



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



NUMBER 07

A Monthly Newsletter for Strengthening Awareness
of Nuclear Abolition

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coverage which is part of a project
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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.

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Analysis by Haider Rizvi

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BY TARO ICHIKAWA

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On Nuke Disarmament, It's Still "You First"

ANALYSIS BY HAIDER RIZVI

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 31 (IPS) - Is the ongoing controversy over Iran's nuclear programme helping to advance the United Nations' agenda on nuclear disarmament? To a number of diplomats and experts who have participated in past U.N. discussions on the spread of nuclear weapons, the answer is, yes – although not necessarily for the expected reasons.

"Iran is challenging the double standards," David Kreiger, executive director of the U.S.-based Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF), told IPS. "How can you set one standard that challenges Iran's uranium processing and another standard that is completely silent about Israel's nuclear arsenal?"

Israel is believed to have more than 300 nuclear warheads, although its arsenal remains clandestine.

The Barack Obama administration in the U.S. is currently involved in multilateral efforts to address the issue of Iranian pursuit of uranium enrichment, but remains silent about calls to set up a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, Kreiger noted.

He believes this issue is not going to be resolved so long as the nuclear powers, particularly those from the Western hemisphere, remain non-committal toward nuclear disarmament.

Iran's leadership has repeatedly denied that it is pursuing a weapons programme, and argues that pursuing a peaceful nuclear programme for energy production is its inalienable right and that in doing so it is not violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The NPT has been endorsed by all the nations that hold U.N. membership, except for India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. The 1968 treaty allows its signatories to produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and requires nuclear-armed nations to take action towards dismantling their arsenals.

For its part, Iran has vigorously countered the Western powers' accusation that it is trying to use its nuclear programme for military purposes, and demands that the United States and other nuclear-armed nations take steps to dismantle their own nuclear arsenals, which they are obligated to do in accordance with the NPT.

At the U.N. General Assembly's First Committee - which is tasked to discuss the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament - a vast majority of delegates have raised questions about the lack of will on the part of the major powers to move ahead with plans to abolish nuclear weapons.

"We do not accept any justification for the acquisition or the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons," stated Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, chairman of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) from Brazil, at a General Assembly meeting early this month.

Established in 1998, the NAC consists of seven countries that have abandoned their nuclear programmes in order to comply with the NPT, namely Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa and Brazil.

"Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing processes," said Soares. "Both therefore require continuous and irreversible progress."

To NAC, it is axiomatic that the only absolute guarantee against the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons is the complete and verifiable elimination of those weapons.

"For as long as a number of states deem that the possession of nuclear weapons is essential for their security, there may be others who will aspire to acquire them, and the risk will remain that they may fall into the hands of non-state actors," Soares said.

NAC does not accept "any justification for the acquisition or the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by any country", said Soares, who strongly believes that the possession of nuclear weapons "cannot contribute to international peace and security". >>>

The U.N. is due to hold a major conference next summer to assess the NPT. In a recent statement, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he wants nuclear-armed nations to take concrete steps towards disarmament.

Ban has asked the 15-member U.N. Security Council to convene a summit on nuclear disarmament, and has called for all the non-NPT members to freeze their weapon capabilities. "Disarmament must enhance security," he stated recently.

His call for the summit comes after Pres. Obama, who recently won the Nobel Peace Prize in part for his support of nuclear disarmament, indicated his willingness to take concrete steps towards eliminating the U.S. arsenal by signing on to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and backing fissile material cut-off.

Republican opposition in the United States, however, remains as intransigent as ever. On Thursday, John Bolton, the hawkish former U.N. ambassador and a close confidant of former president George W. Bush, launched his book "ConUNdrum," in which he suggested that the U.N. "should abolish the Conference on Disarmament".

Though cautious about expressing optimism, some independent policy analysts in the United States think that the prospects for reaching the targets of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are increasingly promising.

"I definitely think that the administration is going to take concrete steps," the NAPF's Kreiger told IPS. One such step, according to him, would be the U.S. explicitly rejecting the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons.

"That would tell the world that he [Obama] is de-emphasising the role of nuclear weapons in the U.S. security strategy," he said.

As reported this month in *The Atlantic*, Obama has said he would take a hands-on role in the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, due out next year, in which Pentagon officials have been calling for new warhead designs.

Although Obama espouses a world without nuclear weapons, he has also said that the U.S. must retain an arsenal for deterrent purposes as long as other nations are nuclear-armed. (END/2009)

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MIDEAST: 'France, U.S. Pushing Arabs Into Nuclear Race'

BY FAREED MAHDY*



ISTANBUL, Oct 25 (IPS) - The decision by the oil-rich United Arab Emirates to build nuclear reactors has unleashed frenetic, politically backed competition between giant corporations from France, the U.S., Japan and South Korea to win contracts estimated at more than 40 billion dollars.

This may lead to a nuclear race involving other Gulf Arab states.

UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan signed a new law Oct. 4 to regulate production and development of nuclear energy in the federation of seven emirates that he chairs.

UAE authorities were quick to announce that the nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. "The UAE's nuclear programme is a peaceful project based on its commitment not to enrich uranium, and its ability to achieve the necessary degree of fuel security through a strong infrastructure," UAE special representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Hamad Al-Kaabi told reporters.

Kaabi said the UAE has set up a Federal Authority of Nuclear Regulation to promote safety, security and radiological protection, with former IAEA technical adviser William Travers as director-general.

He declined to say how many reactors the UAE intends to build. The UAE nuclear plants are scheduled to be operational in 2017.

The UAE, a leading oil producer in the world after Saudi Arabia and Russia, is signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Seemingly standard competition among big corporations to win a multi-billion bid, the UAE nuclear programme has unleashed a tough political race, where France apparently has the upper hand. >>>



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French President Nicolas Sarkozy co-chaired the inauguration of the first French military base in the UAE in May, in what is considered a long step forward to integrate the oil-rich Gulf region - so far a sort of U.S. 'protectorate' - into French security strategies.

Sarkozy is reportedly promoting French companies for the UAE nuclear deal. A consortium formed by Areva, TOTAL and Suez-Gaz de France is leading the race to construct the first nuclear reactor in an Arab country.

Other major competitors are a U.S.-Japanese bid by Hitachi and General Electric; the South Korean Hyundai-Samsung; and Westinghouse from the U.S. A nuclear cooperation agreement between the U.S. and the UAE was signed in January in the last days of the Bush administration.

The U.S. business sector has been seeking the support of neo-conservative political groups to push its case, as a number of Congressmen raised objections that "components" may fall in the hands of Iran. Another Western fear is that nuclear material could fall into the hands of terrorist groups.

Concerns were also raised that the UAE plans may lead to a nuclear race in the Middle East.

"Amid the gathering storm over Iran's controversial nuclear ambitions, the race is on among Arab states to build nuclear power plants of their own, opening up immense trade opportunities for the industrialised world as well as the specter of proliferation," the United Press International wrote Sep. 9.

The U.S., Britain, France and Russia "are competing for contracts in the nuclear energy bonanza that is emerging in the Middle East as Arab states seek to generate more power to feed their growing economies and to build desalination plants, a vital element in development plans as water resources shrink," UPI added in its comment.

The French government has reportedly promised assistance to Qatar and Morocco to launch nuclear programmes.

Egypt and Jordan have plans to build nuclear plants. Egypt signed a cooperation agreement with Russia last year.

"It is clear that an Iranian nuclear weapon programme would spur a regional arms race, involving the acquisition of nuclear arms by other regional powers like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Turkey," Mahtab Alam Rizvi, research assistant at the New Delhi-based Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses wrote last March.

Saudi Arabia had already announced plans to pursue peaceful nuclear technology as a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), he wrote. "The Saudis, along with their fellow GCC members recently announced a plan to create a body that would provide enriched uranium to the states of the Middle East," Rizvi pointed out.

Rizvi said that if other states in the Middle East that have expressed an interest in nuclear energy follow through with their proposed plans, "the potential for increased instability in the region could have a detrimental effect on the price of oil in the region."

The UAE stresses that its nuclear facilities would be safe. The UAE state-run news agency WAM declared Oct. 6 that the UAE "yet again shows the way ahead to others."

The same day, the Gulf News daily wrote: "This is the key to UAE's trail-blazing nuclear strategy, which is based on the premise that it wants the power from the nuclear stations but does not want to deal with the fuel.

"It has contributed to setting up a new UN agency which will handle all fuel enrichment and processing. This means that the UAE can never fall under suspicion of misusing this nuclear material, and has helped set up a system that many other would-be nuclear states will be able to follow.

The editorial warned, however, that the dangers from proliferation of nuclear weapons are serious. "It is essential to stop the possibility that the material for a weapon of mass destruction could end up in the hands of an irresponsible government, or be passed on to a terrorist group."

The Khaleej Times wrote in an editorial: "What is remarkable is the UAE's resolve to keep its nuclear power programme totally above board and beyond the pale of all controversies and disputes. >>>

"(With) the crucial policy decision by UAE, seeking civilian nuclear option mostly for generating electricity and yet avoiding the critical enrichment process, the UAE has once again shown the way forward to others in the region."

The London-based World Nuclear Association (WNA) that promotes nuclear energy and supports companies in global nuclear industry, said the UAE law aims to "promote the highest standards of nuclear safety, nuclear security and radiological protection."

