



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

NEWSLETTER FOR STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION
WITH APRIL 2014 ARTICLES

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Hiroshima Meet Falls Short Of Outlawing Nukes



The mere fact that the two-day foreign ministerial meeting of the 12-nation coalition of non-nuclear states took place in the Japanese city of Hiroshima, gives the clue to its symbolic significance. Being the first city in the world to witness the horrors of atomic destruction, Hiroshima, from that very fateful day almost 70 years ago, remains at the forefront of global efforts to learn about the devastating impact weapons of mass destruction can cause and also serves as a reminder of the necessity of eliminating nuclear weapons. That symbolic gesture of holding the meeting in Hiroshima on April 11-12, 2014 received added value as the ministers listened to the stories of atomic bomb survivors before starting their formal discussion. > Pages 8-9

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Can a Nuclear-Weapons State Champion Disarmament?

Forty-four years after the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force, the world still finds itself perilously close to the edge of the nuclear cliff. The cliff is perhaps not quite as steep as it was in the 1980s, when there were more than 70,000 nuclear weapons compared to today's 17,000, but going over it would be fatal for planet Earth.

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Interfaith Leaders Jointly Call to Abolish Nuclear Arms

By MICHELLE TULLO

WASHINGTON (IPS) - On the eve of the meeting at the U.N. headquarters in New York on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), more than 100 representatives of 11 faith groups from around the world pledged to step up their efforts to seek the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

Gathered at the U.S. Institute of Peace here on April 24, the participants, composed of influential representatives of the Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, among others, said their traditions teach that the threat posed by nuclear weapons was “unacceptable and must be eliminated”.

Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a worldwide grassroots Buddhist organisation based in Japan, hosted the event.

“The continued existence of nuclear weapons forces humankind to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction,” according to a [statement](#) issued at the end of the one-day conference.

“The catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear weapons cannot be fully communicated by numbers or statistics; it is a reality that frustrates the power of both rational analysis and ordinary imagination.”

Signatories of the statement include representatives from the Muslim American Citizens Coalition and Public Affairs Council, the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Pax Christi International.

The conference, the latest in a series on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, came as delegates from around the world prepared to convene in New York for the NPT PrepCom, set to run Apr. 28 through May 9. That meeting will help lay the groundwork for the 2015 Review Conference, also slated for New York, on implementing the NPT’s goals of non-proliferation and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

“Nuclear deterrence theory does not work like it used to. In order to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, the only



way is to create an era in which there are no nuclear weapons,” Hirotsugu Terasaki, vice-president of Soka Gakkai and executive director of Peace Affairs of Soka Gakkai International, told IPS.

“The president of our organisation has said, ‘Nuclear weapons are not a necessary evil, they are an absolute evil.’”

Prodding the process

One goal of Thursday’s symposium was to flesh out the fatal consequences of nuclear weapons, including ramifications that go well the immediate fallout of a nuclear strike.

For instance, keynote speaker Dr. Andrew Kanter, former director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, told the participants of scientific findings that even a small detonation could cause a widespread deadly famine by accelerating climate change and disrupting global agriculture.

Others discussed the need to engage the Permanent Five members of the U.N. Security Council in the broader conversation. As a first step, Thursday’s statement will be presented next week to the chair of the NPT PrepCom.

“We need to think again about what we mean by security and how we experience security,” Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International, said. “As faith-based communities, we are in a position to ask those kinds of questions.”

Since 1970, when the NPT became effective, its regular review conferences have produced few successes other than the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which bars all nuclear explosions – including those, such as took place in the Marshall Islands, for testing purposes.

Picture: Faith leaders gathered at the United States Peace Institute to solidify a common stance on nuclear disarmament. Credit: Courtesy of SGI



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Additionally, the five nuclear-armed signatories have met annually since 2009. Last week, they met in Beijing where they reaffirmed past commitments and solidified a reporting framework to share national progress on meeting treaties.



Also present at the symposium was Anita Friedt, an official on nuclear policy at the U.S. State Department. She described some of the reasons that nuclear abolition has been such a frustratingly slow process.

“Why can’t we just stop and give up nuclear weapons? This is really hard work,” Friedt said.

“If we just say today we’re just going to give up nuclear weapons, there’s no incentive for other countries to do so, necessarily. Unfortunately, it is more complex than it may seem at the surface.”

There are also significant bureaucratic challenges to the ongoing NPT negotiations. The U.S. Congress, for instance, failed to ratify the CTBT in 1999 and only barely ratified President Barack Obama’s New START Treaty – a strategic arms-reduction agreement between the U.S. and Russia – in 2010.

Obligation to disarm

“It’s a slower pace than I would like; it’s a slower pace than our president would like,” Friedt said.

Yet SGI’s Terasaki says global faith communities are well placed use their broad leverage to try to influence, and speed up, this process. Thursday’s event, he noted, was the first time such a discussion had come to the United States. “We want to help re-energise the voice of faith communities,” he said, “and explore ways to raise public awareness of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons.”

The conference occurred on the same day that the Marshall Islands filed an unprecedented lawsuit before the International Court of Justice against the United States and eight other nuclear-armed countries for not upholding their commitments to the NPT and international law.

“Article VI [of the NPT] defines an obligation to negotiate in good faith for an end to nuclear arms and disarmament,” David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and a consultant to the Marshall Islands lawsuit, filed Thursday, told IPS.

“This lawsuit indicates that each of the nuclear armed states are modernising their nuclear arsenal. You can’t modernise your arsenal and say you’re negotiating in good faith.”

Five countries are currently party to the NPT: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. However, the Marshall Islands is also suing India, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan, claiming that those countries are bound to the same nuclear disarmament provisions under international law.

The small island nation, in Micronesia in the Pacific Ocean, is not suing for monetary compensation. Rather, its government wants the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to declare the nine countries in breach of their treaty obligations and to issue an injunction ordering them to begin negotiating in good faith.

Krieger says the Marshall Islands have “suffered gravely” as a result of nuclear testing carried out by the United States between 1946 and 1958.

