



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

NEWSLETTER FOR STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION WITH OCTOBER 2012 ARTICLES

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In-Depth Reports

Hiroshima and Nagasaki Want Nukes Abolished



BERLIN | TOKYO - Much to the chagrin of several millions in Japan and beyond, who are relentlessly campaigning for a nuclear weapons-free world, the government in Tokyo has declined to join an initiative calling for efforts to outlaw nukes out of concern it would affect the country's security arrangement under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. But the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima as well as the Hiroshima Prefecture's Governor remain unwavering in their impassioned commitment to abolition of nuclear weapons.

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Australia-NZ Pact Falls Short of Abolishing Nukes

SYDNEY - Australia and New Zealand have entered into a scientific and technical cooperation agreement to strengthen detection of nuclear explosions under the framework of the international Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and work together to promote a permanent and effective ban on nuclear weapon tests. Welcoming the new framework to support the CTBT, Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr said: "International cooperation enhances the ability of scientific experts to provide advice to their governments on whether a nuclear test has occurred." ➤ Pages 5-6

Thorny Road Ahead For Middle East Conference



BERLIN - A veil of silence and secrecy has shrouded the fate of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in 2012, since the UN announced on October 14, 2011 that Finland will host it. The veil slowly lifting now corresponds to the "wall of silence" in Israel, which Israeli anti-nuke activist Sharon Dolev is persistently trying to break – with some success. Knowledgeable sources in Berlin, London and Helsinki are convinced that the conference will indeed take place – from December 14 to 16 with seasoned Finnish diplomat and politician Jaakko Laajava as facilitator. However, hardly anyone appears to be particularly enthusiastic about it.

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Israel's Hypocrisy on a Nuclear Middle East

UNITED NATIONS - When world leaders packed their bags and headed home, there was one lingering memory of the General Assembly's high-level debate: Benjamin Netanyahu's dramatic presentation on Sep. 27 of a cartoonish nuclear red line, which hit the front pages of most mainstream newspapers in the United States. ➤ Pages 10-11

Snail's Pace Towards Ban on Nuke Testing

VIENNA - Since the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru called for a "standstill agreement" on nuclear testing on April 2, 1954, 183 out of 196 states around the world have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that bans atomic explosions by everyone, everywhere: on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground. ➤ Pages 11-12

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Hiroshima and Nagasaki Want Nukes Abolished

By RAMESH JAURA*



BERLIN | TOKYO (IDN) - Much to the chagrin of several millions in Japan and beyond, who are relentlessly campaigning for a nuclear weapons-free world, the government in Tokyo has declined to join an initiative calling for efforts to outlaw nukes out of concern it would affect the country's security arrangement under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. But the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima as well as the Hiroshima Prefecture's Governor remain unwavering in their impassioned commitment to abolition of nuclear weapons.

The initiative at issue was [announced](#) at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on October 22, 2012 by Swiss Ambassador Benno Laggner on behalf of the 34 member states – Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia,

Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Thailand, Uruguay,

The joint statement calls on all states to "intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons" and expresses "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons".

Referring to "the horrific consequences" of the use of nuclear arsenals, made clear by the suffering caused by the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the joint statement says the only way to guarantee that such weapons are never used again is "the total, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons."

The move was initiated by 16 member states of the United Nations: which include Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Holy See, Egypt, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa and Switzerland.

At a preparatory committee (PrepCom) meeting on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference on May 2, 2012 in Vienna, they issued a similar statement. But, unlike this time, they did not ask Japan to endorse the initiative.

Explaining Japan's decision, senior vice foreign minister Kazuya Shinba said at a news conference in Tokyo on October 22: "We have decided to refrain from participating" in the initiative, adding that it "isn't necessarily consistent with our country's national security policy".

Govt. decision questioned

Soon after the Japanese government's intention was reported on October 19, 2012, the Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to urge that the country has a moral obligation – as the only nation that underwent nuclear holocaust – by endorsing the joint statement.

Taue, mayor since 2007, is also vice president of the [Mayors for Peace](#) organisation, which was established in 1982 by the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima – on which the U.S. dropped atomic bombs in August 1945 killing more than 200,000 women, children and elderly. Those who survived the first atom bombs in history – known as Hibakusha – suffer even now from the aftereffects of radiation.

According to reports, MOFA explained to Mayor Taue that it was difficult for the Japanese government to have it both ways – approving the joint statement seeking to outlaw nuclear weapons on the one hand and being protected by the nuclear umbrella provided by the U.S. on the other. ☹

*Katsuhiko Asagiri, IDN's Asia-Pacific bureau chief and IPS Japan president, contributed to this article from Tokyo.



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After meeting with MOFA officials, Taue reiterated his view in an interview with Nagasaki Broadcasting Company (NBC) published on October 19 on [YouTube](#) that the joint statement was just urging nations to make efforts towards outlawing nuclear weapons; therefore, Japan should take a clear stand by supporting the statement.

Taue was born in 1956, a decade after atomic bombs laid waste the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But the eyewitness accounts of those who survived the bombings left a deep impression on him and inspired him to become a crusader for a nuclear weapons-free world.

His commitment was [also underlined](#) in an eminent civil society presentation to the Prepcom for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in Vienna. The Nagasaki Mayor asked government representatives: "Isn't it absurd that investing the immense sum of 1.63 trillion dollars worldwide on military expenditures such as in 2010 in the name of national security has only led to a more dangerous world? Is it not time now to display the strong will required to free us from that danger?"

Like Mayor Taue, Mayor Kazumi Matsui, who was born in 1953 in Hiroshima as son to a Hibakusha father, has also been championing the cause of nuke abolition. In fact, he has been exploring the possibility of holding the 2015 NPT Review Conference in Hiroshima city.

On August 6, 2012 – remembering the day atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 – Matsui said: "People of the world! Especially leaders of nuclear-armed nations, please come to Hiroshima to contemplate peace in this A-bombed city."

During a meeting with a team of journalists in September, he pointed out that in 2012, which marked the 30th anniversary of the Mayors for Peace, the number of cities calling for the total abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020 has passed 5,300, and members now represent approximately a billion people. "Next August, we will hold a 'Mayors for Peace' general conference in Hiroshima," he said.

"That event will convey to the world the intense desire of the overwhelming majority of our citizens for a nuclear weapons convention and elimination of nuclear weapons. In Spring 2014, Hiroshima will host a ministerial meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative comprising ten non-nuclear-weapon states, including Japan. I firmly believe that the demand for freedom from nuclear weapons will soon spread out from Hiroshima, encircle the globe, and lead us to genuine world peace," Mayor Matsui added.

'Global Peace' plan

He and the Hiroshima Prefecture's Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki who has launched 'Global Peace' plan – formally announced on November 4, 2011 – are in fact 'Hiroshima twins' relentlessly campaigning for a nuclear weapons-free world. Under the plan the Prefecture aims to be actively involved in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and the development of human resources for peace-building thereby boosting efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.

During a meeting arranged by [Hiroshima Soka Gakkai](#) in September, Governor Yuzaki said that the Prefecture had come up with a new approach by which Hiroshima can work toward peace over the next 50 or 60 years. "Thus far Hiroshima has had an influence on the world through the atomic bombing survivors' accounts of their experiences and in other ways. Through this plan Hiroshima will continue to exert its influence on the world but in a new form."

The action plan, the core of the overall plan, consists of five elements: 1) support the creation of a road map for nuclear abolition; 2) reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism; 3) develop human resources for the building of a peaceful international community; 4) amass research on nuclear disarmament, conflict resolution and peace-building; and 5) create a sustainable mechanism to support peace.

Specifically, one of the plan's goals is the start of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, and it proposes holding a 'Hiroshima roundtable' in which senior government officials of nuclear-weapon states could participate as individuals. ☺





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The plan would also create a mechanism for the evaluation and "grading" of disarmament efforts such as the implementation of the final report of the review conference of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. It further proposes the creation of a centre for research and the training of experts to assume responsibility for the resolution of regional conflicts.

Puzzling

Against the backdrop of Nagasaki and Hiroshima striving for a nuclear weapons-free world, the Japanese MOFA's announcement is a source of concern to representatives of the opposition New Komei party's committee for the promotion of nuclear abolition. Addressing Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba, the committee's four members from the lower and upper house of the National Diet have stressed the inhuman aspect of nuclear weapons.

Referring to the debate in the first committee of the UN General Assembly, they point out that [Norway will hold a conference in Oslo in March 2013](#) to focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear detonations, as well as ability to respond to such a disaster credibly and effectively. The conference will provide greater insight and a fact-based understanding of the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation, deputy director general and head of the division for disarmament, non-proliferation and export control in Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Inga M.W. Nyhamar, informed on October 18.