The U.S. will have the right to cancel any agreement if the UAE reneges on its commitment not to engage in enrichment or reprocessing, it said.

The WNA stressed that the UAE law provides for harsh civil and criminal penalties for unauthorised use, theft, transport or trade in nuclear materials.

The WNA says the UAE has plans for three reactors to be online by 2020, and has signed cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding with companies in France, the UK and the U.S.

*This article is part of an IPS-Soka Gakkai International (SGI) project on nuclear abolition. The writer is a correspondent of the IDN-InDepthNews service. (END/2009) <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48990>

U.S.: Clinton Calls for Strengthened IAEA Powers

BY JIM LOBE

WASHINGTON, Oct 21 (IPS) - U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Wednesday called for strengthening the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect suspected nuclear-related facilities and ruled out lifting sanctions against North Korea until it took "verifiable and irreversible" steps toward denuclearisation.



In what was billed as a major policy address, Clinton also called for Iran to take "prompt action" in implementing a proposed plan to ship most of its low-enriched uranium (LEU) to Russia for reprocessing so that it can be used to produce medical isotopes at a reactor in Tehran.

Iranian diplomats reportedly gave tentative approval to the plan in talks with the U.S. and other major powers in Vienna Wednesday.

"Thwarting the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran is critical to the shoring up of the [nuclear] non-proliferation regime," she declared.

She also reiterated President Barack Obama's intention to submit the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) for ratification by the U.S. Senate and to conclude a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia that will slash the nuclear stockpiles of both countries when the existing agreement expires in December. Together the two countries possess 96 percent of the world's nuclear weapons.

"We are under no illusions that this START agreement will persuade Iran and North Korea to end their illicit nuclear activities," she told the U.S. Institute for Peace, a government-supported think tank. "But it will demonstrate that the United States is living up to its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligation to work toward nuclear disarmament."

"In doing so, it will help convince the rest of the international community to strengthen non-proliferation controls and tighten the screws on states that flout their non-proliferation commitments," she added.

Since last April, when Obama unveiled his vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world in a major address in Prague, his administration has made clear it considers non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament to be one of its highest foreign policy priorities.

To underline its importance, Obama himself chaired a U.N. Security Council meeting – becoming the first U.S. president to do so – devoted exclusively to non-proliferation and disarmament Sep. 24. He also announced that he will host a global summit on nuclear security in Washington next April, one month before diplomats from around the world are set to gather in Vienna for talks to review the NPT, including ways that it could be strengthened. >>>



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While Clinton added little to what the administration has already said about these issues, she made clear that strengthening the existing non-proliferation regime – especially the powers of the IAEA - was at the top of the U.S. agenda.

"The International Atomic Energy Agency doesn't have the tools or authority to carry out its mission effectively," she said. "We saw this in the institution's failure to detect Iran's covert enrichment plant and Syria's reactor project."

The IAEA's additional protocol, an optional provision for NPT signatories that permits the agency to carry out aggressive, short-notice inspections at nuclear sites that it monitors, "should be made universal through concerted efforts to persuade key holdout states to join", she said.

In addition to making "full use of existing verification authorities, including special inspections", the IAEA "should also be given new authorities, including the ability to investigate suspected nuclear-weapons-related activities, even when no nuclear materials are present", she added.

Moreover, NPT members should also consider adopting "automatic penalties for violations of safeguards agreements – for example, suspending all international cooperation or IAEA technical cooperation projects until compliance has been restored", she went on, noting that, "the international community's record of enforcing compliance in recent years is unacceptable".

On North Korea, which withdrew from the NPT in 2003 and tested a nuclear device in 2006 and again last May, Clinton said "current sanctions will not be relaxed until Pyongyang takes verifiable, irreversible steps toward complete denuclearisation" pursuant to its 2005 pledge to do so in exchange for a number of economic and political incentives.

The pledge was made in the context of the so-called "six-party talks" that also included the U.S., China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia. She added that Washington remained willing to meet on a bilateral basis with Pyongyang within the six-party framework. "But North Korea's return to the negotiating table is not enough," she stressed.

"Its leaders should be under no illusion that the United States will ever have normal, sanctions-free relations with a nuclear-armed North Korea," she added.

On Iran, which has not renounced the NPT, she also stressed that Washington "will continue to engage both multilaterally and bilaterally to discuss the full range of issues that have divided Iran and the United States for too long".

But, she stressed, "The process of engagement cannot be open-ended." In that context, she called for "prompt action" in implementing the accord that was the subject of negotiations between Tehran and the so-called P5+1 countries – the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany – at the IAEA in Vienna this week. Iran's representatives reportedly said Tehran would make a final decision on the plan by Friday.

Most analysts here believe that, by sending most of Iran's LEU stockpile out of the country and reprocessing it in a form that would be very difficult to convert to weapons use, the plan could buy more time for negotiating an agreement that would permit Tehran to maintain its enrichment programme under the NPT subject to strict verification and inspection provisions of the kind that Clinton suggested should be made universal.

Apart from strengthening the non-proliferation regime, however, she also stressed that the existing nuclear-weapons states should also take steps to reassure non-nuclear states both that they are committed to eventual disarmament.

"We can't afford to continue relying on recycled Cold War thinking. We are sincere in our pursuit of a secure, peaceful world without nuclear weapons," she said.

Clinton added, however, that "until we reach that point of the horizon where the last nuclear weapon has been eliminated, we need to reinforce the domestic consensus that America will maintain the nuclear infrastructure needed to sustain a safe and effective deterrent without nuclear testing."

To secure Senate ratification of the CTBT, which was narrowly rejected in 1999 after President Bill Clinton submitted it, the administration will have to persuade at least seven Republicans to back it. Many analysts believe that will be possible only if the administration agrees to develop new warheads to replace its current arsenal. (END/2009)
<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48952>

DISARMAMENT: Toward A Nuke-Free Germany?

BY RAMESH JAURA



BERLIN, Oct. 27 (IDN) - The new conservative-liberal coalition government wants the United States to withdraw all nuclear weapons still deployed in Germany despite the fall of the Berlin Wall, end of the cold war and re-unification twenty years ago.

Confirming the goal, Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle (then designated) announced Oct 25 and the previous day that they would take up the issue with the U.S. administration. Observers said this might happen when Merkel travels to Washington to address the U.S. Congress on November 3. After Konrad Adenauer who spoke to both houses in May 1957, she will be the second German chancellor to do so.

The coalition agreement that will guide the actions of the government in the next four years states that in the context of the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty next May and "the process of preparing a new strategic concept of NATO, we will work together with American allies for the withdrawal of the remaining nuclear weapons in Germany".

The coalition agreement was signed Oct. 26 by the heads of Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its Bavarian sister Christian Social Union (CSU) and the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) -- Merkel, Horst Seehofer and Westerwelle.

Westerwelle left no doubt about his resolve to have nukes out of Germany when he addressed his party rally here Oct. 25. He said the new German government would support the vision of U.S. President Barack Obama for a world free of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, he added: "We will take President Obama at his word and enter talks with our allies so that the last of the nuclear weapons still stationed in Germany, relics of the Cold War, can finally be removed. Germany must be free of nuclear weapons."

Chancellor Merkel, who continues in office in the aftermath of September general election, shares Westerwelle's view but stresses that no unilateral action would be taken to remove the nuclear warheads. "We do not want any independent action here," Merkel told Oct. 24 reporters in Berlin.

During the cold war that followed on the heels of World War II (1939-1945), the U.S. stationed a large number of nuclear weapons in various European countries. The number of such arsenal still in Germany is estimated at 20 by the German chapter of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

"No official or publicly accessible information is available on where the weapons are stored. But some of the missiles are believed to be stationed at the Buechel airbase in the western German state of Rhineland-Palatinate," agency reports say.

IPPNW Germany -- comprising some 50 peace groups -- welcomed the new government's intention. "This (the coalition agreement) means that the national campaign 'our future -- nuclear weapon-free' has reached an important milestone," said Xanthe Hall, the organisation's nuclear disarmament expert, adding: "We had set ourselves the goal of persuading the government, within three years, to advocate the withdrawal of these remaining nuclear weapons."

She pointed out that "what some people in the media are calling a 'marginal issue' is in fact a very important contribution towards a nuclear weapon-free world". IPPNW believes that a step like this can help negotiations with Iran or North Korea. "Only if we disarm can we demonstrate to others that nuclear weapons are not necessary for our security and persuade other countries to renounce them," Hall said.

The IPPNW campaigners have been putting pressure on parliamentarians since 2007 to position themselves in regard to disarmament. The campaign to win their support was intensified in run up to the September election. The liberal FDP, Buendnis 90/Die Gruenen (the Green Party) and Die Linke (the Left Party) have all taken strong positions in recent years on the question of the withdrawal of the nuclear weapons "based in the Eifel region", and have repeatedly tabled motions in the Parliament. >>>

However, the outgoing CDU/CSU-SPD grand coalition always voted these down. Even though the SPD had pledged to work for withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Germany in its policy programme, it could not vote in favour because of the coalition agreement with the conservative CDU-CSU.

"It was clear from the start that a future coalition agreement would be our greatest obstacle," continued Hall. "That's why lobbied with candidates already during the election to commit them to saying they would stand up for withdrawal of nuclear weapons during the coalition negotiations."

