



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT PrepCom 2003

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Smoke and Mirrors

The United States has distributed an "Information Paper Concerning Article VI of the NPT," with an accompanying "Fact Sheet In Support of its NPT Article VI Obligations Related to Nuclear Disarmament." Perhaps people unfamiliar with disarmament issues and initiatives would be convinced, through reading these two documents, that the US is indeed slowly living up to its Article VI obligations. The papers cite a number of "ongoing actions" undertaken by the US, including strategic offensive weapons reductions (under the Moscow Treaty), support for a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT), tactical weapons reductions, and purported irreversible fissile material disposition. These measures, however, are merely illusions of disarmament, and in no way represent true commitment to the elimination of the nuclear threat.

The Moscow Treaty does indeed reduce the levels of strategic weapons to 1,700-2,200 by the year 2012, as stated in the document. These aren't, however, real reductions. The numbers refer only to deployed strategic weapons. The treaty does not require the destruction of a single warhead or delivery system, and places no limits on the deployment of new kinds of nuclear weapons. At best we could say that the NPR "cuts" will reduce the operational status of a significant number of nuclear weapons. However instead of being destroyed, many of the warheads withdrawn from deployment will be retained as part of a "responsive force," enabling the US to re-deploy an expanded arsenal far into the future. Also uncounted are sub-strategic nuclear weapons that were designated as "tactical" for cold war arms control purposes. And,

unless it is extended, the treaty expires the same day it enters into force.

The "Fact Sheet" also purports to "Contribute to irreversibility of nuclear reductions," without actually stating how it does so. In reality none of the reductions under the Moscow Treaty are irreversible. In addition to the "responsive force, thousands more weapons are likely to be retained on an inactive reserve" status, or stored as components, capable of being reassembled into nuclear weapons. Unlike the START process, there are no provisions for transparency or verification in SORT.

The claim that the US "has not produced fissile material for nuclear weapons for more than a decade" may be technically true, but on April 22, the US nuclear weapons laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico announced that it has successfully made the first nuclear weapons pit in 14 years that meets specifications for use in the U.S stockpile. Further, the Department of Energy is examining several possible sites for a Modern Plutonium Pit Facility capable of producing as many as 500 pits per year.

The Information Paper states that although "proposals exist to decrease the time that it would take to resume nuclear testing... (this) says nothing about the likelihood of a nuclear test. Nor does it relate to the development of a new nuclear weapon." The absence of logic in that statement is breathtaking. Increasing the test readiness absolutely increases the likelihood of a nuclear test. Although the paper admits that "Certainly, cost and feasibility studies related to possible nuclear

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Nya Fleron

Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

1. What are your hopes or expectations for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation 2003 PrepCom?

First of all, I hope that the voices of the NGOs would be heard more and more by the delegates and, in turn, the governments. In practical terms, that would mean more access to the NPT process. I have a strong hope and vision that we as individuals and representatives of nations learn to communicate better our needs and strategies and in that way, learn to better value our differences. I think through a conscious openness and

transparency- because we are never invisible- we will find that we all share common needs. Every day I imagine a world where the conscious practice of honesty, courage, and compassion, especially with oneself, is more common than the violent, reaction-oriented communication of today's world.

2. What topics do you work on most or find the most interesting in this forum?

I must say what I find most interesting in this forum, is the spirit and passion that the civil society demonstrates here at the NPT meetings. It moves and inspires me, and I sense that goes for the diplomatic society, too. The essence of the work that is taking place here is not so much the many speeches, it is the spark and spirit that both diplomats and NGOs put into this. That gives me hope that a future without the existence of nuclear weapons does exist.

3. What led you to be doing the work that you are doing now?

I was in the process of finding peace within, and searching for ways to making my contribution to the world, when I happened to bump into Alyn Ware and a whole other world of peace activists, progressive lawyers, and brilliant, compassionate hearts and minds.



