

THE SUNflower



NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION

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Perspectives

Open Letter to Presidents Obama and Medvedev: Prevent Nuclear Conflict

To President Barack Obama and President Dmitry Medvedev:

Recent U.S. decisions to deploy an integrated missile defense system in Western, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, coupled with the continued expansion of NATO and its military activities, have created increasingly sharp divisions and distrust between the Russian Federation and the United States. This process now threatens to destroy the New START agreement and reverse previous progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. Further deterioration of U.S.-Russian relations could result in a return to the perilous nuclear postures of the Cold War.

To read more, [click here](#).

Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

by Alfred Marder

We are deeply concerned that the current response to the insistence that Iran is on the path to nuclear weapons is creating a volatile, unstable climate that can lead to frightening consequences. We cannot be silent as events unfold.

It is our judgment that the global peace movement must offer a concrete solution based upon historical precedent and experience, a solution that the global movement has adopted years ago, and, in the framework of the United Nations, is recognized as a powerful instrument for peace: a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

To read more, [click here](#).

US Nuclear Weapons Policy

Debate Over New Wharf in Washington State

A lively debate has been taking place in Washington State over whether the Navy should build a second munitions wharf for its nuclear-armed submarines at Naval Base Kitsap Bangor at a cost of at least \$715 million.

The base currently has eight nuclear-armed submarines, but likely Pentagon budget cuts and President Obama's pledge to "end Cold War thinking" may lead to fewer submarines needing service in the future.

Song, Kyung, "Plan for New Navy Wharf at Bangor Fires Up Nuke Debate," [Seattle Times](#), January 8, 2012.

Pentagon to Delay New Nuclear Submarines

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has announced that the Navy will delay by two years its long-range plans to build new submarines that carry nuclear weapons. The decision is reportedly intended to ease current budget pressures. The new nuclear submarines are estimated to cost at least \$5 billion each.

The delay was one of many proposed changes to Pentagon plans. Other changes include canceling a spy drone program, stretching out the purchase of 179 F-35 fighter jets (by far the Pentagon's most expensive program) and cutting the size of ground forces by 92,000.

Drew, Christopher, "Military Contractors Brace for Cutbacks," [*The New York Times*](#), January 27, 2012.

Nuclear Disarmament

Australian Group Calls for Nuclear Weapons Convention

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons has launched a major appeal urging the Australian Prime Minister to support a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The statement has been signed by over 700 recipients of the Order of Australia (that nation's highest civilian honor).

The statement reads in part, "There is a growing consensus among world leaders on the urgent need to abolish nuclear weapons. The increasing risks of nuclear weapons proliferation and use in our region and beyond mean there has never been a more important time for Australian initiative and leadership in global efforts to free the world from nuclear weapons."

Signatories include former prime ministers, foreign ministers, defense ministers and chiefs of the armed forces.

To see the full list of signatories and read the statement, [click here](#).

Doomsday Clock Moves Closer to Midnight

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has moved its "Doomsday Clock" from six to five minutes to midnight, citing nuclear weapons, nuclear energy and climate change as perilous threats to humanity.

A statement from the Bulletin says, "Two years ago, it appeared that world leaders might address the truly global threats that we face. In many cases, that trend has not continued or been reversed." Specifically, "The path toward a world free of nuclear weapons is not at all clear, and leadership is failing."

"Doomsday Clock Moves to Five Minutes to Midnight," [*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*](#), January 10, 2012.

UN Conference on Disarmament Faces Irrelevancy

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has expressed strong concern about the future of the Conference on Disarmament. The 65-nation body based in Geneva has not produced a new disarmament treaty for nearly 16 years after negotiating or assessing pacts including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

"Not only do the members of the conference disagree over its priorities, but the consensus rule, which has served this body so well in the past, is currently used as a de facto veto power to stall every attempt to break the impasse," Ban said.

Some countries have discussed the possibility of moving negotiations for a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty outside of the Conference on Disarmament because of its inability to accomplish any work.

"Disarmament Body Faces 'Irrelevancy': UN Chief," [*Global Security Newswire*](#), January 25, 2012.

Nuclear Proliferation

Is Assassination Being Used as an Anti-Proliferation Measure?

Five scientists and engineers connected with Iran's nuclear program have been killed or injured in recent confirmed or possible assassination attempts. It is unclear who is responsible, but the attacks raise unique policy questions about motives, effectiveness, repercussions, and legal and moral standards.

Past assassination plots, including a U.S. plan to kidnap or kill a German atomic scientist in World War II, suggest that such attempts are products of desperation: A nation tries to kill another country's nuclear scientists when it sees no military or diplomatic options for addressing a perceived threat of existential proportions.

Tobey, William, "Nuclear Scientists as Assassination Targets," [*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*](#), January/February 2012.

