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Perspectives

The Nuclear Threat

by Mikhail Gorbachev

We must put the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons back on the agenda, not in a distant future but as soon as possible. It links the moral imperative—the rejection of such weapons from an ethical standpoint—with the imperative of assuring security. It is becoming clearer that nuclear weapons are no

longer a means of achieving security; in fact, with every passing year they make our security more precarious. [Read more.](#)

A World Free of Nuclear Weapons

by George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn

Nuclear weapons today present tremendous dangers, but also an historic opportunity. US leadership will be required to take the world to the next stage—to a solid consensus for reversing reliance on nuclear weapons globally as a vital contribution to preventing their proliferation into potentially dangerous hands, and ultimately ending them as a threat to the world. [Read More.](#)

It's Time for a Plan to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

by David Krieger

In early January 2007, a surprising commentary appeared in the Wall Street Journal pleading for US leadership to move toward a world free of nuclear weapons. The surprise emanated from the identity of the writers: four prominent former high-level US foreign and defense policy officials, a bipartisan group with impeccable hawkish credentials—George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn.

In their welcome, if belated, statement of concern about nuclear dangers, they harkened back to the 1986 summit at Reykjavik, where Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev came close to an agreement to rid the world of nuclear weapons. “Reassertion of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons,” they wrote, “and practical measures toward achieving that goal would be, and would be perceived as, a bold initiative consistent with America’s moral heritage. The effort could have a profoundly positive impact on the security of future generations.” [Read More.](#)

A Call to Conscience: Report from the Citizens’ Hearing on the Legality of US Actions in Iraq

We, the Citizens’ Hearing Panel, place primary responsibility for initiating crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity on the civilian leadership of our nation. We cannot stand idly by when civilian leadership of our military neglects its oversight responsibility to soldiers during wartime. We, the citizens, must hold these officials accountable, rather than let individual military members take the fall for the illegal actions of their leaders. Military personnel are defending their lives—this is the situation in which the government has put our men and women in uniform. It is our responsibility as citizens to support them by speaking out and by holding the responsible civilian leaders accountable. [Read more.](#) For full report from the tribunal go to www.wartribunal.org

US Policy

Reliable Replacement Warhead Will Use Hybrid Design

The Bush Administration announced that it will likely use an amalgam of two nuclear weapons designs for its Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. The two major US nuclear weapons labs, Los Alamos National Laboratory and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, have been involved in a competition to design the next generation of nuclear weapons. The inter-lab competition was created in an attempt to foster healthy competition between the labs.

Previously designs had come exclusively from one lab or the other. The administration’s decision to combine features from both labs’ designs has been called “peculiar” by Dr. Michael A. Levi, fellow for

science and technology at the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. Levi warned that motivations behind a hybrid design may be bureaucratic, not strategic, which may only encourage inferior design work.

While the RRW is intended to replace the existing nuclear arsenal with newer and fewer weapons, many fear that building new nuclear weapons could seriously undermine international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. There are also concerns that this new hybrid design is so radically different than existing nuclear weapons that it will lead to a resurgence of nuclear testing.

Sources: Broad, William J., David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, "US moving to refurbish its nuclear arsenal," *International Herald Tribune*, 7 January 2007. Owen, Seth, "New warhead could siphon funds from sub builders," *The Day*, 13 January 2007.

Nuclear Dangers

Doomsday Clock Draws Closer to Midnight

On Wednesday, 17 January, a group of eminent scientists warned that the world is dangerously close to nuclear and environmental destruction by pushing the hands of the symbolic Doomsday Clock closer to midnight.

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (BAS), which created the Doomsday Clock in 1947, use the clock to symbolize how close civilization is to self-destruction. The closer the hands are to midnight, the closer humanity is to destruction. This most recent move, to 11:55, brought the hands two minutes closer to midnight than previously had been.

At the accompanying BAS event, a statement was released saying, "We stand at the brink of a Second Nuclear Age. Not since the first atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has the world faced such perilous choices. North Korea's recent test of a nuclear weapon, Iran's nuclear ambitions, a renewed emphasis on the military utility of nuclear weapons, the failure to adequately secure nuclear materials, and the continued presence of some 26,000 nuclear weapons in the United States and Russia are symptomatic of a failure to solve the problems posed by the most destructive technology on Earth. The dangers posed by climate change are nearly as dire as those posed by nuclear weapons. The effects may be less dramatic in the short term than the destruction that could be wrought by nuclear explosions, but over the next three to four decades climate change could cause irremediable harm to the habitats upon which human societies depend for survival."

