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Notes on Nuclear Weapons: Toward Abolition or Armageddon?
核兵器に関する覚え書き　廃止に向かうか、ハルマゲドンか

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Between 2012 and 2014 we posted a number of articles on contemporary affairs without giving them volume and issue numbers or dates. Often the date can be determined from internal evidence in the article, but sometimes not. We have decided retrospectively to list all of them as Volume 10, Issue 54 with a date of 2012 with the understanding that all were published between 2012 and 2014.

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People still clearly remember that on April 5, 2009 the U.S. President Barack Obama excited an audience in Prague by declaring that his government "will take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons." As the only nuclear power to have ever used a nuclear weapon, he said, the United States has a moral responsibility to act. Indeed, the U.S. has not only moral responsibility but also legal responsibility for the victims as the nation that committed a crime against humanity by indiscriminately killing tens of thousands of people and causing lifelong radiation sickness to many survivors. In his speech, Obama also added 'this goal will not be reached quickly -- perhaps not in my lifetime.' Clearly, this goal will never be reached if the U.S. continues to spend ever larger sums on nuclear weapons, overshadowing all other nuclear powers, as the Obama Administration has been doing since the speech in Prague.

On April 29 this year, at the Third Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York, Under Secretary Rose Gottemoeller stated in her speech: 'Indeed, it is the United States' deep understanding of the consequences of nuclear weapons' use – including the devastating health effects – that has guided and motivated our efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate these most hazardous weapons.'

However, despite her claim of "deep understanding [of] the consequences of nuclear weapons' use," in the detailed budget for fiscal 2015 released in mid March this year Obama yet again asked for a substantial increase in funding to support nuclear weapons research and production programs under the Department of Energy's semi-autonomous National Nuclear Security Administration. The proposal includes a seven percent increase in the nuclear warhead budget from $7.7 billion in FY 2014 to $8.3 billion in FY 2015. This budget request sets a new record for DOE nuclear weapons spending, exceeding even the Cold War high point in 1985 under President Reagan's military buildup. The plan, moreover, is to increase the military budget to an astounding $9.7 billion by FY 2019, 24 percent above FY 2014.

A large proportion of this budget is for

"modernizing" nuclear weapons — both warheads and delivery systems. Among the priorities is the B61 *Life Extension Program*, designed to extend the life of B61 nuclear bombs by an additional 20 to 30 years. The Obama Administration is requesting $634 million, up 20 percent from FY2014, for this program, which has already catapulted from an original estimate of $4 billion to more than $10 billion. Currently 200 of the B61 bombs are located in Europe.

While rebuilding nuclear weapons at exorbitant expense, Obama proposes to slash the budget for dismantling these weapons by 45 percent, from an already paltry $54.2 million to $30 million. No additional funding has been allocated for a nuclear waste clean-up program, and the National Nuclear Security Administration's $790 million in spending on nuclear nonproliferation programs is to be cut by 21 percent, or $152 million. Amongst these programs is the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, a program that plays a key part in the effort of preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear and radiological materials that could be used as weapons of mass destruction.

According to the study entitled *Projected Costs of Nuclear Forces 2014 -2023* issued in December 2013 by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, it would cost the U.S. government a total of $355 billion over the next decade to maintain and "modernize" the nuclear weapons stockpile, delivery systems and research and production complex. This would be almost 70 percent more than senior officials have predicted over the next decade. According to the report, *The Trillion Dollar Nuclear Triad: U.S. Strategic Modernization Over the Next Thirty Years,* published in January 2014 by the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, 'Over the next thirty years, the United States plans to spend approximately $1 trillion maintaining the current arsenal, buying replacement systems, and upgrading existing nuclear bombs and warheads.'

It is clear from this official data that the U.S. government has no intention at all to "take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons" despite repeated rhetoric on the reduction of nuclear weapons by Obama himself and his senior staff. Indeed this is the ultimate irony that cannot be ignored: the U.S., under the president who won the Nobel Peace Prize is holding piles of nuclear weapons, while demanding that North Korea and Iran give up their nuclear programs, threatening them with military might. It is not surprising, therefore, that other nuclear power nations such as Russia, China, England and France are also adopting similar policies to "modernize" their own nuclear weapons. In 2012 China officially replaced its "non preemptive nuclear strike" policy by one that permits "the use of nuclear weapons for the purpose of defense," clearly indicating the possibility of conducting a preemptive nuclear strike.

The best way to confront such a perilous world situation plagued by nuclear weapons would be to make illegal both the use and possession of such weapons with the aid of a new international convention as soon as possible, and then assure implementation of phased elimination of all nuclear weapons. For the last several years, various NGOs campaigning against nuclear weapons have been promoting this idea at different international conferences, in particular at the Conference: Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, first held in March 2013 in Oslo, and then in February 2014 in Mexico. (In 2010, I proposed my own idea on this issue through HANWA, a Hiroshima-based anti-nuclear civil organization. Please see:

http://www.e-hanwa.org/announce/2010/82)

During the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) conference held in Hiroshima in April 2014 some NGOs also organized various events in the city and asked NPDI member nations to quickly adopt and promote the illegalization of nuclear weapons. However, some NPDI member nations including Japan and Australia continue to firmly support U.S. nuclear strategies, claiming that the U.S. nuclear deterrent is necessary to protect nations like theirs under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. This explains why official statements demanding nuclear arms reduction by the Japanese and Australian governments always end up using the same rhetoric as Obama and his senior staff. In particular, Japanese politicians like the current prime minister, Abe Shinzo, and the LDP Secretary General, Ishiba Shigeru, not only support the U.S. nuclear deterrent but strongly believe that Japan should maintain the capability to produce its own nuclear weapons by running its own nuclear reactors as a form of indirect nuclear deterrent.

The problem is that the idea of a nuclear deterrent is widely accepted as a *defense* policy by many people from both nuclear and non-nuclear power nations. Unfortunately, even some people with anti-nuclear sentiments reluctantly accept it as one of the gradual steps towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. At the same time, it can be said that there is now nearly global consensus that the use of nuclear weapons in any form is a crime against humanity. Needless to say, possession of a nuclear deterrent equates to preparation for the use of nuclear weapons to commit a crime against humanity. In accordance with the Nuremberg principle, a plan or preparation to commit a crime against humanity is a crime against peace. Therefore, the nuclear deterrent, that is, the possession of nuclear weapons is, in itself, a crime against peace in accordance with international law. In addition, the purpose of a nuclear deterrent is to provide a constant threat to other nations. Such an action is a clear violation of Article 2 of Chapter 1 of the UN Charter, which prohibits "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." In other words, it can be said that a nuclear deterrent is an act of terrorism. Accordingly, a person or nation who maintains a nuclear deterrent rather than participating in their phased destruction should be regarded as a terrorist.

In order to abolish nuclear weapons from this planet, it is necessary to introduce a new international convention prohibiting both the use and possession of nuclear weapons. To achieve this goal, we need global consensus on the above-mentioned idea that a nuclear deterrent is a crime against peace. On April 24, 2014, the Republic of the Marshall Islands filed lawsuits in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague to hold the nine nuclear-armed states accountable for flagrant violations of international law with respect to their nuclear disarmament obligations under the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and customary international law. such international legal action is an effective way to promote and disseminate the concept of the criminality of nuclear deterrents throughout the world.

See also the James Corbett Report on the threat of nuclear war at Conscious Life News http://consciouslifenews.com/cold-war-20-threat-nuclear-warfare-james-corbett/1172685/#

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