



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION



NUMBER 01

A Monthly Newsletter for Strengthening
Awareness of Nuclear Abolition

This page includes independent news
coverage which is part of a project
supported by Soka Gakkai International.

IPS, the global news agency, brings you independent news and views on nuclear abolition. In this newsletter you will find in-depth reports by IPS correspondents and project partners from around the world as well as columns by experts, in addition to special sections for news from international NGOs and a review of the global media for a glimpse of what is happening on the ground. Join us in helping strengthen awareness about the abolition of nuclear weapons – and encourage your friends and colleagues to subscribe to this free monthly newsletter.

New Promise of a Nuclear-Free World

By Ramesh Jaura

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Norway Seeks a New Push

By Ramesh Jaura

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PROJECT PARTNERS

German Peace Movement Gathers Momentum

By Julio Godoy

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The German Peace Movement acquired a mass character when NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) took a double-track decision in Washington in December 1979, offering its rival military bloc Warsaw Pact a mutual limitation of medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, combined with the threat that in case of disagreement NATO would deploy more middle range nuclear weapons in Western Europe. [MORE >>](#)

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CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

New Promise of a Nuclear-Free World

By Ramesh Jaura

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Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama made that announcement in London Apr. 1 on the eve of the G20 summit.

"We committed our two countries to achieving a nuclear free world," the leaders said jointly. Russia and the United States possess about 95 percent of nuclear weapons.

The who's who of the disarmament world agreed to take that impetus forward at a conference held in Rome Apr. 16-17. The Conference on Overcoming Nuclear Dangers was attended by 70 former and current government officials and experts from about 20 countries.

The announcement by Obama and Medvedev "will give new impetus to disarmament and arms control, and certainly strengthen our common effort for a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) Review Conference," said Foreign Minister Franco Frattini of Italy, which co-sponsored the conference. "Other nuclear powers should follow the lead of the U.S. and Russia."

Full compliance with disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, "first and foremost the NPT, is an essential condition of real progress towards the achievement of our stated goals," he said.

But the road is littered with multiple obstacles, warned Mikhail Gorbachev, who was president of what was the Soviet Union between 1985 and 1991. He had signed START with then U.S. president Ronald Reagan.

Gorbachev, who presides over the World Political Forum (WPF), urged the U.S. and Russia to work towards removing the hurdles. "Unless we address the need to demilitarise international relations, reduce military budgets, put an end to the creation of new kinds of weapons and prevent weaponisation of outer space, all talk about a nuclear weapon free world will be just inconsequential rhetoric," he said.

The WPF, an international NGO founded in Piedmont (Italy) by Gorbachev, organised the conference along with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). "We serve as a meeting point for cultures, religions, political leaders and civil society - an open forum where analysis of the issue of interdependence provides a framework for the building of a new world political architecture," WPF's director of external relations Roberto Savio told IPS. The U.S.-based NTI is co-chaired by Ted Turner of CNN and former senator Sam Nunn. It seeks to strengthen global security by reducing the risk of use and preventing the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The conference threw up the idea of "base camps" leading up to a nuclear-free mountaintop. Such base camps, that would serve as platforms to design the best way up towards a world free of nukes, and supportive measures in other areas of arms control and security cooperation, can help usher in a world free of nuclear weapons, according to a joint statement by Gorbachev, George P. Schultz, the U.S. secretary of state 1982-1989 under Reagan, and Frattini.

The conference statement says there is growing recognition - both inside and outside of governments - of the need to embrace the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and the urgent steps necessary to overcome nuclear dangers.

"The current shift towards nuclear abolition in the international political arena, where such a vision has so far been seen as unrealistic, provides a vital opportunity," Hirotsugu Terasaki, executive director of peace affairs at the Tokyo-based Buddhist association Soka Gakkai International (SGI) told IPS.

SGI launched a 'People's Decade' in September 2007 along with international anti-nuclear movements such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a campaign initiated by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), a federation of medical professionals in 60 countries that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1985. >>>



"The aim of the People's Decade is to increase the number of people who reject nuclear weapons. Ordinary citizens and civil society must be the protagonists, creating a groundswell of demand for nuclear abolition that will influence decision makers," Terasaki said.

