

Beyond the Obama Doctrine

Joseph Gerson

World Conference against A- & H- Bombs

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Minosan Konichi-wa. I come with deep sympathy for all that the people of Japan have suffered as a result of the March 11 catastrophes, and I am inspired by the resilience of the Japanese people and the Japanese peace movement.

I return to Hiroshima with humility and anger at what the government that speaks in my name has inflicted and prepares to inflict in the future. And, who cannot but feel rage at the ways Japanese lives have been sacrificed and your economy undermined by the greed, ambitions and corruption of those responsible for Fukushima and Japan's other vulnerable nuclear reactors?

I was privileged this year to participate in the Bikini Day commemorations where we launched the Appeal for a Total Ban of Nuclear Weapons signature campaign. Ten days later came 3-11: the news of earthquake, the predicted murderous tsunami, and – worse – the nuclear assault on the people, environment and economy of Japan and other nations.

Similar to the decision to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki, cities with “densely packed workers homes”,¹ human ambition and greed, not simply nature, were responsible for what you, your friends and communities have suffered from Fukushima.

I felt helpless in the days and weeks that followed, reading what I could in the press and e-mails from friends who immediately understood Fukushima would be more devastating than the earthquake and tsunami. There were panicked messages from friends

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who had lost contact with loved ones in the Tohoku region. Others worried about drinking water for their infants. There was news of the farmer, a Gensuikyo member, who committed suicide, when his farmland was irradiated, leaving him to face economic ruin.

Another recent news report also cut me to the quick. The headline read “Fukushima children have ingested radiation.” The story explained that in a test group of children age six to sixteen had “all tested positive for caesium-134 and cesium 137.” It also reported that Japanese authorities were insisting that “This won’t be a problem if they don’t eat vegetables or other contaminated products.”

Does this madness sound familiar? Nuclear power plants, they said, were safe. Genocidal nuclear weapons are deployed and stockpiled to protect us.

That said, many of us have been moved as Zenroren medical workers traveled north, as Gensuikyo collected relief supplies, as Shinfujin made arrangements for endangered Tohoku children to live in members’ homes a safe distance from Fukushima and by Shinfujin’s campaign to eliminate the misnamed “sympathy budget”² so that Japanese tax money can pay for relief and reconstruction.. And who could not be inspired by the reports of Fukushima region activists and allies from other parts of Japan stepping off on the Peace March.

It is widely believed that the 3-11 catastrophes mark a third great transformation in modern Japanese history, comparable to Admiral Perry’s Black Ships and the Meiji Revolution that followed and to Japan’s 15 Year War and its resulting calamities. The world wonders how Japan will recreate itself, what it will become. With the peace

² The “sympathy budget” is \$1.6 billion in Japanese tax money used to help pay for the more than 100 U.S. military bases and installations concentrated in Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan.

marchers from the Tohoku region and this World Conference we can be assured that the people of 21st century Japan will continue to serve as the vanguard of the essential campaigns to ensure that nuclear weapons and nuclear power are consigned to the dustbin of history.

Before exploring the implications of the Obama Administration's commitment to spend \$185 billion over the next decade to expand the U.S. nuclear weapons production infrastructure and to "modernize" U.S. nuclear weapons and delivery systems, let me say a few words about the U.S. political landscape, the unusually fluid state of the global (dis)order, and the emerging Obama Doctrine.

Remember President Bush's declaration that he would be a "war president"? The sad truth is that he has been succeeded by another war president. The U.S. remains at war in Iraq and Afghanistan and hopes to have permanent military bases in each country. Obama has escalated the wars in Pakistan and Yemen and pursued aggressive military exercises, especially in the Yellow and South China Seas. Washington has deepened its alliances across the Asia-Pacific with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Australia, and India, and in Europe with NATO's new "strategic concept."

Remember too that during last winter's Korean crisis, when China warned the U.S. not to engage in military exercises in the Yellow Sea, the U.S. sent the nuclear powered and nuclear capable USS George Washington into what Beijing claimed are its exclusive territorial waters. As former U.S. Ambassador R. Stapleton Roy put it, "we poked China in the eye because we could." Whether we agree with Beijing's claim or not, it should be clear that the way to address competing international claims is through law and diplomacy, not by signaling the future possibility of a nuclear attack.

