



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT PrepCom 2002

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Youth Fear For Their Future...

Yesterday the discussion on cluster 3 continued (on the safety and security of peaceful nuclear programs). The day was rather uneventful and "low-key", with the exception of the Youth Caucus lunch-time event sponsored by the Educators for Social Responsibility. Remarkably, twelve youth of middle school and high school age gave presentations on the dangers of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy to hundreds of their peers, NGOs and delegates. This historic moment was the first-ever youth gathering to be held during the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty process, and was probably the most action Conference Room 4 has seen in the past two weeks. The statements by the youth reflected a fear posed by the existence of nuclear weapons in their countries (US and UK), and the main theme was the urgency for nuclear disarmament, reinforced following the attacks of September 11. (For excerpts from the presentations by the Youth Caucus see page 2 of this edition of the News In Review).

In contrast, the statements made by states on nuclear safety and security yesterday neglected to mention that ridding the world of nuclear weapons is the only way to prevent nuclear terrorism. There was much concern raised over the need to better protect nuclear facilities. "Ineffective controls over nuclear-related exports might help terrorist groups acquire the components of a nuclear explosive or dispersal device. Irresponsible governments have found loopholes in these controls; there is no reason to believe terrorist could not do the same" (Ambassador Wulf of the US on Cluster III special time, 17 April 2002). NGOs do not feel reassured by a statement such as, "I can reassure this meeting that the UK's

nuclear weapons are protected to the highest security standards, as indeed are our civil nuclear facilities" (Ambassador Boucher of the UK on Cluster III in specific time, 17 April 2002). NGOs and delegates heard at last night's presentation on nuclear terrorism, facilitated by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the devastation that awaits, should an attack occur involving weapons of mass destruction or on a nuclear facility. Almost every single statement of party states was prefaced along the likes of,

"The terrorist attacks of September 11 made clear that the world is confronted with a new quality of threat with serious repercussions in-amongst others- fields such as nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security" (German Delegation, 16 April 2002). If this notion is indeed recognized by all delegations, would it not occur to them that nuclear facilities are dangerous by putting millions at risk all over the globe. Therefore, in order to protect the citizens they claim to represent, would it not be logical to dismantle and destroy nuclear weapons as well as to close and cease building nuclear facilities?

There is evidently another factor at work--blatantly acknowledged by many states in their promotion of "peaceful applications of nuclear energy" -- the influence of the nuclear industry on governments' policy. For extensive profiles on 12 of the "dirtiest corporations" complicit in the growth and maintenance the nuclear industry, please see the "Partners in Mass Destruction", at:
<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/dd/ddindex.html>.

Emily Schroeder, Reaching Critical Will, WILPF

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Excerpts from SANITY: Youth Caucus

Emma Roderick

It's incredible that all 187 governments agreed to these steps. But is anybody following them? No. Here are some of the most significant steps- a glance at what we could, and should be doing.

The first step states that countries must sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, or CTBT, as soon as possible. A worrying recent development, again related to the Nuclear Posture Review I mentioned before, suggests that some politicians in the Bush Administration support the resumption of nuclear testing at the Nevada Test Site.

Another important step of the thirteen point plan is the principle of irreversibility. That is, if a country has made steps toward disarmament, they cannot go back on these steps. The Bush Administration wants to put some of their nuclear arsenal in "storage," but refuses to get rid of it completely. In other words, they will make it very easy to reverse any concrete disarmament steps they may have taken.

Lutful Sanju

Radiological weapons have never been used. However, the fact that there is so much nuclear material that could be used, and that is not under an international standard for safeguarding and control, makes the threat of their use very plausible and a frightening possibility. We can combat radiological weapons. But to do this, we must stop building nuclear power plants and stop making radioactive material.

Miranda Nelson

Anyway, Yucca Mountain is not an appropriate site to store the nuclear waste. For one thing, it is on lands sacred to the Shoshone people. And there are Shoshone and others living in a valley below the mountain. If the waste were to leak into the groundwater, it would contaminate these people's water- which they use for drinking, and for irrigating their crops. There is supposed to be a natural barrier system in the mountain, but it has been decided that it's ineffective. They were working on an artificial barrier, which would delay leakage for 10,000 years. As we know, plutonium is dangerous 250,000 years. So this wouldn't do much good. Besides, 10,000 years is beyond human conception of time, so how can they even predict such a time-frame? There is no language, work of art, no consistent meaning or philosophy within human history that has lasted 10,000 years.

Dania Diaz

I have addressed what is nuclear waste, how it is produced, what harm radiation can cause. Now I'd like to say a few words about what we should do about it.

These are simple but meaningful ideas:

1. Store radioactive waste. Do not bury it.
2. Make sure radioactive waste can be monitored so it does not lead into the environment.
3. Pass the information on to future generations, they have a right to know about the nuclear legacy that we are giving them.

Beth Shiner

There is no reason for anyone to hold nuclear weapons. The UK alone have 200 nuclear warheads each one of the power of 100-120 kilotons, being 8 or 10 times more powerful and dangerous than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bomb. How does the UK government, now Labour, justify this?

Kelly Burke

Encouraging the production of plutonium, through the transfer of nuclear power, is like giving a country deadly bullets without a gun. How long will a nation wait to make a nuclear gun to use their plutonium bullets?