SGI was one of three civil society organisations that took part in the Rome conference; the other two being the Italian Peace Roundtable - a network that unites more than 1,500 civil society organisations and local authorities, and the Global Security Institute (GSI), a U.S.-based group that aims to strengthen international cooperation and security based on the rule of law, with a particular focus on nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

"We have a situation where chemical weapons and biological weapons are condemned universally but nuclear weapons, which are even more horrific than biological or chemical, are allegedly acceptable in the hands of nine countries (Britain, France, Russia, China, Canada and the United States as well as India, Pakistan and North Korea). This is incoherent and unsustainable," GSI president Jonathan Granoff told IPS.

"The only solution is to either allow all countries to use these terrific devices - clearly unacceptable - or to universally ban them," he said.

"They are not over-ambitious in saying that we are going to achieve this in five years time or so because they know they have to create a climate of opinion and then the principal players - U.S. and Russia - have to be persuaded to act and then gradually we go towards the summit which is ridding the world of nuclear weapons," India's former foreign secretary and disarmament expert Lalit Mansingh told IPS. (END/2009)

Norway Seeks a New Push

By Ramesh Jaura

OSLO, Apr 16 (IPS) - Norway's foreign affairs minister Jonas Gahr Støre has called for giving new priority to nuclear disarmament that has been assigned to oblivion since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall not only brought to an end the division of Berlin but also paved the way for unification of Germany and the end of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

"Good governance and human rights took priority over disarmament because the nuclear threat was perceived as having disappeared," the minister told IPS.

"With the new U.S. Administration there is a momentum to move the disarmament process forward," Støre said. "It is not often you see a U.S. President calling for steps to reach a world free of nuclear weapons."

The world is at a crossroads now, he said. On the one hand nuclear disarmament needs are pressing because the non-proliferation challenges are compelling. On the other hand opportunities and possibilities are perhaps greater than they have been for a decade, Støre said.

Earlier, speaking at the opening of an exhibition on nuclear abolition Apr. 15 in Oslo's city hall, Støre said his country would exert all its influence to move nuclear disarmament to centre stage.

Together with Germany, Norway raised this at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit earlier this month in Strasbourg (France) and Kehl (Germany), Støre told IPS. The NATO declaration of Apr. 4 emphasises that "arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation" will continue to make an important contribution to peace, security, and stability.

NATO allies reaffirmed that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains important and that they will contribute constructively to achieving a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT review conference.

Opening the exhibition titled 'From a culture of violence to a culture of peace: transforming the human spirit', Norway's former prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik said: "We must never forget that the NPT does not give the five nuclear weapon states (Britain, France, Russia, the U.S. and China) the right to retain their special status indefinitely." >>>



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Bondevik said a five-state summit for nuclear disarmament with the participation of the UN Secretary-General should be convened regularly to draw up a roadmap of specific measures to fulfil their disarmament obligations. "Non-proliferation and disarmament must only be steps towards the only meaningful goal - a world free of nuclear weapons," he said.

Bondevik was prime minister 1997 to 2000, and from 2001 to 2005, making him the Nordic country's longest serving non-Socialist prime minister since World War II. In January 2006 he founded the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights that he has been heading since.

Bondevik said it was promising that there were signals of new talks between the U.S. and Russia - which between them account for 95 percent of the world's nuclear arsenal - on a new legally binding agreement to replace START 1 (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) that expires in December this year.

Bondevik's remarks were in line with those of Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Tokyo-based Buddhist association Soka Gakkai International (SGI) that has members in 192 countries and territories.

SGI, which organised the exhibition together with five leading Norwegian civil society organisations, considers the NPT review conference next year crucial to nuclear disarmament as a first step towards nuclear abolition.

The exhibition that is open until Apr. 22 is supported by No to Nuclear Weapons (NTA), Norwegian Physicians Against Nuclear Weapons (NLA) affiliated with the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the Norwegian Pugwash Committee, the Norwegian Atlantic Community (NAC) and the United Association of Norway.