The U.S. military and nuclear build ups³, are taking place at a turning point that is being widely debated in U.S. power elite circles: how to proceed in the face of the relative decline of U.S. power and influence and the rise of China and the other BRICs (Brazil, India and Russia.) The dominant question is whether, as in the 20th century, world wars resulting from the challenges of rising powers – in today’s case China - are inevitable. And, if not, how such conflict can be prevented while reaffirming U.S. global dominance.⁴ I will concede that these questions seem not to have occurred to the Know Nothings Tea Party, whose primary focus is reducing the size and power of the U.S. government by defunding essential human services while not touching the Pentagon budget.

It is within these contexts that a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the elite U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, asserted⁵, that after an initial phase of “multilateral entrenchment.” we now have an almost coherent Obama Doctrine: aggressive “counterpunching”.⁵

Obama arrived at the White House facing not only the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression, but a world in which the U.S. was an isolated pariah nation. As one Administration official put it, his initial priorities were to “Wind down [the Iraq and Afghanistan] wars, reestablish American standing and leadership in the world, and focus on a broader set of priorities, from Asia and the global economy to a

³ Despite the U.S. economic crisis and focus on deficit reduction, in July the U.S. House of Representatives voted a \$17 billion increase in military spending.

⁴ See, among others, Henry Kissinger. *On China*, New York: The Penguin Press, New York, 2011; Andrew Nathan. “What China Wants”, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2011; Daniel W. Drezner. “Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy?” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2011; and Richard C. Bush. **The Perils of Proximity**, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2010.

⁵ Op. Cit. Daniel W. Drezner

nuclear-nonproliferation regime.”⁶ This included exploring the possibility of U.S.-Chinese G-2 order, the embrace of the G-20, deeper engagement in Asia-Pacific multilateral organizations, and the inspiring Prague and Cairo speeches.

The BRICs were unimpressed, because Washington’s new ruling elite failed to fully address their interests, and in the Middle East Israel resisted Obama’s vision of a two-state agreement with Palestinians, and the mullahs in Iran had their own ambitions.

Now, having revitalized its alliances, especially in the Asia-Pacific and Europe, Obama and company have turned to “counterpunching”, reasserting U.S. power and influence across the world “when challenged by other countries, reassuring allies, and signaling resolve to potential rivals...” As the authors of the *Foreign Affairs* article report, the doctrine seeks to restore “American strength at home” not only economically, but by using “the specter of rising powers as a motivational tool”, i.e. scaring the U.S. people into supporting aggressive foreign and military policies. In addition to the poking of China in its Yellow Sea eye, this includes deepening economic and military ties with the majority of China’s neighbors, declaring freedom of navigation in the South China Sea as a core U.S. interest, and the accelerated pace of “military exercises” in those contested waters.

In the oil-rich Middle East, Obama and company have used military and other leverage to limit the Arab Spring in Egypt and to enforce an Arab winter in Bahrain and other allied Arab monarchies. In North Africa, NATO’s “counter-punching” in Libya needs to be understood as the first war fought under NATO’s new “strategic concept”. European allies now have increased warfighting responsibilities for the Alliance’s “out of area” (non-European) wars.

⁶ Ibid.

This, of course, is what the U.S. has in mind for Japan to help ensure that China's rise respects U.S. power and privilege.

How then do we understand President Obama's approach to nuclear weapons? How does his call for a nuclear weapons free world square with the commitment to spend \$185 billion over the next decade to "modernize" the U.S. nuclear arsenal and its delivery system? Is President Obama serious when he says that "all options are on the table" in dealing with North Korea and Iran?

As the Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman recently wrote, "It's getting harder and harder to trust Mr. Obama's motive in the budget fight..." The same applies to his rhetoric of a nuclear weapons free world. As still another *Foreign Affairs* essay put it, "the Obama administration's nuclear weapons policy appears to be schizophrenic."⁷

It's not schizophrenic. Obama's Prague speech was part of a diplomatic offensive designed to achieve the nation's preeminent strategic goal: preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and thus reducing the risk of nuclear attacks against the United States. Consistent with the call of Shultz, Kissinger and Company⁸ to acknowledge it's Article VI NPT obligations and demonstrate commitments to disarmament we had Prague, Obama's special General Assembly session and resolution, the Nuclear Security Summit, New START, the call for negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty and the P-5 call for swift entry into force of the CTBT.