After the election, the IPPNW campaign council sent letters to all the negotiators. Ten Conservative 'Mayors for Peace' wrote to Chancellor Merkel and asked her to make the issue of disarmament 'Chefsache' (top priority) and end nuclear sharing. The German affiliate of Mayors for Peace supports the campaign "our future – nuclear weapon-free".

The Mayors for Peace NGO is composed of cities around the world that have formally expressed support for the programme announced by Takeshi Araki, the Mayor of Hiroshima, in 1982. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were assaulted by U.S. atomic bombs in August 1945, reducing the two cities within minutes to rubble and killing hundreds of thousands.

Araki proposed on June 24, 1982 at the 2nd UN Special Session on Disarmament a 'Programme to Promote the Solidarity of Cities toward the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons'. This proposal offered cities a way to transcend national borders and work together to press for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

Subsequently, the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki called on mayors around the world to support this programme. The organisation is now supported by 554 cities in 107 countries and regions. Mayors for Peace is recognised by the UN as an official NGO.

Mayors for Peace aims to build solidarity and facilitate coordination among cities around the world. Its primary goal is to raise awareness regarding nuclear weapons abolition. It is also formally committed to pursuing lasting world peace by addressing starvation, poverty, refugee welfare, human rights abuses and environmental destruction. (IDN-InDepthNews) <http://www.indepthnews.net/news/news.php?key1=2009-10-27%2001:24:20&key2=1>

DISARMAMENT: Closer To Making Utopia Feasible?

BY TARO ICHIKAWA



HIROSHIMA, Oct. 23 (IDN) – "What we see here is tragic, but even more tragic is all that was lost without a trace," said Yoriko Kawaguchi as tears welled up in her eyes. She had just completed a tour of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

Kawaguchi is a former foreign minister of Japan. Together with the erstwhile foreign minister of Australia, Gareth Evans, she co-chairs the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND).

The Commission visited ahead of its meeting Oct. 18-20 in Hiroshima, the Peace Memorial Museum that conveys the horror of the atomic bombing, heard the testimony of one of the "Hibakusha" (atomic bomb victims) and met with Hiroshima community groups concerned with the human dimension of nuclear weapons.

Kawaguchi and the other 26 members of the ICNND were deeply moved learning about the experience of 78-year old Hiroshima resident Akihiro Takahashi, who is one of the aged surviving atom bomb victims.

Equally impressed were they by an impassioned encounter with NGO representatives in Hiroshima at a round-table discussion hosted by the ICNND Japan NGO Network on the Commission's final report.

The NGOs representatives pointed out that if the final ICNND report turned out be passive, it would not be acceptable to the NGO community. The final report, they said, should be remembered by posterity for recommending 'no first use', 'nuclear-weapons-free zone in North East Asia' and a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

If nuclear weapon states adopted 'no use' policy at early stage, such a 'doctrinal shift' would make a big step towards a world free from nuclear weapons, said one NGO representative. >>>



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'PONDER WITH YOUR HEART'

"I think it is important to look at ground zero with your eyes, listening to atom bomb survivors' testimonies with your ears, and pondering the issue of nuclear bomb with your heart. In this sense, I want to express my respect to ICNND members who decided to come to Hiroshima," said Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki city that was also atom-bombed.

"We all must work for achieving nuclear abolition while atom bomb survivors are still alive," he argued.

Though the Commission's co-chairs and members appreciated the non-governmental organisations' deepest wish for the elimination of all nuclear weapons and the realization of a genuinely peaceful international community, they argued that a report which nuclear states cannot put into practice would be meaningless.

The issue of nuclear weapons was not that simple. "It is a different animal from other like land mines, remarked a Commission member."

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in over 70 countries turned out to be successful. The Campaign was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its efforts to bring about the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

Nevertheless, after listening to NGO opinions, one Commission member said: "I feel that I should be sitting on your side. After all, what moves reality is the power emanating from citizens and passion."

ICNND co-chairs assured that the Commission aims to reinvigorate the global debate on nuclear disarmament and on preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons to other parts of the world.

They pointed out that though launched and supported by the governments of Australia and Japan, the Commission is an independent global panel that not only includes former heads of state and senior ministers, military strategists and disarmament experts, but is also backed by an advisory board of international experts. Besides, it works in collaboration with research centres from around the world.

Presenting the conclusion of the three-day closed-door deliberations in a joint statement Oct. 20, Kawaguchi and Evans said the Commission and its advisory board members had held intensive discussions to finalise its draft report, which is to be issued early next year in advance of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference.

Since the report is to help build an international consensus in advance of the May 2010 NPT Review Conference, there was "a particularly strong focus on strategic aspects of moves to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons world-wide, and to achieve the conditions which might permit the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons," the joint statement said.

'GETTING TO ZERO'

It added: "Commission members strongly supported the report's main focus -- a three-phased action agenda aimed at delivering on its key recommendations: Short Term to 2012 -- achieving initial benchmarks; Medium Term to 2025 -- getting to the minimization point, and; Long Term beyond 2025 -- getting to zero."

The statement stressed: "The Commission will undertake a range of outreach activities to brief key government and non-government stakeholders following the launch of its report in 2010."

Knowledgeable sources say that the ICNND report fails to specify the target year for total abolition of nuclear weapons. A draft of the report obtained by the Kyodo news agency prior to the meeting suggested a reduction of nuclear arsenal from 20,000 at present to "1,000 or less worldwide" by 2025.

Though no document has been made public, an article in Hiroshima's 'Chugoku Shimbun' newspaper quoted an informed source saying: "It appears that the target numbers of 1000 in the final draft receded to 2000."

Confirming this, the Malaysian news agency Bernama, reported Oct. 23 that in Hiroshima, Commission members had "agreed to drastically reduce the number of nuclear warheads in the world from the current more than 20,000 to an unspecified level. The level is presumed to be higher than the initial target of 1,000 or fewer stipulated in an earlier draft report by the commission." >>>



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'CHANGE OF HEART'

Quoting Kyodo, Bernama went on to say: "Behind the ICNND's change of heart was strong opposition from some nuclear-armed states to reducing their nukes at the same rate as Russia and the United States, according to sources close to the commission. Such states insisted their stockpiles are already kept at minimum levels."

"Another possible stumbling block for ambitious reductions brought up in the meeting was the physical capability for dismantling nuclear warheads, Yoriko Kawaguchi, co-chairwoman of the commission, told reporters after the conference. She was apparently referring to a lack of dismantling facilities for nuclear arms, as only one plant in the United States and two in Russia are currently believed to exist," Bernama added.

"As for nuclear warheads which we are not able to dismantle, we will make sure that their nuclear fissile materials will not be reused by locking them up in safely guarded environments," Kawaguchi was quoted saying.

In response to the ICNND goals announced following the final meeting, representatives of the Mayors for Peace, an international peace organization headed by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, expressed disappointment saying that the targets are far from sufficient.

As the Mayors for Peace group hopes to achieve a nuclear-free world while survivors of the two atomic bombings are still alive, the organization seeks the adoption of a disarmament protocol targeting the elimination of nuclear weapons by 2020 at the upcoming NPT review conference scheduled for next year.

Commenting the report, 70-year old Haruko Moritaki of Hiroshima Alliance for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (HANWA) said: "Proposals in the final report are supposed to be leading contents but they are too much tied down to reality." Referring to the U.S. policy of halving the number of nuclear weapons by 2012, she averred that the "ICNND report may run behind the reality".

Takahashi, a former director of the Peace Memorial Museum, expressed the sentiments of citizens at large, when he stated: "After I testified my atom bomb experience, I thought that ICNND members' response was positive when some asked to shake hands with me. I hoped that they would mention concrete figures (of reduction in nuclear arsenal) that would have impact on nuclear weapons states. With this outcome, it is meaningless to hold a meeting at a place that suffered from atom bomb attack -- and frankly I am very much disappointed."

Reflecting on the general disappointment, which is however not shared by ICNND co-chairs, Kawaguchi said: "We have agreed on a very ambitious target. I believe we can win the understanding of atomic bomb survivors."

She told reporters: "After spending time with the citizens and NGO representatives of Hiroshima, I'm determined that there must be no further suffering from nuclear weapons. Our discussions have reached a comprehensive conclusion with a process for getting to zero in regard to nuclear weapons in the world. We can issue our report in a favourable environment, including U.S. President Barack Obama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts on behalf of a world without nuclear weapons."

Commenting the contents of the report, Kawaguchi said: "This is an action-oriented report." She pointed out that the contents are "two steps ahead of governments' policies" and that the report would urge ratification and effectuation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It would call on all nuclear powers to adopt a "no first use" pledge by 2025, clarifying their intention not to use nuclear weapons unless hit by a nuclear strike, she said.

Evans, the other ICNND co-chair, stated: "There were tough challenges, but we intended to draw up a report that will change the mindset of the world's policy makers. We are proud of the fact that the final 200-page report has been endorsed unanimously. Though it is true that no nuclear weapons have been used since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this is simply our good fortune."

Asked about the target number for nuclear arms reductions, Evans said: "The number is very low, but I'm unable to speak beyond that. The number has been agreed upon and it will not change."

Answering another question why the exact number was not being revealed, Kawaguchi said: "The ICNND was launched by agreement between the governments of Japan and Australia. We intend to first convey our conclusions to our prime ministers." >>>



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



Asked about the "no first use" pledge, Evans responded: "Declaration of the 'no first use' policy by all nuclear weapon states is an essential step to achieving nuclear abolition. We have set the target year for this at 2025, but we hope it is realized in an earlier year."