SGI vice-president Hiromasa Ikeda said the exhibition was intended to "set out the broad vision of a culture of peace, predicated on the concept of human security, and to encourage people to take action towards its realisation."

"The current shift towards nuclear abolition in the international political arena, where such a vision has so far been seen as unrealistic, provides a vital opportunity," SGI office of peace affairs executive director Hirotsugu Terasaki told IPS.

Good faith efforts on the part of the nuclear weapon states are essential if confidence in the NPT is to be restored, former Norwegian prime minister Bondevik told IPS. "Only then will it be possible to win the trust of countries outside the NPT regime and obtain commitments on freezing and dismantling nuclear weapons development programmes."

The current financial crisis may facilitate the disarmament process, said Steffen Kongstad, director-general at Norway's foreign affairs ministry.

"The public may start questioning the spending of billions of dollars to maintain a fleet of weapons which is envisioned never to be used," Kongstad told a seminar accompanying the exhibition.

"The mere existence of these weapons represents in itself severe security challenges. One cannot distinguish between good or bad nuclear weapons," he said.

Kongstad cautioned against complacency despite some helpful signs from the U.S. and Russia. "We know that the nuclear lobby is still strong in key countries. We must also recognise that there are other actors than the U.S. in the game."

Political pressure from voters, the civil society and academics is essential in order to achieve tangible results, he said. This worked with the Mine Ban Convention in 1997 and the Convention on Cluster Munitions last year. (END/2009)

<http://www.fn.no/>
<http://www.ippnw.org>
<http://www.legermotatomvapen.no>
<http://www.atlanterhavskomiteen.no>

PROJECT PARTNERS

German Peace Movement Gathers Momentum

By Julio Godoy

BERLIN, Apr 30 (IDN) It is indeed an irony of history. The U.S.-led NATO's decision to station nuclear weapons across Western Europe gave birth and clout to the German peace movement. Thirty years later, it is back in the news, this time vigorously campaigning for U.S. President Barack Obama's proposals.

The German Peace Movement acquired a mass character when NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) took a double-track decision in Washington in December 1979, offering its rival military bloc Warsaw Pact a mutual limitation of medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, combined with the threat that in case of disagreement NATO would deploy more middle range nuclear weapons in Western Europe.

Following the NATO decision to station 572 nuclear warheads (Pershing II and cruise missiles) thousands of nuclear munitions were deployed on West German territory alone, all targeting cities and civil and military facilities across the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. At the same time, West German territory was itself one major target of the Soviet SS-20 nuclear missiles, some of them stationed in East Germany.

In the years that followed, especially in the early 1980s, hundreds of thousands of West German citizens regularly protested against NATO and against the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in the country.

But nobody among the German peace activists would have believed that one day they would share views on nuclear disarmament with a U.S. president.

In a speech in the Czech capital Prague April 5, Obama pleaded for a world free of nuclear weapons. He called the thousands of atomic weapons spread across the world "the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War. To achieve a global ban on nuclear testing, my administration will immediately and aggressively pursue US ratification of the comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," Obama said. "So after more than five decades of talks, it is time for the testing of nuclear weapons to finally be banned," he added.

Marching in Obama's slip stream this Easter, thousands of Germans took again to the streets. On Good Friday, in the country's financial capital Frankfurt alone, some 20,000 people came together to call for nuclear abolition. In dozens of other German cities also demonstrations took place. The Easter marches have been traditionally the yearly climax of the peace movement.

In Frankfurt, psychoanalyst Horst-Eberhard Richter, co-founder of the German bureau of the International physicians for the prevention of nuclear war (IPPNW), told peace marchers: "The peace movement comes back not to demonstrate against Obama, but to support him. Then the reversal of the global nuclear intimidation and towards the construction of a human peace policy is such a big step forward, that it needs support from the entire world." In an interview with this correspondent, Jens-Peter Steffen, of the IPPNW, said that Obama's call for nuclear disarmament would "help the boost the popularity of our demands."

