



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



NUMBER 06

A Monthly Newsletter for Strengthening
Awareness of Nuclear Abolition

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

POLITICS: Obama Seeks U.N. Backing for Nuke-Free World

By Thalif Deen

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Why Should We Abolish Nuclear Weapons

By Hiromichi Umabayashi *

TOKYO, Sep (IPS) Why should we abolish nuclear weapons? This apparently naive question seems to have become a matter of hot debate. In Japan, which suffered nuclear holocaust in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is a profound desire for nuclear abolition that derives from its first-hand experience of the appalling damage caused by nuclear weapons. Yet this does not seem to be enough to constitute a successful argument for "a world free of nuclear weapons". The effort to bring about a nuclear abolition must be indivisibly and essentially integrated with the challenge of creating a more equitable, just, and humane global society. *MORE >>*



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By Emilio Godoy

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RAMESH JAURA INTERVIEWS SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA

BERLIN (IDN) - A world free of nuclear weapons is no longer a utopia. There is more than one reason to believe that it is a concrete possibility, says Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Buddhist association, Soka Gokkai International (SGI).

"In recent years, we have seen important, groundbreaking examples of humanitarian ideals surmounting military logic and narrowly defined national interests to bring new disarmament accords into existence," says Ikeda explaining the rationale behind his optimism. *MORE >>*

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UNITED NATIONS, Sep 24 (IPS) - When Barack Obama chaired a summit meeting of the Security Council Thursday - a historic first for a U.S. president - his primary motive was to push for his ambitious, long-term agenda for "a world without nuclear weapons".

A resolution adopted unanimously by the 15 members of the U.N.'s most powerful political body expressed grave concern about the threat of nuclear proliferation and the need for international action to prevent it.

Providing specific time frames, he said, the next 12 months "will be absolutely critical in determining whether this resolution and our overall efforts to stop the spread and use of nuclear weapons are successful".

"Today, the Security Council endorsed a global effort to lock down all vulnerable nuclear materials within four years," Obama told the heads of state participating in the meeting.

The United States, he affirmed, will host a summit meeting next April to advance this goal further and help all nations achieve it.

Obama singled out Iran and North Korea, urging "full compliance" on existing Security Council resolutions that call on both countries to cease their nuclear weapons programmes.

Still, he said, "this is not about singling out individual nations. It's about standing up for the rights of all nations who do live up to their (nuclear) responsibilities."

The resolution adopted Thursday, however, did not mention either Iran or North Korea by name, although most statements in the Council did.

"That was perhaps the price paid for getting the support of China and Russia for the adoption of the resolution," an Asian diplomat told IPS.

Both veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council have continued to be protective of Iran and North Korea primarily because of their political, economic and military interests with both would-be nuclear powers.

"If Iran and North Korea were singled out in the resolution," the diplomat said, "it was very unlikely the United States would have had a unanimous resolution."

But several speakers continued to condemn North Korea and Iran in their statements - perhaps to compensate for the shortcoming in the resolution.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy pointedly said: "We are facing two major proliferation crises, in Iran and North Korea."

Year after year, he said, they have been worsening. "How, before the eyes of the world, could we justify meeting without tackling them?"

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown proposed that countries should form a global bargain on nuclear weapons, including tougher sanctions on countries such as Iran and North Korea, while offering civil nuclear power to non-nuclear states ready to renounce plans for nuclear weapons. He also called for a commitment from countries with nuclear weapons to reduce their arsenals.

The five declared nuclear powers - all permanent members of the Security Council - are the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia. The undeclared nuclear powers include Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea (with Iran knocking at the door).

John Burroughs, executive director of the New York-based Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, told IPS that U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice, who piloted the resolution, was clear that the resolution would not be about particular countries.

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But this could have been worked out with Russia and China ahead of time, he said.

"From my perspective, whether the countries are named is a false controversy. The resolution is about norms applicable to all countries, and it's supposed to be also a resolution about disarmament as well as non-proliferation, and it is to some degree," Burroughs said.

So it is not intended to be a resolution about particular proliferation situations.

The resolution also makes perfectly clear, without naming the countries, that they should comply with the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"Why not have a controversy about why countries that have not complied with disarmament commitments are not named, to go along with the controversy about naming Iran and North Korea?" Burroughs asked.

Dr. Ian Anthony, research coordinator at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), one of the world's best known arms control and disarmament think tanks, said the resolution establishes a framework for international cooperation to tackle a complicated set of problems over an extended period.

The willingness of the Security Council to remain engaged in implementing this programme of work will be seen by the wider UN membership as a key indicator of whether they should play an active role in relevant projects, he said.

"The main challenge for the Security Council will be to sustain their engagement and to implement the package of measures listed in the resolution in the face of competing priorities and urgent challenges in the economic and financial sphere, climate change and in relation to other urgent issues," Anthony told IPS.

Burroughs said that while the resolution did not name Iran or North Korea, it makes quite clear that the Security Council will retain its role in policing compliance with non-proliferation obligations.

But he pointed out that the resolution still lacks a call for a halt to production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons by all states possessing nuclear arsenals, pending negotiation of a treaty.

"It appears that China prevented its inclusion," Burroughs said.

A halt to production of fissile materials in South Asia would be significant because it would essentially end the serious quantitative nuclear arms race there, he added.

"India and Pakistan are the only states known to be currently producing materials for weapons (Israel might be), but China may want to preserve the option," he added.

SIPRI's Anthony argued that the discovery that not all states entered into agreements in good faith was a serious blow to the basic principle on which arms control rests, namely that agreed rules of self-restraint would be respected by all parties under their own responsibility.

In addition, he said, the threats posed by non-state actors planning acts of mass impact terrorism were not historically a part of arms control discussions.

"Arms control has tried to adapt to changes in the security environment by increasing confidence in compliance with existing agreements and by denying groups planning mass impact terrorist attacks access to the most dangerous capabilities," he added. Thursday's Security Council meeting indicates that the United States wants to exercise responsible leadership within a multilateral framework.

"This is the best way to try and establish a fair, inclusive and effective implementation of the multitude of new legal, political and operational tools created in recent years, many of which are noted in the preamble to the Security Council Resolution," Anthony added.

In a historic speech he made in Prague last April, Obama spoke of a world without nuclear weapons.

Burroughs said one point found in the Prague speech is notably lacking in the resolution: reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in security strategies. >>>



Nor are there innovations regarding arms control/disarmament or the role of the Security Council in that regard.

For example, he said, there is no initiation of a disarmament process involving states possessing nuclear arsenals; no establishment of a subsidiary body on non-proliferation and disarmament, or support for reform of the Council to make it more effective in responding to violations of non-proliferation and disarmament obligations.

Additionally, there are no steps to fulfill the Council's responsibility under the U.N. Charter to propose plans for disarmament.

In contrast, there is detailed elaboration and development of non-proliferation and anti-terrorism measures.

In sum, while the resolution robustly asserts and develops the Security Council's role in preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by additional states and by terrorists, its current significance lies mostly in the signal that the Obama administration intends to pursue the existing arms control agenda.

To live up to Obama's Prague commitment, the resolution will need to pave the way for a more ambitious effort, not only to contain the spread of nuclear weapons, but to end reliance on them by existing nuclear powers and set in motion the process of their elimination, Burroughs declared. (END/2009)

Why Should We Abolish Nuclear Weapons

By Hiromichi Umebayashi *

TOKYO, Sep (IPS) Why should we abolish nuclear weapons?

This apparently naive question seems to have become a matter of hot debate. In Japan, which suffered nuclear holocaust in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is a profound desire for nuclear abolition that derives from its first-hand experience of the appalling damage caused by nuclear weapons. Yet this does not seem to be enough to constitute a successful argument for "a world free of nuclear weapons". The effort to bring about a nuclear abolition must be indivisibly and essentially integrated with the challenge of creating a more equitable, just, and humane global society.

When the idea of "a world free of nuclear weapons" resurfaced as practical goal after new anti-nuke initiatives emerged in the United States, I found myself confronting once again the question, Why? The need for a global solution to problems like poverty and climate change is a given, as if tacitly mandated by the standards that guide civilized human society. Nuclear abolition, in contrast, tends to be confined within the category of weapons linked to national security. It is not seen as a moral and global human issue. To succeed, the nuclear abolition movement must be brought into a wider sphere of people's thinking.

Ten years ago I translated into Japanese a book titled, "Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons" by Robert D. Green, a former British Navy Commander. A statement in the book has continued to intrigue me. The author, explaining the analogy between the campaign to abolish slavery two hundred years ago and the nuclear abolition movement, wrote that the campaign to abolish slavery succeeded because "it focused on the illegality of slavery, not just its cruelty."

The lesson of Green's study is that in history the agonies and bitter struggles that human society undergoes can generate the political will to enact important laws, national and international. Even when compromises are necessary to get such laws passed, such legislation will contain legal norms, language, and a conceptual framework that can be applied in the effort to usher in a new era.