Replying to whether 2025 wasn't too late, Evans stated: "We hope to see a world without nuclear weapons as early as possible, even tomorrow. We have met A-bomb survivors and we have a strong desire to realize nuclear abolition. Hope alone, though, will not bring about this goal. I am convinced that people will understand our intentions once they read our report."

PRIORITISING FEASIBILITY

Hiroshima's 'Chugoku Shimbun' newspaper wrote: "Considering that they discussed ways toward 'a world free from nuclear weapons' in a location that suffered from nuclear attack, the joint statement lacked an impact."

It added: "Feasibility has been made a priority, but to ensure that the recommendations being put forth in the report are truly achievable, it is vital to make such efforts as reaching consensus on the report within the international community at NPT Review Conference slated for next May. If governments do not view the report seriously and undertake step-by-step actions in line with its recommendations, the 'feasibility' of the report will have been for naught and hope will turn to disappointment."

The 'feasibility' concept is obliquely related to whether nuclear abolition is a utopia that is far-removed from reality. Daisaku Ikeda, president of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), is however convinced that 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, Ikeda said in an interview with IDN-InDepthNews Sep. 29.

He added: "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."

Ikeda told IDN: "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 times." (IDN-InDepthNews)

<http://www.indepthnews.net/news/news.php?key1=2009-10-23%2017:49:21&key2=1>



RELATED ARTICLES

DISARMAMENT: Less Than 1000 Nukes By 2025?

BY TARO ICHIKAWA

HIROSHIMA, Oct 20 (IDN) -- Is the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) drifting away from the goal of a nuclear weapons free world? Is a small group of Japanese government officials colluding with U.S. conservatives to torpedo reduction in American nuclear weapons?

These questions loomed large in run-up to and during the Commission's fourth meeting Oct. 18-20 in Hiroshima that along with Nagasaki suffered the U.S. atomic bomb assaults. The Commission co-chaired by former foreign minister of Japan, Yoriko Kawaguchi, and her erstwhile Australian counterpart, Gareth Evans, was launched as a joint initiative at the Japan-Australia Summit in July 2008

In Hiroshima, Japanese NGOs criticised the ICNND for taking a stance that is "far from citizens' wish for the realization of nuclear abolition" as expressed by survivors of the atomic bomb, said Masayoshi Naito, a member of the board of directors of Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, the Japan chapter of International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA).

Naito asked the ICNND to "make the best of this important moment" in history characterised by President Barack Obama's initiative and the NPT review conference next May.

ICNND's main objective is to issue, prior to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, a report with recommendations to contribute to the success of the Conference and unveil a final report in early January on a road map to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Media reports said that ICNND was setting an ambitious target of reducing nukes in the world from current level of more than 20,000 down to less than 1,000 by 2025. The initial target date was 2010.

According to the final draft obtained by Kyodo News Agency on the eve of the Hiroshima meeting, ICNND was proposing concrete steps: (1) Nuclear reduction by the U.S. and Russia; (2) coming into effect of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); (3) 'negative security assurances' by way of nuclear weapons states pledging that they would not nuke against non-nuclear weapon states; and (4) laying the ground for multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Analysts said that while previous ICNND draft reports had urged the U.S. to adopt a policy of limiting the "only purpose" of the use of nuke to deter nuclear war by next spring, the latest draft report had extended the deadline to 2012. The deadline of adopting the policy of not using nukes first had also been extended from 2010 to 2025.

This implies that concrete measures to lessen the political and military roles of nukes as steps prior to nuclear abolition had been dropped -- apparently because of the resistance by Japan which has been worried about the weakening of 'nuclear umbrella'.

Analysts say that some in the Japanese government have strong reservations about the goal of bringing about "the world with less than 1000 nukes".

This was partly confirmed at a press conference Oct. 16 in Tokyo. ICNND's Australian co-chair Evans argued that "It is vital that all nuclear weapon states should give a commitment to "first no use" by 2025. Otherwise, we will never reach our goal of nuclear abolition."

Japanese co-chair Kawaguchi emphasized -- at the same press conference -- that it is necessary to proceed step by step toward nuclear abolition, adding that "We will have to reduce the role of nuclear weapon in such a way that the stability of the world is not at risk."

The Hiroshima meeting is the last in a series of four to discuss ICNND's report. The Commission's previous three meetings were held in Sydney, Washington and Moscow. In addition, the Latin American, Northeast Asian, Central Asian and South Asian regional meetings took place in Santiago, Beijing, Cairo, and New Delhi. >>>



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



WORLD MARCH

The Hiroshima meeting coincided with the World March initiated by 'World Without Wars', an international organization launched by the Humanist Movement that has been working for 15 years in the fields of pacifism and non-violence.

The World March called on the Japanese Government to "kick out U.S. bases", a proposal in line with this civil society organization's universal demand that foreign troops should withdraw from the territories of other countries. Local organizers described the demand made at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as "unprecedented".

According to Pressenza news agency, the World without Wars president, Rafa de la Rubia congratulated Japan for its anti-nuclear status and called on the country's new government to maintain at all costs Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution that prohibits an act of war by the state.

In a letter addressed to the Japanese Prime Minister and handed to Yoshinori Takeda, deputy director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Division of the Non-Proliferation and Science Department, de la Rubia urged the Japanese government to "represent the true sentiment of the majority of her citizens and advance three initiatives at an international level: the elimination of nuclear weapons; the renunciation of war as a means to resolve conflicts at the same time as stridently defending article 9 from attack by those who wish to eliminate it; and the closure of foreign bases that are maintained on the territory of other nations".

The Ministry official thanked the World March for having come to Japan and highlighted the efforts of civil society to raise awareness of the nuclear issue and pressurize governments to act for nuclear abolition.

Emphasizing the priority the new Japanese administration places on disarmament, the ministry official was reported saying: "The Japanese Government always underlines the importance and the big efforts by civil society... The Prime Minister in comparison with the former administration puts a very big stress on this issue. It's high time to do some action from Government's side and from your side."

World March Japan organizer Makiko Sato however expressed dissatisfaction with the response of the Japanese government official. "It's the same story all the time; they say the right things to civil society in meetings and then act in a totally contradictory way. But I'm very pleased because I think that may be the first time that anyone entered the Foreign Ministry and suggested the closure of U.S. bases."

SECRET VOICES

This kind of mixed joy is shared by Joseph Cirincione, president of the U.S.-based Ploughshares Fund and the author of 'Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons'. In an article posted on the web Oct 12, Cirincione welcomes Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's remarks at the United Nations Sept. 23: "I highly approve of President Obama's courageous leadership... We will work together with the United States toward a world without nuclear weapons."

Cirincione is of the view that Prime Minister Hatoyama should consider writing an article for U.S. newspapers directly stating his views. "This would be an easy and very effective way to correct the false claims by speaking directly with the American people about Japan's position. He should use the opportunity to support the goal that he, President Obama and the Japanese and American publics share: to move towards the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. As Mr. Hatoyama has said, 'we have no time to waste.' Now is the time to act."

Cirincione, who worked for nine years in the U.S. House of Representatives on the professional staff of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Government Operations, has strong reasons in urging Hatoyama putting the record straight.

He writes: "U.S. officials are presently working hard to finish a new report that will determine the direction of U.S. nuclear policy and the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal for the next five to ten years. This report, the Nuclear Posture Review, is written by the Department of Defense and will be given to President Barack Obama at the end of the year."

➤➤➤



"In preparing the report, defense officials are not citing the appeals from the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Nor are they citing the important statement of (the) prime minister . . . No, the most important Japanese voices in the United States right now are secret voices. A small group of conservative Japanese defense officials have spread the view that if the United States decreases its nuclear weapons, then Japan will build its own nuclear bombs."

This issue emerged suddenly this year in the deeply-flawed report of the U.S. Strategic Posture Commission, chaired by former-Secretaries of Defense William Perry and James Schlesinger. Conservatives on the commission twice brought in Japanese officials to make these claims. As result, the report devoted a whole chapter to the issue of "extended deterrence". This is the theory that the U.S. nuclear arsenal protects U.S. allies who, therefore, do not have to build their own nuclear weapons.

Cirincione points out that Conservatives used these Japanese statements to justify keeping a massive U.S. nuclear arsenal indefinitely. Nuclear hawk Keith Payne, a member of the Commission, said, "If the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent loses credibility, some in Japan believe that other security options will have to be examined."

(IDN-InDepthNews)

<http://www.indepthnews.net/news/news.php?key1=2009-10-20%2001:08:49&key2=1>

MIDDLE EAST: Are France, U.S. Pushing Arabs Into Nuclear Race?

BY FAREED MAHDY*

ISTANBUL, Oct 20 (IDN) - The oil-rich United Arab Emirates' decision to build nuclear reactors on its soil has unleashed a frenetic, politically backed competition between giant corporations from France, U.S., Japan and South Korea, to win the \$40 billion bid for this project, which may lead to a nuclear race involving other Gulf Arab states.

The UAE president Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al Nahyan signed on Oct. 4, a nuclear strategy and a new law to regulate the production and development of nuclear energy in the seven-emirate federation that he chairs.

