Iran.

One of our most important projects for 2012 was a visit of survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Hiroshima survivors (Hibakusha) met with civil society, young audience, reporters, opinion-makers and Holocaust survivors. The Hibakusha shared their experience and

joined our call for regional talks. We used their visit to educate about the catastrophic humanitarian costs of a limited nuclear war, and joined their call for "No More Hiroshima, No More Nagasaki."

Movement members participate actively in international conferences on nuclear disarmament and the Middle East and, usually in cooperation with other organizations, organize events at the United Nations and during meetings of NPT states parties (review conferences and preparatory committee meetings).

The unique status of the movement – an anti-nuclear movement from the nuclear ambiguous/opaque Israel – has resulted in many opportunities to present our position, to talk about Isra-

el, to recommend new approaches to and perspectives on the nuclear issue in the Middle East, and to meet decision makers and government representatives. We regard these as important opportunities that allow us not only to talk about what we do, but also to learn from campaigns around the world and from leading experts, and even to feel that we have some influence, however small, over the international discourse on this issue.

### Not easy

The campaign in Israel is not easy. Fear is the foremost enemy of the anti-nuclear struggle in Israel. At the end of the day, ☺

however, the principles of the Israeli campaign are identical to those of campaigns anywhere else in the world: education, dissemination of information, and inspired action.

We believe that most residents of Israel, like people everywhere, would prefer a world without nuclear weapons.

The Israeli campaign, like others throughout the world, does not exist in a vacuum all by itself. It must be part of a global campaign against nuclear weapons, such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) – represented in Israel by the Israeli Disarmament movement.

Likewise, the Middle East, of which Israel is part, cannot be disconnected from the rest of the world. While we fully support the vision of a Middle East free of WMD, it is important to bear in mind that just as we in Israel analyze developments in Iran with trepidation, Iran watches Pakistan, which views with trepidation developments in India, which analyzes developments in China, which watches the United States, which in turn feels threatened by Russia and Iran. The real challenge and solution, therefore, are to be found in a comprehensive treaty against nuclear weapons, joined by all the states of the world.

\*Sharon Dolev is the Director of the Israeli Disarmament Movement, which promotes anti-nuclear discourses in Israel and represents international disarmament organizations in the country.  
*[IDN-InDepthNews – March 25, 2013]*



finalcall.com



Israeli bombers are ready | nextyearcountrynews.blogspot.com

## THE LAST PAGE

## Chavez Had Creative Link With A US Organisation

By Ernest Corea

WASHINGTON DC - The death of President Hugo Chavez, after a drawn-out battle with cancer, brought out huge crowds of grieving Venezuelans onto the country's streets. Their grief suggested that he had been a more effective ruler than many of his critics allowed.

His visceral reaction to most things American was unfortunate, standing in the way of expanded economic relations which could have benefitted both countries, while each remained faithful to its internal political imperatives. In one area, however, he was personally responsible for a strong and beneficial link with the US.

Among those to whom it was known, it sometimes became cause for concern, and for denunciation of his American partner, the Citizens Energy Corporation, which was founded by former Congressman Joe Kennedy of Massachusetts. The corporation is popularly referred to as "Joe-4-Oil," a formulation derived from its phone number.

The facts of the collaboration, as reported by the New York Times on Sept. 6, 2009, are that "since 2005, Citizens' 877-JOE-4-OIL campaign has been sustained by the oil fields of Venezuela. Chávez, who controls the industry there, has delivered crude oil at no charge to a Citizens affiliate, which has resold it and used the money to pay for oil deliveries to America's poor. In the past two years, Citizens has been given 83 million gallons of crude by Chávez and sold it for \$164 million – money used to fund almost its entire philanthropic mission."

Revenues derived from the sale of oil supplies from Venezuela enable Joe-4-Oil to provide low cost heating in the winter months to 200,000 families a year in 23 states. Supplies are assured through the end of 2013.

### No Pause Button

John Kerry, the 68th American Secretary of State, chose to launch his new career at a site closely associated with the country's first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson. Kerry delivered his opening policy address at the University of Virginia which was founded by Jefferson in 1819. (Kerry is an alumnus of Yale.)

Given the controversial nature of some of the foreign policies inherited by the Obama administration, many observers expected a mixture of political analysis and polemics, in keeping with Kerry's experience in the Senate (1985-2013), particularly his most recent responsibilities there as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Kerry, however, took an approach that would have pleased Jefferson who believed that the greatest boon one nation could grant another was a new, food-bearing plant. Kerry pointed out that diplomats, academics and others interested in the study and practice of international relations "have always understood that bad things happening over there threaten us right here.

"Knowing that, the question is this: How do we, together, make clear that the opposite is just as true; that if we do the right things, the good things, the smart things over there, it will strengthen us here at home?" He pointed out with facts and figures that this process is already happening "....in Cameroon and Bosnia and other surprising places." He added that eleven of America's top 15 trading partners were formerly "beneficiaries of U.S. foreign assistance.

"Now, some may say not now," Kerry continued, "not while we have our budget; it's too expensive. Well, believe me, my friends, these challenges will not get easier with time. There is no pause button on the future."