The preambles of international treaties or conventions banning or limiting weapons invoke basic legal norms and principles. However, there is a striking difference between instruments limiting nuclear weapons and those concerning other classes of armaments. The Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention, Anti-Personnel Mines Convention, and the recent Cluster Munitions Convention all contain a clear exposition of the human and moral basis of the prohibition, which, they argue, is a prerequisite to a civilised world and subject to the laws dictated by human conscience. Surprisingly, this is not the case with nuclear weapons treaties, such as the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). >>>



I trust that all readers would naturally assume that the principles underlying bans on biological and chemical weapons would also be prescribed as rightful norms in treaties on nuclear arms, but this is not at all the case. Nowhere in the NPT or CTBT is there a similar invocation of human and moral standards. Can we really achieve a world free of nuclear weapons with such weak legal footing?

We know why this is the case. It is because euphemisms are needed in order to persuade nuclear weapon possessors to join such instruments to bind themselves. As long as we accept this practice, I fear we may fail to establish norms that recognise the real nature of nuclear weapons and their implications for future generations of humanity. We would also be failing to envision a nuclear weapons-free world as a better one for human society.

Our first task, therefore, is to explore how to establish an international legal instrument that can be effective even if countries possessing nuclear weapons do not accept it because it formulates coherent moral norms governing the unparalleled horrors of nuclear weapons. A possible step in this direction would be an international instrument to outlaw the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons, as discussed in a recent article by Rebecca Johnson (Disarmament Diplomacy, Spring 2009). A so-called Ottawa process in which civil society and like-minded nations collaborate would be a feasible approach.

We also need to fully articulate how the world today is distorted by the habit of sabre rattling and gun diplomacy, the most prominent example of which has been the threat to use nuclear weapons. The norms enshrined in the United Nations Charter to pursue "friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" and "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination" will never be attained in a world dominated by the horror of nuclear weapons. The path towards a nuclear weapons-free world should also enable us to envision the new, more humane society embodied in such norms. - COPYRIGHT IPS

*Hiromichi Umebayashi is founder and special advisor of Peace Depot, Inc. Japan. He holds a PhD in applied physics.

LATIN AMERICA: "The More Guns, the More Violence"

By Emilio Godoy

MEXICO CITY, Sep 10 (IPS) - Traffic in light weapons and small arms is one of Latin America's major disarmament concerns, because they fuel urban violence, especially in countries like Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil.

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"These weapons, trafficked illegally for huge profits, are used by common criminals and organised crime to attack society and the members of the security forces," Mexican Foreign Secretary Patricia Espinosa said Wednesday at the start of the conference, which is being held at a former convent near the historic centre of the Mexican capital.

Small arms are a particular scourge in Mexico, because of the widespread activities of drug cartels. An undetermined number of weapons are acquired on the legal market in the United States, or are smuggled in from Central America.

Defence Ministry statistics indicate that between 2000 and 2006 a total of 257,993 firearms were destroyed, 723 lost, 2,367 stolen, 238,838 registered and 31,931 transferred between owners or jurisdictions.

Since taking office in late 2006, conservative President Felipe Calderón has deployed thousands of soldiers around the country to fight drug trafficking. However, since then drug-related killings have soared, leaving over 14,000 people dead up to August this year, according to unofficial counts. Behind these deaths are the small and light arms which provide the drug mafias with most of their fire power.

Worldwide there are more than 500 million light arms in circulation, an average of one for every 12 people. They were instrumental in 46 out of the 49 major conflicts fought since 1990, and were responsible for the deaths of four million people, most of them civilians, women and children, according to the United Nations.

It is estimated that only about half the global trade in small arms is legal. Furthermore, legally exported weapons often end up on the black market. >>>



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Illegal dealing in small arms is estimated to net between two billion and 10 billion dollars a year, according to the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), founded in 1998 and made up of 800 NGOs from 120 countries.

Nearly seven million rifles and handguns are manufactured every year, mainly in the United States and the European Union.

To tackle the problem, a United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held Jul. 9-20, 2001 at U.N. headquarters in New York.

"In Mexico, armed violence and violence against women are severe problems. The more guns, the more violence," Héctor Guerra, IANSA representative in this country, told IPS.

IANSA is proposing legislation to ban or revoke firearm licenses for people convicted of using guns to commit gender violence.

The high levels of violent crime in this country of over 107 million people have had an impact on life expectancy, shortening it by more than half a year, according to a study by researchers from the United States, Canada and Switzerland published late July in the British journal *Criminology and Criminal Justice*.

Mexico is a keen supporter of efforts toward an international agreement on the small arms trade and fighting illegal arms traffic.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons is another concern at the DPI/NGO Conference, which runs through Friday. This is the second consecutive year that the meeting has been held outside of U.N. headquarters in New York.

In his opening address, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said "there are over 20,000 nuclear weapons around the world. Many of them are still on hair-trigger alert, threatening our own survival."

"There can be no development without peace and no peace without development. Disarmament can provide the means for both," Ban said.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-I) signed in 1991 by the United States and the then Soviet Union, which imposed a cap on the nuclear arsenals of both powers, expires in December.

On Sept. 24, a special session of the U.N. Security Council will discuss global nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

A conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in force since 1970, will also meet in New York in May 2010.

U.S. activist Jody Williams, winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for her campaign against land mines, told reporters Wednesday she would "press for a convention on nuclear weapons," because "if we continue to talk about the eventual elimination of these weapons," they will never actually be banned.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is a nuclear weapons-free zone under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was signed in Mexico City in 1967. Mexico was one of the sponsors of the ban.

The U.N. strategy for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons proposes that disarmament must enhance the security of nations, be reliably verified, be rooted in legal obligations, be visible to the public and anticipate emerging dangers from other weapons, Ban said.

Williams said that if, at this critical juncture, NGOs did not step in and push for the abolition of nuclear weapons, the moment would be lost, and a new, uncontrolled and terrifying arms race might ensue - a frightening prospect for the future.

In Guerra's view, this week's conference should conclude with a strong declaration against all kinds of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons. (END/2009)



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DISARMAMENT: 'Let Us Make Nuclear Abolition a Reality'

RAMESH JAURA INTERVIEWS SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA

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"In recent years, we have seen important, groundbreaking examples of humanitarian ideals surmounting military logic and narrowly defined national interests to bring new disarmament accords into existence," says Ikeda explaining the rationale behind his optimism.

"In recent years, we have seen important, groundbreaking examples of humanitarian ideals surmounting military logic and narrowly defined national interests to bring new disarmament accords into existence," says Ikeda. "Rather than asking ourselves whether nuclear abolition is possible, we need to ask ourselves what we can do to make this a reality in our time."

Ikeda formulated a five-point plan early September aimed at nuclear abolition.

"Through my proposal, I want to encourage the leaders not only of the nuclear-weapon states but also of those countries that rely on the nuclear weapons of others for their security to consider the present and future danger presented by nuclear weapons," the SGI president says in a joint interview with IPS and IDN-InDepthNews.

Following are excerpts from the interview conducted by email after the UN Security Council session on nuclear abolition Sep. 24 chaired by U.S. President Barack Obama.

QUESTION: President Obama spelt out his vision of a world free of nuclear weapons last April in Prague. However, the U.S. President expressed doubts in his speech in Prague that a nuke-free world would be ushered in in "our lifetime". Would you share that view? In your proposal you ask "the world's people to clearly manifest their will for the outlawing of nuclear weapons and to establish, by the year 2015, the international norm that will serve as the foundation for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC)."

DAISAKU IKEDA: We stand today at a critical juncture, one that will determine whether or not humankind can make genuine progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Rather than asking ourselves whether nuclear abolition is possible, we need to ask ourselves what we can do to make this a reality in our time.

Through my proposal, I want to encourage the leaders not only of the nuclear-weapon states but also those countries that rely on the nuclear weapons of others for their security to consider the present and future danger presented by nuclear weapons. At the same time, I urge that we all understand that the real "enemy" is not nuclear weapons, nor the states that possess or would develop them.

The real enemy is the way of thinking that justifies nuclear weapons. It is our readiness to see others eliminated when they stand in the way of the fulfilment of our desires and ambitions. This was the underlying message of the declaration, issued some 52 years ago by my predecessor and mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

As you note, President Obama has expressed his determination to work for a world without nuclear weapons. At the same time, he has questioned whether this goal will be realised in our lifetime. If the leaders of the nuclear-weapon states and of all countries take concrete action on the basis of a shared sense of responsibility and - most importantly - if there is consistent pressure from the world's people acting in solidarity, what might seem impossible now can certainly be made possible.

The five-year period to 2015, and in particular the eight-month period to next year's NPT (non-proliferation treaty) review conference, will be decisive. To establish a solid beachhead for a world without nuclear weapons, we need to expand global popular commitment towards this goal. >>>



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Q: The document released Sep. 8 - 'Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition' - points out that the path to the adoption of an NWC is likely to be a difficult one, not least because the entrenched perceptions of military security stand in the way. Do you see any realistic possibility of "humanitarian" ideals taking an upper hand over military and money-making ideologies?

DI: In recent years, we have seen important, groundbreaking examples of humanitarian ideals surmounting military logic and narrowly defined national interests to bring new disarmament accords into existence. I am referring of course to the treaties banning landmines and cluster weapons. Both were realised through international campaigns based on the collaborative efforts of NGOs working together with governments seriously committed to disarmament.