“They don’t want any other country or people to suffer the consequences that they have,” he said, noting that the residents of the Marshall Islands have suffered health effects in the generations since the testing stopped, including stillborn babies and abnormally high rates of cancer.

Out of the nine nuclear-armed countries, only the United Kingdom, India and Pakistan accept the ICJ’s jurisdiction. The other six countries, including the United States, are to be invited to the court in order to state their reasons for not fulfilling their obligations under the NPT.

Still, just to be sure that the United States answers for its responsibility to the NPT, the Marshall Islands has also filed a lawsuit in a U.S. federal court in San Francisco. (IPS | 25 April 2014)

Original <> <http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/04/interfaith-leaders-jointly-call-abolish-nuclear-arms/>



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U.S.-Dependent Pacific Island Defies Nuke Powers

By THALIF DEEN

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - The tiny Pacific nation state of Marshall Islands – which depends heavily on the United States for its economic survival, uses the U.S. dollar as its currency and predictably votes with Washington on all controversial political issues at the United Nations – is challenging the world’s nuclear powers before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.



The lawsuit, filed April 24, is being described as a potential battle between a puny David and a mighty Goliath: a country with a population of a little over 68,000 people defying the world’s nine nuclear powers with over 3.5 billion people.

John Burroughs, executive director of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy and the U.N. Office of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), told IPS the Marshall Islands and its legal team strongly encourage other states to support the case, by making statements, and by filing their own parallel cases if they qualify, or by intervening in the case.

Burroughs, who is a member of that team, said the ICJ, in its 1996 advisory opinion, held unanimously that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

And these cases brought by the Marshall Islands nearly 18 years after the ICJ advisory opinion “will put to the test the claims of the nine states possessing nuclear arsenals that they are in compliance with international law regarding nuclear disarmament and cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date.”

The nine nuclear states include the five permanent members (P5) of the U.N. Security Council, namely the United States, the UK, France, China and Russia, plus India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

Burroughs said three of the respondent states – the UK, India, and Pakistan – have accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court, as has the Marshall Islands.

For the other six states, he said, the Marshall Islands is calling on them to accept the Court’s jurisdiction in these particular cases.

“This is a normal procedure but the six states could choose not to do so,” said Burroughs.

Between 1946 and 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear weapons tests, triggering health and environmental problems which still plague the island nation.

Tony de Brum, the foreign minister of Marshall Islands, was quoted as saying, “Our people have suffered the catastrophic and irreparable damage of these weapons, and we vow to fight so that no one else on earth will ever again experience these atrocities.”

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the terrible risk they pose to the world threaten us all, he added.

The suit also says the five original nuclear weapon states (P5) are continuously breaching their legal obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Article VI of the NPT requires states to pursue negotiations in good faith on cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and nuclear disarmament.

India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea are not parties to the treaty. But the lawsuit contends that all nine nuclear-armed nations are still violating customary international law.

Far from dismantling their weapons, the nuclear weapons states are accused of planning to spend over one trillion dollars on modernising their arsenals in the next decade.

David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, which is strongly supportive of the law suit, said, “The Marshall Islands is saying enough is enough.”



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He said it is taking a bold and courageous stand on behalf of all humanity, "and we at the foundation are proud to stand by their side."

In a statement released Thursday, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa said, "The failure of these nuclear-armed countries to uphold important commitments and respect the law makes the world a more dangerous place.

"We must ask why these leaders continue to break their promises and put their citizens and the world at risk of horrific devastation. This is one of the most fundamental moral and legal questions of our time," he added.

Burroughs told IPS the United States maintains that it is committed both to the international rule of law and to the eventual achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

"The United States should defend the case and widen the opportunity for the Court to resolve the wide divide of

opinion regarding the state of compliance with the disarmament obligations," he added. The other five states which have not accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court are being asked to do likewise.

As to the case against the UK, a key issue is whether the UK has breached the nuclear disarmament obligation by opposing General Assembly efforts to launch multilateral negotiations on the global elimination of nuclear weapons, said Burroughs.

For India and Pakistan, because they are not parties to the NPT, the case will resolve the question of whether the obligations of nuclear disarmament are customary in nature, binding on all states.

He said it will also address whether the actions of India and Pakistan in building up, improving and diversifying their nuclear arsenals are contrary to the obligation of cessation of the nuclear arms race and the fundamental legal principle of good faith. (IPS | 25 April 2014)

Picture: A Patriot interceptor missile is launched from Omelek Island Oct. 25, 2012 during a U.S. Missile Defense Agency integrated flight test. Credit: U.S. Navy

Original <> <http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/04/u-s-dependent-pacific-island-defies-nuke-powers/>

Translations:

Arabic <http://www.ipsinternational.org/arabic/nota.asp?idnews=3166>

Japanese

<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/japanese-chinese-korean/254-u-s-dependent-pacific-island-defies-nuke-powers>

米国に依存する太平洋の島嶼国が、核兵器保有国に挑む

【国連IPS = タリフ・ディーン】

太平洋上の小さな国家マーシャル諸島が、ハーグの国際司法裁判所 (ICJ) で世界の核大国に挑戦しようとしている。同国

は、経済的な生存のために米国に大きく依存し、通貨として米ドルを使用し、あらゆる政治的に議論のある問題に関して国連で米国とほぼ同じ投票行動をとる国である。

4月24日に提起された訴訟は、小さなダビデと屈強ゴリアテとの間の戦いに喩えられている。人口わずか6万8000人余の国が、[合計]人口35億人以上を擁する世界9つの核兵器国に抵抗しようとしているのだ。

「『核政策法律家委員会』と国際反核法律家協会 (IALANA) 国連事務局の代表を務めるジョン・バローズ氏は、マー

シャル諸島政府およびその法律支援チームは、他の諸国に対して、声明を出したり、資格があるのであれば同様の提訴を行ったり、マーシャル諸島の起こした訴

訟に参加したりすることによって、訴訟の支援するよう強く働きかけています。」とIPSの取材に対して語った。



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U.S.-Russia Sabre Rattling May Undermine Nuke Meeting

By THALIF DEEN

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - The growing tension between the United States and Russia over Ukraine has threatened to unravel one of the primary peace initiatives of the United Nations: nuclear disarmament. As they trade charges against each other, the world's two major nuclear powers have intensified their bickering – specifically on the eve of a key Preparatory Committee (PrepCoM) meeting on a treaty to stop the proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction (WMD).