The Japanese government's decision not to endorse the joint statement, backed by 34 nations, sounds puzzling for yet another reason: At the fifth ministerial meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) – initiated by Japan and Australia – on September 26, 2012, Tokyo endorsed a joint statement, which affirmed:

"We, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, resolve to move forward with practical steps that will advance the implementation of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference Action Plan ('Action Plan') and to pursue the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We acknowledge the efforts of many states towards achieving these objectives but also recognise that much more needs to be done."

Also Ambassador Mari Amano [said](#) during the UNGA First Committee discussions on October 17 that "the tragic consequences of nuclear weapon use must never be repeated". He added: "As the only country to have suffered from atomic bombings, Japan had engaged in practical and progressive efforts for a world without nuclear weapons. As part of those ongoing efforts, Japan would once again be submitting to this Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament entitled 'United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons'."

The New Komei party members recalled in their letter to Foreign Minister Genba a [resolution](#) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), approved on November 26, 2011. The IFRC said that it was "deeply concerned about the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the unspeakable human suffering they cause, the difficulty of controlling their effects in space and time, the threat they pose to the environment and to future generations and the risks of escalation they create".

The four parliamentarians – Masao Akamatsu, Masayoshi Hamada, Masaaki Taniai and Kozo Akino – stressed that the New Komei party favoured the convening of a nuclear abolition summit in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015 inviting heads of nuclear states.

"As a step toward the realization of the summit, we must make the scheduled NPDI foreign ministers meeting to be held in Hiroshima in 2014 a success. Japan should take a leading role as the chairing nation in clearly positioning 'inhumanity of nuclear weapons' in the course of debate on 'lessening roles of nuclear weapons' which has been positioned as one of six NPDI working items," the parliamentarians said. [IDN-InDepthNews – October 25, 2012] □

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Pictures: (page 2) Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Left to right) | Credit: Mayors for Peace
(page 3) Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki | Credit: Hiroshima Prefecture



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Australia-NZ Pact Falls Short of Abolishing Nukes

By NEENA BHANDARI

SYDNEY (IDN) - Australia and New Zealand have entered into a scientific and technical cooperation agreement to strengthen detection of nuclear explosions under the framework of the international Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and work together to promote a permanent and effective ban on nuclear weapon tests.

Welcoming the new framework to support the CTBT, Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr said: "International cooperation enhances the ability of scientific experts to provide advice to their governments on whether a nuclear test has occurred. Cooperation between Australia and New Zealand can serve as a model for others around the world and will strengthen the CTBT."

The framework for bilateral cooperation is set out in a memorandum of understanding between the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It describes its key aims as aiding sound scientific and technical analysis by Australian and New Zealand agencies of data and information related to verification of the CTBT; promoting the development of similar capacity in regional countries; and promoting development of effective verification tools and methodologies for the CTBT.

The move would see [Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency](#) and [Geoscience Australia](#) working more closely with New Zealand's [Environmental Science and Research](#) (ESR) to enhance their capabilities to detect nuclear explosions.

Carr said in a statement: "Australia strongly advocates the earliest possible entry into force of the CTBT, so we are taking technical steps to prepare for that time." Australia and New Zealand signed the scientific and technical cooperation agreement on September 28, 2012.

'Move quickly to a Nuclear Weapons Convention'

But Chairman of the [Mayors for Peace Foundation](#) and former expert advisor to the [Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation](#), Steve Leeper, feels countries like Australia that have signed and ratified the CTBT should be doing far more than talking about a new framework.

"It makes it look like the two countries are doing something about nuclear weapons when what they are really doing is refusing to support the nuclear weapons convention. They should be applying serious diplomatic and even economic pressure on the United States to force it to ratify the Treaty," Leeper told IDN.

He suggests that one way to do this would be to launch an initiative to deny the U.S. and other non-signatories the extremely valuable information about seismic activity and radiation releases and tests now being gathered by the remarkable network of monitoring stations created by the [CTBT Organisation](#).

The Treaty calls for cooperation among its parties to strengthen their ability to use the monitoring system to verify whether a nuclear explosion has taken place.

The CTBT Organisation has completed work on a [global network](#) of over 300 facilities to monitor the environment for acoustic waves and radionuclide particulates and gases from a possible nuclear explosion. Data collected by these facilities is made available to CTBT parties, who have the final responsibility in determining which events – about 30,000 per year – could be a nuclear explosion.

Leeper said: "The CTBT is part of the so-called step-by-step approach, which is nothing more than an effort to trick the non-nuclear weapon states into continuing to abide by the non-proliferation treaty while the nuclear-weapon states continue to maintain their nuclear advantage forever. Japan and Australia are two countries devoted to the step-by-step approach because they don't want to irritate the nuclear weapon states. We need to move quickly beyond the CTBT to a Nuclear Weapons Convention and we need Australia and New Zealand solidly behind the comprehensive approach." ➔



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CTBT opened for signature on September 24, 1996 and since 183 countries have signed it, but it is still awaiting ratification by specified states before it can enter into force. With Indonesia's ratification of the Treaty earlier this year (2012), 36 Annex 2 states have now ratified the CTBT. Currently, eight remaining Annex 2 states (China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America) must ratify in order for the Treaty to be legally binding.

Annex 2 states are the 44 countries designated "nuclear-capable states" that participated in the negotiations of the CTBT from 1994-1996 and that possessed nuclear power reactors or research reactors at that time. In the past 16 years, progress has been made to develop a verification system and analysis techniques to detect and investigate a possible nuclear explosion anywhere around the globe.

'Prohibit nuclear weapons completely'

According to a spokesperson for the [Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#), "A permanent and verifiable ban on nuclear testing through the CTBT is a vital building block for non-proliferation and disarmament. Australia continues to press for its earliest entry into force".

However, a growing number of nations, organisations and prominent individuals around the world are now calling for negotiations to start on a treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons completely, not just nuclear testing. In recent years, many governments have voiced support for a nuclear-weapon-free world, but precious little has been done to reach that goal.

As [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\) Australia](#)'s Director, Tim Wright said: "Although the CTBT has certainly helped to restrain some nuclear developments, it has not provided – and was never intended to provide – the necessary legal framework to halt the modernisation of nuclear forces or prevent nuclear proliferation, let alone achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

"This is where governments should focus their diplomatic efforts. Negotiations need not, and must not, await the entry into force of the CTBT. We need nuclear-free countries to play a leading role, rather than simply waiting for the nuclear-armed countries to act. This is an urgent humanitarian necessity," Wright told IDN.

[Australian Red Cross](#) in conjunction with [Flinders University](#) and the [Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre at University of South Australia](#) are co-hosting a conference in Adelaide in the first week of November 2012 to advance the debate on the urgent need to develop a legally binding tool to prohibit and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons. The [Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#) have been at the centre of the nuclear weapons debate from the very outset. From 1945 to 2011, the Movement has consistently voiced its deep concerns about these weapons of mass destruction and the need for the prohibition of their use.

In November 2011, the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement had come together to pass a resolution, which appealed to all states to "pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement". The resolution has since attracted worldwide attention, including garnering support from the Australian parliament.

Today there are [at least 20,000 nuclear weapons world-wide, around 3,000 of them on launch-ready alert](#). The potential power of these would roughly equate to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs.

As [ICAN Australia Advisory Board Member, Catriona Standfield](#) said, "It is the civil society, which first ignited the movement for a nuclear weapons ban, and it has continued to be the most vocal supporter of disarmament and non-proliferation in the face of inaction by nuclear weapon states".

"Civil society continues to be the primary arena in which young people like me become involved in the push for a nuclear weapons ban. I believe that the rapid changes in communication and technology will see my generation build a truly global coalition of young civil society advocates for a nuclear weapon-free world," Standfield told IDN. This augurs well for a complete elimination of nuclear weapons. [IDN-InDepthNews – October 21, 2012] □

Read in Japanese http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=773:australia-nz-pact-falls-short-of-abolishing-nukes-japanese&catid=2:japanese-korean&Itemid=3

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Knowledgeable sources in Berlin, London and Helsinki are convinced that the conference will indeed take place - from December 14 to 16 with seasoned Finnish diplomat and politician Jaakko Laajava as facilitator. However, hardly anyone appears to be particularly enthusiastic about it.

In fact, as Kate Hudson, general secretary of the [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament \(CND\)](#) and a leading anti-nuclear and anti-war campaigner [says](#), "many will see this proposal as a pipedream". She adds: "There are of course significant obstacles to overcome before this conference can succeed, but certainly, the biggest threat to the region would be failure."

Reporting about obstacles to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) preparatory committee meeting early May 2012 in Vienna, Laajava said that although he had conducted more than 100 meetings - both inside and outside the region - he had yet to secure an agreement from all relevant states on participation.