The IPPNW, founded in 1980 by U.S. and Soviet cardiologists concerned with the horrors of a nuclear war, is a worldwide grouping with some 60 national medical organizations, which campaigns for the abolition of all nuclear weapons. The IPPNW German bureau has some 8,000 members and is the largest peace organisation in the country.

The NATO double-track decision of 1979, conceived in Washington under U.S. president Jimmy Carter, and implemented under President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, made the West German territory home to thousands of nuclear warheads. Given that Germany was also the target of Russian and French middle-range nuclear weapons, the possibility of a nuclear war being fought on the country's territory raised awareness among ordinary Germans of the obliterating dangers of such arsenals.

When the German government of the time, led by the Social Democratic (SPD) chancellor Helmut Schmidt, ratified the NATO double-track decision, and allowed for the deployment of nuclear war heads on German territory, hundreds of thousands of Germans marched throughout West Germany to denounce the deadly logic of the nuclear arms race. >>>

In 1981, during the so-called Easter March, more than 300,000 people in the then West German capital Bonn peacefully protested against the double-track decision. Soon after, Chancellor Schmidt who had lost support for the decision in his own party was removed in a constructive vote of no-confidence in the German Bundestag.

The conservative Christian Democratic Union's (CDU's) Helmut Kohl took over as Chancellor. The SPD spent 16 years in the opposition, its share of electoral power enduringly mined by the emergence of the Green party, itself rooted in the peace movement. When U.S. President Reagan visited Bonn in 1983, half a million Germans took to the streets of Bonn, to show their discontent.

Fall of the Berlin Wall

But since the fall of the Berlin Wall and end of the Cold War, especially during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the German peace movement appeared to have reached terminal exhaustion. After German unification and the dismantling of the Soviet block, the horrors of nuclear war might have appeared to many as a phantom of a distant past. In those years, Easter marches were negligible demonstrations, without any influence whatsoever in national politics.

And yet, Germany continued to be home to dozens of nuclear warheads – it still is. Although the exact dimension of the nuclear arsenal deployed in Germany remains classified, the German bureau of the IPPNW estimates that some 20 nuclear bombs of the type B61 are still stored in Buechel, a military base located some 500 kilometres southwest of Berlin, near the border with Belgium and Luxembourg.

Buechel has the capacity to store up to 44 nuclear warheads. Some 1,700 German soldiers learn there the handling of this arsenal, in the framework of the so-called nuclear sharing policy, the NATO's policy of nuclear deterrence, which involves member countries without nuclear weapons of their own in the planning for the use of nuclear weapons by NATO. Other than Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands host U.S. nuclear weapons.

According to IPPNW, all in all, there some 300 U.S. nuclear bombs spread across European NATO members. Each of these bombs can have a detonation power of up to 170 kilotons – for comparison, the bomb that destroyed the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August 1945, and killed up to 200,000 people, had a detonation power of 12.5 kilotons.

Meanwhile, the present Russian nuclear arsenal might consist of up to 7,000 middle-range nuclear warheads, although some 5,000 of these bombs are considered useless. All these middle range nuclear weapons, both the NATO's and the Russian, are completely unregulated and vulnerable to theft.

Even though this year's Easter peace demonstrations were in Germany by a far cry smaller than those of the 1980s, the marches, thanks to Obama's nuclear abolition plans, represented a rebirth of the movement. So much, that even mainstream German politicians, who until recently saw nuclear sharing as a permanent fact of life, are discovering the charm of nuclear disarmament.

German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, SPD's is one of them. In interviews with German media, Steinmeier urged the U.S. government to include the nuclear weapons deployed in Germany in its disarmament plans. "These weapons are obsolete," Steinmeier told the German weekly *Der Spiegel*.

Last December, in a report for the U.S. defence ministry, a U.S. expert commission concluded that the B61 nuclear bombs deployed across Europe are "useless, military speaking". The commission also underlined the disproportionate costs associated with maintaining this nuclear arsenal ready for use.