U.S. Permanent Representative Samantha Power (left) speaks with Russia's Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov (right), and Vitaly Churkin (back to camera), Russia's Permanent Representative, in happier times, prior to a unanimous vote by the Security Council on Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. Credit: UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

The "Thirteen Steps" agreed upon at a review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2000 and the 64-point Action Programme, together with the agreement on the Middle East WMD Free Zone proposal at the 2010 Conference, had augured well for the strengthened review process, former U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Jayantha Dhanapala told IPS.

But he warned that, "However the actual achievements, the return to Cold War mindsets by the U.S. and Russia and the negative record of all the nuclear weapon states have converted the goal of a nuclear weapon free world into a mirage. "Unless the Third Prepcom reverses these ominous trends, the 2015 Conference is doomed to fail, imperiling the future of the NPT," warned Dhanapala, who is also president of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.

The Third PrepCom for the upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the NPT is scheduled to take place at the United Nations Apr. 28 through May 9.

But a positive outcome will depend largely on the United States and Russia, along with the other declared nuclear powers, Britain, France and China, who are also the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council.

Ray Acheson, director of Reaching Critical Will, a programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), told IPS next week's PrepCom is being held at a time of high tensions between the two countries with the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

The United Nations describes the 1970 NPT as "a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament".

The treaty represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon states.

As of now, there are 190 parties to the treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon states, namely the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

But the other nuclear weapons states - India, Israel and Pakistan - have refused to join the NPT. North Korea joined and withdrew in 2003.

She said neither of these countries has fulfilled their obligation to negotiate the elimination of these weapons and in fact, both spend billions of dollars upgrading them and extending their lives into the indefinite future.

"Nuclear weapons are inherently dangerous and the risk of their use by accident or on purpose warrants urgent action on disarmament," Acheson added.

During 2014, she pointed out, the NPT nuclear-armed states must report on their concrete activities to fulfill the disarmament-related actions of the 2010 NPT Action Plan.



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The extent to which the nuclear-armed states can report the achievement of meaningful progress in implementing their commitments will be a strong indicator of their intention to serve as willing leaders and partners in this process, she noted.

But “none of the public releases issued thus far by the nuclear-armed states has given any reason to expect they have given serious consideration to the implementation of most of those commitments.”

Alice Slater, New York director of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, told IPS there is “alarming sabre rattling on the eve of the NPT PrepCom.” She said the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) builds up its military forces to “protect” Eastern Europe. The media reports only part of the story, justifying NATO war games based on events in Ukraine; former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton compares Putin to Hitler; and the New York Times front page blares “Cold War Echo, Obama Strategy Writes Off Putin”.

“Yet there’s little reporting on Russia’s security fears as NATO expands up to its borders, inviting even Ukraine and Georgia to join,” said Slater, who also serves on the Coordinating Committee of Abolition 2000.

This, she said, despite President Ronald Reagan and President George Bush’s promises to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that NATO would not expand beyond East Germany.

Nor is it reported how the U.S., in 2001, quit the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Treaty, planting missiles in Poland, Romania and Turkey, she added.

In his closing statement as president of the historic 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which extended the treaty for an indefinite duration, Dhanapala said, “The permanence of the Treaty does not represent a permanence of unbalanced obligations, nor does it represent the permanence of nuclear apartheid between nuclear haves and have-nots.

“What it does represent is our collective dedication to the permanence of an international legal barrier against nuclear proliferation so that we can forge ahead in our tasks towards a nuclear weapons-free world.” Slater told IPS that deteriorating U.S.-Russian relations bodes poorly for progress at the paralysed NPT process, which even before

this latest eruption of enmity failed to implement the many promises for nuclear disarmament since 1970.

But this new crisis may motivate nations to press more vigorously for the process that began in Oslo (at the 2013 conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons), addressing the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and urging their legal ban.

With 16,000 nuclear bombs in Russia and the U.S., non-nuclear weapons states must step up their efforts for a ban treaty, she added.

The P-5 nuclear powers boycotted these meetings in Oslo (in 2013) and Mexico (February 2014) while Indian and Pakistan joined 127 nations in Oslo and 144 in Mexico. This year, Austria will host a follow-up. This new process raises a contradiction highlighting the growing reality gap in the “nuclear umbrella” states, Slater said.

They ostensibly support nuclear disarmament and deplore the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war in this burgeoning new global conversation about its humanitarian effects, while continuing to rely on lethal nuclear deterrence, she noted.

Article VI of the NPT requires all treaty parties to be responsible for its fulfillment. “The spectre of war in Europe may give new impetus to efforts to ban the bomb,” warned Slater.

Acheson told IPS that unlike the other weapons of mass destruction – chemical and biological weapons – nuclear weapons are not yet subject to an explicit legal prohibition.

“Now is the time to address this anomaly, which has been allowed to persist for far too long. History shows that legal prohibitions of weapon systems, their possession as well as their use, facilitate their elimination.”

She said weapons that have been outlawed increasingly become seen as illegitimate.

They lose their political status and, along with it, the money and resources for their production, modernisation, proliferation, and perpetuation.

In the context of rising tensions between two countries with nuclear weapons it is more imperative than ever that non-nuclear weapon states take the lead to ban nuclear weapons, Acheson stressed. (IPS - 22 April 2014)

Original <> <http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/04/u-s-russia-sabre-rattling-may-undermine-nuke-meeting/>



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Hiroshima Meet Falls Short Of Outlawing Nukes

By MONZURUL HUQ*

TOKYO (IDN) - The mere fact that the two-day foreign ministerial meeting of the 12-nation coalition of non-nuclear states took place in the Japanese city of Hiroshima, gives the clue to its symbolic significance. Being the first city in the world to witness the horrors of atomic destruction, Hiroshima, from that very fateful day almost 70 years ago, remains at the forefront of global efforts to learn about the devastating impact weapons of mass destruction can cause and also serves as a reminder of the necessity of eliminating nuclear weapons. That symbolic gesture of holding the meeting in Hiroshima on April 11-12, 2014 received added value as the ministers listened to the stories of atomic bomb survivors before starting their formal discussion.