I am calling for the establishment of a clear international norm condemning nuclear weapons. This will provide the basis for a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting these most inhumane of all weapons. It is clear that the way forward to an NWC will not be easy. But there are signs of new awareness among the world's political leaders that are cause for hope.

The first is that we now hear more voices calling for nuclear abolition from a realistic assessment of the dangers they pose. These include former high-level officials of the nuclear-weapon states. I think the confluence of this "realist" approach with more traditional peace and humanitarian antinuclear perspectives presents an important opportunity to make progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The second is the fact that, in the 64 years since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have never been used. This points to the steadily solidifying awareness that nuclear weapons are essentially unusable for military purposes, even if we include the implicit threat underlying deterrence as a form of "use".

I think this understanding is shared to a greater or lesser degree by the political leaders of the nuclear-weapon states. In order to outlaw nuclear weapons, we will need to raise the visibility of the issue internationally to a far higher degree than was the case even for the movements to ban landmines and cluster weapons. Civil society needs to come together to create a popular groundswell for nuclear abolition.

Q: The document calls upon the five declared nuclear-weapon states to announce their commitment to "a shared vision of a world without nuclear weapons." What would you expect such a shared vision to look like? And what distinct outcome would you expect from the NPT review conference next May?

DI: Vision gives birth to action. This is why it is epoch-making that the United States has offered a vision of nuclear abolition. What is important now is for all the nuclear-weapon states to earnestly debate the significance of this vision and to find ways of sharing it. A shared vision provides the common foundation for taking the next concrete steps forward.

In this regard, there are signs of progress. A few days ago, on Sep.24, the UN Security Council meeting on non-proliferation and disarmament adopted a resolution expressing the resolve to realise a world without nuclear weapons. In light of the fact that all five of the nuclear-weapon states participated as permanent members of the Security Council and that Security Council resolutions are legally binding, this is extremely important.

If this resolution can serve as an impetus to the nuclear-weapon states to start taking concrete and concerted action, they will be taking the lead towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Exercising this kind of leadership is their solemn obligation under the NPT. At the same time, it is clearly the only way to encourage the countries presently outside the NPT regime to move towards nuclear arms reduction and elimination. The solidarity that arises from this kind of responsible action will also accelerate efforts to respond to such global challenges as poverty and climate change.

Perhaps the greatest single reason to expect the nuclear-weapon states to play this kind of role is the emergence in recent years of the realistic possibility of terrorism using nuclear weapons. Needless to say, deterrence is not possible - meaningless in fact - against this type of threat. The greatest and indeed only defence against the threat of nuclear terror is the strictly verified abolition of nuclear weapons. Only this will obviate the danger that nuclear weapons will be stolen or nuclear weapons technologies leaked.

In my proposal, I urge the five nuclear-weapon states to undertake the following three commitments at next year's NPT review conference: 1) a nuclear weapons moratorium; 2) substantively enhanced transparency regarding their nuclear capabilities; and 3) deliberations on the absolute minimum number of nuclear weapons on the path to abolition. Of course, there is no need to wait until next year to commit to this path. >>>



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A moratorium on further development or modernisation of their nuclear arsenals in particular would be a critical step towards nuclear abolition. From the perspective of the world's citizens, there is no possible justification for maintaining the capacity to destroy the world dozens of times over, much less for further refining of this capability through technological development. Agreement to this would certainly have an important positive impact on the discourse surrounding the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).

Q: The document also calls upon the UN to establish a panel of experts on nuclear abolition, strengthening collaborative relations with civil society in the disarmament process. How would you evaluate UN's present relations with the civil society in the field of nuclear disarmament? What role do you envisage for SGI in particular and the civil society in general in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons?

DI: The world has changed greatly since the United Nations was established in 1945. In recent years, there has been an increased appreciation of the need to heed the voices of the world's citizens. Disarmament involves issues that are of central concern to states. If the specialised knowledge and communicative capacities of civil society can be fully utilised in this field, it would greatly advance the cause of disarmament. I think the fact that the annual conference of NGOs affiliated with the UN's Department of Public Information, convened earlier this month in Mexico City, for the first time ever took up disarmament as its theme symbolises this trend.

Nor can we overlook the increasing importance that has been accorded to the concept of "human security" in recent years. As civil society has been clearly pointing out, there are critical gaps in traditional conceptualisations of national security - namely, adequate consideration of the impact of political decisions in the lives of people. There are signs that governments are starting to look to civil society as partners in developing and implementing new modalities of security. The same can be said for the United Nations.

In my proposal, I stressed the importance of establishing a clear international norm for nuclear abolition, and bringing together the power of ordinary citizens to this end. I think civil society has a special role to play in resolving issues that involve the complex interplay of national interests and are therefore not amenable to solution solely through state or government initiatives. It is crucial that civil society provide opportunities for people to become more aware and awakened to their capacity to be agents of change. People who share the common aspiration for a world free of nuclear weapons need to come together and coordinate their efforts based on a deepened sense of solidarity.

Drawing from a tradition of antinuclear activism reaching back more than five decades, the SGI will continue to work to promote this kind of empowerment within and through civil society. We will collaborate with other NGOs to facilitate the development of a broad-based network for nuclear abolition. (IDN-InDepthNews/29.09.09)

(This interview jointly with IPS is part of a media project initiated by the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist association, and the Inter Press Service global news agency to strengthen public awareness of the urgent need for nuclear abolition.)



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DISARMAMENT: Nuclear Weapons Free World by 2020?

By Maria Luisa Vargas

MEXICO CITY (IDN) – If Tadatoshi Akiba, the mayor of Hiroshima, had his way, the special UN Security Council session to be chaired by U.S. President Barack Obama on Sep. 24 would decide to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons by 2020 -- a year that would mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the terrible destruction caused by U.S. atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Along with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jody Williams, Tadatoshi Akiba, president of Mayors for Peace, was among eminent participants in the annual conference for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the banner 'For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!'

The meeting, attended by some 1,200 NGO and civil society representatives from about 70 countries, was organised by the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) in co-operation with the DPI/NGO Executive Committee, the Government of Mexico, and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The conference was held outside of UN headquarters in New York for the second time in its 62-year history. Mexico City is the seat of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which in 1969 established Latin America as the first densely populated region to be a nuclear-weapons-free zone

"The abolition of nuclear weapons is not only the desire of Hibakusha (survivors), but also the majority of peoples and nations on this planet," said the Hiroshima mayor in an impassioned plea, urging NGOs and city mayors from around the world to mobilise public opinion for global nuclear disarmament.

Echoing his support, UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, in a pre-recorded message, said that in August he had met with the victims and families of the 1945 atomic bombing in Nagasaki, Japan. The gruesome reality for them had lost none of its power to inspire grief and terror, as well as shame and righteous anger.

He said it was crucial to set an early date for achieving disarmament and a clear, realistic timetable -- and strongly supported the 2020 deadline. "Eleven years is not too little to demonstrate real commitment and real progress, D'Escoto said, adding that: "We can have realistic, time-bound interim benchmarks, against which the world community must hold all -- not just some -- nuclear powers accountable."

Noting that global military spending is now well over \$1 trillion per year and rising every day, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon supported the call for the total eradication of nuclear weapons and exhorted civil society groups in particular to continue to speak out against the scourge.

"The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded," Ban warned in his opening remarks to the conference Sep. 9. He noted that more weapons continue to be produced and are flooding markets around the world. "They are destabilizing societies. They feed the flames of civil wars and terror," he stated. "Here in Latin America, gun violence is the number one cause of civilian casualties."

Ban said the presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States had made a good start to create a nuclear-weapons-free world when they recently joined forces to seek to reduce their respective nuclear arsenals and delivery vehicles in accordance with their obligations under Article VI of the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty).

Three days ahead of the UN Security Council special session, on Sep. 21, the world would celebrate the International Day of Peace dedicated to the "We Must Disarm" Campaign. And next March, President Obama would convene a meeting in Washington on nuclear security. Against this backdrop, now was the time for all stakeholders to build on that momentum.

"I have come here to give you my full encouragement to continue your work in disarmament. I also want to expand the coalition of support for my five-point plan -- first introduced on October 24, 2008 -- to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons based on key principles," Ban said. >>>



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



That plan “to stop the bomb” requires enhancing security and protecting non-nuclear-weapon states from nuclear weapon threats, as well as having non-NPT states freeze their weapon capabilities and make their own disarmament commitments.

The plan also envisages that disarmament is reliably verified, thus supporting Britain’s proposal for recognized nuclear-weapon states to discuss nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures, including verification. Further, it must be rooted in legal obligations. Universal membership in multilateral treaties is crucial to the plan, as are regional nuclear-weapon-free zones and a new treaty on fissile materials.

Also in September, the United Nations would hold a special meeting to promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Ban welcomed President Obama’s support for United States ratification of the CTBT, noting that the treaty only needed a few more ratifications to enter into force.

Ban further called on countries with nuclear weapons to publish more information about their efforts to honour their disarmament commitments, stressing that the precise number of nuclear weapons in existence worldwide was unknown. The UN Secretariat could serve as a repository for such data. He proposed that the Council, through an appropriate mechanism, consider how to increase transparency and openness on nuclear weapons programmes of the recognized nuclear-weapons states.