Nuclear Labs

Secrecy Trumps Transparency at Nuclear Lab

Performance Evaluation Reports are the primary mechanism by which success or failure is measured for contractors working at National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) sites, including the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Despite an executive order from President Obama stating, "The Government should not keep information confidential merely because public officials might be embarrassed by disclosure, because errors and failures might be revealed, or because of speculative or abstract fears," NNSA has refused to make Performance Evaluation Reports from Los Alamos public.

With rampant cost overruns and numerous security breaches at the site, it is likely that NNSA has decided that protecting the contractors from public evidence of poor performance is more important than the public's right to know about that poor performance.

Fleck, John, "Obama Policy Shrouds Lab Evals in Secrecy," [*Albuquerque Journal*](#), January 31, 2012.

Nuclear Testing

French Nuclear Testing Sites in Polynesia Remain Closed

In January, the French Senate approved a bill to return Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls to French Polynesia by 2014, but the National Assembly is widely expected to vote against it. France promised to return the atolls after the weapons tests ended, but France has thus far failed to do so.

"Concern at Continued Closure of French Polynesia's Nuclear Weapons Test Sites," [*Radio New Zealand International*](#), January 22, 2012.

Resources

146 Countries Support a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Three-quarters of all nations support UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal for a treaty to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons, according to a study released by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Of the 146 nations to have declared their willingness to negotiate a new global disarmament pact, four maintain nuclear stockpiles: China, India, Pakistan and North Korea.

"Nuclear disarmament cannot continue at a snail's pace if we are to prevent the further spread and use of nuclear weapons. It must be accelerated, and the best way to achieve that is through a comprehensive nuclear disarmament treaty with timelines and benchmarks for eliminating nuclear stockpiles," said Tim Wright, the author of the report. "This must be the next big negotiating objective of the international community."

To download the full report, [click here](#).

Preventing War Saves More than Lives

A new fact sheet from the Friends Committee on National Legislation shows that preventing war is 60 times cheaper than fighting it.

Research has indicated that investing early to prevent conflicts from escalating into violent crises is, on average, 60 times more cost effective than intervening after violence erupts. Still, the world spends just \$1 on conflict prevention for every \$1,885 it spends on military budgets. In the U.S., less than 2% of income tax goes to civilian foreign affairs agencies, while 39% goes to the military.

To download the fact sheet, [click here](#).

Foundation Activities

NAPF Announces the 2012 Swackhamer Disarmament Video Contest

The topic for the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 2012 Swackhamer Disarmament Video Contest has been announced. Contestants are asked to make a video of three minutes or less on the following theme: **What School Didn't Teach Us: The Truth about Nuclear Weapons.**

Historically and through to the present day, the profound dangers of nuclear weapons have been downplayed or altogether ignored. Winning videos will highlight some of the many dangerous truths about nuclear weapons for the world to see.

For more information about the contest, including instructions on how to enter and to view previous years' winners, [click here](#).

Lecture Featuring Daniel Ellsberg in Santa Barbara

Daniel Ellsberg, a former U.S. nuclear analyst best known for his 1971 leak of a 7,000-page study known as the "Pentagon Papers," will speak on "Nuclear Weapons and Humanity's Future" at the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 11th Annual Frank K. Kelly Lecture. The free event will take place Thursday, February 23, at 7:00 p.m. at the Lobero Theatre in Santa Barbara.

For more information, call the NAPF office at (805) 965-3443 or [click here](#) for a flyer. A video and transcript of the lecture will be available for those unable to attend.

Join Us in Washington, DC March 18-21

Please join representatives from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and other grassroots activists from around the United States at this year's DC Days lobbying event March 18-21. This is the 24th year that the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability has hosted DC Days.

This year's theme is "Nuclear Budget Accountability Now!" Disarmament and environmental activists from across the country will deliver our message to Congress and the Obama Administration. Will you be among them? DC Days is the perfect opportunity for new or seasoned advocates to call for environmental cleanup, restrained nuclear weapons programs, and rolling back the "nuclear renaissance."

For more information on how to get involved in DC Days, [click here](#).

NAPF to Host Dr. Helen Caldicott in Santa Barbara

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation will host a public event featuring Dr. Helen Caldicott in Santa Barbara, California, on the weekend of March 23-25. Dr. Caldicott is the author of numerous books on nuclear weapons and nuclear energy issues, and she continues to be an effective advocate for a nuclear-free future.

Details of Dr. Caldicott's visit will be published on www.wagingpeace.org as soon as they are finalized, and will be featured in the March 2012 edition of *The Sunflower* newsletter.

Quotes

"Mr. Obama has declared his commitment to arms control, but there is no reflection of that in the budget plan. He needs to back it up with significant cuts in the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons, ballistic missile submarines and intercontinental ballistic missiles."

-- *New York Times* [editorial](#) on January 29, 2012, calling for significant cuts to the Pentagon budget.

"It is now high time for us to realize that nobody needs parkways or playgrounds on land contaminated with unknown quantities of hot plutonium particles."

-- **LeRoy Moore** and **Robert Del Tredici**, [writing](#) about the proposals for a road or playground on Rocky Flats, which is highly contaminated with plutonium from nuclear weapons production.

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