Hiroshima lanterns | Credit: ICAN

The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) is a coalition of states that came into being in 2010 with the aim of leading the international efforts in nuclear disarmament. Composed of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, the NPDI, through its regular meetings and declarations and statements, focuses on ways to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament. The Hiroshima conference was the eighth NPDI meeting since the group was formed.

All of it sounds pretty good

Prior to the start of the Hiroshima conference, Fumio Kishida, the Japanese Foreign Minister, published an opinion article in the [Wall Street Journal Asia](#) where he stressed the importance of adopting a multilateral approach to nuclear disarmament and also outlined the priorities that the global community needs to work out for achieving the desired goal of a nuclear free world. He expressed concern over North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and reiterated Japan's commitment in tackling the Iranian nuclear issue.

Japanese Foreign Minister also did not fail to mention about the lessons his country had learned from the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in March 2011. Since nuclear power generation is an issue linked

closely to nuclear safety, Kishida pledged Japan's continued support for countries that are building up their capacities in the field of nuclear security, and vowed to share the lessons learned from Fukushima nuclear accident.

The Hiroshima conference touched upon most of the issues that the Japanese foreign minister raised in his Wall Street Journal article and a joint statement issued at the end of the meeting outlined the priorities and actions that the global community needs to take for fostering further momentum for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. The statement underlined the need of extending forever the nearly 69 years record of non-use of nuclear weapons and encouraged all states to contribute actively and constructively to pursue practical and effective measures that will strengthen the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime based on NPT.

While condemning strongly North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs by mentioning that they "undermine NPT and the global non-proliferation regime as well as pose a great threat to regional and global peace and stability", the statement also welcomed the start of the implementation in Iran of the first-steps under the Joint Plan of Action and expressed hope that the on-going negotiations with the country will lead to the final and comprehensive resolution of Iran's nuclear issue. It further said that to remove international concerns regarding Iran's nuclear activities, Iran needs to implement swiftly and steadily measures such as the ratification, and implementation of its Additional Protocol.

The loopholes

The NPDI member states also recognized the importance of the role played by the civil society and underlined the need to enhance disarmament and non-proliferation education. The joint statement welcomed the opportunity to engage with civil society, including NGOs, students, academics and the media.



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However, the International Campaign to abolish Nuclear Weapons ([ICAN](#)), which is a coalition of NGOs and civil society organizations advocating for the abolition of nuclear weapons, expressed disappointment with the outcome of Hiroshima meeting. In a statement issued immediately after the ministerial meeting, ICAN pointed out that “the foreign ministers were unable to agree that the world needs to close the legal loopholes on weapons of mass destruction, and outlaw nuclear weapons.”

ICAN is strongly in favor of starting a negotiation process that would lead to a framework for a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons and the organisation feels that an absence of any binding prohibition would not bring any tangible outcome. The anti-nuclear group suggests that a legal prohibition “would fulfill and strengthen the NPT and create conditions for disarmament by establishing a clear room against possession of nuclear weapons; challenge the assertion that nuclear weapons provide security; and provide a strong moral incentive for nuclear possessor States to eliminate their arsenals; and reinforce non-proliferation efforts worldwide.”

The group has also pointed out a few conflicting positions on nuclear issues being pursued by the 12 NPDI states. As seven of the twelve NPDI governments rely on nuclear weapons in their security strategies, ICAN feels that they bear a particular responsibility in removing the threat to the world posed by nuclear weapons. A more convincing step taken by those governments would rationally be the one that would first address the conflicting position by revising their security strategies to bring them in line with the NPDI’s declared position on nuclear weapons.

Moreover, Japan and Australia, the two leading countries of the NPDI, are also taking a number of steps that run contrary to what NPDI policy statements are calling for. Japan now looks set for continuing the process that would result in accumulating large quantities of weapons-grade plutonium; and Australia sells uranium, the raw material for nuclear weapons, to all the NPT nuclear weapons states.

Which way to go now?

Despite such criticisms and drawbacks; discussions that had taken place at the Hiroshima meeting clearly point out the significance of such initiatives at a time when the community of nations is getting ready for the next round of NPT Review Conference in 2015. As the Hiroshima joint

statement rightfully mentions that with the 2015 NPT Review Conference fast approaching, it is necessary that all the state parties fully comply with the obligations and commitments, particularly with the full and prompt implementation of all the actions in the 2010 Action Plan. It should be noted that the nuclear-weapons states made an unequivocal undertaking in the 2000 NPT Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, a pledge that was reconfirmed at the 2010 conference. However, the world has moved no further in achieving that long cherished desire of the majority of human being.

“Declarations and statements being issued periodically by the NPDI concerning the pace of NPT negotiations and the need to move swiftly on non-proliferation and disarmament reminds us not only of the necessity of taking steps towards the right direction, but also warns us of the serious consequences the global community might face in case we fail to take timely action,” noted an informed observer.

“So, to end with, we can once again go back to what the Japanese foreign minister said in his Wall Street Journal article, which is: ‘increased cooperation, transparency, rule of law and other cornerstones of 21st century diplomacy led global stockpiles (of nuclear weapons) to fall around 17,000 (from the Cold War era height of 70,000). While this is a significant decrease, our progress must not stop there.’”

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China Lashes Out at North Korea

By ZACHARY KECK | The Diplomat

(April 05, 2014) Tensions appear to be quickly mounting between the erstwhile allies North Korea and China. Last week I noted that North Korea has [reportedly begun hanging](#) banners declaring that China is “a turncoat and our enemy” at its Kang Kon Military Academy. The characterization of China as a “turncoat and our enemy” was coined by Kim Il-Sung, North Korea’s eternal leader, in 1992 but has been invoked by Pyongyang on a number of occasions since to express its displeasure toward Beijing.