The UN plan further stipulates that disarmament must also anticipate emerging dangers from other weapons urging progress in eliminating other arsenals of mass destruction and limiting missiles, space weapons and conventional arms.

“There can be no development without peace and no peace without development. Disarmament can provide the means for both,” Ban said.

NO 'PEACE DIVIDEND' YET

The significance of the conference was also underlined by the fact that the end of the cold war had led the world to expect a massive peace dividend. But more than 20,000 nuclear weapons still exist today, and military spending continues to rise, with weapons flooding markets and destabilizing societies, feeding the flames of civil war and terror. That, coupled with ever-growing ballistic missile proliferation and increasing threats from terrorists, has demonstrated that nuclear weapons are existential threats to humankind.

Presently, more than 110 countries are covered by nuclear-weapons-free zones. Recently, the treaty for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Central Asia entered into force. Political leaders had negotiated a treaty to outlaw all nuclear explosions, but it still has not entered into force, while the obstacles continue to derail tireless negotiations for a global ban on the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear explosives.

The UN Conference on Disarmament -- a multilateral negotiating forum set up in 1979 in Geneva -- broke the gridlock on its programme of work for the first time in 12 years, yet it has failed to advance because of procedural disagreements.

Moreover, many countries have agreed to ban anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, but some major players have chosen to remain outside of these commitments. An international Programme of Action has been agreed to stem the illicit trade in small arms, yet it, too, faces many challenges in achieving its goals. No multilateral legal norms exist concerning missiles.

Ban hit the nail on the head, when he said: “We the peoples” have the legitimate right to challenge international leaders by asking what they were doing to eliminate nuclear weapons and fund the fight against poverty and climate change -- global goods that every Government and every individual in the world should strive to achieve together in the spirit of renewed multilateralism. No nation could act alone to solve the four “F” crises: food; fuel; flu; and financial.

Mexico's foreign minister Patricia Espinosa Cantellano said nuclear weapons were a threat to international peace and security and an intolerable threat to human survival. The end of the cold war had not resulted in the abandonment of nuclear doctrines. On the contrary, more countries had nuclear weapons than ever before. Mexico was a peace-loving nation that believed in international cooperation and considered it inhumane to misuse fundamental resources on weapons instead of human development. >>>



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



'GLOBAL ZERO'

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jody Williams, founder of the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, Chair of the Nobel Women's Initiative and the Conference's keynote speaker, also expressed her outrage over the nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

She said no child anywhere should have to grow up fearing it would happen again. No war planner should be able to sit in remarkable isolation from the desire of most of the planet's population to eliminate nuclear weapon, holding the world's collective fate in their hands and holding on to nuclear deterrence doctrines or worse -- such as the Bush Doctrine.

"The time has more than come for us to stop accepting such nuclear absurdity," Williams said. "It is well beyond time for us to push with single-minded determination for an international convention that completely bans the use production, trade and stockpiling of nuclear weapons for all time." She regretted that since the United Nations Charter's passage in 1945, which under Article 26 called on the Security Council to create an international arms regulation system to guide member states, little had been accomplished.

China, India, Israel, France, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, United States and the United Kingdom still possessed nuclear weapons. And there were growing concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions and Myanmar's desire to obtain a nuclear arsenal, too.

The world was on the cusp of an historic opportunity to stop nuclear proliferation, Williams said. "Or we can stand by and listen to strong words followed by weak and vague action that by design or ineptitude fritter away this chance and a new nuclear arms race spirals out of control."

"Global zero" -- a plan launched by some of the world's former leading military experts in December 2008 to phase out nuclear weapons -- offered hope for the future, as did the vows of the presidents of the United States and Russia to cut the nuclear stockpiles of their respective nations. But much more must be done to bolster that process and ensure it moved forward.

A coherent strategy and plan to lay the groundwork for genuine disarmament was needed, she said dismissing as "nonsense" the claims of nuclear weapon states that it was premature to negotiate a nuclear weapons convention.

'DON'T RELY ONLY ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'

Miguel Marin Bosch, a career Mexican diplomat and leading figure in international disarmament negotiations, agreed, adding that NGOs deserved a place at the negotiating table to rid the world of nuclear weapons, a place they were long denied by government officials.

While many people had argued that small and light weapons had killed or maimed more people than weapons of mass destruction, the latter were still the greatest danger facing the world. The second half of the twentieth century was marked by several disarmament agreements, spurred by a military power, notably the United States, which had deemed certain weapons or weapons systems no longer useful and thus had decided to eliminate them unilaterally, while demanding a universal treaty to ensure no other country could have them. One could conclude that nuclear disarmament could only occur with the blessing of the United States military.

But under the current political climate in Washington, D.C., it was difficult to contemplate such a possibility in the future, he said. Former U.S. President George Bush's 2002 Nuclear Posture Review assigned nuclear weapons an important role; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), whose membership was expanding, also shielded itself behind its members' position to maintain the option to use nuclear weapons. Marin expressed hope that the Nuclear Posture Review of Bush's successor, Obama, would move in a different direction.

Rather than rely on the U.S. Government to dictate disarmament affairs, the world could in fact take a different tack, he said, suggesting that a world conference be held to draft a treaty, outside the United Nations and the Geneva Conference, to eliminate nuclear arsenals. There were hopeful signs in that regard.

Governments everywhere were also coming to the conclusion that weapons were not the best way to enhance national security, Marin said. Deterrence and mutually assured destruction were outdated concepts in a world more concerned with the threats and challenges of widespread poverty, climate change, a global economic crisis and the new H1N1 virus.

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BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



'ZERO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION'

To truly achieve complete global disarmament, the process of ridding the world of nuclear weapons must be verifiable, transparent and anchored in international law and the rule of law, Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, Vice-President of Programmes of the United States-based EastWest Institute, said.

Speaking during a round-table discussion titled "Zero Nuclear Weapons, Zero Weapons of Mass Destruction: Why, How, When?", Sidhu said the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, introduced in October 2008, was an important road map to follow. Stakeholders in disarmament must also decide on what was meant by "zero" nuclear weapons and how to get there.

He stressed, however, that the process would not be easy, given fundamental differences of opinion between the global West or North, represented mainly by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the East or South, comprising Iran, China, India, North Korea and Israel. Without common consensus, little progress would be made.

Reaching zero could be achieved through such instruments as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), he said. That approach was very strongly reflected in international law but very weak in enforcement, while the multilateral approach -- working through the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly -- had played an important role in actually pushing disarmament treaties forward.

For example, the Government of India had initially blocked the CTBT's adoption, but the treaty had been "resurrected" when the Government of Australia had introduced the matter as a resolution in the Assembly, he said.

The ad hoc non-treaty-based approach -- such as the Six-Party Talks on the nuclear weapons programme of North Korea, the European Union's efforts to reach out to Iran, the proliferation security issue launched by the United States, and the U.S.-India nuclear deal -- were relatively weak in international law but very strong in terms of international implementation.

Alexander Pikayev, Director of the Department of Disarmament and Conflict Resolution at the Moscow-based Institute of World Economy and International Relations, expressed concern over the fate of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START) I, which is set to expire in December.

U.S. and Russia had agreed in April to jumpstart talks on reducing warheads, but the looming deadline left them little time to devise the outline of a new nuclear treaty. Although Washington's Nuclear Posture Review should be completed by December, experience had shown that it was difficult for any U.S. Administration to translate noble declarations into real negotiations on reducing arms expenditures.

Jacqueline Cabasso, Executive Director of the United States-based Western States Legal Fund, recalled that after the end of the Cold War, nuclear weapons had diminished considerably and the world had expected a peace dividend. However, scientists had lobbied successfully for nuclear weapons development, on the basis of the notion that they made countries and communities more secure.

But that was not true as human security could not be realized through military means or by the threat or actual use of nuclear weapons. That message was particularly important in the United States, where corporate executives, military leaders and the mainstream media shaped public opinion while allowing very little independent thinking.

Reiterating that nuclear weapons really did not make people more secure, Cabasso said that in the United States, for example, unemployment was rising and people lacked the money to send their children to college. Ordinary citizens felt they had more in common with people in Afghanistan than with their own Government -- which had seized upon the end of the cold war to continue its policy of managing the nuclear threat as the cornerstone of national security.

President Obama had made noble statements about the nation's moral obligation as the last standing super-Power to lead on global disarmament, while speaking at the same time of its need to keep its nuclear weapons in order to manage nuclear deterrence.

The wealthy everywhere were benefiting from nuclear weapons to the detriment of everyone else, when funds and efforts really should be channelled into addressing the global environmental and economic crises, she said, adding that existing nuclear weapons were far more dangerous than those that some nations or groups may seek to acquire. >>>

However, they were no match for the global challenges posed by climate change, worsening poverty and new health concerns such as the H1N1 virus. Non-nuclear-weapon states rightfully expected states parties to the NPT to honour their commitment made 40 years ago to eliminate nuclear weapons.

There was a real opportunity to rally behind the "2020 Vision" proposal to create a nuclear-weapons-free world by 2020, she said, expressing hope that millions of people would petition global leaders during next May's NPT Review Conference to achieve that goal.