"News of Laajava's no-news statement was met with another round of eye-rolling and finger-pointing: The likely holdouts are Israel and Iran, with a major question mark hanging over Syrian participation," [wrote](#) Martin B. Malin in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.

But Malin - who is the executive director of the Project on Managing the Atom at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government - is nevertheless optimistic that Israel may come to see as the least unpalatable option negotiations with its neighbours to establish rules for limiting the possession of WMD (weapons of mass destruction) across the region, eventually putting its own capabilities on the negotiating table.

"Discussing a WMD-free zone would allow Israel to prolong its nuclear weapons monopoly with the fewest challenges for an interim period, while negotiating the terms of a transition to a nuclear and WMD free Middle East. It can also use a forum on regional arms control as a venue to raise its concerns about proliferation elsewhere in the region," avers Malin.

In his view, Iran too has important security interests in pursuing a WMD-free zone. Because Tehran has a long-term strategic interest in denuclearizing Israel, and, "odious as it might seem to Iran's leaders, direct negotiations with Israel on regional security and a WMD ban are the only way to do that."

Facilitator Laajava has formally asked Iran to participate in the planned conference, the Fars News Agency reported. He made the request on September 10, 2012 during a meeting in Tehran with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Akhoundzadeh.

With the planned dates fast approaching, the conference facilitator and civil society organisations are faced with a huge task to persuade key participants that, as Hudson says, nuclear weapons-free zones (NWFZs) are highly successful forms of collective security across large parts of the world. Currently, 115 states and 18 other territories belong to five regional treaties, covering a majority of the earth's surface, including almost the entire southern hemisphere. ☺

Photo: Israeli disarmament action | Credit: ICAN





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Iran initiated

The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East was first proposed in 1974 by Iran, now being ostracised for its alleged nuke development programme. Egypt extended the proposal in 1990 to include other WMD (weapons of mass destruction), reflecting the serious concern around chemical and biological warfare in the region. A resolution on achieving a WMD-free zone was adopted at the [1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty \(NPT\) Review Conference](#).

Fifteen years later, the 2010 NPT Review Conference identified five steps necessary towards the goal of establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, including convening a regional conference in 2012 and appointing a facilitator.

"Failure to move forward in establishing a WMD-free zone will in fact mean that the stakes will remain higher in any potential conflict. And the stakes are always a human cost," cautions CND's Hudson.

Hudson rightly points out that NWFZs are fundamental mechanisms for tackling precisely these insecurities and subsequent escalations. The Treaty of Tlatelolco (South America) included two competing treaty members, Argentina and Brazil, both with large nuclear power industries with the capability of developing nuclear weapons. The treaty provided the confidence-building framework and a norm of non-proliferation which defused the potential and perceived need for pursuing nuclear weapons systems.

Voicing general concern, the [Egyptian Foreign Ministry](#) says in a document submitted in May 2012 to the planning committee of the NPT Review Conference in 2015 that the Arab League sees the conference in Finland as an important crossroad with regard to its nuclear policies. It believes that if realistic and practical steps towards WMD disarmament cannot be agreed upon, then nuclear proliferation will become a dangerous reality across the region. The international community should therefore do all it can to avert this.

There is a pressing need for open discussions about security concerns and weapons capacity, which will be vital to the success of WMD-free zone in the Middle East: and it begins with opening channels of communication which are the building blocks of peace and genuine security.

This is what Dolev has been doing with a handful of activists under the umbrella of the Greenpeace and in cooperation, among others, with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons ([ICAN](#)).

In the face of uncertainty about Israeli participation in the conference, the evolution of the [Treaty of Tlatelolco](#) may in fact serve as a role model for the Middle East conference in Finland, suggests Dolev during a visit to Berlin.

The possibility is not ruled out that like Argentina, to begin with Israel (and Iran) stay away from signing any agreement. But the conference could trigger landmark co-operation and negotiations which would be essential in establishing a WMD-free zone would be positive for intra-regional relations.

"And while states may be cautious in their approach, if they believe that this can be a serious framework for peaceful co-existence then of course they would be supportive. Such caution can be gradually turned to confidence, through robust and transparent verification measures, as well as binding mechanisms with teeth," says Hudson.

Call a spade a spade

Xanthe Hall, the nuclear disarmament campaigner at German affiliate of Nobel laureate International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War ([IPPNW](#)), says Germany as a close partner of Israel should do its best to persuade Tel Aviv to participate in the proposed conference in all seriousness.

This necessitates calling a spade that Israel possesses nuclear weapons and holding on to the Cold War thinking justifies these as deterrence.

"While the entire world is constantly discussing Israel and its nuclear capability, within Israel, ambiguity is alive and well and the 'issue' has become taboo," says Dolev at a 'meet the press' organised by IPPNW Germany, adding: "If we as a society give any thought to the nuclear issue, it is to the Iranian nuclear weapons, which has not yet become a reality. If the subject of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is raised among us, we immediately point to Iran (which unlike Israel is an NPT signatory)."

Dolev explains the prevailing situation: "Like the hunchback who does not see his hump, we do not see, hear or think about our own weapons, nor do we question their necessity beyond saying from time to time that we can always strike Iran with nuclear weapons. Even then, we say it without considering the fact that Israel is a nuclear state. ☹"



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Though Israelis are open to debate, they not only tend to consider the nuclear question taboo but also rather complex for expressing dissenting opinions. Subsequently, most people accept that only top acting political and military leaders assume that right, only in closed forums.

"Any relevant information in Hebrew is rare; information in English is abundant but arduous to analyse," says journalist Pierre Klochendler. "The absence of discussion stems also from the fact that, since the inception of its own nuclear programme in the late 1950s, Israel has officially stuck to a policy of 'ambiguity': it 'won't be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons in the region' is the official posture.

Ambiguity therefore means that the international community should continue to ignore Dimona, believed to be the centre of the Israeli nuclear programme, and focus solely on Natanz, allegedly the nerve centre of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Israeli government officials praise "ambiguity" as it enhances Israel's security almost as much as WMD. Assuming such a policy is necessary, anti-nuclear activists propose a debate which would respect the constraints of not exposing Israel's nuclear capability. Such discussion would strengthen the democratic character of their society.

"It's still possible, even obligatory, to hold serious discussions about the need for nuclear weapons, the dangers they present regionally and globally, and the various possibilities for disarmament," says Dolev.

The sense of creativity which permeates the activities of Dolev and her supporters is reflected also in the visit of four survivors of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb massacre (the Hibakusha) to Israel and their meetings with broad sections of the society, including survivors of the holocaust. Such meetings drew attention to the catastrophic nature of nuclear arsenal.

Dolev's actions are guided by the underlying conviction that "Israel's practice of hiding in the bunker of ambiguity is perceived as a threat and not as a gesture of non-violence or as an absence of an intended threat."

On the other hand, an anti-nuclear movement in Israel that would bring the question of the country's nuclear policy to national and global media attention would reveal a more open Israel, an Israel with which one can talk and, moreover, an Israel with a democratic society that is not monolithic, where different opinions exist and can be expressed, maintains Dolev. [IDN-InDepthNews – October 17, 2012] □

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Israel's Hypocrisy on a Nuclear Middle East

By THALIF DEEN

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - When world leaders packed their bags and headed home, there was one lingering memory of the General Assembly's high-level debate: Benjamin Netanyahu's dramatic presentation on Sep. 27 of a cartoonish nuclear red line, which hit the front pages of most mainstream newspapers in the United States.

The Israeli prime minister warned Iran against crossing that red line even though the Jewish state itself had crossed it when it went nuclear many moons ago.

As Mouin Rabbani, contributing editor to the Middle East Report, told IPS, "The real absurdity of Netanyahu lecturing the world about nuclear weapons was precisely that – an Israeli leader lecturing the world about the dangers of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East."

The fact of the matter is that not only is Israel the region's sole nuclear power, and not only has it on previous occasions all but threatened to use these weapons of mass destruction, but it has since its establishment consistently and steadfastly rejected ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Rabbani said.

"It's a bit like listening to (Hustler magazine publisher) Larry Flynt denouncing pornography – though to be fair to Flynt, it's unlikely he will reach the levels of hypocrisy displayed by Netanyahu," said Rabbani, a Middle East expert who has written extensively on the politics of the volatile region.

Still, most Middle East leaders, speaking during the high-level debate here, seem to have accepted Israel's double standards on nuclear politics – and with hardly an aggressive response to Netanyahu's address to the Assembly.

Besides standard bearers like Jordan's King Abdullah and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, the new generation of Arab leaders who addressed the General Assembly included Mohamed Morsi of Egypt, Yemeni President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, Libya's Mohamed Yousef El Magarief and Tunisia's Moncef Marzouki.