View #45

After Hokusai and Hiroshige

I dreamt half my life was spent
In wonder, and never suspected.

So immersed in the moment
I forgot I was ever there.

Red-tailed hawk turning
resistance into ecstasy.

The patrolman joking with the drunk
Whose butt seemed glued to the sidewalk.

A coral quince blossom in winter,
Pink as a lover's present.

And tilting my bamboo umbrella
Against the warm slant

Of rain, was I not a happy peasant
Crossing the great bay on a bridge that began

Who knows when, and will end
Who knows when?

Thomas Centolella

Submitted by the Atomic Mirror
<www.PoetsAgainstTheWar.org>

Quote of the Day

I have had two objectives in my life. The short-term objective is the elimination of nuclear weapons; the long-term objective is the elimination of war altogether. As the years have gone on, my hopes of seeing the long-term goal have gone, and now I am not sure that I will see the short-term goal either. But other people will take up the fight. The present phase will pass, and if we can avoid a nuclear holocaust in the age of Bush, then I think that there is hope.

-Sir Joseph Rotblat

Depleted Uranium

What is DU?

Depleted Uranium (DU) is a by-product resulting from the uranium enrichment process. When the fissionable isotope U-235 is removed through gaseous diffusion, what is left is predominantly U-238, or depleted uranium. DU is nearly identical to natural uranium, or pure uranium. It is a toxic heavy metal and retains 60% of the radioactivity of natural uranium. It has a half-life of 4.5 billion years.

DU as a Weapon

DU is pyrophoric, which is the quality that makes it so destructive. Solid-core DU ammunition or DU-strengthened weapons burn through a target. This burning causes DU to aerosolize into tiny dust-sized particles able to be breathed in or ingested. Once DU is inside the body, its heavy metal and radioactive toxicity can have short and long-term health effects.

In October 1943, the US War Department proposed "The Use of Radioactive Materials as a Military Weapon." The document, declassified in 1974, describes two objectives of the use of radioactive materials against enemy personnel: "1) As a terrain contaminating material, the radioactive product would be spread on the ground and would affect personnel. 2) As a gas warfare instrument, the material would be ground into particles of microscopic size to form dust and smoke and distributed by a ground-fired projectile, land vehicle, or aerial bombs. In this form, it would be inhaled by personnel."

DU achieves both of these objectives.

DU weapons are illegal under international laws governing weapons of war. Weapons must meet four criteria under existing international humanitarian and human rights law in order to be legal for us in armed conflict:

---- Weapons must be able to be limited in effect to the field of battle (the territorial limitation);

---- Weapons must be limited in effect to the time period of the armed conflict (the temporal limitation);

---- Weapons must not be unduly inhumane (the humanity limitation)

---- Weapons must not unduly damage the

environment (the environmental limitation).

DU weapons meet none of these criteria. 1) DU dust cannot be limited to the field of battle it can be carried by wind, water, and soil and be ingested or inhaled by human populations. 2) DU is both a radioactive hazard and a toxic heavy metal. It has a half-life of 4.5 billion years. 3) DU is inhumane because it can cause cancer, kidney disease, neurological disorders, birth defects, etc, in people who were never involved in military combat, long after the armed conflict has ended. The use of DU weapons puts an undo burden on the gene pools of future generations and therefore can be considered genocidal. (For example, in the report *DU and Health: Incidence and pattern of congenital abnormalities among births in Basra* [Southern Iraq site of great DU use during 1991 Gulf War] 1990-2001, data reveals a 7-fold increase in the incidence of congenital malformations from 3.04 per 1000 births, to 22.19 per 1000 births). 4) DU cannot be used without unduly damaging the natural environment by spreading long-lived contamination indiscriminately.