An important side event at the conference was a photo exhibition 'From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace - Nuclear Disarmament' organized by the Soka Gakkai International, a Buddhist network, whose president Daisaku Ikeda issued a proposal Sept. 8 outlining concrete steps toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. (IDN-InDepthNews/12.09.09)

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

GERMAN

ABRÜSTUNG: Atomwaffenfreie Welt keine Utopie mehr – Daisaku Ikeda im Interview

Von Ramesh Jaura

Berlin, 30. September (IPS/IDN*) – Eine atomwaffenfreie Welt ist nach Ansicht von Daisaku Ikeda, dem Präsidenten der buddhistischen Religionsgemeinschaft 'Soka Gokkai International' (SGI) keine Utopie mehr, sondern eine realistische Option. Wenn die Zivilgesellschaft ihren Druck auf die Regierungen fortsetze und die Staaten die Chance zum verantwortungsvollen Handeln ergriffen, "dann könnte möglich werden, was bislang unmöglich erscheint".

In den letzten Jahren habe es genügend Beispiele gegeben, dass sich humanitäre Ideale durchaus gegenüber militärischer Logik und eng definierten Nationalinteressen behaupten könnten, so der Japaner Ikeda, ein vehementer Verfechter für Frieden und Abrüstung.

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/German_Interview_Ikeda_key1=2009-09-30%2016_05_28.pdf

Original Article

DISARMAMENT: 'Let Us Make Nuclear Abolition a Reality'

SPANISH

DESARME: "Más cerca de un mundo sin bombas atómicas"

Ramesh Jaura entrevista a DAISAKU IKEDA, presidente de Soka Gakkai International*

BERLÍN, 13 oct (IPS) - Un mundo libre de armas nucleares ya no es una utopía, sino una posibilidad concreta, aseguró Daisaku Ikeda, presidente de la asociación budista Soka Gokkai International (SGI).

"En los últimos años hemos visto importantes y significativos ejemplos de ideales humanitarios superando la lógica militar y los estrechos intereses nacionales para hacer realidad nuevos acuerdos de desarme", dijo Ikeda.

El presidente de la SGI, filósofo budista, educador y escritor, formuló a inicios de septiembre un plan de cinco puntos para abolir las armas atómicas en todo el mundo.

"A través de mi propuesta, quiero estimular a los líderes no sólo de los estados con armas nucleares, sino también de aquellos países que dependen de los arsenales atómicos de otros para su seguridad, a que consideren el presente y futuro peligro que suponen" estos armamentos, afirmó en una entrevista conjunta de IPS e IDN (InDepthNews).

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Spanish_Interview_Ikeda_idnews=93608.pdf

Original Article: DISARMAMENT: 'Let Us Make Nuclear Abolition a Reality'

DESARME: Por un planeta sin hongos

Por Thalif Deen

NUEVA YORK, 25 sep (IPS) - La resolución aprobada esta semana por el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU llamando a frenar la proliferación nuclear alude a Corea del Norte e Irán, pero no los menciona explícitamente para no irritar a China y a Rusia.

El texto aprobado en forma unánime por los 15 miembros del órgano más poderoso del foro mundial expresa grave preocupación por la amenaza de la proliferación atómica y subraya la necesidad de una acción internacional para frenarla. <http://www.ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=93423>

Original Article

POLITICS: Obama Seeks U.N. Backing for Nuke-Free World

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

LAAMENAZA NUCLEAR SIGUE PENDIENTE

Por Hiromichi Umebayashi

TOKIO, Sep (IPS) "¿Por qué deberíamos abolir las armas nucleares?" Esta pregunta aparentemente ingenua parece haberse convertido en una cuestión candente debido a la proliferación del armament atómico. En Japón, que sufrió un holocausto nuclear en Hiroshima y Nagasaki en 1945, existe, como norma primordial, un anhelo de abolir por completo las armas nucleares.

Cuestiones globales tales como la pobreza y el cambio climático tienden a ser reconocidos como problemas que requieren soluciones globales bajo la orientación de una norma tácita que muestra el camino a seguir por la sociedad humana. Sin embargo, la abolición del armamento nuclear tiende a seguir confinada dentro de un marco de una categoría de armas vinculada con la seguridad nacional. Por lo tanto, necesitamos encauzar al movimiento abolicionista en un más amplio espectro, vinculado con el sentir de los pueblos del mundo.

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/COLUMN_LA_AMENAZA_NUCLEAR_SIGUE_PENDIENTE.pdf

Original Article

WHY SHOULD WE ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

DESARME-AMÉRICA LATINA: Calles sin armas, países sin violencia

Por Emilio Godoy

MÉXICO, 9 sep (IPS) - El comercio de armas ligeras y pequeñas es una de las mayores preocupaciones de América Latina en materia de desarme, por su vínculo con la violencia urbana en naciones como México, Guatemala o Brasil. Ése es uno de los asuntos puestos de manifiesto en el primer día de labores de la 62 Conferencia Anual para las Organizaciones No Gubernamentales vinculadas al Departamento de Información Pública de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (DIP/ONG), que reúne a 1.700 delegados de 75 países bajo el lema "Desarme ahora, trabajemos por la paz y el desarrollo".

<http://www.ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=93274>

Original Article

LATIN AMERICA: "The More Guns, the More Violence"

ITALIAN

EDITORIALE: Perché abolire le armi nucleari

Hiromichi Umebayashi (*)

La domanda, apparentemente ingenua, ha suscitato un acceso dibattito. Nel Giappone reduce dall'olocausto nucleare di Hiroshima e Nagasaki, il desiderio di abolire il nucleare è molto forte, radicato nell'esperienza diretta dei danni devastanti causati dalle armi nucleari.

Questa devastazione, però, non sembra sufficiente per avere "un mondo denuclearizzato". L'impegno a abolire le armi nucleari è imprescindibile e inscindibile dalla sfida che ci impone di creare una società globale più equa, giusta e umana. Quando è tornata alla ribalta l'idea di "un mondo libero da armi nucleari", come obiettivo concreto stimolato dalle nuove iniziative anti-nucleare condotte negli USA, mi sono ritrovato a chiedermi di nuovo "perché?".

<http://www.ipsnotizie.it/nota.php?idnews=1494>

Original Article

WHY SHOULD WE ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

ARABIC

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Arabic_idnews=1660_Interview_Ikeda.pdf



INTER PRESS SERVICE

وكالة الأنباء العلمية انتر بريس سيرفيس (آي بي إس)

مقابلة مع الزعيم البوذي الياباني دايساكو إيكيدا:
"العدو الحقيقي ليس الأسلحة النووية وإنما تبريرها"

بقلم راميش جورا/وكالة انتر بريس سيرفيس

برلين , أكتوبر (IPS) - أكد دايساكو إيكيدا، رئيس المنظمة البوذية السلمية اليابانية "سوكا غاكاى الدولية"، أن تحرير العالم من الأسلحة النووية لم يعد وهماً، وإنما إمكانية محددة تستوجب تعبئة كافة القوى السلمية في مختلف أنحاء الأرض.

وشرح أن "العالم قد شاهد في الأعوام الأخيرة، أمثلة قوية واضحة على قدرة المبادئ الإنسانية على التغلب على المنطق العسكري والمفهوم القصير النظر للمصالح الوطنية، والسعي إلى التوصل إلى إتفاقيات جديدة لنزع الأسلحة".

وأضاف في مقابلة مع وكالة انتر بريس سيرفيس أنه "عوضاً عن التساؤل ما إذا كان إلغاء الأسلحة النووية ممكناً، يجب أن نسأل أنفسنا ما الذي يمكن أن فعله لكي يكون ذلك ممكناً في المستقبل المنظور".

هذا وقد قدم الزعيم البوذي منذ شهر، مقترحاً لبلوغ هدف إلغاء الأسلحة النووية في العلم. وقال أن المقترح "يحث قادة الدول النووية وزعماء النول التي تعتمد على أسلحة نووية تابعة لقوى أخرى لضمان أمنها، على التفكير في الأخطار الحاضرة والمقبلة التي تمثلها هذه الأسلحة".

وفيما يلي أبرز ما ورد في المقابلة التي أجرتها وكالة انتر بريس سيرفيس (آي بي إس) مع الزعيم البوذي الياباني دايساكو إيكيدا.

آي بي إس: أعرب الرئيس أوباما في أبريل الماضي عن رؤيته لعالم دون أسلحة نووية. لكنه شكك أيضاً في أن تشهد الأجيال الحالية هذه اللحظة. هل تشاطر هذا الرأي؟ في إقتراحك، تطلب من "شعوب العلم أن تفصح عن إرادتها في حظر الأسلحة النووية ووضع إتفاقية عالمية بحلول سنة 2015 كأساس لإتفاقية دولية..."

إيكيدا: العالم يجتاز الآن مرحلة نقيفة وحرارة سوف تحسم ما إذا كانت البشرية قادرة على تحقيق تقدم حقيقياً على مسار تحرير العالم من الأسلحة النووية.