The feeling seems to be mutual these days, if the *Global Times*—[a state-run Chinese newspaper](#)—is any indication. As my colleague Shannon noted earlier today, the *Global Times* [published an editorial](#) on Thursday that contained unusually harsh criticism of North Korea. Although the editorial focused primarily on North Korea’s nuclear program, it also includes some other more general criticisms of Pyongyang. For example, it stated: “If Pyongyang continues to follow this [nuclear] path, it will suffer long-term isolation by the international community and the country’s poverty will never be eliminated. The risks these factors pose to the Pyongyang regime can hardly be offset even if North Korea truly becomes a nuclear state.” North Korea has been extremely critical of foreign leaders that characterize North Korea as being wrecked by poverty.

The *Global Times* editorial also suggested that North Korea’s claims about its nuclear progress were exaggerated, and warned against trying to exploit the divergence between China and America’s approaches towards its nuclear program. “The North’s nuclear issue has caused some divergence between China and the US,” the editorial stated. “If Pyongyang thinks this provides an opportunity for it to further develop its nuclear capabilities, it should give up such fantasies.”

At other points in the piece, the *Global Times* characterized North Korea’s heavy reliance on missile and nuclear tests as a clear demonstration of its overall weakness. “Nuclear tests and missile launches have become Pyongyang’s only diplomatic cards, which is unfortunate for Pyongyang and the entire Northeast Asia.” Similarly, it said the reason why North Korea emphasizes its nuclear program so much is because “Pyongyang’s deterrence is so weak that it has no other ‘leverage’ than nuclear weapons.” Nonetheless, the *Global Times* dismissed North Korea’s nuclear technology as primitive, and said that it is “not enough to truly deter Washington.” As a result, the *Global Times* said that North Korea should abandon its long followed path of isolation in Northeast Asia.

China has not limited itself to media criticisms of North Korea, however. [As I noted earlier today](#), in response to North Korea’s medium-range ballistic missile tests last week, the

UN Security Council openly condemned Pyongyang. This would not have been possible without China’s acquiescence (North Korea responded by threatening to conduct a “new form” of nuclear test, which was the proximate impetus for the *Global Times*’ editorial).

Probably more disconcerting for North Korean leaders, China has openly backed South Korean President Park Geun-hye’s new initiative that aims to ease the eventual reunification of the two Koreas, which have been divided since the end of WWII. Park made this initiative a central focus of her trip to Germany last week, [stating](#): “Germany is an example and a model for a peaceful reunification of our own country.” Park also said while in Germany that she saw three ways to bring the Koreas closer together: more family reunions, more humanitarian aid and helping to build up North Korean infrastructure.

On Thursday, China came out strongly in favor of Park’s proposal. During a press conference, a Chinese [Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated](#): “China always supports the ROK (South Korea) and the DPRK (North Korea) in improving their relations through dialogue, promoting reconciliation and finally realizing an independent unity.” This followed comments Chinese President Xi Jinping made during a meeting with Park on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit last week, in which Xi announced his support for an “independent and peaceful reunification” of the two Koreas.

North Korea has been far less enthusiastic about President Park’s initiative. In fact, earlier this week North Korea’s state media [blasted Park’s reunification](#) plan for having a “sinister intention for ‘unification by absorption,’ which will escalate north-south confrontation and war danger and keep national division permanently.” The report was laced with extremely sexist language directed toward Park, and suggested that she had given the speech in Germany because if she had made it in South Korea, “she would be shot to death like her father.” Its overarching conclusion was that Park had brought disgrace upon the Korean nation.

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/china-lashes-out-at-north-korea/>



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Can a Nuclear-Weapons State Champion Disarmament?

By RAMESH THAKUR*

Forty-four years after the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force, the world still finds itself perilously close to the edge of the nuclear cliff. The cliff is perhaps not quite as steep as it was in the 1980s, when there were more than 70,000 nuclear weapons compared to today's 17,000, but going over it would be fatal for planet Earth.

Authoritative road maps exist to walk us back to the relative safety of a denuclearized world, but a perverse mixture of hubris and arrogance on the part of the nine nuclear-armed states (China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) exposes us to the risk of sleepwalking into a nuclear disaster.

For nuclear peace to hold, deterrence and fail-safe mechanisms must work every single time. For nuclear Armageddon to break out, deterrence or fail-safe mechanisms need to break down only once. This is not a comforting equation.

Deterrence stability depends on rational decision-makers being always in office on all sides: a dubious and not very reassuring precondition. It depends equally critically on there being no rogue launch, human error or system malfunction: an impossibly high bar.

According to one U.S. study reported by Eric Schlosser last year, more than 1,200 nuclear weapons were involved in significant incidents from 1950-68 because of security breaches, lost weapons, failed safety mechanism or accidents resulting from weapons being dropped or crushed in lifts.

Nuclear weapons were invented to cope with Germany, used to defeat Japan and deployed most extensively against the Soviet Union. As their primary strategic rationale disappeared with the end of the Cold War, Washington's evolving nuclear policies acquired greater regional specificity. In East Asia, for example, U.S. nuclear weapons and doctrines are designed both to deter China and North Korea and reassure allies like Japan, South Korea and Australia. The world remains at a loss on how to persuade, coax or coerce North Korea to step back into the NPT as a denuclearized member in good standing.

Paradoxically the very fact that nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945 is powerful evidence that their sheer destructiveness makes them virtually unusable. A second paradox is that while the progress in the dramatic fall in

their numbers since the 1980s has occurred through bilateral agreements and measures between Moscow and Washington, their irreversible elimination will have to rest on a legally binding international convention. To be meaningful, this will have to include all nine nuclear-armed states.

The prospects for such a treaty would be significantly greater if it were to be championed by a credible country from among the nine nuclear powers. India should step forward to be a champion of phased, regulated and verifiable global nuclear disarmament governed by a universal, nondiscriminatory nuclear weapons convention.