As one Asian diplomat put it, "Nethanyahu's nuke-oriented speech ended with a bang while the speeches of most Middle East leaders ended with a whimper."

Asked why Arab leaders were reticent, Ian Williams, a senior analyst at Foreign Policy in Focus and Deadline Pundit, told IPS, "Perhaps one of the problems is that Arab leaders and their people are so aware that Israel has nuclear weapons they do not realise how much of a taboo subject it is in the West.

"So while they have on other occasions referred to Israel's nuclear capacity, they were slow to riposte on the flagrant hypocrisy of Netanyahu posturing with a cutout card bomb while standing on 200 real ones," said Williams, a longstanding observer of Middle Eastern politics.

Even as Iran continues to insist that its nuclear programme is only for peaceful purposes, Israel continues to taunt the Iranians.

As Netanyahu told delegates last week, "The relevant question is not when Iran will get the bomb but at what stage can we no longer stop Iran from getting the bomb."

Rabbani told IPS, "Many observers commented on the – literally and figuratively – cartoonish nature of his remarks, replete with a Looney Tunes graphic of a bomb with fuse.

"If Netanyahu wanted to present a point of view with potential interest, he would instead have explained why Israel remains committed to rejecting the long-standing Egyptian initiative for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and more importantly, why Israel only days before Netanyahu mounted the U.N. podium rejected participation in the Helsinki conference to be held later this year and backed by the U.S., to debate the establishment of a nuclear-weapons free zone in the Middle East," Rabbani added.

He said Arab leaders appear not to have directly challenged Israel's war-mongering towards Iran – in part because some Arab states desperately hope such an attack materialises.

Others either do not want to strain relations with influential Arab states for whom containment of Iran is their primary foreign policy objective, or risk tensions with Washington by being seen as supporting Iran in its conflict with Israel. ☞



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"It is a very different Arab world than existed mere decades ago. Yet it is also beginning to change, and is in the process of a fundamental transformation," Rabbani said.

Thus Egyptian President Morsi devoted more than a few words to the Palestine question, and spoke about it in ways that were unthinkable during the Mubarak era. "Expect to see more of the same in years ahead," he said.

Rabbani also said there is a growing perception in the Middle East that the United States is going the way of the British and French before them, that its imperial moment is behind it and that "we are witnessing the gradual decline of American influence in the region."

This in part helps explain why so many Arab leaders felt the need to harp on about the controversy ignited by the ludicrous yet patently offensive video clip "Innocence of Muslims", which ignited protests throughout the Muslim world.

"The video, or at least reports about it, caused genuine outrage in the region. And condemning this clip was a convenient method for leaders known to be excessively close to Washington to demonstrate they haven't yet surrendered that final shred of national dignity," Rabbani said.

Williams said Morsi was relatively circumspect in addressing the controversial video.

"Christian leaders in the West have called for blasphemy laws to be applied in the past and few countries are absolutists on free speech. His approach was balanced with nuances to head off criticism at home and abroad," Williams added.

"His engagement of Iran over Syria did of course challenge the U.S.-Israeli consensus, but he is not alone and already seems to have produced some results since (Iranian President Mahmoud) Ahmedinijad's discursive speech did not mention Syria." [IPS | October 2012] □

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Snail's Pace Towards Ban on Nuke Testing

By JAMSHED BARUAH

VIENNA (IDN) - Since the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru called for a "standstill agreement" on nuclear testing on April 2, 1954, 183 out of 196 states around the world have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that bans atomic explosions by everyone, everywhere: on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground.

157 countries including three of the nuclear weapon States – France, Russia and Britain – have ratified the treaty. But before the CTBT can enter into force, 44 specific nuclear technology holder countries must sign and ratify it. Of these, eight are still missing: China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA. In fact, India, North Korea and Pakistan have yet to sign the treaty.

Nevertheless since September 24, 1996 when the CTBT opened for signature at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, following three years of intense negotiations, the world has become slightly safer. Because the treaty has a unique and comprehensive verification regime to make sure that no nuclear explosion goes undetected.

In the five decades before the CTBT, over 2,000 nuclear tests shook and irradiated the planet. But, according to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the post-CTBT world saw only a handful of nuclear tests: those by India and Pakistan in 1998 and by North Korea in 2006 and 2009. ☺



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All these met universal condemnation, including unanimously adopted UN Security Council sanctions. "The zero-tolerance stance against nuclear tests is reflected by the number of States Signatories to the CTBT: 183, or over 90% of all countries," avers the Vienna-based CTBTO, headed by the Executive Secretary, Tibor Tóth from Hungary.

And yet there is no reason for complacency. With this in view, foreign ministers and other high-level representatives, who met on September 27 at the UN headquarters in New York, issued a joint call for the entry into force of the CTBT.

In their joint statement, the foreign ministers described the CTBT's entry into force as "a vital step towards the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons...We call upon all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty, in particular the remaining eight Annex 2 States [these are China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States]."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon echoed this appeal, urging the states that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT: "You are failing to live up to your responsibility as a member of the international community."

CTBTO Executive Secretary Tóth provided the historical context to the meeting against the background of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He called for political leadership to overcome the nuclear danger, stressing that the CTBT is a milestone on the way to a nuclear-weapon free world.

The meeting at the UN headquarters was co-hosted by the foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Pulitzer Prize-winner Richard Rhodes, author of the Reykjavik play, reminded delegates that the risk of nuclear extinction is man-made. Thus a man-made solution could be found, as the 1986 Reykjavik summit had demonstrated. In Reykjavik, U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev had come close to an agreement to abolish their nuclear arsenals: "A nuclear-weapon free world is not a utopian dream," Rhodes said. He also invited all delegates to the performance of the Reykjavik play later that day at the Baruch Performing Arts Center in New York.

The play re-enacts the moment in October 1986 at the Reykjavik summit in Iceland when Reagan (Richard Easton) and Mikhail Gorbachev (Jay O. Sanders) came close to abolishing all nuclear weapons. More than 25 years later, the drama of the meeting and its potential to fundamentally change the course of history continues to ignite the imagination and inspire hopes for the future. The performance is directed by Tyler Marchant and produced by Primary Stages.

With the file on the Reykjavik negotiations declassified, key players from the summit are now able to speak freely. In the panel discussion after the performance they considered lessons learned, opportunities missed and what is needed today to move forward in eliminating nuclear weapons.

"In the current political climate, which is still clouded by nuclear threats, revisiting Reykjavik is a reminder that strong leadership, with political will and vision, can act to make nuclear disarmament breakthroughs," said Tóth. "It is time for the world's leaders to heed Reykjavik's message. In particular, from the eight remaining countries needed to bring the treaty into force."

As far as India is concerned, it has expressed its "regret that the (CTBT) text, as has finally emerged, does not do justice to the negotiating mandate. It is not a comprehensive ban but merely a ban on nuclear explosive testing. It also lacks a definitive commitment to nuclear disarmament".

However, according to the CTBTO, Keith Hansen, part of the United States' CTBT negotiating team, believed that India's refusal to sign the CTBT reflected not only dissatisfaction with the treaty, but also a desire to join the 'Nuclear Club' of nuclear armed countries. [IDN-InDepthNews – October 2, 2012] □

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What Others Say

Pentagon Nixed 1998 U.S. Nuclear Scientists' Probe of Iranian Programme

By GARETH PORTER

WASHINGTON (IPS) - In 1998, the Defence Department vetoed a delegation of prominent U.S. nuclear specialists to go to Iran to investigate its nuclear programme at the invitation of the government of newly-elected Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, according to the nuclear scientist who was organising the mission.

The Pentagon objected to the delegation's mission even though it was offered the option of including one or more scientists of its own choosing on the delegation, according to Dr. Behrad Nakhai, the nuclear scientist who was organising it.

The Pentagon veto of the nuclear scientists' delegation eliminated the Khatami government's most promising initiative to promote a thaw in U.S.-Iran relations by weakening a key U.S. argument for viewing Iran as a threat.

The Bill Clinton administration had been accusing Iran of wanting nuclear weapons, based not on intelligence on the nuclear programme but on the assumption that Iran would use enriched uranium for nuclear weapons rather than for civilian power.

In a series of interviews with IPS, Nakhai, an Iranian who had come to the United States after high school, got a PhD in nuclear engineering from the University of Tennessee in 1979 and was a research scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, provided a detailed account of the episode.

Iran's mission to the U.N. informed Nakhai in late February 1998 that President Khatami and the new head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, Gholam-Reza Aghazadeh, wanted him to put together a group of nuclear scientists to visit Iran to study the Iranian nuclear programme, Nakhai recalled.