### Violence Against Women

Some 70 percent of women the world over will be "beaten, raped, abused or mutilated in their lifetimes," UN officials pointed out on March 8, International Women's Day. Over 125 countries classify domestic violence as crime. Yet, 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime.

Against this background, governments and citizens were exhorted to "take action to end violence against women in all its forms and in all its contents." In a special message for International Women's Day, UN Secretary General Ban ki-moon said that 2012 was marked by "shocking" crimes of violence against women and girls.

For example: "One young woman was gang-raped to death. Another committed suicide out of a sense of shame that should have been attached to the perpetrators. Young teens were shot at close range for daring to seek an education."

Ban added that "these activities, which rightly sparked global outrage, were part of a much larger problem that pervades virtually every society and every realm of life." He emphasized the view that "there is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: Violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable."

Extending the importance of International Women's Day beyond the immediate impact of gender-based violence, Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP (UN Development Programme) said that "violence has a long-term impact on women and girls ranging from education to employment and economic status, to participation in politics."

### Short Take

The US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor is seeking proposals for programs that will strengthen the capacity of independent media in the area of investigative journalism and increase safety and support for journalists in Sri Lanka. The country is ranked 163 out of 179 countries in the press freedom index compiled by Reporters Without Borders. [IDN-InDepthNews – March 13, 2013]

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### JAPAN TREADING NEW HORIZONS IN EDUCATION

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By Ramesh Jaura | IDN-InDepth NewsFeature

BERLIN (IDN) - When I visited Japan five years ago and met senior representatives of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) in Tokyo, I learnt about the educational activities of this faith organization and the underlying concept spelt out by its President Daisaku Ikeda: "Education that lacks an ethical or spiritual underpinning can warp our attitudes toward knowledge, allowing scientific research to run dangerously out of control."

Nothing demonstrates this more horrifically than the development of nuclear weapons, he said in an interview. "This is why I have put my energies into dialogues aimed at bridging differences of nationality, religious affiliation and ideology, and into promoting educational exchanges that foster people-to-people connections," stressed the President of SGI, a worldwide Buddhist network spanning the globe and promoting peace, culture and education through personal transformation and social contribution.

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### OBAMA URGES MIDDLE CLASS-BASED PROSPERITY

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By Ernest Corea\* | IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

WASHINGTON DC (IDN) – A 19-year-old single mother captured the spirit of hope and change that animated candidate Barack Hussein Obama's first presidential election campaign with this text message: "Rosa sat, so Martin could walk; Martin walked so Obama could run; Obama is running so our children can fly." Khari Mosley, a leader of the Democratic Party in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania cited the comment in a newspaper article and it re-surfaced in 2013, reaffirming the sentiments of "hope and change" that helped to propel Obama to the pinnacle of political power in the US.

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### WORLD BANK HELPS TACKLE RAPID URBANIZATION

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By J C Suresh | IDN-InDepth NewsReport

TORONTO (IDN) - Developing countries are urbanizing so fast that their populations will tilt from less than 20 percent urban today to more than 60 percent in just 30 years. This is in stark contrast to the mostly gradual transformation today's developed countries experienced as their cities expanded over a period of 100 years or more with jobs shifting from farms to factories.

Developing countries cannot afford today's developed countries' luxury of trial and error in growth patterns and policies. To meet the challenges that rapid migration is creating, city leaders must move quickly to plan, connect, and finance resilient and sustainable growth. A new World Bank report, Planning, Connecting and Financing-Now: What City Leaders Need to Know, provides a framework to assist in this huge task.

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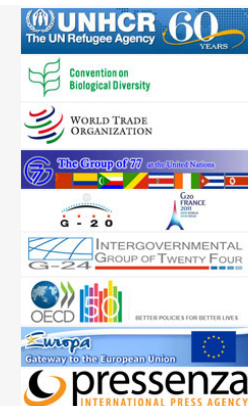
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 Forward To The Future In Quest Of Global Security. Europeans are finding it hard to keep their heads above water as tidal waves of an overwhelming desire for participation in governance pound at the Arab shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The challenge thrown down by Arab uprisings is however only one front in the uphill battle for achieving "security for the global world". Is there a European answer to that challenge?

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**Strengthening Public Awareness For Nuclear Abolition**  
The Global Cooperation Council has launched a special website as part of a media project of Inter Press Service news agency and Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist association based in Tokyo.

**TOWARD A NUCLEAR FREE WORLD**  
  
TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
2011 Report of the Joint Media Project

**B E Y O N D Nuclear Non-Proliferation**  


Some personalities who have been interviewed, have contributed their views or whose views have been incorporated in articles as part of this project are:

 Daisaku Ikeda	 Sergio Duarte	 Tibor Tóth	 J. Dhanapala
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**People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition**  
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**Japan Responding Creatively to Crisis**  
The human spirit has a truly remarkable capacity -the ability to generate hope from the most devastating of crises. This ability to create value can be seen in the response to the earthquake that struck Japan on March 11, writes Daisaku Ikeda, a Japanese Buddhist philosopher and peacebuilder and president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), in a column for IPS.

**'Abolish Nukes in the Middle East and Beyond'**  
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

Global Cooperation Council has set up a **Media Task Force** in order to strengthen its media network, with veteran journalist and Sri Lanka diplomat, **Ernest Corea** as president.



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