وبالإضافة إلى مناداة قادة النول النووية وغير النووية المعتمدة عليها لأمنها، للتفكير في مدى خطورة هذه الأسلحة، يحث إقتراحي على تفهم أن "العدو الحقيقي" ليس هو الأسلحة النووية، ولا الدول التي تحوزها أو التي تنتجها لإنتاجها.

العدو الحقيقي هو أسلوب التفكير الذي يبرر هذه الأسلحة. العدو الحقيقي يكمن في تأهينا كبشر لإزالة الآخرين طالما يقفون في طريق رغباتنا وطموحاتنا. هذا هو ما تطالب به المنظمة البوذية السلمية اليابانية منذ 25 عاماً من الكفاح من أجل إلغاء الأسلحة النووية.

وكما تقول أعرب الرئيس أوباما عن عزمه على العمل من أجل تحرير العلم من الأسلحة النووية، لكنه شكك في أن يتم ذلك في مستقبل نعيشه.

لكنه لو إتخذت النول النووية وكافة بلدان العالم، خطوات محددة من منطلق المسؤولية المشتركة، بل وما هو أهم، إذا

ما مارست شعوب العالم ضغوطا متواصلة في هذا الإتجاه، لأمكن تحقيق ما قد يبدو الآن مستحيلا. العالم في أشد الحاجة إلي التزام الشعوب بتحقيق هذه الغاية.

أي بي اس: تشير وثيقة "بناء التضامن العالمي نحو إلغاء الأسلحة النووي" الصادرة في 8 سبتمبر إلي أن المسار نحو إبرام معاهدة نووية عالمية هو مسار صعب، لأسباب ليس أقلها مفهوم العسكر للأمن...

إيكيدا: في السنوات الأخيرة شاهد العالم تطورات كبيرة، منها إتفاقية حظر الألغام الأرضية والأسلحة العنقودية، بفضل الحملات الدولية التي أطلقتها المنظمات غير الحكومية مع الحكومات الملزمة جديا بنزع السلاح.

ما ندعو إليه هو التوصل إلي قانون دولي واضح وقاطع يدين الأسلحة النووية، كمنطلق وأساس لمعاهدة نووية عالمية تحظر أفضع أنواع الأسلحة وأكثر وحشية. بالطبع لن يكون سهلا، لكن هناك مؤشرات علي وعي جديد بين زعماء العالم.

كما هناك واقع بالغ الأهمية، إلا وهو أن الأسلحة النووية لم تستخدم طيلة الفترة المنصرمة منذ قصف هيروشيما وناغازاكي، أي منذ 64 عاما، ما يعني أساسا أنها قابلة للإستخدام لأغراض عسكرية. وحتى مع إحتمال قدرتها علي الردع، فهي لا تستخدم.

لقد أتخذ مجلس الأمن المكون من الدول النووية الخمس، قرارا بالغ الأهمية في 24 سبتمبر، أعرب فيه عن إرادة بلوغ غاية عالم حر من الأسلحة النووية، علما بأن قرارات مجلس الأمن ملزمة قانونيا.

وربما يأتي عزم الدول النووية من منطلق الإحتمال المحدد لأن يستخدم الإرهاب أسلحة نووية. وغني عن القول أن عنصر الردع غير وارد في مثل هذه الحالة.

وسيلة الدفاع الأكبر بل والوحيدة ضد خطر الإرهاب النووي هي إلغاء الأسلحة النووية وتحت رقابة صارمة. فقط بهذه الوسيلة يمكن التغلب علي خطر سرقة أسلحة نووية أو تسريب تكنولوجيات نووية.

في إقتراحنا، ندعو الخمس دول النووية إلي إتخاذ ثلاث إلتزامات في مؤتمر مراجعة معاهدة حظر إنتشار الأسلحة النووية في العام المقبل: 1) وقف إنتاج الأسلحة النووية، 2) الشفافية الكاملة فيما يخص قدراتها النووية، 3) التباحث حول أدني حد علي الإطلاق من الأسلحة النووية، تجاه إلغائها.

ومن المؤكد أن قرارا بوقف إنتاج الأسلحة النووية وتحديثها سيعتبر خطوة حاسمة تجاه إلغائها.

أي بي اس: ما هو رأيك في العلاقات الحالية بين الأمم المتحدة والمجتمع المدني في مجال نزع السلاح النووي؟ ما هو دور منظمتك خاصة والمجتمع المدني عامة في تحقيق غاية تحرير العالم من هذه الأسلحة؟

إيكيدا: لقد تغير العالم منذ تأسيس الأمم المتحدة في عام 1945. فقد سجلت الأعوام الأخيرة إقرارا متناميا بالحاجة إلي أصوات المواطنين في العالم.

من الممكن الإستفادة تماما من المعرفة والخبرة المتخصصة والقدرة علي التوصل التي يتمتع به المجتمع المدني، لإحراز التقدم علي مسار نزع السلاح. تضاف إلي ذلك الإهمية المتزايدة التي تعلق علي قضايا "الأمن الإنساني" منذ بضعة سنوات.

وإنني علي يقين من أن المجتمع المدني قادر علي أن يلعب دورا خاصا في حل قضايا تمس الصالح القومي ولا يمكن حلها من خلال مبادرات الدول أو الحكومات وحدها.

أما منظمتنا فلن تدخر جهدا في السعي إلي تعزيز هذا الدور والتعاون مع غيرنا من المنظمات غير الحكومية لتأسيس شبكة عريضة للعمل علي إلغاء الأسلحة النووية. *دايساكو إيكيدا، رئيس الحركة السلمية البوذية الشعبية "سوكا غاكاوي الدولية" SGI، بالإشتراك مع InDepthNews.

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Arabic_idnews=1653_Latin_America-Toward_An%20Armed-To-The-Teeth_Peace.pdf

كولومبيا والبرازيل وفنزويلا: نحو سباق تسلح في أمريكا اللاتينية | ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

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INTER PRESS SERVICE

وكالة الأنباء العلمية انتر بريس سيرفيس (أي بي إس)

كولومبيا والبرازيل وفنزويلا:
نحو سباق تسلح في أمريكا اللاتينية

بقتم إميليو غودوي/وكالة انتر بريس سيرفيس

المكسيك، سبتمبر (IPS) - حذرت منظمات غير حكومية من 75 دولة في مؤتمر عالمي في المكسيك، أن قرار كولومبيا بفتح قواعدها العسكرية لثولايات المتحدة، والاتفاقيات العسكرية الأخيرة بين البرازيل وفرنسا، وصفقات الأسلحة المبرمة بين فنزويلا وروسيا، إنما تنذر بإتطلاق سباق تسلح وعودة العسكرة في أمريكا اللاتينية.

فقد ذكر تيسار مارين مندوب منظمة شبكة العمل الدولي ضد الأسلحة الصغيرة التي تأسست في 1998 وتضم 800 منظمة من 120 دولة والمشارك في المؤتمر السنوي للمنظمات غير الحكومية المتعاملة مع إدارة الإعلام العام بالأمم المتحدة، ذكر لوكالة انتر بريس سيرفيس أن المنطقة "تشهد عملية تحديث (عسكري) غير إيجابية، وتجتاز مرحلة من إنعدام الثقة بين دولها".

أما الأرجنتينية باولا ثيلوني مندوبة منظمة السياسات العامة، فقد صرحت أن "شراء الأسلحة يمثل مصدرا للخطر ويهدد بعودة شبح العسكرة في دول مثل كولومبيا والمكسيك والبرازيل وتشيلي وفنزويلا".

ويذكر أن الحكومة البرازيلية أبرمت هذا الشهر مع فرنسا إتفاقيات تعاون ونقل تكنولوجيا عسكرية قيمتها 12,5 مليار دولارا، تشمل شراء البرازيل لخمس غواصات واحدة منها نووية، و 50 مروحية نقل، وإمكانية شراء 36 مقاتلة.

وأعلنت البرازيل أن الغاية من هذه الإتفاقيات هي حماية تراثها النفطية الضخمة التي إكتفتها مؤخرا في أعماق مياهها الإقليمية، وأن الطاقة النووية المتفق عليها لتشغيل أحد الغواصات التي إشترتها من فرنسا لا تتجاوز حدود الإستخدام السلمي لهذه الطاقة.

هذا وكانت حكومة فنزويلا قد أعلنت من ناحيتها في يونيو الماضي، قرارها بمضاعفة وتحديث ترسانتها من الدبابات وشراء وحدات جديدة من روسيا، تضاف إلي الطائرات والمروحيات والبنادق وغيرها من العتاد العسكري الروسي الذي إشتريته في الخمس سنوات الأخيرة، بـ 600 مليون دولارا.

كما أبرمت حكومتا باريس وكازاكس إتفاقيات جديدة تشمل التعاون في مجال تبادل التكنولوجيا وإجراء مناورات عسكرية مشتركة وتوثيق الروابط العسكرية الفنزويلية الروسية.

كل هذا يضاف إلي مشتريات بيرو وتشيلي من السلاح في السنوات الأخيرة.

بيد أكثر دواعي القلق في أمريكا اللاتينية جاء علي صورة الإتفاقية التي أبرمتها حكومتا بوغوتا وواشنطن التي ترخص كولومبيا بموجبها أن تستخدم القوات الأمريكية سبع من قواعدها العسكرية علي الأقل، ما يمنح الولايات المتحدة تفوذا إستراتيجيا واسعا لمراقبة أمريكا اللاتينية.