The Iranian invitation came in the wake of President Khatami's January 1998 interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour calling for a "crack in the wall of distrust" between the United States and Iran and his appeal to the U.S. people for "the exchange of professors, writers, scholars, artists, journalists and tourists".

Although those appeals had been followed by a public rejection by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of official talks between Iran and the United States, Khatami appeared determined to reduce tensions with Washington.

Nakhai recalled that he asked Iranian officials at the U.N. mission how big the delegation could be and was told, "You decide and we will issue the visas." Iran would also foot the bill for the trip, they said.

"Where can I take them?" asked Nakhai, and the Iranians responded, "You decide. No restrictions." The Iranians said the U.S. scientists could meet with whomever they chose, according to Nakhai's account. On Mar. 5, Nakhai began to contact prominent nuclear scientists and engineers. His first call was to Dr. Richard T. Lahey, chairman of the department of nuclear engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and one of the world's most eminent nuclear scientists. Lahey had headed a group of scientists who went to China after détente to study the Chinese nuclear programme.

After being assured by Nakhai that there would be no restrictions on what the scientists could see and where they could go, Lahey expressed interest in the proposed delegation, Nakhai recalled.

In an e-mail to Lahey that same day, which Nakhai has provided to IPS, Nakhai wrote, "The 7-10 days visit will entail sessions with government officials, discussions with University and Laboratory faculties, and tours of facilities." Nakhai suggested late spring for the delegation trip.

At Nakhai's request, Lahey offered to contact other prominent nuclear scientists, and in a Mar. 24 e-mail to Nakhai, also provided to IPS, Lahey said, "I have now heard from a number of top specialists in the field of Nuclear Energy and Safety who would be interested in going to Iran on a technology exchange visit." ➡

Picture above: Then President Mohammad Khatami hoped to reduce tensions with Washington. Credit: World Economic Forum/cc by 2.0





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Lahey said Prof. Theo Theofanous of University of California Santa Barbara, Professor John J. Dorning of the University of Virginia and Dr. Rusi Taleyarkhan of Oak Ridge National Laboratory had expressed their willingness to join Lahey on such a delegation.

Lahey's e-mail also said Nakhai would need to contact the State Department "to make sure that we have formal permission to go on this trip." Most prominent nuclear scientists had security clearances from the Department of Energy, he noted, and could lose their clearances if they made the trip without official approval.

In mid-March, Nakhai recalls, he called the State Department's Iran desk officer, J. Christopher Stevens. Stevens went on to become ambassador to Libya in 2012 but was killed in an attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi on Sep. 11.

In their third conversation that same week, Stevens told the scientist that the trip was "a good idea", according to Nakhai. But Stevens said Nakhai would have to "clear it with the Department of Defence".

Stevens gave Nakhai the telephone number for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Near East and South Asia Alina Romanowski, the top adviser to the secretary of defence on Near East matters. But when Nakhai called Romanowski, he got a decidedly negative response to the proposed trip.

Romanowski was unequivocally opposed to the idea, according to Nakhai, arguing that the scientists wouldn't be able to get the truth in Iran. "They will mislead you," Nakhai recalled her saying. "They will not show you everything."

"I told her these scientists could not be easily fooled," Nakhai said. He pointed to Lahey's experience in leading a mission to China during the Richard Nixon administration.

Nakhai then told Romanowski that the group would ask to go wherever the Defence Department wanted them to go.

Nakhai asked her to think it over, and said he would call back later.

When Nakhai called back a week later, Romanowski gave him the same answer and the same argument, Nakhai said.

In a later conversation with Romanowski, Nakhai recalled, he offered her assurances that he would include an expert on nuclear weapons on the delegation. He also referred to his contacts with the American Nuclear Society -the premier professional association of specialists on civilian nuclear power - and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

And in yet another phone conversation with Romanowski, Nakhai said, he invited the Pentagon to "send somebody of your own choosing as part of the delegation." But Romanowski's opposition remained unchanged.

Nearly two months after he had first contacted the Defence Department official, Nakhai pulled the plug on the project in May 1998.

Romanowski is now deputy assistant administrator in the U.S. Agency for International Development's Middle East Bureau. Responding to a query from IPS Thursday, a spokesman for USAID, Ben Edwards, said, "Ms Romanowski cannot comment about the DoD in her current capacity at USAID."

Robert Pelletreau, who had been assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asia in 1994-97 and had been deputy assistant secretary of defence for the same region in 1983-85, told IPS the decision to oppose the delegation trip would have been made at a higher level at DOD with input from the Joint Staff and others.

DOD's reluctance to see a gesture toward Iran that the State Department was supporting might have been a factor, according to Pelletreau, along with distrust of an initiative coming from an Iranian scientist with no ties to the Pentagon.

The DOD's rejection of the nuclear scientists' mission came at a crucial turning point in Iran's nuclear programme. Iran had begun testing centrifuges secretly and making plans for the construction of a uranium enrichment facility.

Although the delegation of scientists would not have uncovered those facts, it probably would have anticipated the construction of both uranium conversion and enrichment facilities, and could have analysed whether the profile of Iran's nuclear programme indicated that it was indeed for civilian power or not.

Such a report might have challenged the Clinton administration's line on the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons.

Nakhai believes the Pentagon wanted to protect that line. "They had anticipated that the nuclear programme would be useful for pressure on Iran," Nakhai said, "and they didn't want any reduction in that pressure point."

[IPS | October 28, 2012] □



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What Others Say

Disagreements Abound Over WMD-Free Middle East

By J C SURESH

TORONTO (IDN) - Negotiations for a proposed conference on ridding the Middle East of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction would be difficult and the path would be long, but the "prize" – the security of the region and the world – would be worth the time and effort, the United Nations General Assembly's (UNGA's) First Committee dealing with Disarmament and International Security has been told.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on October 16, 2012, Ireland's Jim Kelly, said the conference, which was planned for December in Helsinki and part of the action plan agreed at the 2010 review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), was an opportunity for meaningful discussion on establishing such a zone in that tense region, and he urged all States of the region to attend and to engage constructively with each other.



Eshagh Al Habib of Iran, which has been under fire for allegedly working on nuclear weapons, said its representative, had proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 1974, but efforts to establish it, he said, had not yet succeeded, owing to the persistent refusal of "the Zionist regime" to join the NPT as a "non-nuclear-weapon party" and place its concealed nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

The best way to stop proliferation of nuclear weapons, he said, was "full and non-selective implementation" of the NPT, in particular in his region, where the clandestine nuclear weapons programme of the only non-NPT party in the region seriously threatened regional and international peace and security.

After seven decades of constant calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, he said, nations had lost their patience. The nuclear-weapon States should "stop the rhetoric [...] and start adopting practical measures to fulfil their obligations", he said.

Syria's Bashar Ja'afari similarly expressed deep concern that the NPT reviews had failed to draw a timeline for the nuclear-armed States to get rid of their nuclear arsenals. He urged the international community to work diligently to implement the 2010 NPT Action Plan, particularly the agreement to convene the 2012 Conference on the Middle East zone.

Nuclear-weapon States were arming Israel and providing it with the technologies needed to manufacture such weapons, he said. International silence towards Israel, which had allowed it to openly declare nuclear weapons possession and the threat of their use, was indicative that some countries were conspiring with Israel and protecting it, thereby endangering the NPT's credibility.

The region, said Israel's representative Ron Prosor, was undergoing historic changes, and the current turmoil in the Arab world was a clear example of its fragility. Israel had never challenged the non-proliferation regime, but there were other countries in the Middle East that were not members of other non-proliferation treaties. The Syrian chemical weapons threat remained extremely worrying, he said.

Although Israel had substantive reservations regarding certain elements of the resolution establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, it supported "the annual endorsement of that visionary goal", he said. In stark contrast to that spirit of cooperation, the Arab League was tabling a second resolution, titled 'Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East'. That was a contentious text, which sought to divert attention from the activities of some regional States, such as Iran and Syria; those activities constituted flagrant violations of international obligations.

☺

Photo: Serbia's Vuk Jeremić presides over the 67th session of the Assembly. Credit: UN



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Tabling the resolution constituted an annual declaration by its sponsors that they preferred to continue trying to alienate and isolate Israel rather than engage it in a cooperative manner. The decision to add a paragraph on the 2012 regional conference raised profound questions about the real motivation of the Arab States with regard to that idea. Belligerent resolutions did not result in progress, and he called on Member States to vote against the draft.

He said it was no coincidence that four out of five major violations of NPT had occurred in the Middle East – Iraq, Libya, Syria and Iran – while the fifth case, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, had been involved in nuclear proliferation to the Middle East. Iran and Syria were under continuous investigation by IAEA, and Syria had not yet declared the nuclear fuel destined for the nuclear reactor built by the 'DPRK' at the Deir al Zour site.