But there is another dimension to the Obama Administration's nuclear policies: its first strike doctrine and its commitment that "as long as nuclear weapons exist, we the

⁷ Keir A. Lieber & Daryl G. Press, "The Case for Modernizing America's Nukes", *Foreign Affairs*, July 6, 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67973/keir-a-lieber-and-daryl-g-press/obamas-nuclear-upgrade>

⁸ George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry and Sam Nunn, as articulated in the Wall Street Journal statements.

United States will maintain a[n]...effective nuclear arsenal.”⁹ The U.S. is building the nuclear arsenal needed to enforce empire for decades to come. In the deal that secured the votes needed to ratify New START, the President committed to “a major modernization effort to revitalize” the nation’s 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads and its massive arsenal of stockpiled nuclear weapons. This includes expansion of the nuclear weapons production infrastructure, the training a new generation of nuclear weapons designers and technicians, extending the murderous “life” of aging nuclear warheads, and replacing what are described as “old delivery systems.”¹⁰

Although it may seem counter-intuitive, in addition to maintaining enough strategic hydrogen warheads to eliminate Russia or China and to bring on nuclear winter, this also includes modernizing low-yield nuclear weapons so they can be delivered by the new nuclear-capable F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and cruise missiles, that are to replace aging B-52 and B-2 bombers. B-61 nuclear bombs are to be converted to lower-yield warheads with greater accuracy. Funding has been pledged to replace the fleet of Trident submarines and to increase the accuracy of the missiles they carry. There is also the likelihood of a new generation of nuclear-capable air launched cruise missiles and nuclear capable drones.¹¹

⁹ Hillary Clinton. “Secretary Clinton at Tallinn NATO Ministerial”, April 23, 2010. http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/clinton_nato_ministerial_tallinn

¹⁰ Keir A. Lieber & Daryl G. Press. Op. Cit

¹¹ Ibid. and Global Security Newswire. February 14, 2011: http://gsn.nti.org/siteservices/full_edition.php, and William Hennigan, "Pentagon Weapons Buyer Quietly Visits California to Discuss Bomber Planes," *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2011.

The authors of “The Case for Modernizing America’s Nukes” remind us, that they warned that “as nuclear weapons proliferate, it becomes increasingly likely that the United States will find itself in conventional conflicts with nuclear-armed adversaries.” In addition to growing tensions with China, the US is at war in Pakistan. The confrontation with North Korea continues. And Washington fears that Iran seeks to become a nuclear power. In such situations, Lieber and Press write “detering weak, desperate adversaries from using their nuclear trump card will be a major challenge.” Given the taboos against using nuclear winter triggering strategic weapons, they insist that the U.S “must possess nuclear weapons that a president might actually use.”¹²

This explains the focus on so-called “low-yield” nuclear weapons, and the bombers, missiles and drones needed to launch them. In the tradition of the more than 30 occasions during crises and wars that the U.S. has prepared and threatened to initiate nuclear war,¹³ the \$185 billion nuclear weapons modernization program is designed to ensure the credibility of U.S. threats and to increase the probability that U.S. presidents will not fear pushing the nuclear button.

Tragically, criminally, the Obama Administration is fulfilling the Bush-Cheney and Clinton visions of nuclear weapons serving as the “cornerstone” of U.S. military power for the next fifty years.¹⁴

And, of course, Washington is not the only power preparing for nuclear war. Despite the outcome of last year’s NPT Review Conference, all of the nuclear powers are modernizing and/or expanding their arsenals. Nuclear war could all too easily result from

¹² Keir A. Lieber & Daryl G. Press. Op. Cit.

¹³ Joseph Gerson. Empire and the Bomb: How the US Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World, London, Pluto Press, 2007, pp 37-38.

¹⁴ **Faking Nuclear Restraint : The Bush Administration's Secret Plan For Strengthening U.S. Nuclear Forces, <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/restraint.asp>**

miscalculations during U.S./NATO-Russian confrontations over Georgia, U.S.-Chinese confrontations over Taiwan, the South China Sea and Korea, or out of an Indian Cold Start retaliation against a Pakistani inspired terrorist attack. Nuclear weapons abolition remains our urgent task.