Following the announcement, UAE authorities rushed to underline the peaceful purposes of the nuclear programme, while stressing that the UAE does not intend to enrich uranium itself. This process would be carried out abroad.

"The UAE's nuclear programme is a peaceful project based on its commitment not to enrich uranium, and its ability to achieve the necessary degree of fuel security through a strong infrastructure", UAE Special Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hamad Al Kaabi, told reporters on Oct. 4.

Kaabi also informed that UAE has set up a Federal Authority of Nuclear Regulation to promote safety, security and radiological protection, with former IAEA technical adviser William Travers as director-general.

He declined to provide information regarding the number of reactors the UAE intends to build. The UAE nuclear plants are scheduled to be operational in 2017. UAE is signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

NOT ONLY BUSINESS

Though seemingly another standard commercial competition between big corporations to win a multibillion dollars bid, the UAE nuclear programme has also unleashed a tough political race, with France apparently having the upper hand.

In fact, French president Nicolas Sarkozy co-chaired the official inauguration, last May, of the first French military base in the UAE, in what has been considered as long step forward to integrate the oil-rich Gulf region -- so far a sort of U.S. 'protectorate'-- into French security strategies.

Sarkozy has reportedly promoted French business sector to handle the UAE nuclear deal. A French consortium formed by Areva, TOTAL, and Suez-Gaz de France has been leading the race to win the bid of constructing the first nuclear reactors in an Arab country.

Other major competitors are a Japanese-American tandem integrated by Hitachi and General Electric; a South Korean Electric Hyundai-Samsung, and the U.S. Westinghouse. >>>



THE AMERICAN PRESSURE

Parallel to French pressures, the U.S. business sector has been relying on the support of the neo-conservative political and commercial groups of interest.

In fact, it was the U.S. previous neo-conservative administration who signed a nuclear co-operation agreement with the UAE, last January before quitting the White House.

Initially the deal negotiation process was expected to finalise in September. But a number of Congressmen reportedly posed objections to the construction of nuclear facilities on the UAE, arguing that “components” might fall into the hands of Iran.

Meanwhile, the UAE heir Mohammed bin Zayed recently visited the United States to check the state of things.

Immediately after, he visited Paris to review the French offer. There, the UAE heir met the general secretary of French Presidency, Claude Gueant, who is reported to be in-charge in Paris of the UAE nuclear file.

THE BIG FEAR

The approval of UAE nuclear programme merited a wide local media coverage, which significantly went in line with the repeated UAE officials' assurances that the UAE nuclear programme would be for peaceful purposes only.

At the same time, the UAE has been trying over and over again to dissipate fears that the nuclear enriched material, if further developed, would be capable of producing nuclear weapons.

The latest is the main declared argument of Western powers in the face of Iranian nuclear programme, which the West alleges could be diverted to military purposes, that is, to developing nuclear weapons.

In fact, concerns that the UAE nuclear plans may lead to nuclear race in the Middle East, were raised even before the plants were approved.

Under the title ‘Arab states race for nuclear power’, United Press International wrote on Sept. 9, “Amid the gathering storm over Iran's controversial nuclear ambitions, the race is on among Arab states to build nuclear power plants of their own, opening up immense trade opportunities for the industrialized world as well as the specter of proliferation.”

The U.S., Britain, France and Russia “are competing for contracts in the nuclear energy bonanza that is emerging in the Middle East as Arab states seek to generate more power to feed their growing economies and to build desalination plants, a vital element in development plans as water resources shrink”, it added.

At the same time, Sarkozy's government has reportedly promised assistance to Qatar and Morocco, to launch their own nuclear programmes.

Egypt and Jordan would also be heading for building nuclear plants. In fact, Cairo signed last year with Moscow, an agreement on Russian enrolment in the setting up of nuclear plants in Egypt.

Mahtab Alam Rizvi, research assistant at the New Delhi-based Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, wrote last March for the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies “It is clear that an Iranian nuclear weapon programme would spur a regional arms race, involving the acquisition of nuclear arms by other regional powers like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Turkey.”

Saudi Arabia recently announced its plans, as a member of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), to pursue peaceful nuclear technology, he wrote. In Dec. 2007, Alam Rizvi added, the GCC announced the intent to commence a joint programme to develop nuclear energy.

“The Saudis, along with their fellow GCC members recently announced a plan to create a body that would provide enriched uranium to the states of the Middle East.” Alam Rizvi concluded that if other states in the Middle East that have claimed an interest in nuclear energy follow through with their proposed plans, “the potential for increased instability in the region could have a detrimental effect on the price of oil in the region. . . ” >>>



UAE SHOWING THE (NUCLEAR) WAY TO THE OTHERS

But UAE has stressed that its nuclear facilities would be safe. The UAE state-run news agency WAM declared Oct. 6 that the UAE "yet again shows the way ahead to others."

The same day, the UAE-based Gulf News daily, in its editorial titled 'UAE's nuclear strategy is trail-blazing', wrote: "This is the key to UAE's trail-blazing nuclear strategy, which is based on the premise that it wants the power from the nuclear stations but does not want to deal with the fuel."

"It has contributed to setting up a new UN agency which will handle all fuel enrichment and processing. This means that the UAE can never fall under suspicion of miss-using this nuclear material, and has helped set up a system that many other would-be nuclear states will be able to follow," its added.

"The nuclear energy law shows the UAE offering international leadership in the nuclear arena, using its resources to set up a safe and totally transparent system, which other countries can follow," it said.

However it alerted: "The dangers from proliferation of nuclear weapons are very serious. It is essential to stop the possibility that the material for a weapon of mass destruction could end up in the hands of an irresponsible government, or be passed on to a terrorist group."

Also the Khaleej Times in its Oct. 6 editorial "Nuclear Power: UAE Shows the Way", wrote: "What is remarkable is the UAE's resolve to keep its nuclear power programme totally above board and beyond the pale of all controversies and disputes."

"(With) the crucial policy decision by UAE, seeking civilian nuclear option mostly for generating electricity and yet avoiding the critical enrichment process, the UAE has once again shown the way forward to others in the region," it said.

In line with the above, the London-based World Nuclear Association (WNA), whose declared role is to promote nuclear energy and support companies that comprise the global nuclear industry, informed on Oct. 5 on the UAE decision.

According to the association, the UAE approved law aims at "establishing a national nuclear regulatory authority and prohibiting the country from pursuing uranium enrichment".

The 'Federal Authority of Nuclear Regulation' is a fully independent nuclear safety regulatory authority, which aims to "oversee the nuclear energy sector in the UAE and to promote the highest standards of nuclear safety, nuclear security and radiological protection", said WNA.

It stressed: "The law prohibits the development, construction or operation of uranium enrichment or spent fuel reprocessing facilities within the borders of the UAE."

The WNA insisted on underlining that the UAE "has promised to never enrich and reprocess uranium or other fuel and to instead obtain nuclear fuel from reliable international suppliers, in line with the co-operation agreement signed with the USA earlier this year". The USA will have the right to cancel the agreement if the UAE reneges on its commitment not to engage in enrichment or reprocessing activities, it said

The criminalisation and assignment of harsh civil and criminal penalties for violating the law, including the unauthorised use, theft, transport or trade in nuclear materials, is also established by the law, it stressed.

According to WNA, the UAE is therefore actively working towards introducing nuclear power with plans for three reactors to be online by 2020. It has signed co-operation agreements and memoranda of understanding with a number of countries and companies including France, the UK and the USA. (IDN-InDepthNews)

(This article 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. The writer is special correspondent of IDN-InDepthNews service, an external partner of IPSEurope that coordinates the project.)

<http://www.indepthnews.net/news/news.php?key1=2009-10-20%2011:55:00&key2=1>

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

GERMAN

GOLFSTAATEN: Atomstrom für die VAE – Wettstreit um die Aufträge

Von Fareed Mahdy

Istanbul, 27. Oktober (IPS/IDN*) – Mit der Entscheidung in Atomkraft zu investieren, haben die erdölreichen Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate (VAE) einen internationalen Wettstreit um die lukrativen Aufträge ausgelöst. Vor allem Frankreich, USA, Japan und Südkorea hoffen auf den Zuschlag für den Bau der Anlagen.

VAE-Präsident Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan hatte Anfang Oktober ein entsprechendes Gesetz für die Produktion und Entwicklung von Atomenergie in den insgesamt sieben Emiraten gegengezeichnet, das für den unerlaubten Besitz, Diebstahl, Transport oder Handel mit Nuklearmaterial drakonische Strafen vorsieht. Die VAE, nach Saudi-Arabien und Russland die größten Erdölproduzenten der Welt, sind Unterzeichner des Atomwaffensperrvertrags.

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/GERMAN_Are_France_U.S._Pushing_Arabs_Into_Nuclear_Race.pdf

Original Article:

MIDEAST: 'France, U.S. Pushing Arabs Into Nuclear Race'

ABRÜSTUNG: Hiroshima-Opfer wollen atomwaffenfreie Welt noch erleben

Von Taro Ichikawa

Hiroshima, 28. Oktober (IPS/IDN*) – "Was wir hier sehen, ist tragisch, doch noch tragischer ist all das, was spurlos verloren ist", meinte Japans ehemalige Außenministerin Yoriko Kawaguchi nach einem Besuch des 'Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum'. Die Gedenkstätte erinnert an das grenzenlose Leid, dass der Abwurf der Atombombe 1945 auf die Stadt nach sich zog.