وأعلنت بوغوتا وواشنطن أن الهدف الوحيد من الإتفاقية هو مكافحة تجارة المخدرات والقوات المسلحة الثورية في كولومبيا (فارك). بيد أن منظمات المجتمع المدني ومصادر حكومية في الدول المجاورة لكولومبيا تشدد علي أن الغاية من التواجد العسكري الأمريكي الجديد تتجاوز كثيرا هذا النطاق بل وقد تهدد سيادة كافة دول المنطقة.

ويشار إلى إتفاقيه القواعد هذه تضاف إلى قرار الولايات المتحدة في أبريل من العام الماضي، بإعادة تنشيط إسطولها العسكري الرابع الذي شكلته في عام 1943 للإبحار في مياه أمريكا اللاتينية، وأبطلت العمل به في عام 1950.

وعلى الرغم من كل ذلك، لم تدخل قضايا التسلح والعسكرة الجديدة في أمريكا اللاتينية رسمياً في نطاق مداولات مؤتمر المكسيك العالمي الذي شارك فيه أكثر من 1,700 وفداً من 75 دولة، لمناقشة نزع السلاح في العالم، بما يشمل الأسلحة النووية والأسلحة الصغيرة والخفيفة، والذي إنعقد تحت شعار "نزع السلاح الآن: لنعمل من أجل السلام والتنمية".

أما مسودة البيان الختامي للمؤتمر، المفتوحة لتقديم الإضافات وإقتراحات التعديل حتى يوم 18 الجاري، فتتص على إقتراح مرفوع للمجتمع الدولي بالتوصل إلى معاهدة "لتنظيم التجارة العالمية في قطاع الأسلحة التقليدية... تطبيق على كافة أنواع الأسلحة التقليدية" وبلا إستثناء.

وصرحت أنا يانسي اسبينوثا من مؤسسة أرياس للسلام الي أسسها رئيس كوستا ريكا، أوسكار أرياس الحاصل على جائزة نوبل للسلام لعام 1987، صرحت لوكالة نتر بريس سيرفس أن "ثمة حاجة لعقد مؤتمر إقليمي حول تجارة الأسلحة الصغيرة والخفيفة، لأن الأمم المتحدة تركز على نزع السلاح النووي" أكثر منها على غيره من الأسلحة.

وعلقت كارمن دي ليون اسكريبانو مديرة معهد التربية من أجل التنمية المستدامة في غواتيمالا، لوكالة انتر بريس سيرفس أن مسودة المؤتمر تبلور الإهتمام السائد في العالم بنزع السلاح.

لكنها شرحت أن "دول الشمال تسلط إهتماماتها على الترسنات النووية، فيما تكمن المشكلة الأساسية في الجنوب على الأسلحة الصغيرة التي تقف وراء العنف المتنامي في الدول النامية".

هذا ويشار إلى أن عدد الأسلحة الصغيرة والخفيفة المتداولة في العالم يتجاوز 500 مليون سلاحاً، بمعدل سلاح لكل 12 شخصاً، وأنها لعبت وتلعب دوراً أساسياً في 46 من إجمالي 49 نزاع مسلح هام منذ 1990، وأدت إلى قتل 4 مليون فرداً أغلبهم من المدنيين والنساء والأطفال وفقاً لبيانات الأمم المتحدة.



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



PICKUPS BY WEBSITES

Q&A: 'Closer Now to a Nuke-Free World'

DISARMAMENT: 'Let Us Make Nuclear Abolition a Reality'

DISARMAMENT: 'Ask What We Can Do To Make Nuclear Abolition a Reality'

http://www.silobreaker.com/disarmament-ask-what-we-can-do-to-make-nuclear-abolition-a-reality-5_2262630881623539712

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POLITICS: Obama Seeks U.N. Backing for Nuke-Free World

<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2009/09/25/obama-seeks-un-backing-nuke-free-world>

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WHY SHOULD WE ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

<http://www.global-perspectives.info/news/news.php?key1=2009-09-22%2008:00:02&key2=1>

<http://www.cannews.net/news/others/304>

LATIN AMERICA: "The More Guns, the More Violence"

<http://www.universalrights.net/people/stories.php3?start=4&category=peace>

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<http://ins.onlinedemocracy.ca/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=12497&theme=Printer>

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CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

Australia Should Stop Relying on Nuclear Deterrence

29 September 2009

This week Barack Obama has issued a massive challenge to the world.

It is a challenge to rid the world of its worst weapons of terror. It is a challenge to banish one of humanity's greatest fears—the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

President Obama's chairing of the UN Security Council on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation served to focus the nuclear spotlight where it is most needed, on the Council's five permanent members.

Between them - Russia, USA, France, China and the UK are responsible for all but a fraction of the world's 26,000 nuclear weapons. The President spoke of the need for "new strategies and new approaches" to reach the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, with every nation playing a part.

Notwithstanding the enormous responsibility of the nuclear weapon states to get rid of their own weapons, the barriers to disarmament go further than just these nations, and far beyond the usual suspects such as Iran and North Korea.

That challenge includes Australia, and our subservience to an out-dated and dangerous Cold War policy that lives on.

The policy is "extended deterrence".

Tucked away in the 2009 Defence White Paper is confirmation of our continuing reliance on it: "For so long as nuclear weapons exist, we are able to rely on the nuclear forces of the United States to deter nuclear attack on Australia." In other words, Australia remains complicit with the global threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Such complicity brings multiple political, strategic, legal and moral dilemmas. It is also brazen in the extreme. Australia went to war in 2003 with a sense of moral outrage that such threats, real or fabricated, were being made against Western nations.

The strategic problem is that as long as any nations, including Australia, give military legitimacy to nuclear weapons, other nations will seek to acquire them. Australia's alleged need for a nuclear deterrent is even shakier when one considers which nations today are most threatened militarily.

The Defence White Paper confirmed that Australia is certainly not among them. By the logic of deterrence it is in fact not Australia that needs these weapons, but several far more threatened nations whom we regard with deep suspicion, and whose nuclear programs we have strenuously opposed.

The truth about deterrence is that it works as long as things go to plan, and leaders are rational and care about their own people. That's an ideal world. The real world is a very different place.

The Defence White Paper referred to "stable nuclear deterrence" as if such a thing exists. Robert McNamara, US Defense Secretary at the time of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, describes the knife-edge instability of those fateful 13 days.

The legal and moral issues attached to deterrence are even more challenging to Australia's position.

In 1996 the International Court of Justice, delivering its advisory opinion that nuclear weapons are generally illegal, treated the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a single indivisible concept. An illegal act must be neither committed nor threatened.

Australia is of course not alone in seeking security under the US nuclear umbrella.

Hundreds of US nuclear weapons are stored at bases in five NATO countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey). In Japan, where nuclear sensitivities run deeply, the issue arose during the recent election campaign when Yukio Hatoyama, now the country's prime minister, vowed to keep American nuclear weapons out of Japan. >>>



CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

One US ally has long since rejected the “protection” of nuclear weapons. In 1987 New Zealand banned US nuclear weapons from entering its ports, and that policy remains to this day.

Time is running short if further proliferation of these weapons is to be avoided. Next year the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will have its 5-yearly review.

Following the disastrous 2005 review conference, many civil society organizations around the world galvanised to push for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, a treaty to ban all nuclear weapons. Such a treaty is feasible and long overdue. This week in New York, the UN Secretary General referred to the need for “new agreements including a Nuclear Weapons Convention...”

Prime Minister Rudd has taken the issue of nuclear weapons very seriously, not least through the setting up of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. However our contribution to nuclear disarmament depends not so much on what we say but on what we do. Currently Australia's position is fraught with inconsistencies.

President Obama is right that every nation must play a part if we are to rid the world of nuclear weapons. The greatest contribution Australia could make would be to stop relying on them.

Dr Sue Wareham OAM is a member of the ICAN Management Committee in Australia

An edited version of this article was published in The Canberra Times on 29 September 2009 ■

Abolish nuclear weapons, but when? - ICAN Australia MEDIA RELEASE

September 25th, 2009

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) today welcomed the unanimous adoption of the historic UN Security Council resolution 1887, which affirms the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

“This is the most significant commitment in many years by key nuclear powers to work towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is a watershed moment. Abolition has been placed firmly on the global political agenda,” said ICAN spokesperson Dr Bill Williams.

“But the resolution lacks details on precisely how and when a nuclear-weapon-free world will be achieved. What we need now is a clearly defined road map to zero, which includes a time frame.

“UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call for a legally binding nuclear weapons convention — a comprehensive disarmament treaty — has enormous merit. In fact, it is the surest way of achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a timely fashion.

“The need for swift action is obvious. Every moment the nuclear-weapon states delay doing away with their arsenals, the risks of further proliferation increase. Complete nuclear disarmament must be a near-term goal rather than a distant dream.

“If Australia is to have any real influence in the process, it must begin championing a legally binding, verifiable and time-bound nuclear weapons convention. We don't need more half-measures. The political climate is right for a comprehensive ban.

