

## Toward Nuclear Weapons Abolition

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Bikini Day Commemoration, February 28, 2012

Shizuoka, Japan

“[T]he world needs new thinking, based not just on the recognition of universal interests and of global interdependence but also on a certain moral foundation...politics becomes dirty and a zero-sum, lose-lose game only when it has no moral core. This perhaps is the main lesson to be learned from the past two decades.” – Mikhail Gorbachev<sup>1</sup>

Friends,

It is particularly humbling to return for this year’s Bikini Day commemorations. Last year Oishi Matashichi, Alson Kelsen and Misaki Yoshio brought us face to face with the shock, deadly fallout and suffering brought on by the 1954 Bravo H-bomb. Sawada Shoji and Kido Sueichi moved and inspired us with the Hibakusha’s courage and the imperative that humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. And we took a major step in building the popular force needed to win nuclear weapons abolition by launching the Appeal for a Total Ban of Nuclear Weapons.

Ten days later Japan and the world were overwhelmed by the destruction and suffering inflicted by Tohoku Earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima meltdowns.

Remarkably, even as you dealt with your grief, provided assistance, protected children and the food supply and denounced the deadly myth of nuclear safety, Gensuikyo activists persisted. You kept your eyes on the prize: working to create a nuclear weapons free world. The signature drive was slowed, but it wasn’t sidelined.

Please reflect for a moment and take pride from the image of one million petition signatures being presented to U.N. High Commissioner for Disarmament Sergio Duarte

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<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev. Is the World Really Safer Without the Soviet Union?, *The Nation*, January 9/16,2012

and others in New York this past October. Despite all that you, your families and friends endured, you did the persistent and often humble work needed to create a world free of the dangers of nuclear war.

In the US we have a saying that people need to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time, to pursue more than one goal at a time. This is what we humans do. We breathe while our hearts beat. With all of the nuclear weapons states “modernizing” their nuclear arsenals and still dangerously lost in the deterrence theory illusion that nuclear weapons provide security, and with the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moving the hands of their Doomsday Clock one minute closer to midnight, we cannot be distracted from the sacred task of eliminating the scourge of nuclear weapons.

In her letter of invitation, Tsuchida-san wrote, “we think that there are a lot of positive conditions and possibilities for the elimination of nuclear weapons compared to 2006,” the year following the Bush Administration’s subversion of the NPT Review Conference and of the Treaty itself.

Each of us has a list of how the world has simultaneously become more dangerous or hopeful over the past six years. I want to point to three major changes that open ways to build on our recent successes.

### **Proliferation and Abolition**

First is the recognition by senior figures of the U.S. elite, including President Obama, that the only meaningful way to address dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation is to work toward – but not necessarily achieve - nuclear weapons abolition.

During the last six years, the pace of proliferation has increased. North Korea detonated its first A-bomb in 2006, frightening its neighbors and creating fears that

Pyongyang might follow A.Q. Kahn's example, trading nuclear weapons or nuclear know-how for badly needed hard currency. In the Middle East there is Iran, which is either developing nuclear weapons or following the Japanese model of becoming a near-nuclear state, able to assemble a bomb in a matter of weeks or months. Iran's nuclear program has now spawned warnings that Saudi Arabia and other Arab states that they may respond with nuclear weapons programs of their own. As we meet, we face the dangers of U.S. or Iranian miscalculations or an Israeli preemptive attack resulting in a calamitous regional war with global implications.

Yet it is precisely the increasing dangers of proliferation that awakened former U.S. foreign ministers Shultz and Kissinger, Senator Nunn, former Defense Secretary William Perry and many of their colleagues to conclude that the only way to prevent proliferation is to recommit the U.S. to nuclear weapons abolition and to take meaningful steps toward that goal. Steve Andreasen, the former Clinton Administration arms controller who moved Senator Nunn to sign on for abolition, and who was a principle author of the Four Horsemen's manifestos, put it this way: "The only way to decisively address the nuclear threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – i.e. the threat of deliberate nuclear use or nuclear blackmail; nuclear proliferation; nuclear terrorism; accidental, mistaken or unauthorized nuclear use – is to eliminate all nuclear weapons globally."<sup>2</sup>

It was the danger of proliferation that refocused then Senator Obama on the dangers of nuclear war, leading him to conclude that the U.S. must "marshal... a global effort to meet a threat that rises above all others in urgency – security, destroying and stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction." Later, during his campaign for the presidency, when peace activist voters pressed Obama to commit to implementing Article

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<sup>2</sup> Philip Taubman. *The Partnership*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York: 2012, pp/301-302

VI of the NPT, it was Shultz and company's analysis and credibility that he relied upon when he pledged that as President he would say "America seeks a world in which there are no nuclear weapons."<sup>3</sup>

Seeking and doing are two different things, and with the exception of the pending nuclear agreement with Vietnam, Obama has given greater attention to non-proliferation than to abolition. Beginning with his Prague speech, he has repeatedly pledged that "[a]s long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies."<sup>4</sup> A safe nuclear arsenal?