Martin Rees, president of the Royal Society, Britain's academy of science, added, "We are transforming, even ravaging the entire biosphere. These environmentally driven threats—threats without enemies—should loom as large as did the East-West divide during the Cold War era."

Since 1947, the Doomsday clock has been moved 18 times. The closest the clock has ever come to midnight was after the first successful test of a hydrogen bomb by the United States, when the hands were moved two minutes to midnight. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the clock was 17 minutes from midnight—the farthest it has ever been.

The BAS Board, which is made up of prominent scientists, policy experts and affiliated organizations, is responsible for deciding when the clock should be moved. The clock was last moved in 2002, following the United States' announcement that it would withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Source: "Nuclear scientists move 'Doomsday Clock' toward midnight," *Associated Press*, 17 January 2007.

Nuclear Proliferation

Man Arrested for Attempting to Sell Uranium

On Friday, 26 January, Georgian officials revealed that early last year a Russian man was caught trying to sell weapons-grade uranium.

A joint US-Georgian sting operation led to the arrest of Oleg Khinsagov as he was trying to sell 3.5 ounces of highly enriched uranium, appropriate for use in a nuclear bomb. The man has claimed that he has access to larger quantities of uranium, but Georgian officials have said that they have not been able to investigate due to Russia's lack of cooperation.

Anton Khlopkov, deputy director of Moscow's PIR Center, stated that the quantity taken was too small to build a nuclear weapon. He went on to say, "Why was this information released now? It looks like an attempt, by Georgia or the United States, to build up an image of Russia as a nuclear market."

This event has left many questioning whether Russia is capable of securing its nuclear materials. Russia has between 735 and 1,365 metric tons of weapons-grade uranium and between 106 and 156 tons of military-use plutonium. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, between 1993 and 2005 there were seven cases where highly enriched uranium or plutonium was illicitly trafficked. Through US backed programs, Russia has made headway in securing its nuclear materials. In December 2006, 590 pounds of highly enriched uranium was taken from Eastern Germany to a secure site in Russia.

Source: "Georgian uranium smuggling case throws Russia on defensive," *Associated Press*, 26 January 2007.

King of Jordan Interested in Nuclear Program

On Friday, 19 January, King Abdullah II of Jordan said that Jordan wants to develop a peaceful nuclear program.

"The rules governing the nuclear issue have changed in the entire region," said Abdullah. "We want to make sure this is used for energy. What we don't want is an arms race to come out of this," he said.

Jordan is the latest in a growing number of Arab nations that are considering a nuclear program. Egypt and the Arab Gulf nations have already indicated that they would consider a nuclear program. There is speculation that this recent wave of states interested in peaceful nuclear programs is the result of fears that Iran will inevitably possess nuclear weapons. Development of such programs by Middle Eastern nations would increase the likelihood of nuclear weapons technologies proliferation.

Although it would still take years for any of these countries to develop a significant nuclear program, these announcements could show that Iran's nuclear ambitions are straining its relationship with other Arab nations.

Justin Logan, a foreign policy analyst at the Washington-based Cato Institute said, "Jordan is trying to toss another log on the fire and...obliquely point out to the Iranians that the acquisition of such a weapon would create such pressure on the Arab neighbors [to respond] that acquiring the bomb would not be useful."

Source: Mattar, Shaffika, "Jordan interesting in starting peaceful nuclear program," *Associated Press*, 20 January 2007.

Nuclear Energy

Tennessee Valley Authority to Lead Nuclear Energy Renaissance

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has announced that it will submit applications to build two new

nuclear reactors and restart its oldest reactor at Browns Ferry.

TVA also plans to decide later this year whether to complete an unfinished nuclear reactor located at the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant. The federal government's recent incentives and simplifications of the licensing process have made it easier and more appealing for utilities to pursue construction of new nuclear power plants. For the first time since the 1979 accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant, there are plans to build up to 31 new reactors around the country.

The TVA plan has many concerned about the financial cost and safety issues associated with building new nuclear reactors. "Of all the places on Earth that have given nuclear power a shot and failed, the Tennessee Valley has got to be No. 1," said S. David Freeman, a former TVA chairman who has headed four other electric utilities across the country.