One of the most central threats in the Middle East today was Iran's hostile policies, its pursuit of nuclear weapons, the aggressive development of missile technology and its support of terrorist groups. It was clear that without halting the Iranian military nuclear programme, it would be very difficult to promote an international or regional non-proliferation agenda.

Iran 'stonewalling' IAEA

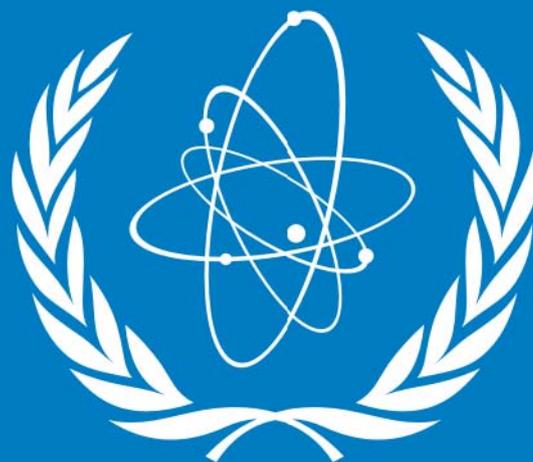
The Canadian delegate Elissa Golberg said it must be decided in 2012 whether to take the steps required to addressing the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and contribute to their eventual elimination. The alternative was to sit idly by as the disarmament machinery continued to fall into irrelevancy.

He called on Iran, Syria and Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with their NPT obligations, stressing that Iran's continued illegal enrichment of nuclear material and non-cooperation with IAEA inspectors had a profoundly destabilizing effect on the region and international security. Furthermore, its "stonewalling" of IAEA demands and blatant sanitization of suspect sites underscored Canada's belief that Iran continued to develop nuclear weapon capabilities. A nuclear Iran would embolden an already reckless regime in an already fragile region.

Also speaking during the general debate were the representatives of Ethiopia, Bahrain, Timor-Leste, Niger, Nepal, Tajikistan, Kuwait, Georgia, Morocco and Gabon.

A representative from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Véronique Christory, in a statement said that while discussion on nuclear disarmament had for decades focused primarily on military doctrine, there was now a growing understanding of the catastrophic consequences of those weapons for public health, human safety and the environment.

ICRC had focused on raising awareness of the incalculable human cost of using nuclear weapons ever since it assisted the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in August 1945. She called on all States to ensure that those weapons were never used again and to pursue negotiations to prohibit and eliminate those weapons through a legally binding international instrument. [IDN-InDepthNews – October 23, 2012] □



International Atomic Energy Agency



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What Others Say

Hunger Striking for Disarmament in France

By JEANNE KAY*

WASHINGTON DC - Only a few weeks after Francois Hollande's election, former Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard came up with an original budget-balancing solution: if France chose to relinquish its nuclear arsenal, he argued, "16 billion euros that serve absolutely no purpose" could be saved over five years.

Apparently unimpressed, Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian immediately retorted that the nuclear bomb was essential to the nation's security: "We won't be miserly about our life-insurance," he declared.

His reaction was echoed on both sides of the political spectrum, reflecting France's historical attachment to the nuclear program initiated by Charles De Gaulle in 1958. Throughout the recent presidential campaign, as in all the previous ones, the topic was not subject to controversy.

It is against this seemingly immutable status quo that the citizens' organization [*Action des Citoyens Pour le Desarmement Nucleaire*](#) (ACDN) has been fighting since 1996. After years of activism for international nuclear disarmament, ACDN's president Jean-Marie Matagne decided to take dramatic action and begin a hunger strike.

"It was a desperate measure. We had already done everything that was feasible as citizens," said Matagne, a 68-year-old Philosophy PhD, in a phone interview. According to him, there is an "omerta," a systematic blockade on the subject of nuclear disarmament in the French national media and political sphere, sustained by a militant nuclear-military lobby. His hunger strike was aimed at grabbing the attention of newly elected President Francois Hollande after he ignored several letters from Matagne during the campaign.

On the day of Hollande's inauguration, Matagne began his fasting and asked for an audience with the new president. Two weeks later, he and fellow hunger-striker Luc Dazy were stopped by police a few feet away from the Elysee palace, as they were on their way to make an appointment to meet the president. After more unanswered letters to Hollande, Matagne finally received a response from Hollande's chief of staff referring him to the Ministry of the Environment — a response that Matagne calls "near insulting." To him, the issue can only be dealt with by the president, who is the sole possessor of the nuclear strike capacity.

After 42 days of complete fast, Jean-Marie Matagne interrupted his hunger strike. However, up to 100 ACDN members and supporters throughout the country have undertaken a relay hunger strike in which they take turns to fast.

Matagne declared that he had given up on meeting Hollande "until [Hollande] changes his mind and opens the possibility for a referendum." The project for a referendum on nuclear disarmament was recently approved by the French Green Party, Europe-Ecologie-Les-Verts, who are part of Hollande's government in parliament. To Matagne, who is hoping for his movement to keep growing in the following months, this is already a first victory. □

*Jeanne Kay is a contributor to Foreign Policy in Focus. This article was posted in [FPIF](#) on October 1, 2012.





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What Others Say

Group of 10 Pleads for a Nuke-Free World

By J C SURESH



TORONTO (IDN) - A group of non-nuclear weapon states has expressed its resolve to move ahead with practical steps to advance the implementation of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference Action Plan ('Action Plan') and to pursue the goal of a nuke-free world.

At a meeting in New York on September 26, 2012 on the margins of the UN General Assembly, the foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates reaffirmed their "commitment to contribute to the realisation of a robust regime across the three pillars of the NPT". As agreed at the meeting in Istanbul in June, they identified future prospects.

While acknowledging the efforts of several states towards achieving these objectives, the Group of 10 – initiated in 2010 by Australia and Japan – said that

"much more needs to be done".

In particular, the group known as Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) stressed the need for the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, "to be attended by all states in the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at".

In a joint statement on September 26, NPDI foreign ministers assured full support for the efforts by the Finnish facilitator "to consult broadly with all relevant stakeholders to prepare for a successful conference and call upon all parties in the Middle East to engage, in the spirit of genuine and constructive cooperation".

The conference was expected to be convened in 2012. But a date has yet to be announced, and whether Israeli would participate, remains an open question.

The cross-regional group said: "We have demonstrated our valid interest, as leading non-nuclear-weapon states, in greater transparency surrounding nuclear disarmament efforts. The NPDI developed a draft reporting form, guided by Action 21 of the Action Plan, as a contribution to the discussions between the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) on transparency and reporting.

"The draft reporting form was shared with the NWS in June 2011 and submitted with the NPDI's working paper on transparency at the 2012 NPT Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting in Vienna. In September, NPDI members undertook consultations in the capitals of NWS to discuss the NPDI's contribution. We have agreed to follow up on this matter in order to support the confidence building measures of the NWS."

The statement further reiterated commitment "to seeing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and an end to nuclear test explosions for all time. We endorse the Friends of the CTBT and join in urging the remaining eight Annex II states to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible".

The group expressed its concern for the lack of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) across the four core issues on its agenda, and urged the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive Program of Work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).

In keeping with UN GA Resolution 66/44, in May and August 2012, NPDI members Germany and the Netherlands organised scientific experts' meetings in Geneva to encourage the technical work on an FMCT and support the commencement of negotiations.

NPDI member Canada will again this year lead a resolution at the First Committee of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York to address this issue. "We will strongly support a resolution that takes stock of the current situation, supports ongoing efforts to break the impasse in the CD and proposes ways forward, and will encourage others to do likewise," the joint statement said.

It pointed out that the NPDI member states have agreed to continue to put our collective effort into increasing the support for and conclusion of key legal instruments that safeguard and govern nuclear activities. ➔

Image credit: unitedforpeace.org



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"As part of this, we confirmed that letters urging action on the Additional Protocol will be issued shortly. We have endorsed the content of papers on non-strategic nuclear weapons and the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons and welcome their further elaboration in the lead up to the second NPT PrepCom in Geneva in 2013," the ten-member grouping said.

"We also agreed to develop joint working papers on the CTBT, export controls, nuclear-weapon-free zones and wider application of safeguards in NWS. These papers aim to bring new ideas and fresh impetus to the second NPT PrepCom of the 2015 NPT Review Conference," it added.

The group will meet next in April 2013 in the Netherlands to review progress in taking forward its priorities and to finalise our contributions to support a productive and successful 2013 NPT PrepCom.

This was the fifth ministerial meeting of the group since its inception in September 2010 at the margins of the UN General Assembly. In the second meeting held in Berlin on April 30, 2011 the ten shared a common purpose: to take forward the consensus outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and jointly to advance the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agendas as mutually reinforcing processes.