“Canada led the treaty-making process to ban land mines. Norway led the process to ban cluster bombs. Why doesn't Australia take the lead on abolishing the worst weapons of all?” ■



CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

Australian government urged to act on nuclear weapons threat

Thursday, 17 September 2009

ICAN - the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons - has welcomed today's call by a federal parliamentary inquiry for Australia to play a leading role in ridding the world of nuclear weapons through a global Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC).

"Australia can help end the threat of nuclear weapons and war and support a roadmap for the elimination of nuclear weapons in a structured and verifiable way," said ICAN Campaign Coordinator, Dimity Hawkins.

"With the right political will, a Nuclear Weapons Convention would see the world free of these ultimate weapons of mass destruction within 10 to 15 years."

The recommendation supporting the Nuclear Weapons Convention is part of a new report by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties following its examination of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

The report has also urged the Australian Parliament to actively call for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

"We warmly welcome the Committee's recommendation and urge the Australian government and Parliament to take up this global challenge and champion a Nuclear Weapons Convention," said Dr Sue Wareham, Board Member of ICAN.

"Recent years have seen important international moves opposing chemical and biological weapons, land mines and cluster munitions," said Dr Bill Williams, Board Member of ICAN and President of the Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW).

"It is now time to get serious about abolishing the worst weapons of all and Australia has an important role to play". ■

President Obama Making Good on Nuclear Weapons Promises

September 23, 2009

Washington, D.C. -- In response to President Barack Obama's appearance today before the United Nations General Assembly, the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation released the statement below.

"In his historic April 2009 speech in Prague, President Barack Obama outlined a number of concrete steps the United States would take to address the nuclear weapons threat head-on. The President is now taking these steps and leading by example in order to move the world closer to reducing the danger posed by nuclear weapons.

The United States plans to introduce a resolution on nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament during a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council to be chaired by Obama on September 24. In addition, Obama designated Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to lead the U.S. delegation this week at the conference on facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The White House also intends to host a global nuclear security summit in Washington in April 2010.

Obama's September 24 UN appearance will mark the first time that a U.S. president has presided over a special session of the Security Council. This sends a clear and powerful signal that the United States will reestablish its leadership position on arms control. Obama's draft resolution reaffirms U.S. support for key commitments that the Bush administration shunned, including ratification of the Test Ban Treaty and a pledge not to target non-nuclear weapons states with nuclear weapons (known as negative security assurances).

If agreed to, the resolution will be only the second Security Council resolution in history to call on all states to join the Test Ban Treaty. It could pave the way for the nuclear- and non-nuclear weapon states to take steps to reduce nuclear dangers at the May 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Such steps might include relaunching negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty to ban the production of nuclear fissile material for weapons purposes (known as a fissile material cutoff treaty). >>>



CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

Clinton's appearance at the Test Ban conference this week is a change from the previous administration, which failed to send a delegation to the last four meetings of the conference. Ratification of the Test Ban Treaty is clearly in the U.S. national interest. Since the United States does not conduct nuclear tests and has no plans or need to do so, the United States should take advantage of the security and political benefits it would gain from ratification. A permanent Test Ban Treaty would strengthen efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and materials by making acquisition harder and more politically costly. The Test Ban Treaty's provision for a global network of monitoring stations and on-site inspections would greatly enhance the international community's ability to deter and detect potential cheaters.

Finally, Obama will also host a global nuclear security summit in Washington in April 2010. First announced in the Prague speech, the summit will work towards raising the global standard for effective nuclear security. The President noted that the world should not wait for a terrorist attack to address this looming threat.

These steps to address the world's gravest threats are laudable. Obama has taken an aggressive stance on preventing nuclear weapons proliferation and demanding that nations adhere to their international treaty obligations. An endeavor of this magnitude will take the leadership of the United States in concert with the other states." ■

CND welcomes Security Council unanimity for action

Thursday, 24 September 2009

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament today welcomed the UN Security Council resolution passed unanimously after the special session on disarmament chaired by President Barack Obama.

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said:

"Today's UN Security Council meeting indicates another step on the path towards nuclear disarmament. The unanimous support for dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation - as an overriding priority - is most welcome. There has been much pious rhetoric from world leaders in the past, but this time there are the beginnings of real-world action to back up the fine words.

"The unanimous support for creating the 'conditions for a world without nuclear weapons' must be followed through. The US-Russian disarmament talks, President Obama's push for the US Congress to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and Gordon Brown's Trident cutback are all steps that move us in the right direction. The support given to the development of nuclear weapon-free zones is excellent. These zones now cover the entire southern hemisphere and international support for their expansion into the Middle East and South Asia would be one potential route to bringing Israel, India and Pakistan into compliance with the norms of international law."

"But more can and must be done to ensure that reductions transform into a global abolition process. And this can start at home. Britain can provide a much bigger boost to all these efforts by cancelling the replacement of Trident outright."

Also this afternoon, Eric Joyce MP, the former Parliamentary aide to the Defence Secretary has called for Trident to be included in the upcoming Strategic Defence Review which will take place after the general election. Writing for the website of the pressure-group Compass, Joyce calls for Labour to 'take the bull by the horns' and engage in open public debate on the rationale for replacing the system. See <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/news/item.asp?n=5600> for the article. ■



WHAT OTHERS SAY

Australia and Japan Make Themselves Targets by Relying On a US shield

By John Loretz

IN JAPAN, the Democratic Party of Yukio Hatoyama has just swept to power with the same readiness for change and hope for a new kind of politics that saw Barack Obama become US president.

A new generation of Japanese leaders now has an unprecedented opportunity to join Obama and other leaders in the pursuit of a vital goal overwhelmingly supported by people the world over: ridding our planet of nuclear weapons.

It is a goal that Australia has also stated its support for. The International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, established by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, is co-chaired by the former Australian and Japanese foreign ministers Gareth Evans and Yoriko Kawaguchi. However, pressure from the Japanese Government is compromising the commission's ability to advocate boldly and independently.

The role the two countries can play in achieving that critical goal cannot be overestimated. As the only country whose people have been directly targeted by nuclear attack and suffered the deadly consequences, the Japanese people stand as foremost witnesses to the obscenity of nuclear weapons.

Yet in the legitimate pursuit of security in a dangerous world, both Australia and Japan have come to rely on US nuclear weapons under a doctrine known as extended nuclear deterrence. This is euphemistically called the "nuclear umbrella" to give a misguided sense of protection. The reality is quite different.

Obama's pledge in Prague on April 5 "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" was greeted enthusiastically in Australia and Japan as it was globally. Sadly, an obstacle to fulfilling that pledge has been both countries' desire to cling to extended deterrence.

In Japan's case, this goes as far as allowing introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan while pronouncing the opposite, opposing deep reductions in the massive US nuclear arsenals, and opposing reducing the circumstances in which nuclear weapons might be used, through a US no-first-use declaration.

Japan has wanted to continue to threaten use of nuclear weapons in response to biological, chemical or even conventional attack. Make no mistake - this obstacle is being aggressively exploited by US hardliners intent upon maintaining and even modernising the US arsenal.

If such policies were to find their way into the US Nuclear Posture Review, in preparation right now, the prospects for abolition of the worst weapons of terror would be substantially set back. [The Nuclear Posture Review will be the third formal review of US nuclear strategy conducted since the end of the Cold War.]

Nuclear deterrence, at its core, is a pledge to inflict catastrophic retaliation - including mass extermination of civilian populations and radioactive devastation on a scale that knows no borders - on any state that uses these weapons first.

We now know that use of even a tiny fraction of current nuclear arsenals would produce a global climatic catastrophe that would make any such use not only murderous but suicidal. A country that relies upon a proxy nuclear arsenal for its security is making a Faustian bargain.

It increases the ways and places in which a nuclear war might start. It makes the security of its people and land hostage to nuclear security and restraint elsewhere, including in Russia, China and North Korea. >>>



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



This is why Australia and Japan should reject extended nuclear deterrence in favour of a sustainable, non-nuclear framework for security. Both governments should communicate strongly to the US Government and its Nuclear Posture Review that they want a world free of nuclear weapons, and that nuclear weapons no longer have a place in their security policies. It would be a powerful step that could make a decisive difference at this crucial time.

In Australia, the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCT) reported this week on its inquiry into nuclear disarmament non-proliferation. The report recommends that Australia has a real impact by working for a Nuclear Weapons Convention - a legally binding, irreversible, verifiable, comprehensive treaty for the elimination of nuclear weapons globally.

Obama needs all the help and support he can get for a world free of nuclear weapons. Why should Australia and Japan not lead the way to negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention? The gains will far outweigh the precarious and illusory stability provided by a so-called nuclear umbrella, which, from above, looks more like a bull's eye.

John Loretz is program director of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The organisation received the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize. Dr Tilman Ruff, who will be addressing the "Who will stop Nuclear Next Use" public forum at RMIT this Sunday, is associate professor in the Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne, and chairs the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Publisher: Mario Lubetkin
CEO IPS-Inter Press Service Consortium
Via Panisperna, 207, 00184 Rome
Editor-in-Charge: Ramesh Jaura
IPS-Inter Press Service Europe
Marienstr. 19-20
10117 Berlin
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