At the insistence of the Pentagon, his Administration's Nuclear Posture Review reaffirmed the U.S. first-strike nuclear war fighting doctrine. Simulated and sub-critical nuclear weapons tests, as well as missile tests, continue. And, kowtowing to Republican demands, Obama committed to increase spending by \$185 billion for nuclear weapons and the missiles needed to deliver them missiles as the price paid to win votes needed for New START Treaty ratification.

Nonetheless, Obama has been true his word in "begin[ing] the work of reducing our arsenal. Marginal reductions were agreed in the New START treaty. More important are reports that the Obama Administration's highly secret review, which will establish the baseline for future U.S. negotiations with Russia, includes three options: retaining the

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Taubman. Op. Cit. pp. 333 &335

<sup>4</sup> President Barak Obama, Prague, May 6, 2009, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/05/obama-prague-speech-on-nu\\_n\\_183219.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/05/obama-prague-speech-on-nu_n_183219.html)

status quo, 700 to 800, or 300-400 deployed strategic (I would add omniscidal) nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup>

How serious is this? John Kyl, the Senate's most influential nuclear warrior, has promised a "battle royal in the Congress if the President moves forward with these kinds of plans."<sup>6</sup> My best guess is that Obama will hedge his political bets and opt for a bottom line of 700 to 800 deployed strategic weapons.

It is also worth noting that the Obama Administration's Nuclear Posture Review and the Pentagon's more recent Strategic Guidance provide for reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military doctrines. But we need to remember that the US retains its commitments to full spectrum dominance, and that even the Air Force's minimum number required for "deterrence", 311 hydrogen warheads, is sufficient to bring on Nuclear Winter.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, this is not our goal, but it reflects change and provides us many new openings.

### **Outside/Inside Strategies**

The second great change since 2006 is that we have created a mutually reinforcing dynamic of collaboration between civil society abolitionists like ourselves and allied sectors of state power working together for nuclear weapons abolition. This is

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Burns. "US weighing steep nuclear arms cuts", The Associated Press, February 14, 2012. <http://www.ajc.com/news/nation-world/us-weighing-steep-nuclear-1349285.html>

<sup>6</sup> Elaine M. Grossman, "U.S. can safely take deeper nuclear arms cuts, senior Defense official says:" *Global Security Newswire*, <http://www.govexec.com/defense/2012/02/us-can-safely-take-deeper-nuclear-arms-cuts-senior-defense-official-says/41229>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

best illustrated by the participation of U.N. High Commissioner for Disarmament Sergio Duarte and other senior diplomats in the World Conference against A- & H- Bombs, and their willingness to receive millions of abolition petition signatures on the floor of General Assembly. The collaboration was also there when U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon joined our NGO conference on the eve of the NPT Review and his subsequent journey to Hiroshima.

We see results of these collaborations in the U.N. General Assembly's repeated and overwhelming adoption of resolutions requiring the world's nuclear powers to implement Article VI of the NPT. They are there, too, in the 2010 NPT Review's Final Declaration.

Along the way we have learned that winning nuclear weapons abolition requires an "inside-outside" game. While pressing from the outside by building and mobilizing public opinion, we need to continue finding ways to engage, learn from, work with and support those within state systems who are no less committed to nuclear weapons abolition than we are.

This does not mean waiting for power elites to give us direction. Instead, it means that we can strengthen one another. Examples of how this works include the sharing of information and analyses, the presentation of millions of petition signatures to Sergio Duarte and the President of the 2010 NPT, the arrangements made to impact the psychological climate of this year's NPT PrepCom with the display of Hidankyo posters, and the collaboration between the Norwegian government and ICAN to move other European governments to more actively support abolition diplomacy.

I had a very personal experience of how this dynamic relationship can work when we organized for the 2010 NPT Review. At the direction of our planning committee, I invited Ban Ki Moon to address our NGO conference on the eve of the Review Conference. Frankly, I didn't think there was the remotest chance that he would accept our invitation. But I was wrong, and he joined us on the stage from which Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his seminal "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" speech.