This would be in keeping with the legacy of Indian initiatives on nuclear arms control and disarmament, including the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988; with the fact that India was the most reluctant nuclear weapons possessor of all nine nuclear-armed states; and the incongruent reality that its official nuclear doctrine lists global nuclear disarmament as a national security objective.

Inaugurating a conference on April 2, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reaffirmed that "as a responsible" nuclear armed state, "India supports the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free world because we believe that it enhances not just India's security, but also global security." He insisted that "there is no paradox in a nuclear weapons state like India being a strong advocate of a nuclear-weapons-free world."

India was the only country to demonstrate a nuclear-weapons capability in 1974 and then exercise restraint for nearly a quarter century before regional and global events "obliged us to test in 1998 and declare ourselves a nuclear weapon state."

On March 9, former Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), widely expected to win the elections currently being fought, wrote a somewhat silly, if not hysterical, letter to Singh demanding that his address to the conference be canceled and that the conference itself be postponed until after the elections.

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Sinha accused Singh of being the head of “a lame-duck government” and the conference of being “ill-designed and ill-timed” because of the general elections. For good measure, he added that his perusal of the agenda showed the speakers to be mainly “known anti-India ... nonproliferationists” who “have not only been bashing India but have been working against our interests.”

Sinha should sack the aide who provided him with this information. There were indeed some among the speakers who are strong advocates of nonproliferation and were never reconciled to India’s nuclear weaponization. No seminar on the challenge of nuclear weapons can be balanced and credible if it excludes this point of view. Most speakers were strong and passionate nuclear abolitionists, directing their arguments at all who possess and seek security through nuclear weapons that add hugely to the security dilemmas and dangers of the whole world.

Mercifully Singh ignored the letter as part of the silly season of campaign politics. In his address, Singh called for practical

Source: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2014/04/07/commentary/can-a-nuclear-weapons-state-champion-disarmament/#.U5mERajMKlu>

measures to “reduce nuclear dangers by reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.”

Because an increasing number of voices are demanding that the sole function of nuclear weapons, as long as they exist, should be to deter a nuclear attack, all the nuclear armed states should join together to establish a global no-first-use norm.

It is simplistic to dismiss “no first use” as merely declaratory, easily ignored in wartime. A universal no-first-use policy by all nine nuclear-armed states would have considerable practical import with flow-on requirements for nuclear force posture and deployment — for example, de-alerting (taking warheads off hair-trigger alert), de-mating (separating warheads from delivery systems) and de-targeting.

This strengthened norm of nonuse would then lay the groundwork for further gradual reductions in the number of nuclear warheads held by the various nuclear armed states and their eventual elimination through a nuclear weapons convention. (April 7, 2014)

Obama's New Nuclear Weapons

By MARCH BINDER

The U.S government today released a precise accounting of its strategic nuclear forces, something it is required to do by treaty, and it's worth a careful read.

The world now knows that, by February of 2018, the U.S. will have approximately 400 intercontinental ballistic missiles, down from 450; 240 submarine-launched ballistic missiles, down about 50; and 60 nuclear-capable heavy bomber fighters (B-2As and B-52Hs), converting 30 B-52s to a non-nuclear role.

Since most of the nuclear payloads contain multiple warheads, the U.S. must also disclose the number of strategic nuclear weapons it will maintain on an alert status. As of 2018, that will be 1,550.

The good news: the number of viable nuclear warheads in the world will go down. President Obama [has prioritized](#) nuclear arms reduction, and the Senate in 2010 ratified a treaty with Russia that reduces to 700 the number of nuclear delivery vehicles. (The U.S. can keep an extra 100 platforms in storage.)

The timing is interesting, of course, but the decisions to reduce certain types of weapons is even more interesting. Of the three "guns," the silo-based ICBMs are the oldest, the least efficient, and operated by missileers who have had well-publicized troubles with cheating and morale. But the cuts to that "leg" of the triad are much smaller, proportionally, than the cuts sustained by the Air Force's nuclear fighter wings and the Navy's ballistic missile submarines.

It may well be that the Obama administration decided to boost the confidence of the missileers, but the plan to keep most of the ICBMs might serve another purpose. It will require future administrations to cut the ICBM force more heavily, while giving nuclear planners more time to adapt the new set of platforms to existing targets. The composition of the nuclear force is unclassified; virtually everything else about nuclear war remains a state secret.

Source: <http://theweek.com/article/index/259589/obamas-new-nuclear-weapons#axzz34QAwM DAT>



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For example: cutting the number of strategic warheads will force a big change to the [Joint Strategic Capabilities Supplement](#) annex to the current nuclear war plan, [OPLAN 8010-12 Strategic Deterrent and Force Employment](#), as well as to the exercises used to test forces on the plan and the intelligence that guides it. Also, the U.S. maintains a stockpile of battlefield nuclear weapons, which have "yields," or explosive power equivalent to as little as 300 tons of TNT. Most are kept in storage in bunkers across the world. Their locations, types, and numbers are classified, although the U.S. admits to a force of at least 500 "battlefield" weapons.

The U.S. also keeps a [big reserve](#) of nuclear weapons material and equipment — the "nuclear strategic reserve," which, while disassembled, do not count towards any of the treaty's red lines. As of 2010, the reserve stock was

equivalent to 2,800 weapons. These are intended (in nuclear doctrine) to hedge against strategic surprise, but the number is probably significantly higher than it needs to be, particularly if the classified target countries (China, North Korea, Russia, Iran, Syria) are no longer formally chartered enemies.

Though President Obama has changed the policy undergirding the employment of nuclear weapons, the exact language of the war plan, as well as the thresholds that might trigger the consideration for the use of nuclear weapons, remain classified, even though there is considerable ambiguity built into the precision. It is not known, for example, how flexible the U.S. can be in response to a conventional attack from a non-nuclear country, like Syria. After 9/11, a "[WMD hedge](#)" was built into the war plan, too. The U.S. does not rule out using nuclear weapons to respond to a terrorist attack from a non-state actor. (April 8, 2014)

Why India Must Stay the Nuclear Hand

By VIPIN NARANG*

Revising India's no-first-use posture, as the BJP is purportedly considering, would be unnecessary and dangerous.