Government divided

Despite Steinmeier's straightforward words in favour of nuclear disarmament in Germany, the German coalition government appears divided on the issue. Chancellor Angela Merkel, a Christian Democrat, said last March during a debate in the German parliament, that her government continues to adhere to the nuclear sharing policy, because it "would guarantee the German government influence in the NATO in the particularly sensible subject" of nuclear weapons policy.

On yet another recent occasion, during the Munich security conference early February, Merkel said that "we ... adhere to the principle of the nuclear deterrence." German observers believe that in this matter Merkel's party, the CDU follows the argumentative line defined by the country's military command.

In fact, along with the co-ruling SPD, all opposition parties, left and right, in the German parliament (Bundestag) support the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from German territory: Both the Green party, which has its roots in the peace movement of the 1980s, and the Left Party plead for nuclear disarmament. So does the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP, after its German name).

In fact, immediately after Obama's speech in Prague, FDP leader Guido Westerwelle urged the German government to "start negotiations with the NATO to withdraw the nuclear weapons from our territory. These weapons do not belong here," Westerwelle said in an interview with German public television.

Despite the vocal majority of political leaders, the withdrawal of the NATO nuclear weapons from German territory is not expected to be discussed in the Bundestag this year. In their coalition government pact, the SPD and the CDU specifically agreed that this withdrawal would not be proposed to vote in the Bundestag.

But the government's mandate is coming to an end – and activists for disarmament hope that the subject would form the core of the campaign towards the general elections scheduled for next September.

IPPNW's Steffen told this correspondent that Steinmeier's sudden public position in favour of nuclear disarmament is already part of the electoral campaign – Steinmeier is the SPD chancellor candidate.

"Numerous opinion polls have shown along the years that a consistent, large majority of German voters of some 75 percent support the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the country," Steffen said. Obviously, Steinmeier wants to politically benefit from this popularity of nuclear disarmament.

Despite the growing likelihood that the NATO nuclear weapons shall be withdrawn from German territory, the German peace movement is aware of the difficulties facing nuclear disarmament worldwide.

"Countries like Pakistan, India, North Korea and Israel, which possess the nuclear bomb, can only be persuaded to renounce it through global, difficult negotiations, under leadership of the United Nations," Steffen said.

"To that end, a new international nuclear disarmament pact is needed, and the UN appears to be the only body capable of leading negotiations towards this end, and carrying out an effective monitoring of disarmament," Steffen said

Such a treaty should include the nuclear arsenals of the five members of the UN Security Council – other than the U.S. and Russia, France, Britain and China are officially nuclear powers. The Leftist German opposition wants the European Union to support Obama's call for nuclear disarmament by declaring itself a "nuclear weapons free zone," as Wolfgang Gehrcke, in charge of foreign policy in the Bundestag group of the Left party, put it.

But, despite the sudden enthusiasm for nuclear disarmament, neither France nor Britain are yet willing to relinquish their nuclear arsenals. Gehrcke's proposal would therefore remain wishful thinking. (END/2009)

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OTHER LANGUAGES

Norway Seeks a New Push

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س فريس س يرب رتن/اروج ش يمار ملقب

يف ةي وونلا ةحل سألأ عزن ةي ولوأ ةديج ةحفء اطعاب، روتس رهاغ سانوي يج يورنلا ةي جراخل ريزو بلاط - (س! يب يا) ل يربأ، ولسوأ
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<http://ipsinternational.org/arabic/nota.asp?idnews=1511>

Noruega quiere priorizar la cuestión nuclear

Por Ramesh Jaura on 16/04/2009 22.21.54 GMT

OSLO - El canciller de Noruega, Jonas Gahr Støre, pidió que el desarme nuclear vuelva a ser un asunto prioritario en la agenda internacional, papel que perdió con la caída del Muro de Berlín en 1989....

<http://www.ipsnews.net/dominologin.asp?Db=ipsesp.nsf&wView=vwWebMainView&DocID=5762509F2F3DE203C125759A007B97C9>

Noorwegen wil doorstart kernontwapening

Ramesh Jaura

OSLO (IPS) - De Noorse minister van Buitenlandse Zaken Jonas Gahr Støre heeft opgeroepen om van nucleaire ontwapening opnieuw een prioriteit te maken. Het thema raakte in vergetelheid na de val van de Berlijnse Muur in 1989.