The third ministerial meeting took place in New York on September 21, 2011 and the fourth in Istanbul on June 16, 2012 which expressed "concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and in full cognizance of their longstanding, far reaching and irredeemable effects". [IDN-InDepthNews – October 5, 2012]

□

For further reading

The Failure of Nonproliferation

<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-failure-nonproliferation-7551>

The UN and the fate of treaties

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1267123--the-un-and-the-fate-of-treaties>

Deterrent Effect

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/10/05/deterrent_effect

Getting to Zero – Is Nuclear Abolition Desirable and/or Possible?

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Security-Watch/Articles/Detail/?lng=en&id=153448>

Norway's statement on Nuclear Disarmament

<http://www.norway-un.org/Statements/Committee-Meetings/C1-Norways-statement-of-Nuclear-Disarmament/>

U.S. and Nuclear Disarmament

<http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/199343.htm>

Japan's Right Sees Nuclear Arms in Island Dispute

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/opinion/japans-right-sees-nuclear-arms-in-island-dispute-304643.html>

The REAL Reason America Used Nuclear Weapons Against Japan

<http://www.washingtonsblog.com/2012/10/the-real-reason-america-used-nuclear-weapons-against-japan-to-contains-russian-ambitions.html>

China and Nuclear Disarmament

<http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t980543.htm>

Is global nuclear disarmament possible?

<http://womennewsnetwork.net/2012/10/15/global-nuclear-disarmament/>

Some Theoretical Concerns on Nuclear Disarmament

<http://theriskyshift.com/2012/10/some-theoretical-concerns-on-nuclear-disarmament/>

Is Israel's Nuclear Ambiguity Worth Preserving?

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/01/10/meretz-chairperson-zahava-gal-on.html>



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What Others Say

Toward a World of Diminished Reliance on Nukes

By Robert Wood*

The [CTBT](#) (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) remains central to leading us toward a world of diminished reliance on nuclear weapons, reduced nuclear competition, and eventual nuclear disarmament. The legal ramifications of its entry into force, and the practical effects of its verification provisions, remain vital to achieving our ambition of a world without nuclear weapons.

With a global ban on nuclear explosive tests, states interested in pursuing nuclear weapons programs would have to either risk deploying weapons uncertain of their effectiveness, or face international condemnation for conducting nuclear tests.

And with the immense progress that the [Preparatory Commission](#) has made in the last decade toward establishing the CTBT's verification regime, the International Monitoring System (IMS) is well on its way to providing States Signatories with an effective system for monitoring nuclear explosions anywhere in the world.

In addition to the primary value of the treaty, in the 15 years since the Provisional Technical Secretariat began its work in Vienna, we've learned of the related benefits that the treaty and the CTBTO bring to bear. The CTBT provides a ready mechanism to ensure the integrity of regional nuclear-weapons-free zones such as those in Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific. It serves as an important confidence building measure, contributing to regional peace and security by limiting the extent to which nuclear testing can be used as a political lever in regional conflicts.

And with the recent Fukushima nuclear crisis, we saw dramatic proof of the capabilities of the CTBTO's International Monitoring System for non-verification related purposes, such as providing early tsunami warnings and tracking the dispersal of radioactivity from reactor accidents.

Obama committed to seeking CTBT's recognition

As a representative of the United States, I'm not oblivious to the obvious question: in the face of all the benefits I've just listed, why hasn't the United States ratified the treaty?

You all know that, while the United States abides by the core prohibition of the CTBT through the nuclear testing moratorium we voluntarily undertook in 1992, the principal benefit of the treaty – that of legally constraining all states from testing – still eludes us since it has not yet entered into force. And the United States remains one of the Annex 2 states that have not yet ratified the treaty.

Here I can only reinforce: President Obama remains committed to seeking the treaty's ratification. Our senior officials continue to engage with members of the United States Senate and their staff.

The Administration commissioned a number of classified and unclassified reports, including an updated National Intelligence Estimate and an independent National Academy of Sciences report, to assess the ability of the United States to monitor compliance with the treaty and the ability of the United States to maintain, in the absence of nuclear explosive testing, a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal so long as these weapons exist. Those reports and meetings with Senators and their expert staff will give the U.S. Senate a wealth of information to assist them in making a determination on the merits of ratification of the CTBT.

The key question the reports and briefings will attempt to answer is whether the CTBT can be effectively verified. As many of you are well aware, the U.S. Senate declined to provide its consent to ratification of the CTBT in 1999, in large part because of concerns about effective verification. With the advances in technology and the build out of the IMS that have taken place since then, we have a much stronger case today. ☺

*Robert Wood is Charge d'Affaires and the Acting Permanent Representative to the CTBTO, U.S. Mission in Vienna. This is an abridged version of his remarks at a conference organised by the Arms Control Association in partnership with the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation with financial support from the Government of the United Kingdom. The conference report was released on October 24, 2012.



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It is thanks to the hard work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, the CTBT's States Signatories, and the staff of the PTS (Provisional Technical Secretariat) that the treaty's verification regime has made such tremendous progress in the last decade. The expansion of the IMS network, together with significant advances in the technologies of the verification regime, mean that the CTBTO can reliably detect even relatively small nuclear explosions, a capability that was regrettably put to the test in 2006 and 2009 in the DPRK.

U.S. participation increased

Which doesn't mean that U.S. ratification will be quick or easy. Getting advice and consent from the Senate for [New START](#) taught us to prepare for an equally robust debate over the CTBT. We have been careful to note that we have no specific date in mind for a ratification vote. There is a good reason for that: rushing to a vote before the important process of engagement and explanation has run its course increases the risk of an unfavorable outcome, which is the last thing those of us who support the CTBT want.

So we will continue working to engage members of the Senate on the national security rationale behind our support for the CTBT, and will keep a close eye on that dialogue to judge when the time is right to bring the CTBT to the floor of the U.S. Senate for a formal debate.

And even as we engage the Senate, we have increased our participation in all of the Preparatory Commission's activities. We have increased our budget request over the past three years in order to reduce and eliminate our past arrears. We transferred \$33 million to the PTS to pay our dues and retire an additional tranche of arrears.

As Secretary Clinton noted in her remarks to the Article 14 Conference in September 2009, the United States is prepared to pay our share of the Preparatory Commission's budget. In fact, we've since demonstrated that we're prepared to do a good deal more than that. In addition to our annual assessment, the United States provided a voluntary, in-kind contribution of \$8.9 million in 2011. Those monies will underwrite a series of multi-year projects to accelerate the development of the verification system and to improve its capabilities.

We also concluded with the Provisional Technical Secretariat a Memorandum of Understanding for the United States to provide a contribution of up to \$25.5 million to rebuild a hydroacoustic monitoring station in the southern Indian Ocean. That station, on Crozet Island, will complete the International Monitoring System's important hydro acoustic network. Those contributions are all the more significant given how tough the budget climate is in Washington – they reflect the importance the United States attaches to the CTBT and to the completion of its verification system.

In addition to our financial support, U.S. technical experts are working closely with their counterparts from the Provisional Technical Secretariat and with other experts from many States Signatories in collaborative efforts to improve the capabilities of the global International Monitoring System and the International Data Centre.

After a long absence, U.S. experts have since 2009 again been fully engaged in further developing the On-Site Inspection element of the verification regime, both from policy and technical perspectives. Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Disarmament, and Verification Rose Gottemoeller led the U.S. delegation at the CTBTO's Preparatory Commission meeting last June. Her participation in that meeting—as the most senior U.S. representative to date—underscored the depth of our commitment to preparing a fully operational verification regime for the entry into force of this treaty.

And while the United States moves forward with the ratification process, we continue to call on all governments to declare or reaffirm their commitment not to conduct explosive nuclear tests, and encourage all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the treaty.

We enthusiastically welcomed Indonesia's ratification of the treaty, which is particularly significant given that it is the first Annex 2 state to ratify the CTBT since Colombia did so in 2008. We were also very pleased that Guatemala ratified the treaty a bit earlier this year, bringing Central and South America closer still to region-wide ratification of the CTBT.

The United States is working to join Indonesia, Guatemala, and the many other states that have ratified the treaty, and in the meantime, we intend to continue to provide robust technical expertise and political and financial support to the CTBTO and to this important treaty. □



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Civil Society Perspective

Ecocide – A Catastrophic Consequence of Nuclear Weapons

By Xanthe Hall*

“Killer” Lake Karachay, known as the most polluted place on Earth, near the Mayak nuclear plant in Chelyabinsk, reportedly has enough radiation in it to kill a human being in an hour. Image: Google

Over the many years that we have been trying to educate the public on the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons we have mostly concentrated on the destruction of human life and health, not surprisingly, as we are a physician’s organisation.