DU in Iraq

The US military admits to the use of 315 tons of DU for solid core ammunition during the 1991 Gulf War. US Air Force A-10 aircraft fired 940,000 30mm rounds in Iraq in 1991. More than 1,000 tomahawk cruise missiles, whose nose cones are fortified with DU, were fired on Iraq since 1991 (not including use in the current invasion). In the so-called "Operation Iraqi Freedom," the US M1A1 and M1A2 tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and A-10 ground attack aircraft have all fired DU munitions. The UK Challenger tanks also have been using DU. DU is used as shielding on tanks; in casing for bombs; counter weights, nose cones, and ground penetrators on missiles; fragments in cluster bombs; and fragments in anti-personnel mines. As the invasion of Iraq continues, coalition forces are using tank fire, cluster bombs, and missiles in urban population centers, putting an already vulnerable population at further risk of harm from the effects of DU.

Maria Santelli works with the International Depleted Uranium Study Team (IDUST), near Albuquerque New Mexico, USA.
<http://www.idust.org/>

modernization are undertaken,” it goes on to claim that “Such studies, however, in no way represent a decision to proceed with development of a new warhead.” Actually, as it was stated in the introductory presentation of the NGOs on Wednesday, research efforts at the U.S. laboratories are now officially underway on a Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, *which is five times more powerful* than the 15 kiloton atomic bomb that obliterated Hiroshima. The Labs are also studying the effectiveness of so-called “low-yield” nuclear weapons. The Bush administration is also attempting to repeal the Spratt-Furse restriction of 1994, which prevents the development of the so-called “mini-nukes.”

For more objective information on the reality of United States nuclear policy, please seek out Jackie Cabasso, of the Western States Legal Foundation, who can be found lurking the halls of the Palais. Further elaboration on the failure of the U.S. to implement Article VI obligations (specifically, those obligations promised at the 2000 Review Conference under the 13 Steps) are also available in the Reaching Critical Will Shadow Report. If your delegation or organization has not received a copy of this report, please contact the WILPF team either in the NGO office in room #2076 or at the WILPF office listed above.

Rhianna Tyson
Reaching Critical Will
WILPF
Jackie Cabasso
Western States Legal Foundation

Be sure to visit Conference Room XXIV and view the exhibit depicting Hiroshima and Nagasaki, before and after the atomic bombings of 1945. The photos are a reminder as to the real reason we are here- to prevent nuclear weapons from ever being used again. The NGO Mayors for Peace, which is hosting the exhibition, should be encouraged to take the photos on a worldwide tour, as part of the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons by 2005. Perhaps if everyone could view the horrors of nuclear war that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have experienced first hand, we would have already achieved true, verifiable, transparent and accountable disarmament.

What's On

Today, Friday May 2, 2003

Chairman Molnar briefs the Abolition 2000 Morning Caucus, **9am to 10am, Conference Room XXIV**

NGO Committee on Disarmament Business Meeting, **10:00-1:00, continued 3:00-5:00, Conference Room XXIV**

Follow-up discussion of Citizen's Inspection Team Working Group & Reporting to the UN, **11am - 1pm, Committee Room 2072**

Panel: “Steps to Nuclear Disarmament: A European Initiative” Featuring: Peter Nicholls (Abolition 2000) on “Technical and Historical Aspects;” Dominique LaLanne (Stop Essais and Abolition 2000) “Political aspects and the future;” and a Representative from the World Count Project to discuss “Legal Aspects.” For more information, contact either Peter or Dominique. **1-3 pm, Conference Room XXIV.**

Saturday, May 3, 2003

Abolition 2000 General Assembly Meeting, **10 am- 6 pm, Centre Universitaire Protestant, 7th floor.** For directions, contact Colin Archer: mailbox@ipb.org, or at 022 731 6429. *If you are calling from the NGO office, remember you must first dial 0 to get an outside line!*

Monday, May 5, 2003

Morning Caucus, **9am - 10am, Conference Room XXIV**

Space Weaponization, hosted by Acronym Institute, UNIDIR and Project Ploughshares, **1pm - 3pm, Conference Room XXIV**

Please check venue and times against daily schedule as these may change