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PICKUPS BY WEBSITES

German Peace Movement Gathers Momentum

<http://globalsouth.org/news/news.php?key1=2009-04-30%2017:52:05&key2=1>

With 'Base Camps' To A Nuclear Free World

http://www.southasianoutlook.com/issues/2009/may/with_base_camps_to_a_nuclear-free_world.html

Disarmament: New Promise of a Nuclear-Free World

<http://www.globalissues.org/news/2009/04/24/1301>

New Promise of a Nuclear-Free World

http://www.silobreaker.com/disarmament-new-promise-of-a-nuclearfree-world-5_2262267943918239756

With 'Base Camps' To A Nuclear-Free World

<http://globalsouth.org/news/news.php?key1=2009-04-24%2018:44:29&key2=1>

New Promise of a Nuclear-Free World

http://beyondwar.org/news/current_issue.htm

New Promise of a Nuclear-Free World

<http://news.neilrogers.com/news/articles/2009042525.html>

Disarmament: New Promise Of A Nuclear-Free World

http://www.australia.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8833:disarmament-new-promise-of-a-nuclear-free-world&catid=71:world-news

Disarmament: Norway Seeks a New Push

<http://www.globalissues.org/news/2009/04/16/1219>

Disarmament: Norway Seeks A New Push

<http://sydney.indymedia.org.au/topic/disarmament>

Norway Seeks a New Push

<http://www.ipsterraviva.net/UN/currentNew.aspx?new=5836>

Disarmament: Norway Seeks A New Push

<http://globalsouth.org/news/news.php?key1=2009-04-17%2013:07:00&key2=1>

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Concrete Steps Needed To Realize N-Free World

The Yomiuri Shimbun

It is almost impossible to realize nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation merely by chanting the rhetorical slogan of a "nuclear-free world."

How can nuclear-armed China be persuaded to carry out nuclear disarmament? How can North Korea—which has provoked the international community by conducting nuclear and missile tests—be persuaded to give up its nuclear development program?

The government needs to closely cooperate with the United States and other nations to press for concrete steps toward the goal of denuclearization.

On Monday, Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone delivered a speech on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. It followed a speech given by U.S. President Barack Obama on April 5, in which he called for a world without nuclear weapons. Nakasone's speech was aimed at supporting the push for nuclear disarmament.

Listing 11 benchmarks to be met, Nakasone called on nuclear-armed nations to, among other things, freeze their nuclear arms development programs, disclose information on such matters as the number of nuclear warheads they possess, and move to dismantle those warheads. [Read more](#)

Ending the Nuclear-Weapons Threat

By HIROFUMI NAKASONE From Wall Street Journal Asia.

After World War II -- although it became an economic power -- Japan, as the country that experienced nuclear devastation firsthand, has been steadfast in its commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. We have adhered to three principles: no possession, no production and no introduction of nuclear weapons. We also recognize that the threat of nuclear weapons is bigger than any one country's ability to solve it. International action is needed, now more than ever.

To that end, Japan has actively advanced nuclear disarmament diplomacy. Last year marked the 15th anniversary of the United Nations resolution on nuclear disarmament, which was sponsored by Japan. We also strongly support President Barack Obama's clear commitment to seek realistic and concrete ways to achieve what he has described as "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." [Read more](#)

DISARMAMENT: Conditions Towards Zero

BY JAYA RAMACHANDRAN

TOKYO (IDN) Japan has proposed a resolution for the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the United Nations General Assembly every year for the past 15 years and has otherwise been engaged in active nuclear disarmament diplomacy. In a move to take advantage of the growing momentum toward a nuclear free world, Japan's Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone has put forward an 11-point initiative for promoting global nuclear disarmament.