The BJP's election manifesto pledged to "revise and update" India's nuclear doctrine. Initial reports suggested that rather than just a routine update, a future BJP government might revisit and abandon India's pledge not to be the first party to use nuclear weapons in a crisis or conflict, otherwise known as a No First Use (NFU) pledge.

The NFU pledge is a cornerstone of India's nuclear doctrine, formally adopted by the BJP-led NDA government in January 2003. While pledging NFU, and to not threaten the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states (a so-called negative security assurance), the doctrine promises massive retaliation if weapons of mass destruction are used against India or its armed forces. India's massive retaliation doctrine is strictly designed to deter a nuclear attack. The goal, if crafted properly and if deterrence is successful, is to never to have to fire a nuclear weapon.

In potentially revisiting India's NFU pledge, the 2014 BJP would be questioning a fundamental tenet of the 2003 BJP's nuclear doctrine, formulated in large part by the then-national security advisor, Brajesh Mishra. The doctrine has been accepted by successor UPA governments, and the NFU pledge publicly reaffirmed by NSA Shivshankar Menon. It is unclear whether reversing NFU is seriously being considered by the BJP, or whether these are just rumours. Abandoning the NFU pillar of the nuclear doctrine would be a terrible idea for India's national security. It would potentially transform India's deterrence-

only nuclear doctrine to one of nuclear warfighting, with serious ramifications for Indian security.

First, abandoning NFU is strategically unnecessary for India. Threatening the first use of nuclear weapons is useful for one primary purpose: to deter a conventionally superior adversary, where the threat of using nuclear weapons against conventional forces is necessary to offset the adversary's conventional advantage over passable terrains.

This is really the only scenario that requires a state to contemplate using nuclear weapons first. But India has conventional superiority against Pakistan, and this gap will only grow in the future as India incorporates more — and more advanced — platforms into its armed forces. India does not need the threat of nuclear weapons — or nuclear warfighting — to deter Pakistani conventional forces from attacking India. India need only deter nuclear use by Pakistan, for which its present assured retaliation doctrine is a powerful and sufficient deterrent.

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Some advocates of abandoning NFU point to the fact that Pakistan threatens to use nuclear weapons first against India (precisely because of India's conventional superiority) and is developing tactical or battlefield nuclear weapons such as the Nasr system to deter Indian army operations across the international border. Therefore, according to former foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh, "There is a feeling within nuclear experts that because of this changed scenario, we need to rethink our response as well." But since India already reserves the right to retaliate against any nuclear use — whether from Nasr or Shaheen missiles — these developments do not alter the basic deterrent logic or aim of India's retaliatory doctrine.

How will reversing NFU improve India's ability to respond to Pakistani development of battlefield nuclear weapons? Against China, India has achieved a greater conventional balance and, in any case, the first use of nuclear weapons against Chinese ground forces in the likely terrain of any conflict renders them futile as a practical deterrent.

Second, not only is abandoning NFU unnecessary, it would make any militarised crisis with Pakistan very dangerous for India. Pakistan does not have a nuclear force guaranteed to survive a first strike from India. This makes the threat of first-use by India much more alarming to Pakistan. In a crisis, absent a formal NFU assurance, Pakistan would have reasons to fear a disarming Indian first strike and begin to calculate that it is in a "use them or lose them" situation, where it is better off striking first before India can wipe out its nuclear forces.

In a mutual first-use world where at least one side worries about the survivability of its forces (as Pakistan might), the overriding incentive by both sides is to "go first", before the adversary, so that one's nuclear weapons are not eliminated by an opponent's first strike. India's formal NFU pledge is therefore a stabilising firebreak that stays both Pakistan's and India's nuclear hands in a crisis.

Third, formally abandoning NFU would carry significant costs and set a dangerous precedent in the second nuclear age in which the world presently finds itself. Having a credible first-use doctrine involves costly development



and intensive management procedures for both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, and would carry risks of inadvertent and unauthorised nuclear use. India has been accepted by the world (and formally by the Nuclear Suppliers Group) as a legitimate and responsible nuclear power. Reversing NFU could provocatively undermine the rightful legitimacy that the NDA and successive UPA governments achieved.

One could retort that the formal NFU pledge is just words — words that Pakistan and China may not even believe. But these words signal intent, and declaratory nuclear doctrine is an important and valuable window into a nation's intentions on when and under what conditions it might be thinking the unthinkable.

For example, it is certainly worth re-evaluating whether "massive retaliation" is an appropriate doctrine, as opposed to simply "assured" or "certain" retaliation, which is both more credible and better achieves India's deterrent objectives.

India's security situation is such that its nuclear forces are primarily required to deter nuclear use and coercion against it, demanding only a doctrine of credible and assured retaliation — this is difficult enough to manage, and aligning India's nuclear posture with that doctrine is something that both the NDA and UPA governments have admirably worked hard to achieve.

The formulators of India's doctrine in the first NDA governments — K. Subrahmanyam and Brajesh Mishra for example — understood this and made NFU a pillar of India's nuclear posture. Those who may be thinking of revising the NFU pledge should remember why they did so, and recognise that no changes in the geostrategic landscape necessitate abandoning NFU.

One hopes that lucid strategic sense prevails and that future governments focus on further enhancing the credibility and reliability of India's retaliatory deterrent nuclear doctrine and posture, rather than dangerously trying to abandon it. (April 12, 2014)

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/why-india-must-stay-the-nuclear-hand/99/>



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The Humanitarian Initiative and the NPT

By JOHN LORETZ, IPPNW

The third and final preparatory committee meeting for the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference will convene at the end of April at the United Nations in New York. Central to this Review will be an assessment of progress on the NPT Action Plan adopted in 2010. Sadly, barring some dramatic development, there won't be much to assess.

The [final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference](#) expressed "deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that these weapons could be used and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons."