Omar McCray

Sometimes when I think about the future, I feel unsafe because of the uncertainties of nuclear weapons. I want to think about the future as something that is certain. With nuclear weapons, the future is not certain. It is not something we can take for granted. I want there to be a real sense of security for our future

Naihomy Jerez

We recommend that governments allocate their resources away from the military and toward more constructive endeavors, like cleaning-up the environment affected by the production of nuclear weapons.

Wilma Gonzalez

For my fellow adolescents, the future is in our hands. And it is the future responsibility of the adults to give us the knowledge and nobility to ensure the future for ourselves, and our children. To paraphrase William Shakespeare, the sins of the parents are visited on their children. Do you really want to demolish an opportunity to have a safe and more promising environment? We are the people who can make that environment. Though some of you may feel as if you can't make a difference, you must remember that you have a voice and a right to know

Health and Environmental Consequences of the Production, Testing and Use of Nuclear Weapons

In the name of deterrence, a dubious notion anyway (see critical Question on Deterrence), a third world war has been launched by the nuclear weapon states. The battlefield is the entire globe. The ammunition is invisible. The war is covered up by false reports and denial. The casualties are hidden, shunned, blamed, rejected. Nuclear weapons have turned national security on its head and lead to the widespread killing and maiming of peoples in order to save them.

In 1984 the United Nations Human Rights Committee noted that "It is evident that the designing, testing, manufacture, possession and deployment of nuclear weapons are among the greatest threats to the right to life which confront mankind today," and concluded that "the production, testing, possession, deployment and use of nuclear weapons should be prohibited and recognized as crimes against humanity."

The actual human cost will never be known. Many of the individual cases of health problems and deaths likely to be caused by the radiation from the nuclear weapons cycle are difficult to link to it. Radioactive elements enter the body furtively and do their damage secretly leaving no business cards. They will continue their rampage until they are exhausted, which for some radioactive elements will be over a hundred thousand years from now.

-Professor Victor Sidel, MD, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

Excerpt from Security and Survival, The Case for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, by International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, 1999.



<http://www.fas.org/nuke/hew/Japan/Hirosh.html>

Hiroshima woman suffering from flashburns. The woman died on October 15, 1945

Little Boy bomb, dropped by the U.S. B-29 Enola Gay, exploded with the force of 15 kilotons on 6 August 8:15 AM

NUCLEAR WEAPONS: Action Needed To Avoid Making NPT "Broken Contract"

By Jim Wurst, UN Wire (Excerpt)

UNITED NATIONS -- Many attending the current meeting of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty say that the treaty, and nonproliferation in general, are at risk unless there is greater progress on nuclear disarmament. "Pursued without progress on disarmament, nonproliferation will inevitably become an exercise in futility," Undersecretary General for Disarmament Jayantha Dhanapala said yesterday.

"We meet in cheerless times. The fact is that the gulf between declarations and deeds, especially in the field of disarmament, is alarming," he said. Like many governments and the civil society groups who have spoken during the last eight days, Dhanapala placed the bulk of the responsibility on the United States, saying, "We will be overtaken by disaster unless a concerted and coordinated effort is made to take the first credible steps in nuclear disarmament" since the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Referring to the U.S.-Russian summit in May, Dhanapala said, "The agreement that comes out of that meeting must include concrete cuts in nuclear weapons arsenals in a legally binding, irreversible and verifiable pact. ... We can only hope that that agreement places nuclear disarmament back on the rails. It is appropriate that those who announced the death of arms control should contribute to its resurrection. If this fails, the NPT may go down in history as a broken contract."

Dhanapala spoke at a ceremony at which he received the first Alan Cranston Peace Award from the Global Security Institute. Alan Cranston, who died in 2000, was a U.S. senator and disarmament activist who founded the U.S.-based institute. The award was presented by primatologist Jane Goodall, who was named a messenger of peace by Secretary General Kofi Annan yesterday.

"The nuclear disarmament issue remains for the most part buried under the welter of countless global problems -- the most recent being terrorism," Dhanapala said. "But the very prospect of the terrorist use of nuclear weapons must be a wake-up call to us all to return to the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons. The alternative to the international rule of law can only be anarchy."

What's On: WEEK TWO

* **NOTE CHANGE- Daily:** Abolition 2000 Morning Caucus, 9am , Monday-Friday, Conf Room D, United Nations.

Thursday, April 18th, 2002

* "Counter-proliferation, New Nuclear Weapons, and Counter-strategies", 1:15pm-2:45pm. Panel discussion on new nuclear weapons, counter-proliferation, US nuclear doctrine, and alternative approaches to security. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). UN Conference Room D.

* "The New Nuclear Danger: George W. Bush's Military-Industrial Complex", Dr. Helen Caldicott, Discussing her new book. 7pm, at Swayduck Auditorium, New School University, 65 Fifth Avenue (Between 12th and 13th Streets).

Friday, April 19th, 2002

* "Into the Future: what should we be trying to do before the next NPT PrepCom?" Discussion with Rebecca Johnson of Acronym Institute (UK) and Ernie Regehr, of Project Ploughshares (Canada). 1:15pm, Conference Room D. Facilitated by the NGO Committee on Disarmament.

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