The significance of the "11 benchmarks for global nuclear disarmament" tabled on April 27 needs to be viewed against the backdrop that although Japan developed into a major economic power after World War II, the country has maintained its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons. This policy is based on the fact that Japan is the only country to have experienced the nuclear devastation. It has strictly committed itself to concentrating on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. [Read more](#)

Zero Nuclear Weapons Still Distant Dream

The second tier of nuclear weapon states (the UK, France and China) will have to be brought into the negotiation process, which until now has been confined only to the US and Russia

Borderline | W Pal Sidhu

In early May, representatives from 191 countries will assemble in New York to discuss the fate of one of the most popular international treaties: the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Only four countries—Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea—will not be present; the first three because they are not parties to the NPT and the last one because it is deemed to have withdrawn from it.

Although the NPT review conference (RevCon) is a year away, given the failure of the previous RevCon in 2005, there is serious concern that the 2010 conference might meet a similar fate and with it, as Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre recently warned: "The NPT as such might sail into the sunset." [Read more](#)

A Nuclear Weapons Free World Is Now Possible

By Bill Williams

Nuclear weapons abolition is back on the radar.

Not such a crazy proposition really. The detonation of a small, "primitive" uranium fission weapon, concealed in a shipping container in one of Australia's harbour cities, for instance, would obliterate the CBD, causing up to a quarter of a million fatalities and an enormous radiotoxic legacy. Meanwhile, the explosion of even a small portion of the currently available 26,500 nuclear weapons would mean global catastrophe.

New evidence from climate and vulcanology specialists suggest a "nuclear winter" could result from the detonation of less than 100 smallish nukes (i.e. Hiroshima-size) on large urban centres. Think Krakatoa meets Hiroshima and multiply accordingly. All this is well within the arsenal capacities of Russia, America, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, France and the UK.

How could such scenarios fade from the public consciousness? And what could an informed, concerned public do about it? There is an urgent need to call for a credible, universal treaty to abolish nuclear weapons.

A draft for such a treaty already exists: the "Model Nuclear Weapons Convention" (NWC) was prepared by an international consortium of legal and technical specialists, and was released and circulated by the United Nations (UN) in 1997. It was revised and published in 2007 as a key project of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The document, *Securing our Survival*, lauded by UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon and available at www.icanw.org - sets out in detail the essential steps to abolition. [Read more](#)

Saying No To Nukes: President's Speech Revives The Dream

Posted by Post-Standard Editorial Board April 27, 2009 5:02AM

It's been a long time since there was any momentum behind an international effort to rid the world of nuclear weaponry. President Barack Obama restored some of that momentum earlier this month in a welcome foreign policy address, delivered in historic Hradcany Square in Prague during his visit to Europe. "The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War," he told an audience estimated at 20,000. "Today, the Cold War has disappeared, but thousands of those weapons have not."

Obama vowed to downplay nuclear weapons in the U.S. defense posture; seek Senate ratification of the long-delayed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; secure all nuclear material around the globe within four years; strengthen the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty; negotiate deep new nuclear arms reductions with Russia; and host a world summit on nuclear security.

Decades ago, nuclear abolitionists were dismissed as naive. The Nuclear Freeze movement of the 1980s fizzled in the Reagan-era arms buildup -- though Ronald Reagan came as close as any president to endorsing a nuclear-free world at a meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987. The two superpowers agreed to reduce their arsenals, the Soviet Union crashed and burned, and disarmament lost much of its force.

On President George W. Bush's watch, Libya abandoned its nuclear ambitions and A.Q. Khan's nuclear shopping center in Pakistan was shut down. But the Bush administration derided arms control treaties. The terror attacks and subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq trumped the nuclear issue -- except for a preoccupation with Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs. [Read more](#)

Do Not Break The Nucleus

By Shobha Shukla, Thaindian News

Twenty three years ago, in the early hours of 26th April, 1986 (precisely at 01.24 a.m.), the world witnessed one of its worst nuclear disasters. Reactor number 4 of Chernobyl power station, situated near Pripyat in Ukraine, exploded. Two explosions blew off the dome shaped roof of the reactor, causing its contents to erupt out. As air was sucked into the shattered reactor, it ignited the flammable carbon monoxide, resulting in a fire that raged for nine days. As the reactor was not housed in a reinforced concrete shield, large amounts of debris escaped in the atmosphere.