In the 1970s and 1980s, TVA spent \$8 billion on ten nuclear reactors that were never finished. "TVA's electric rates would be a whole lot lower today if they wouldn't have tried to build all those expensive nuclear plants," Freeman said. "It's just baffling to me that TVA would want to get into that business again."

Source: "TVA plans to add reactors to its nuclear power program," *Associated Press*, 27 January 2007.

Nuclear Waste

Scientists Determine that Material for Storing Nuclear Waste May Not Be Safe

Scientists have discovered that a material thought to be capable of containing nuclear waste may not be as dependable as previously thought.

Scientists had previously hypothesized that the synthetic known as zircon would contain nuclear waste safely for thousands of years. In an announcement made on Wednesday, 10 January, scientists at the University of Cambridge in England said that when zircon was used as a container for plutonium, the zircon degraded far faster than previously thought. This would mean that zircon would be able to safely contain nuclear waste for only part of the waste's toxic lifetime.

Through a process called nuclear magnetic resonance, the scientists were able to simulate how the two materials would interact over thousands of years. This is part of a broader study to determine what materials could be used to safely store nuclear waste.

There are over 50,000 metric tons of nuclear waste in the United States. Yucca Mountain in Nevada has been chosen as a repository site for this waste. Due to various environmental and health concerns that have been raised over locating the repository at Yucca, many have fought to make sure this site never opens.

Source: Reaney, Patricia, "Study casts doubt on nuclear waste storage safety," *Reuters*, 10 January 2007.

Nuclear Insanity

NRC Says Power Plant Operators Not Responsible for Defending Reactors from Planes

In a revised defense plan for America's nuclear plants, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has said that nuclear power plant operators are not responsible for providing additional measures to protect reactors from the possibility of a plane crash.

In a statement released on 29 January, the NRC said, “The active protection against airborne threats is addressed by other federal organizations, including the military.”

The plan, which assumes that a terrorist attack would be small and limited in resources, opposed building a “lattice-like” barrier that would prevent aircrafts from breaching the reactor containment dome.

NRC has argued that security requirements for plants must be reasonable for a civilian security force. The nuclear power industry advocates have argued that it was unreasonable to be expected to guard against hijacked aircrafts and that the government should be responsible.

Director of Public Citizen’s Energy Program Michelle Boyd, who is critical about this new plan, has said, “Rather than requiring measures to prevent a plane crash from damaging vulnerable parts of a nuclear plant, which would be the smartest course, the government is relying on post-crash measures and evacuation plans to attempt to ‘mitigate’ the public's exposure to radiation.”

In a letter sent to the NRC, Senator Barbara Boxer, said that this plan must “ensure that...the plants are prepared to defend against large attacking forces and commercial aircraft.”

Sources: “Nuclear commission: Operators need not defend against airplane attack,” *Associated Press*, 29 January 2007. Randall, Maya Jackson, “Groups slam NRC rule on nuclear plant protection from attacks,” *Dow Jones*, 29 January 2007.

Resources

Spring Online Course on “The Human Right to Food”

Transcend Peace University is offering a spring 2007 online course on “The Human Right to Food.” The course is designed for individuals who wish to teach about the right to food in a variety of settings including schools, communities or the government. The course director, George Kent, is a professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawaii. His approach centers on finding remedies for social problems, especially finding ways to strengthen the weak in the face of the strong. He works on human rights, international relations, peace, development, and environmental issues, with a special focus on nutrition and children. The course will run from March 19 to June 19, 2007. Information about Transcend Peace University and its registration procedures is available at www.transcend.org/tpu.

New Novel on the Creation of the Bomb

Best-selling author Nora Gallagher has released a new book, *Changing Light*. The novel follows two characters, a painter and a scientist AWOL from the Manhattan Project, as their lives converge in the New Mexico desert. Nora Gallagher’s essays, books, reviews, and journalism have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *Double Take*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and elsewhere. For more information on events and readings, visit www.noragallagher.org.