How could we not have been inspired and revitalized with the Secretary General saying "Be bold. Think big. For it yields big results...we need people like you. ..What I see on the horizon is a world free of nuclear weapons. What I see before me are the people who will make this happen. Please keep up your good work. Sound the alarm, keep up the pressure...We will rid the world of nuclear weapons. And when we do, it will be because of people like you."

Equally remarkable was the extended standing ovation that followed, taking Secretary General and his entourage by surprise. We were later told that they were so deeply moved that it stiffened their commitments as they approached the challenges of the Review Conference. This was a powerful lesson about the need to be bold in our thinking and organizing. It should also remind us that when the people lead, our leaders will follow.

### **Imperial Over Reach**

The third major change and opening lies in the relative decline of the United States, and the economic choices that necessarily follow. True, even impoverished nations can become nuclear powers, but it is also true that nations like the US and Britain,

which have suffered steady declines in industrial production and essential social services, increasingly face zero-sum decisions of guns or butter, military spending or investing to serve and revitalize their societies.

Obama made a Faustian bargain, buying Republican votes needed to ratify the New START Treaty by committing to increase spending for nuclear weapons and the missiles needed to deliver. But under pressure from his political base to “Move the Money” from the Pentagon to addressing urgent human needs, he appears to be beginning to reverse course. An additional push is coming from Rep. Ed Markey has introduced a bill which would cut \$90 billion in nuclear weapons spending. And the Pentagon’s desire for costly non-nuclear high-tech weapons may be one reason it is willing to consider significant reductions in the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

We need more than this, but like CND’s campaign in Britain to fund education and job creation rather than Trident replacement, the growing debate over military spending in the US provides activists and national campaigners openings to build political pressure that we need to win nuclear weapons abolition.

### **Getting to Zero**

I want to stress several points as I close. Let me begin with the words of the man who inspired the Shultz/Nunn/Perry/Kissinger initiative, Max Kampleman, a former U.S. arms control negotiator. Kampleman was not impressed with the quartet’s second public statement and responded by saying that “all kinds of detailed proposals have been advanced over the years, only to end up on the scrap heap because the political leadership and public interest have been lacking....Getting that support should be our first

priority....public psychology has to be altered before anything like a zero option has a serious chance.”<sup>8</sup> Friends, this is our job.

Second, I wish I could say that the U.S. peace movement is living up to its moral and historic responsibilities. As the citizens of the state that has been the world’s most dangerous nuclear power we have unique responsibilities. That said, there are three initiatives you should know about. The Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Free World has launched a [petition campaign](#) designed to impact the outcome of Nuclear Guidance review. We are hoping to secure 50,000 signatures – a significant amount for us – by April. We are also engaged in education and organizing to press nuclear disarmament in broader campaigns to cut Pentagon spending. And abolition will be a significant dimension of the Counter-Summit being organized for the NATO/G-8 summits in Chicago this May.

Third, as the only nation to be targeted by nuclear weapons in time of war, the unique historical role of the Japanese peace movement needs to be honored. With Hibakusha testimonies, signature drives, critiques and denunciations of nuclear umbrellas and deterrence theory, demonstrations, alliance building, delegations and raising up the next generation of abolitionists, you have been a beacon to the world, altering and transforming “public psychology” in Japan and globally. You must keep on keepin’ on.

Lastly, I want to celebrate your plans for the PrepCom in Vienna and – for the longer term - our collective education and organizing for the 2015 NPT Review. Along with petition campaigns, we need to exploit every opening we can find to press our governments to begin the good faith negotiations promised in the NPT. We need to

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<sup>8</sup> Philip Taubman. Op. Cit. p.329.

remember that the NPT Review is one of the best means we have to hold the nuclear powers accountable to their Article VI commitments, as well as to prevent proliferation.

Let me conclude as I began with an appreciation of moral vision. Let us heed Kuboyama Aikichi's appeal that he be the last victim of nuclear weapons. Let us live our lives with the courage of Joseph Rotblat, the one Manhattan Project scientist who had the moral vision to quit inventing the Atomic bomb and chose instead to devote his life to abolishing nuclear weapons. Some of you were there in Hiroshima when, like an Old Testament prophet, he warned that the human species faces a stark choice: either we eliminate the world's nuclear arsenals or we will suffer the apocalyptic nuclear wars that will inevitably follow.