Recently, IPPNW has begun to focus on the environmental effects, particularly [on the climate](#), of a nuclear war, limited to one region but affecting the whole world and the knock-on effects for human life and health. The work with climatologists Alan Robock and Brian Toon has enabled us to show that a relatively “small” nuclear exchange could cause millions of people to die from starvation – this we have termed “[nuclear famine](#)”.



When I was in [Astana](#), I met [Polly Higgins](#). She is a Scottish barrister with a background in corporate law. Polly is campaigning to get the crime of “Ecocide” added to the list of crimes against peace that are recognised by the International Criminal Court. She came to Astana to speak to Parliamentarians for Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament (PNND) about how ecocide would apply to the nuclear weapons issue, giving teeth to our calls for a treaty to abolish them.

Uta Zapf, a German MP and Co-President of [PNND](#), invited Polly to come to Berlin last week to speak to other parliamentarians about this idea. I also managed to get a group of interested lawyers to come and to chew the idea through with her. We talked about the idea of ecocide itself, what it means and what the history of it is, as well as how we might use it to further our campaigning in ICAN. Polly also talked about the movement of people supporting her which is predominantly young, very large and growing rapidly.

[Ecocide](#) is, according to Polly’s definition, “the extensive damage to, destruction of or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished.”

Chelyabinsk, Chernobyl, Fukushima, Marshall Islands, Maralinga, Semipalatinsk, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kakadu, Wismut – we could apply the above description to all of these places. A [nuclear winter](#) (the climate change caused by an all-out nuclear war) is the worst imaginable ecocide. The scenario we use for the nuclear famine would also be ecocide.

The drive to get this law into place is about stopping the ongoing destruction of the planet as a whole, of which the nuclear weapons/energy issue is only one – albeit one of the widest-reaching. Added to this is the daily corporate ecological destruction caused by oil, gas and mineral extraction, the production of greenhouse gases, deforestation, water and air pollution.

Present international humanitarian law only outlaws ecocide in a time of war, not in peacetime. A law of ecocide would criminalise the destruction of ecosystems and establish a [legal duty of care](#) for the environment, holding people of “[superior responsibility](#)” – government members, heads of state, CEOs, heads of banks, etc. – to account. With this law in place it would be possible – if strict liability was applied – to act preventively to stop a pending ecocide. In other words, we could begin to establish primary care for the health of the Earth.

Humans are part of the environment, which is a living entity. The Earth cannot be viewed as an inert thing to be exploited in order to provide more and more consumables for humans. We are literally eating away at our foundations, digging up and burning them, poisoning the air we breathe. The radiation we have belched out with more than 2000 nuclear tests and add to daily with more and more reactors has insidiously caused millions of cancers and seeped into our gene pool, causing havoc. The catastrophic consequences of the [nuclear chain](#) are already there, without the nuclear war that we all feared in the 1980s ever having taken place. We need to understand that the nuclear weapons/energy element of the greatest ecocide of all, the destruction of the planet, is an issue that requires the peace movement and the environmental movement to join together and speak with one, strong voice. ☺

* Xanthe Hall is international campaigner and nuclear disarmament expert for IPPNW Germany



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What we have to do, in my view, is share our messages and use the same terminology. That is why, when I talk about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, I will use the term “ecocide” and not just say there are environmental consequences. The magnitude of the problem requires this term in order to further frame the debate about changing international humanitarian law.

A law of ecocide that would make governments and CEOs liable for their actions would enable them to act differently, so that the profit margin was no longer the top priority – presently, corporations are [legally bound to make the maximum profit](#) for their shareholders, says Higgins – and usher in new business behaviour that takes the legal duty of care into account at the outset. While maximum profit is legally prioritised higher than the duty to protect the environment (including the right to life and health), it is difficult for businesses to opt out and act differently because of the expense involved.

The abandonment of nuclear energy in Germany is a case in point. It can only succeed if Germany manages to convert to environmentally-friendly energy sources quick enough and secure the export market for renewable technologies against massive competition from Asian companies that can produce more cheaply. If a law against ecocide was in place then this would allow subsidies to aid such an energy shift and take the unfair advantages out of the market.

In order for us to get a treaty abolishing nuclear weapons, we need to find support from a wider constituency. The environmental movement is severely divided over the nuclear issue. Framed this way, however, there is a possibility to stop trading one environmental evil for another and to start seeing that there are other solutions. We need to see the problem more holistically while retaining our special focus where our competence is recognised. Ecocide is a health problem, and nuclear weapons could cause the worst ecocide imaginable. □

For more information on ecocide visit the website: <http://eradicatingecocide.com/>

ICAN Sweden holds Campaigner Weekend

On October 27th and 28th, ICAN Sweden gathered over 20 future anti-nukes campaigners for a weekend course entitled “Nuclear weapons, peace and disarmament”.

The course included topics such as the functioning of nuclear weapons, their environmental and humanitarian consequences, the current political landscape regarding disarmament and the proposition of a global ban. Using their newfound knowledge the participants tackled issues such as the funding of nuclear weapons, political paralysis and low public awareness, while developing their own action ideas through an interactive campaigning workshop.

The course featured lectures by representatives from ICAN partner organisations WILPF Sweden (“Power and Gender Norms in International Relations”) and The Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (“Nuclear Weapons and Peace”).

The purpose of the course was to provide an introduction to nuclear weapons and to question their role in the world, as well as to give people with an interest in this field the opportunity to meet and to inspire their continued involvement in the nuclear issue.

The participants in the weekend’s events hailed from ten cities in Sweden and from nine different organisations. The evaluations show that an overwhelming majority feel more engaged in nuclear weapons issue than before and wish to continue to work actively against nuclear weapons.

One participant wrote: “You have made me understand that this is not an old 1940’s problem, but a highly relevant problem for today!”.

“We are extremely excited, and happily surprised, that so many amazing people from all over the country wanted to come and dedicate their weekend to learning more about the nuclear issue. It not only sparked a new commitment among the participants, but fueled the campaign as a whole. It clearly shows that people in Sweden care and are willing to fight for a nuclear weapons-free world. The only thing needed is awareness of the problem and a platform on which to work. ICAN is that platform”, says Pernilla Lundmark, campaign coordinator ICAN Sweden.

Source: <http://www.icanw.org/node/6229> □



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CND Praises UK Govt for Refusing To Assist In US Build-Up over Iran

[26 October 2012] The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has praised the UK Government's rejection of US requests to use British military bases as part of a build-up of its forces in the Gulf. The move puts a check on US mobilisation amid an escalation of the confrontation around Iran's alleged nuclear ambitions.

In May, CND and Public Interest Lawyers (PIL) sent a letter to David Cameron expressing concerns about the illegality of any pre-emptive strike on Iran – including support for other states involved in a military intervention. Without the support of the UN Security Council and in the absence of an evidenced threat – any strike would be illegal under international law.

Kate Hudson, CND General Secretary, stated:

"It is good news that the UK Government has both sought legal advice on the status of a pre-emptive military intervention in Iran, and is actually following it through. The Government has recognised that international law prohibits not only direct participation in such a strike, but also support or assistance to any state engaging in such unlawful actions. This is an important and laudable step. Indeed, the Government appears to have learned from the disaster of Iraq.

"The current tensions in the Middle East require diplomatic solutions. This is where the energy of our government must be focused. It must continue to reject developments that make a military conflict more likely, and work to ensure that the diplomatic process can operate and succeed."

50 Years On: Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis Have Not Been Learned

[22 October 2012] 50 years on from the Cuban missile crisis, we have still not learned the lessons of this grim period of human history, says CND's Kate Hudson.

"Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the brink of a catastrophic nuclear war is a crucial time to look back at the wanton recklessness of previous generations: a moment to take stock of how far we have come since then."

"But the bleak reality is that we have not moved forward" said Hudson. "In fact, with global nuclear proliferation accelerating and with countless billions being poured into the modernisation of nuclear weapons systems, we are taking dangerous, irresponsible steps backwards."

"Spending on nuclear weapons worldwide will top \$1 trillion in the next decade, and with the spread of nuclear technology through civil nuclear programmes, the risks of nuclear terrorism and further states developing nuclear weapons are manifold."

"A Nuclear Weapons Convention is the only rational way forward. States must reassess their blind commitment to maintaining nuclear arsenals and genuinely work towards their legal obligations as signatories to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: to negotiate in good faith towards disarmament."

"Reductions of stockpiles are an essential part of the process, and we have seen some progress through the START agreement between the US and Russia. But with the US alone set to spend around \$700bn on nuclear weapons over the next decade, this is only the tip of the iceberg."

"To pass on genuine peace and security to future generations, we cannot afford to ignore the lessons of the past." □

Visit www.nuclearabolition.net

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