2007 National Security Briefing Book

NGOs working on peace and security issues around the country collaborated to create this free, online briefing book. It provides essential information on major national security issues that will require congressional oversight and action in 2007. Also included are a glossary of terms and a full list of experts who are available for consultation on these issues. [Click here to see the briefing book.](#)

US Nuclear Weapons Policy: Confronting Today’s Threats by Christopher Chyba and Dean Wilkening

What role should nuclear weapons play in today's world? How can the United States promote international security while safeguarding its own interests? US Nuclear Weapons Policy informs this debate with an analysis of current nuclear weapons policies and strategies, including those for deterring, preventing, or preempting nuclear attack; preventing further proliferation, to nations and terrorists; modifying weapons designs; and revising the US nuclear posture. Presidents Bush and Clinton made major changes in US policy after the Cold War, and George W. Bush's administration made further, more radical changes after 9/11. Leaked portions of the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, for example, described more aggressive possible uses for nuclear weapons. This volume examines the significance of such changes and suggests a way forward for US policy, emphasizing stronger security of nuclear weapons and materials, international compliance with nonproliferation obligations, attention to the demand side of proliferation, and reduced reliance on nuclear weapons in US foreign policy.

Summer Institute on Nonviolence and K-12 Curricula

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona is hosting a residential summer institute for K-12 educators entitled "Gandhi, Nonviolence and the 21st Century Curriculum." The institute will provide a focused learning atmosphere for forty K-12 educators, providing ways to integrate lessons based on critical understanding of Gandhi's thought and actions into school curricula. It will be a two-week residential program July 15-28, 2007. Applications are due by Monday, March 19, 2007. The institute is part of California State Polytechnic University's Ahimsa Center for Nonviolence in Thought and Action. To learn more about the institute or the Ahimsa Center, contact Dr. Tara Sethia, Director of Ahimsa Center at (909) 869-3868/3808, ahimsacenter@csupomona.edu or visit www.csupomona.edu/ahimsacenter.

Foundation Activities

John St. John Art Show

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is holding an art show with the Rehabilitation Institute at Santa Barbara February 5-24, 2007. The show features the John St. John collection owned by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. The Harris & Fredda Meisel Gallery of Art, 2415 De la Vina Street, will host the exhibit Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and weekends 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information call (805) 687-7444.

6th Annual Frank K. Kelly Lecture Featuring Jakob von Uexkull

Founder of the Right Livelihood Award Jakob von Uexkull will speak on "Globalization: Values, Responsibility & Global Justice," Wednesday, February 21, 2007, 8:00 p.m. at UCSB Corwin Pavilion. Von Uexkull is also a founder of the World Future Council, a body of 50 globally recognized wise elders, pioneers and youth leaders, that was formed to give voice to the interests of future generations on issues related to the environment, peace, justice, human development and human rights. This annual lecture series was inaugurated in 2002 in honor of Frank K. Kelly, a founder and senior vice president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. Co-sponsors: Orfalea Center for Global & International Studies at UCSB; Political Science Department at UCSB; Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at UCSB; Global Studies at SBCC; Community Environmental Council; United Nations Association - Santa Barbara.

Foundation President to Speak in Toronto

David Krieger will speak on "Nuclear Weapons and the Human Future" at Hart House at the University of Toronto on February 19, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. He will also be meeting with the staff of Toronto-based

Quotable

“The magnitude of the radiation generated in a nuclear power plant is almost beyond belief. The original uranium fuel that is subject to the fission process becomes 1 billion times more radioactive in the reactor core. A thousand-megawatt nuclear power plant contains as much long-lived radiation as that produced by the explosion of 1,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs.”

-- Doctor Helen Caldicott, President of Nuclear Policy Research Institute, member of NAPF Advisory Council addressing nuclear power.

“I weep for the waste that we have already seen. Lives, treasure, time, goodwill, credibility, opportunity. Wasted. Wasted. And this President is calling for us to waste more.”

--Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-West Virginia), commenting on the President’s plan to commit over 20,000 more troops to fight in Iraq.

“There’s no such thing as a 700-ton conventional weapon. Make no mistake about it, there’s an effort to move into creating new nuclear weapons.”

-- Representative Jim Matheson (D-Utah), regarding the planned Divine Strake weapons test.

“The very fact that nuclear weapon use is not being ruled out as an option—against a state [Iran] that does not have nuclear weapons and does not represent a direct or imminent threat to the United States—illustrates the extent to which the Bush administration has changed U.S. nuclear weapons policy.”

-- Kurt Gottfried, chairman of the Union of Concerned Scientists, making remarks about possible attacks on Iran.

Editorial Team

- Nickolas Roth
- Andrew Culp
- Vicki Stevenson
- David Krieger

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