Kawaguchi und der vormalige australische Außenminister Gareth Evans teilen sich den Vorsitz der der Internationalen Kommission für atomare Nichtverbreitung und Abrüstung (ICNND), die in Hiroshima vom 18. bis 20. Oktober hinter verschlossenen Türen über den Inhalt ihres Abschlussberichts für die Konferenz zur Überprüfung des Atomwaffensperrvertrags (NPT) im Mai 2010 diskutierten.

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

Original Article:

DISARMAMENT: Closer To Making Utopia Feasible?

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

ARABIC

U.S.: Clinton Calls for Strengthened IAEA Powers - <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48952> (1)

Page 1 of 2... وكالة الذرية عاجزت عن رصد مشروع المفاعل السوري: كلينتون: التسرع إيران بتخصيب اليورانيوم في روسيا



وكالة الأنباء العلمية انتر بريس سرفيس (أي بي إس)

قائلة أن الوكالة الذرية عاجزت عن رصد مشروع المفاعل السوري: كلينتون: "التسرع إيران بتخصيب اليورانيوم في روسيا"

بقلم جيم لوب/وكالة انتر بريس سرفيس

واشنطن، أكتوبر (IPS) - طالبت وزيرة الخارجية الأمريكية هيلاري كلينتون، إيران بالتعجيل بتنفيذ مقترح إرسال غاليية اليورانيوم المنخفض التخصيب لديها، إلى روسيا لمعالجته لاستخدامه في إنتاج نظائر (إيوسنوب) الأدوية في مفاعل بطهران، وناشدت بتعزيز صلاحيات الوكالة الدولية للطاقة الذرية للتفتيش علي منشآت نووية مشبوهة.

وفيما أعتبر خطابا أساسيا للسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، تناولت كلينتون بهذا في تصريحاتها الخميس، ما تردد عن موافقة إيران مبدئيا علي هذا المقترح أثناء محادثاتها مع الولايات المتحدة والنول الكسري في فيينا يوم الأربعاء 21 أكتوبر.

وشددت كلينتون في خطابها في المعهد الأمريكي للسلام الذي تدعمه الإدارة الأمريكية، علي أن تخلي كوريا الشمالية وإيران عن طموحاتهما النووية، يعد خطوة أسلسية علي مسار عدم الإنتشار النووي.

وإستبعدت رفع العقوبات المفروضة علي كوريا الشمالية، حتي تتخذ خطوات "يمكن التحقق منها ونهائية" نحو التخلي عن برامجها النووية.

وأكدت وزيرة الخارجية الأمريكية عزم الرئيس براك أوباما عرض معاهدة حظر التجارب (النووية) علي مجلس النواب الأمريكي للمصادقة عليها، وكذلك التوصل مع روسيا إلي إتفاقية جديدة لخفض الأسلحة الإستراتيجية (ستارت)، لتقليص الترسانات النووية في البلدين إثر قفلا سريان الإتفاقية الحالية في ديسمبر المقبل.

ويذكر أن الولايات المتحدة وروسيا تحوزان 96 في المائة من إجمالي الأسلحة النووية الموجودة في العلم.

وأكدت كلينتون "ليس لدينا أوهاما بأن تؤدي هذه الإتفاقية (خفض الأسلحة الإستراتيجية) إلي إقناع إيران وكوريا الشمالية بإنهاء إنشئتهما النووية غير المشروعة... لكنها ستين هن علي إلتزام الولايات المتحدة بواجباتها المنبثقة من معاهدة حظر الإنتشار النووي، في العمل نحو نزع الأسلحة النووية".

وقالت أن ذلك سوف يساعد علي إقناع بقية المجتمع الدولي بتعزيز آليات مراقبة عدم الإنتشار وإحكام الحلقة حول الدول التي تنتهك إلتزاماتها بهذا الشأن.

ويشار إلي أن إدارة الرئيس أوباما، منذ أن أعرب عن رؤيته لعالم دون أسلحة نووية في أبريل الماضي في براغ، قد شددت علي أن قضايا حظر الإنتشار ونزع الأسلحة النووية ترد ضمن أولويات سياستها الخارجية. وقرأس أوباما بنفسه في 24 سبتمبر الماضي، جلسة مجلس الأمن المخصصة لهاتين القضيتين.

كما أعلن أوباما أنه سيدعو إلي عقد قمة عالمية حول الأمن النووي، في واشنطن في أبريل المقبل، أي قبل شهر من إجتماع المؤتمر الدولي للتفاوض علي إستعراض معاهدة حظر الإنتشار النووي وسبل تعزيزها، والمقرر عقده في فيينا.

وفي هذا الصدد، شددت كلينتون علي ضرورة تمتين نظام حظر الإنتشار النووي، وخاصة قدرات الوكالة الدولية

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

ARABIC

U.S.: Clinton Calls for Strengthened IAEA Powers - <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48952> (2)

...وكالة الذرية عجزت عن رصد مشروع المفاعل السوري: كلينتون: "التسرع إيران بتخصيب اليورانيوم في روسيا Page 2 of 2

للطاقة الذرية، باعتبارها قضية أساسية علي الأجندة الأمريكية.

وقالت أن الوكالة "ليست لديها الأدوات أو السلطات التي تمكنها من أداء مهمتها بصورة فعالة"، وشرحت "لقد رأينا ذلك في عجز الوكالة عن رصد محطة تخصيب اليورانيوم الإيرانية، ومشروع المفاعل السوري".

واستطردت كلينتون قائلة أنه إضافة إلي تمكين الوكالة من "تنفيذ صلاحيات التحقق بأكملها، بما فيها عمليات التفقيش الخاصة، لا بد من إعطائها صلاحيات جديدة تشمل القدرة علي التحري في أنشطة مشبوهة ذات صلة بأسلحة نووية، حتي في حالة عدم وجود مواد نووية".

وأكدت وزيرة الخارجية الأمريكية علي أن الولايات المتحدة "صادقة في سعيها نحو عالما آمن وسلمي وخالي من الأسلحة النووية".

وعلي الرغم من ذلك، فقد أكدت أيضا "إننا حتي نبلغ غاية إزالة آخر سلاح نووي (في العالم)، علينا أن نعزيز الإئتفاق الوطني بأن الولايات المتحدة سوف تحتفظ بالبنية التحتية النووية الضرورية للإبقاء علي الردع دون تجارب نووية".

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OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

ARABIC

MIDEAST: 'France, U.S. Pushing Arabs Into Nuclear Race' - <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48990> (1)

الشرق الأوسط: هل تدفع الدول الغربية العرب نحو سباق نووي؟

Page 1 of 2



INTER PRESS SERVICE

وكالة الأنباء العلمية انتر بريس سرفيس (آي بي إس)

الشرق الأوسط:

هل تدفع الدول الغربية العرب نحو سباق نووي؟

بقلم فريد مهدي/وكالة انتر بريس سرفيس*

إسطنبول، أكتوبر (IPS) - أطلق قرار الإمارات العربية المتحدة ببناء مفاعلات نووية لإنتاج الطاقة، سباقاً محمومًا، تجارياً وسياسياً، بين فرنسا، الولايات المتحدة، اليابان، وكوريا الجنوبية وغيرها، للفوز بهذه الصفقة التي يتجاوز إجماليها 40 مليار دولاراً، إضافة إلى تكهنات قوية عن سباق نووي في المنطقة العربية.

فقد وقع رئيس دولة الإمارات الشيخ خليفة بن زايد النهياني في الرابع من أكتوبر، علي قانون جديد لتنظيم إنتاج وتطوير الطاقة النووية في الإتحاد. وسارعت سلطات الإمارات بالتأكيد علي أن هذا البرنامج النووي سيخصص لأغراض سلمية.

وصرح حمد الكعابي، ممثل الإمارات الخاص لدي الوكالة الدولية للطاقة الذرية، أن البرنامج هو مشروع سلمي، متبني من التزام الإمارات بعدم تخصيص اليورانيوم وقدرتها علي تحقيق مستوى الأمن المطلوب من خلال بنية تحتية قوية.

وأفاد أن الإمارات أسست هيئة إتحادية متخصصة لضمان أمن المنشآت وسلامتها والحماية من الإشعاعات، يديرها المستشار الفني السابق بالوكالة الدولية للطاقة الذرية وليام ترافيرز. لكنه رفض التعليق علي عدد المفاعلات التي تنوي الإمارات العربية المتحدة بنائها.

ومن المقرر أن يبدأ العمل بإنتاج الطاقة النووية في الإمارات في عام 2017. ويذكر أن الإمارات وقعت علي معاهدة حظر الانتشار النووي.

هذا ولقد تحول ما كان يفترض أن يكون سباق تجارياً حامياً بين الشركات الكبرى للفوز بهذه الصفقة متعددة المليارات من الدولارات، إلي سباق سياسي أيضاً تكفي فرنسا في مقدمته.

فقد نشن الرئيس الفرنسي نيكولا ساركوزي في مايو الماضي، أول قاعدة عسكرية فرنسية في الإمارات، ما أعتبر خطوة هامة نحو مساعي إدماج الخليج الغني بالنفط، الذي أعتبر "محمية" أمريكية حتي الآن، في إطار الإستراتيجيات الأمنية الفرنسية.