The accident released at least 100 times more radiations than the atom bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Much of the fallout was deposited close to Chernobyl, in parts of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, where measurable health effects were observed. But traces of radioactive debris were found in nearly every country in the Northern Hemisphere. Thirty two people died in the accident. Another 38 died of acute radiation sickness, in the months that followed. In just 36 hours, 59430 persons had to be evacuated from Pripyat.

This human tragedy resulted in large scale displacement of more than 200,000 people, contamination of vast areas of land and loss of livelihood. Since then, there have been 1800 thyroid cancer cases in children, who were 0 – 14 years old at the time of the tragedy. A very conservative estimate prepared by the Chernobyl Forum in 2005, acknowledged 4000 extra cancer deaths among the 600,000 most highly exposed people. [Read more](#)

Getting to zero

Safe Without The Bomb?

Apr 8th 2009 From *The Economist* print edition

A nuclear-free world may never come about, but there can be safety in trying

IF HE had hoped his vision of a world free of nuclear weapons would rally universal support for America's new cause, Barack Obama's disappointment came all too quickly. North Korea's pre-emptive, missile-guided raspberry on April 5th—hours before President Obama outlined his nuclear-free dream in Prague—had long been expected from a regime that treats rule-breaking as a national pastime. Its boss, Kim Jong Il, claims his latest rocket launched a satellite that is now warbling back patriotic songs from space. Others say he tested a nuclear-capable missile that flew about 3,200km (2,000 miles) before plopping into the Pacific (see article). The disappointment came hours later when China and Russia blocked all rebuke of Mr Kim at the UN Security Council, saying he had a right to a space programme, even though a UN resolution supposedly bans his missile work. [Read more](#)

CIVIL SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

CND welcomes Obama Prague Statement

Sunday, 05 April 2009

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament warmly welcomed President Obama's speech on nuclear weapons in Prague today. CND welcomed the reinforcement of the commitments announced earlier in the week by Presidents Obama and Medvedev. Of particular significance is President Obama's determination to ensure US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty - a step much welcome by Russia - and the new intention to support a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. Previous US administrations had not supported a Treaty banning the production of fissile - or nuclear explosive - material. Progress on these initiatives will open the way towards the ultimate goal of 'global zero'.

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament said "These additional concrete steps towards resolving the global dangers of nuclear weapons are very welcome. They have long been the demands of not only of the disarmament movement, but the vast majority of states. They are a welcome addition to Presidents Obama and Medvedev's determination to rapidly conclude a replacement for the START treaty. This is an indication of their firm intention to make progress on substantial bilateral reductions. This process, which had stalled during the Bush years is being brought back to life under the Obama Presidency."

World Physicians Issue Medical Appeal To Obama, Medvedev

FOR RELEASE March 23, 2009

More than 300 of the world's top physicians have called on US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev to "end the nuclear weapons era once and for all."

The letter, signed by senior faculty and deans of medical schools, heads of medical associations, health ministers, medical journal editors, and Nobel laureates from 39 countries, was delivered to Presidents Obama and Medvedev today by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), its US affiliate, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Russian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Dr. Ira Helfand, a US physician who was a principal organizer of the campaign, said that the 25,000 nuclear weapons in the world's arsenals are "the most urgent and immediate threat to the health and survival of humankind. And, unlike the other major health threats of our time—climate change, poverty, AIDS and other epidemic diseases—this one can be eradicated with nothing more than a firm decision to do so."

Noting that a world without nuclear weapons is now championed by experts and diplomats across the political spectrum, the physicians called on the US and Russian presidents to lead the world by starting negotiations on a worldwide agreement "that will abolish all nuclear weapons."

Presidents Obama and Medvedev will meet for the first time in London on April 1, on the eve of the G-20 summit. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures, including proposals for substantial reductions in US and Russian nuclear arsenals, are expected to be high on their agenda.