In one of his more profound insights, the French philosopher Albert Camus wrote metaphorically of the plagues that threaten humanity and urged that we must do all that we can to create a “real barrier against the disease.”¹⁵ That is the challenge we face as we press to eliminate nuclear power, so that there are no more Fukushimas, and to abolish nuclear weapons so that there are not more Hiroshimas, Nagasakis or nuclear extortion.

Fortunately, both elite and community-based forces are campaigning for abolition. The U.S. abolition movement understands that its primary goal is to win negotiation of a nuclear weapons abolition convention. We have also committed to make the links between nuclear weapons and nuclear power.¹⁶ Some in our movement are preparing the political ground for CTBT ratification. But, with Congress and President Obama cutting so many essential government services, our greatest chance for near-term success lies in the social movement that is gathering to cut the Pentagon budget so that human needs are met.

Our popular campaigning is reinforced by statements like that of Archbishop Francis Chullikatt¹⁷, who pronounced that there is no “legal, political, security and most of all - moral justification” for nuclear weapons and called for negotiation of a nuclear

¹⁵ Albert Camus. *The Plague*, New York: The Modern Library, 1948, p. 57.

¹⁶ See, among others, the results of the AFSC & Peace Action organized consultation, April 8, 2011, Washington, D.C.

¹⁷ Text of Archbishop Francis Chullikat’s speech on nuclear disarmament, National Catholic Reporter, July 5, 2011, <http://ncronline.org/news/peace/text-archbishop-francis-chullikat%E2%80%99s-speech-nuclear-disarmament>

weapons abolition convention. The repeated calls of the U.S. Council of Mayors and of Global Zero to slash spending for nuclear weapons so that communities are funded have direct political impact and reinforce our community based organizing.

Working through United for Peace and Justice's Disarmament Working Group, a host of organizations from Massachusetts to California have organized an extended Nuclear Free Future month. We began early in Boston with a Trinity Day Nuclear Free Festival in downtown Boston where, as an expression of solidarity with your responses to the Fukushima disaster and Gensuikyo's campaigning for abolition, many participants signed this banner, which I will later present to Gensuikyo.¹⁸

On the economic front, we suffer not only the losses of casino capitalism, but skewed political and moral values. Rather than stimulate the economy to create jobs and build the 21st infrastructure need for economic security, President Obama and the Tea Party Republicans are reprising the policies that precipitated the Great Depression. While they increase the military budget¹⁹, [showing a U.S. budget ribbon] – already 60% of discretionary government spending as you can see from this red line, they also plan to cut trillions over the next decade needed for schools, railways, health care, job and environmental safety – this part of the discretionary budget [show 40% line.]

In crisis there is opportunity. In the U.S. there is now a growing wave of popular movements that bring together organized labor, faith communities and the peace movement pressing to “Move the Money” and to “Fund Our Communities – Not War!” AFSC's “Wage Peace” campaign is integral to this effort to create an irreversible political and social movement. One of AFSC's unique contributions is our work to put

¹⁸ The banner reads: “For A Nuclear Free Future. Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Eliminate Nuclear Power.”

¹⁹ Congress voted a \$17 billion increase in 2012 Pentagon spending, more than President Obama requested.

spending for nuclear weapons on the chopping block and to use the opportunities of the moment to educate about the imperative of nuclear weapons abolition beyond our traditional constituencies.

I should also point to my program's other movement building initiatives this fall. As part of our campaign to reach both the elite and grassroots activists, the paintings of Hiroshima Hibakusha Kayashige Junko will be displayed at Harvard University throughout October, and Kayashige-san will be giving a number of talks in Boston and elsewhere. And, in partnership with the Chinese People's Association for Disarmament and Peace, and with Gensuikyo's participation, we have organized our fourth Peace Forum, a conference to bolster the capacities of the U.S. peace movement to challenge the growing militarization which threatens Asia-Pacific peace and, ultimately, human survival.

Friends, none of this is enough to stem the nuclear plague. But, together, with imagination and persistence, we shall make the world a safe and secure place for our children and grandchildren. WE SHALL OVERCOME!

No More Fukushimas! No More Hiroshimas! No More Nagasakis! No More Hibakusha!!