وروج ساركوزي لتولي شركات فرنسية تنفيذ مشروع بناء المفاعلات النووية الإماراتية، عبر كونسورتيوم فرنسي يضم شركات، «أريفا» للصناعات النووية، و«توتال»، و«سويس - غاز فرنسا».

ويتنافس علي نفس الصفقة أيضاً كونسورتيوم ياباني أميركي من «جنرال إلكتريك» و«هيتاشي»، وكوري جنوبي من «الكتريك هيوونداي سامسونغ»، وكذلك «وستنغهاوس» الأمريكية.

وفي الولايات المتحدة، سعي قطاع الأعمال لكسب دعم المحافظين الجدد للضغط لصالح فوز الشركات الأمريكية بالصفقة النووية. لكن عدداً من أعضاء الكونغرس الأميركي عارضوا الصفقة منذ عين بعدم وجود قواعد صارمة لمنع الانتشار النووي، وغياب ضمانات كافية لعدم وقوع معدات حساسة بيد إيران.

كما أثار البرنامج النووي الإماراتي مخولفاً غربية من وقوع مواد أو معدات نووية في أيدي تنظيمات إرهابية. لكن

OTHER LANGUAGES [Translations | Adaptations]

ARABIC

MIDEAST: 'France, U.S. Pushing Arabs Into Nuclear Race' - <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48990> (2)

الشرق الأوسط: هل تدفع الدول الغربية العرب نحو سباق نووي؟

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البرنامج أثار فوق هذا وذلك، سلسلة من التكهنات حول إنطلاق سباق نووي واسع النطاق في الشرق الأوسط.

فقد رددت وسائل الإعلام الغربية أن التنافس قائم الآن بين الولايات المتحدة وفرنسا وروسيا وبريطانيا، للحصول على صفقات دسمة لإنتاج الطاقة النووية في الخليج العربي والشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا. كذلك أن الحكومة الفرنسية قد تباحثت مع قطر والمغرب بشأن مساعدتهما في تنفيذ برامج نووية.

وأشير إلى أن مصر والأردن تعترضان بناء محطات توليد طاقة نووية، وأن مصر وقعت إتفاقية تعاون مع روسيا في هذا المجال.

وعلق مهتّب علام راضي، الباحث بمعهد دواسات الدفاع في نيودلهي، قائلا أنه "من الواضح أن برنامجا نوويا إيرانيا من شأنه أن يطلق سباق تسلح إقليمي، يشمل شراء أسلحة نووية من قبل قوي إقليمية أخرى كالمملكة السعودية والأمارات العربية المتحدة ومصر وتركيا".

وذكر بأن المملكة السعودية قد أعلنت عن مخططات للحصول على تقنيات نووية سلمية، وبأنها كعضو في مجلس التعاون الخليجي، قد أعلنت مع الدول الأخرى الأعضاء، عن خطة لتأسيس هيئة تتولى تزويد دول الشرق الأوسط باليورانيوم المخصب".

وخلص الباحث إلى أنه إذا نفذت دول الشرق لأوسط الأخرى التي أعربت عن إهتمامها بالطاقة النووية، مخططاتها في هذا الإتجاه، فإن احتمال وقوع حالة من عدم الإستقرار في المنطقة، سوف يأتي بتداعيات حاسمة علي أسعار النفط.

هذا وفيما شددت وسائل الإعلام الإماراتية علي أمن المنشآت النووية المقرر بنائها، قالت وكالة الأنباء الوطنية أن الإمارات تنور الطريق للآخرين، أبرزت وسائل إعلامية أخرى مدي أهمية عزم الإمارات علي عدم تخصيب اليورانيوم أو إعادة معالجته.

وحذرت "أخبار الخليج" من خطر إنتشار الأسلحة النووية، وقالت أنه من الجوهري الحيلولة دون وقوع مواد كفيلة بإنتاج أسلحة دمر شامل، في أيدي حكومة ما غير مسؤولة أو تنظيم إرهابي ما.

وأفادت الرابطة النووية العالمية، التي تروج للطاقة النووية وتساعد الشركات العاملة في قطاع الصناعات النووية في العالم، أن الإمارات العربية المتحدة تخطط لبناء ثلاثة مفاعلات لتشغيلها في 2020، وأنها وقعت إتفاقيات ومذكرات تفاهم مع شركات فرنسية وبريطانية وأمريكية لهذه الغاية.*بالإشتراك مع وكالة InDepthNews ومنظمة Soka Gakka International.

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The '**feasibility**' concept is obliquely related to whether nuclear abolition is a **utopia** that is far-removed from reality. Daisaku Ikeda, president of Soka ...

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CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

24 Experts Urge Congress to Address Proliferation Concerns of Laser Enrichment

October 30, 2009

Washington D.C. – In a letter to Congress, 24 leading nuclear experts urged policymakers to take into account the proliferation risks associated with laser uranium enrichment and requested that Congress conduct an inquiry into the proliferation risks associated with this technology.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is currently reviewing a license request by Global Laser Enrichment, a partnership led by General Electric-Hitachi, for a laser enrichment facility outside of Wilmington, North Carolina. The experts' letter requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission consider proliferation consequences during the licensing process.

The full text of the letter, which was sent to Chairs of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Energy and Environment Subcommittee, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is available online:

http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/nonproliferation/articles/103009_letter_congress_laser_enrichment/.

The letter noted that the planned Global Laser Enrichment Commercial Facility would complicate diplomatic efforts to discourage the use of this technology in other countries. It stated, "If the United States demonstrates that it is a commercially viable technology, it will dangerously undermine U.S. nuclear non-proliferation efforts by making it much more difficult to dissuade other countries from acquiring this technology."

Concerns stem from the technical characteristics of this specific method of uranium enrichment make it easy to conceal, and consequently extremely difficult for international nuclear inspectors to detect. The letter noted that laser isotope separation "enables an enrichment facility to be smaller in size and to use less power than other methods of enrichment such as centrifuge or gaseous diffusion which are currently used to make low-enriched uranium fuel for use in nuclear power plants."

Laser technology would be used as an alternative to centrifuge or gaseous diffusion to enrich uranium for nuclear fuel. The use of this uranium enrichment technology could detract from U.S. and international security efforts to detect and monitor nuclear programs worldwide as global interest in nuclear power grows. If enriched to a concentration of 20 percent uranium 235 or higher, enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear weapons.

A laser uranium research program in Iran escaped detection in 2002. Another laser enrichment research experiment was also detected in South Korea in 2004 after several years. The discovery of undeclared centrifuges enrichment facilities in Iran, at Natanz in 2002 and more recently at Qom, underscore the importance of being able to detect covert facilities that could be used to make nuclear weapons-usable material.

Several experts also previously sent comments (available online) to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

*http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/nuclearweapons/articles/100209_letter_nrc_laser_enrichment_north_carolina

Source: Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation
322 4th St., NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 546-0795
Fax: (202) 546-5142



CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

(Source <http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/recent>)

Obstacles to Negotiating a New START Agreement

Oct 30, 2009

In May 2009, the United States and Russia began formal negotiations on a follow-on agreement to replace START I, which expires in December 2009. Based on news reports, conversations with Russian and American experts, and discussions with senior U.S. officials, Kingston Reif outlines the four main sticking points in the negotiations.

Letter to Congress on Laser Enrichment Facility in North Carolina

Oct 30, 2009

A letter to Congress about the proliferation risks of a specific uranium enrichment method known as laser isotope separation that Global Laser Enrichment plans to use in its proposed uranium enrichment facility in North Carolina.

A Shift in Focus: Changes in the Missile Defense Program

Oct 27, 2009

On September 17, President Barack Obama announced changes in the American missile defense program seeking a more proven and cost-effective system than that introduced by the Bush administration. FPIF spoke with Kingston Reif, Deputy Director of Nuclear Non-Proliferation at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, to understand the reasons for the changes and its effects on American foreign policy.

Analysis of FY 2010 Defense Authorization Conference Agreement (HR 2647)

Oct 21, 2009

On October 7, a House-Senate conference committee finalized the Fiscal Year 2010 Defense Authorization bill. The bill authorizes \$550.2 billion for the national security budget and \$130 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan, which adds up to \$680.2 billion in total funding, the same amount requested by the Obama administration. The House passed the conference bill on October 8. The Senate is expected to follow suit soon.

New START Won't Require Cuts in U.S. Force Structure

Oct 16, 2009

Assuming the United States and Russia can agree to new elimination, counting, and inspection rules as part of the New START negotiations, the United States should have no problem complying with a delivery vehicle limit of 800, which comports with the number of nuclear-armed systems it actually deploys and would not require it to eliminate bombers, missiles, and submarines that have been converted to conventional roles. Kingston Reif explains why in this new analysis.

Biohazard: Why U.S. Bioterror Research Is More Dangerous Than Bioterrorism

Oct 16, 2009

In their new article on *ForeignPolicy.com*, Lynn Klotz and Edward Sylvester argue that the race to develop countermeasures to biological weapons might have actually increased the probability of a bioterrorist attack and made it more difficult to achieve the kind of international cooperation that can truly reduce this threat.

Senate Sounds of Silence on Nukes

Oct 8, 2009

Given the important role Capitol Hill can play in foreign policy, recent Senate reactions to major Obama administration announcements are worth analyzing as a sign of challenges ahead. After a survey of press activity, the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation concludes that only the sounds of silence have been heard from the Senate on arms control – except for Republicans' predictable disavowal of reformulated plans for missile defense in Europe.