The recognition that these consequences are the basis of the disarmament obligations of NPT Member States and, in fact, make the elimination of nuclear weapons an urgent priority, has given rise to a series of joint statements by NPT and UN Member States on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and to two international conferences—one in Oslo in March 2013, and a second in Nayarit, Mexico in February of this year. A third conference will take place in Vienna later this year.

In their most recent [Joint Statement](#), presented at the General Assembly in October 2013, 130 States cautioned that "the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination." They recognized a core principle of the NPT, that nuclear disarmament "is a shared responsibility of all States," and concluded that it is "essential that the humanitarian consequences inform our work and actions during the current Review Cycle and beyond."

The conference in Oslo, with 127 States in attendance, was the first intergovernmental meeting ever organized around the scientific evidence about the medical, environmental, and social effects of nuclear weapons use. In [summarizing](#) the meaning of that evidence, the Chair concluded "It is unlikely that any state or international body could address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation in an adequate manner and provide sufficient assistance to those affected. Moreover, it might not be possible to establish such capacities, even if it were attempted."

Delegates from 146 States participated in a follow-up conference in Nayarit, where they heard moving testimonies from survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; got a crash course in nuclear weapons effects from physicians, climate scientists, and physicists; and

learned from national and international relief agencies that they would be helpless to mount or to manage a meaningful emergency response to the use of nuclear weapons. In his [summary](#), the Chair observed that "The wide range of damage and negative impact in the likelihood of a nuclear explosion, as well as the vast resources allocated to maintain and modernize nuclear arsenals, make the mere existence of these weapons absurd, question the arguments in their defense and ultimately are contrary to human dignity."

The governments of Norway, Mexico, and Austria, along with ICAN and other voices from civil society, have helped to transform the discourse about nuclear weapons and have put the focus where it belongs: on humanity's well being and survival. The conference websites have archived the most of the presentations, and the materials are also available at [Reaching Critical Will](#). They summarize the overwhelming evidence that nuclear weapons are unique in the catastrophic nature of their effects and cannot be held responsibly by any State. Some of the facts are familiar but too often neglected; others have come to light more recently:

a single nuclear weapon can destroy an entire city, inflicting massive numbers of instantaneous casualties from explosions that generate the heat of the sun and the force of a dozen hurricanes;

acute radiation injuries kill in a matter of minutes, days, or weeks; and radiation-caused cancers and other illnesses continue to kill for years among those directly exposed and across generations;

the use of even a small fraction of existing nuclear arsenals would cause environmental devastation, including disruption of the global climate and agricultural production, potentially leading to the starvation of two billion of the world's most vulnerable people from a [nuclear famine](#).

Knowing and internalizing these facts about nuclear weapons is important, because they lead inexorably to a few simple truths.

<http://peaceandhealthblog.com/2014/04/09/humanitarian-npt/>



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First, nuclear weapons themselves are the problem, regardless of who possesses them or for what reasons.

Second, the only way to ensure that these consequences will never occur is to eliminate the possibility that the weapons can be used. This, in turn, means that eliminating the weapons themselves must be seen as a humanitarian imperative, as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement explained eloquently in a resolution adopted in 2011 and reaffirmed in 2013.

Third, because every State will suffer from the use of nuclear weapons, whether or not they are possessor States, every State has the right and responsibility to work for their elimination. This principle is enshrined in the NPT, the 1996 World Court advisory opinion, and numerous UN resolutions.

This new focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons—whether one thinks of it as a humanitarian initiative, a humanitarian movement, or the humanitarian basis for a new process to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons—is, at the present time, no more than a reframing of the problem—a shift in the way we think and talk about nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament.

From the humanitarian perspective, the justifications for the continued possession of nuclear weapons by a few States can no longer carry any weight. The claim by some states that they continue to need these weapons to deter their adversaries has been exposed by the evidence presented in Oslo and Nayarit as a reckless and unsanctionable gamble with our future.

From the humanitarian perspective, “deterrence” means declaring one’s willingness to kill millions of people indiscriminately and to create nuclear graveyards where cities used to be; having the means at hand to produce that outcome; having the systems in place to launch those weapons at a time and under circumstances of one’s choosing; and issuing credible threats from time to time, in order to be taken seriously. The humanitarian definition of “deterrence,” in other words, is global blackmail, with the entire world held hostage to the threat of omnicide.

Basing security on threats to inflict such destruction as is not only morally reprehensible, it is also foolhardy. Unlike conventional forms of deterrence, failure of which can have tragic consequences, we cannot afford for *nuclear* deterrence to fail, because the consequences are unthinkable. Therefore, we should not put ourselves in a position where it *can* fail. The truth deterrence proponents refuse to face is that nuclear deterrence sooner or later *will* fail. Recent books by [Ward Wilson](#) and [Eric Schlosser](#) have exposed the faulty reasoning and the faulty systems that make deterrence not a safeguard, rather the biggest threat to our survival. Accepting deterrence means accepting the inevitability that nuclear weapons will be used, with the only unanswered questions being when and how many.

Even before they are used—as they will be if we do not eliminate them—nuclear weapons continually undermine development and the achievement of global economic and social equality. The maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons diverts vast and essential resources needed to address real human needs, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Unfortunately, the nuclear-armed States, with the exception of India and Pakistan (who are not NPT Member States) made a deliberate decision to absent themselves from both the Oslo and the Nayarit conferences. They have distanced themselves from the humanitarian discourse and have attempted to discredit this new initiative at every turn. They have given various explanations, none of which are satisfactory. From the perspective of civil society, it seems clear that the nuclear-armed States have no answer to the humanitarian argument for nuclear disarmament, and are therefore unwilling to engage with other States and with civil society on those terms.

This is a shame, because we need the nuclear-armed States to participate in this discourse about humanitarian impact, which will continue and evolve at a third conference in Vienna later this year. After all, these are the States that will have to complete the task of nuclear disarmament at the end of the day. Good-faith engagement with the States who have come together around this fresh perspective on nuclear weapons and the existential threat they pose to all of us could hasten the arrival of that day. (April 9, 2014)

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