Rebalancing U.S. Foreign Policy: The State Department and Congressional Fellowships

Oct 5, 2009

This essay argues that in order to reclaim its proper place alongside the Pentagon as the chief incubator and executor of U.S. foreign policy, the State Department must strengthen its legislative affairs activities, and thereby its relationship with Congress, through the improved utilization of congressional fellowships for Foreign Service Officers. ■



CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

Obama must live up to Peace Prize ideals says CND
Friday, 09 October 2009

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament today welcomed the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to President Barack Obama, but cautioned that he must now live up to the ideals enshrined in the prize, both on nuclear issues and conventional wars.

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said "It is excellent that the Prize Committee have recognised the central importance of work aimed at reducing the nuclear threat we all face. Now President Obama must live up to the ideals of the Nobel Prize and follow through with concrete disarmament steps. There are many hopeful signs that the US and Russia will agree significant cut-backs, but as we approach the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May it is vital that all nuclear-armed states are brought into the process and that a timetable for abolition is agreed.

"Obama needs to decide whether he really will be a peace-maker when it comes to Afghanistan and Iran. The unwinnable war in Afghanistan is spreading hatred and instability throughout the region, with a terrible blood price being paid not only by Western forces, but primarily by Afghan civilians. Now is the time to bring it to an end - certainly not to increase troop levels. On Iran, Obama must be a real friend of peace - clearly outlining that any solution will be diplomatic and not military."

All these issues will be discussed **tomorrow at CND's international conference** "Making nuclear disarmament happen: Ideas and action in a changing world". The event, including top speakers from the US, Russia, India, Pakistan, Israel, France, Germany, Japan and New Zealand, will analyse the current global situation and the prospects for disarmament. Media access is possible for all sessions from 10:00 - 5:30. Full details at <http://www.cnduk.org/conference>

CND is also preparing for the **'Troops Home from Afghanistan' demonstration** on Saturday October 24th, co-organised with the Stop the War Coalition and the British Muslim Initiative, which will voice the majority opinion of the public - that Britain should immediately withdraw from the unnecessary and unwinnable conflict in Afghanistan. CND welcomes Security Council unanimity for action. ■

CND calls on Brown to follow through proposed nuclear warhead cuts
Monday, 12 October 2009

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament today called on Gordon Brown to agree to a reduction in the UK's stocks of nuclear warheads, as reportedly being investigated by officials. As covered in today's *Financial Times* [note 3], Downing Street officials are said to be considering the possibility of a 25% cut in warhead numbers from around 160 to around 120. This would complement the reduction in the number of missile tubes from 16 to 12 on the Vanguard-successor submarines [note 4], planned to be built as part of the Trident replacement programme, and the potential reduction from four to three submarines, proposed by Gordon Brown last month and to be decided upon in December.

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said "We strongly urge Gordon Brown to go ahead with this proposed reduction. Making the cut before the crucial non-proliferation and disarmament talks in the spring would be a real boost to efforts to reduce and then rid the world of these most awful of weapons. The US and Russia are expected to announce major cut-backs over coming months and a British initiative would pile pressure on other nuclear states to follow suit. If serious momentum can be built before the review of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in May then the chances of a breakthrough deal there are greatly increased.

"Serious movement on reducing warheads helps reinforce the positive trend towards 'global zero', but it remains the case that the biggest contribution that Britain could make to multilateral disarmament would be to scrap the Trident system and its replacement altogether.

"This cut is a start but it is only a step in the right direction. A 25% warhead cut will not provide significant cost savings on the £100bn bill for British nuclear weapons over the lifetime of Trident and its replacement. As recently as this summer ministers sneaked out a £1bn a year funding boost to the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, announced by a written statement during the Parliamentary recess [note 5]. New developments there continue apace, whilst scrapping Trident now would free up tens of billions of pounds for socially useful spending, from health and education to housing and transport, currently under threat from recessionary cut-backs." ■



WHAT OTHERS SAY

'Japan Has the Potential to Be a Constructive Global Player'

Japan should play an active role in supporting efforts toward a nuclear weapons free world, without jeopardizing its close and trusted relations with the United States, said Natsuo Yamaguchi, president of the New Komei Party, the country's third largest political party that has promoted and pursued initiatives to enhance peace and protect the vulnerable in Japanese society since 1964.

Excerpts from the interview with IDN-InDepthNews Japan correspondent:

NATSUO YAMAGUCHI: I am happy that we are witnessing a groundswell of efforts toward nuclear abolition among nuclear weapons states led by the United States. The New Komei Party has constantly advocated nuclear abolition but during and right after the cold war period, no common consensus could be formed especially among nuclear weapon states.

Now that this groundswell of movement has arisen toward doing away with nuclear weapons, Japan, as the only country which experienced nuclear holocaust, must seize this opportunity to play an active role through concrete steps in (1) advancing nuclear disarmament bringing the number of nuclear weapons possessed by nuclear holding states to zero, (2) preventing nuclear proliferation, and (3) promoting peaceful use of nuclear energy by providing Japan's technology.

I trust that such efforts are most appropriate for Japan which has both the right and a responsibility to play a constructive role. We, the New Komei Party, would like to be a front runner in this effort.

NUCLEAR UMBRELLA

Q: Speaking of nuclear abolition: President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has during U.S. visit this August politely rejected U.S. nuclear umbrella and strongly pleaded for the Middle East becoming a nuclear weapons free zone without any weapons of mass destruction. The Middle East is a rather hot spot in comparison to North-east Asia. Isn't Egypt's stance perhaps worth emulating by Japan that appears to be caught in some kind of a dilemma between its national security concern and wish for a nuclear free world? What do you think?

NY: I would say Egypt's stance is indeed thought-provoking. So far the concept of Japan's national security is based on the U.S.-Japan Treaty (of mutual cooperation and security) that entails the perception of nuclear deterrence. A re-appraisal of that perception would require careful consideration -- consideration also of implications for our relations with other countries. At the same time, I think it is important to very carefully ponder over whether the theory of nuclear deterrence will hold ground in the future.

In my view, instead of nuclear deterrence and national security measures influencing the relationships among nations, a series of bilateral relationships based on a wide range of cooperation entailing cultural and economic aspects, would gradually build a mass of multilateral relations. Only such trusted and solidly based multilateral relations would enable us review the concept of national security and in turn even influence the existing rigid way of thinking on security concerns.

I believe that a nuclear free zone such as the one proposed by Mr. Mubarak cannot be established on the basis of a one-country initiative. Confidence-building among nations in the region is vital -- it must be based on a holistic approach to the ultimate goal; besides, it cannot be achieved in a short period of time. If we succeed in creating adequate regional environs, it would lay the groundwork for not only a nuclear weapons free zone but also for a platform for collective security in the region.

In this context, let me point out that I myself have attended several international conferences convened by policy makers from NATO member countries right after the end of cold war. I still remember the remarks made by a policy maker from Iceland at one of those conferences. A representative of Iceland said that his country does not have an army of its own but has nevertheless played an important role within the collective security framework of NATO.

What he meant was that Iceland can provide a un-freeze port and a 24-hour available airbase for NATO thus serving as a cornerstone to bridging both sides of the Atlantic. This contains a lesson that national security in relations with allied nations does not necessarily have to be accompanied by substantial military capability. >>>

WHAT OTHERS SAY

In other words, a country could assume an important role for the stability of a region or regions by contributing in a way that reflects its own national setting. Iceland could do so only because there already existed a solid trusted base with countries in the region which have pledged not to invade but protect the small island of Iceland by all means. Without such a trusted relationship, the Iceland approach is not possible.

I am convinced that it is important for Japan to build up such trusted relationships with neighboring Asian countries. If we look only at military aspects, we will never be able to attain the goal of fostering trust. In fact, it is crucial to have a wide spectrum of channels including economic, cultural and people-to-people exchanges leading to trusted relationships with Asian neighboring countries.

I believe that through such sincere approaches we can help evolve conditions for mutual security in the region. These in turn would help us take necessary steps toward the establishment of a nuclear free zone in Asia. I am aware that such a zone will not be achieved within a short span of time but it is very important that we strive towards that goal.

JAPAN, U.S. AND NORTH-EAST ASIA

Q: What role do you envisage in this context for Japan's relations with North-east Asia and the United States?

NY: Let me start with U.S.-Japan relations: The bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Japan is the most basic and vital diplomatic capital for Japan -- and I believe that this will not change in the future. Casting doubts on this trusted relationship would bring in unstable elements not only to bilateral relations but also to international relations, including the Asian region. Therefore, I believe that maintaining and furthering the trusted relationship with the U.S. is vital.

Further, I believe that when we think of Japan's road to the future, it should be anchored in our constitution, our country's activities within the framework of the UN, and the U.S.-Japan relationship based on a treaty of mutual cooperation and security. Based on these three vital norms, and while maintaining cooperation with emerging neighboring powers in Asia such as China and South Korea, Japan should strive to contribute toward stability and prosperity in the region.

This will surely have positive impact on international relations. Let us consider as an example Japan's concerns with neighboring North Korea -- about nuclear development, missile tests and the abduction of Japanese nationals. We have six-party talks aimed at solving these issues through peaceful negotiations and U.S.-Japan relations play a vital role. Any uncertainty in U.S.-Japan relationship would make it impossible to advance on resolving tensions. ■