

75 Years After Hiroshima and Nagasaki The Quest for Nuclear Disarmament; Where Do Things Stand?

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A little over 75 years ago, on August 6, 1945 the United States unleashed the nuclear age, dropping a single atomic bomb on Hiroshima, which indiscriminately incinerated 10s of thousands of children, women and men in an instant. It was a tiny and crude nuclear weapon by today's standards, justified by a lie of historic proportions that the bombing ended World War II and saved American lives. Over 90% of the doctors and nurses in Hiroshima were killed or injured by the bomb.

Three days later, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. By the end of 1945 more than 210,000 people - mainly civilians - were dead, and the surviving A-bomb victims ("hibakusha"), their children and grandchildren continue to suffer from physical and psychological effects of the bombings.

We have also recently marked the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. On January 24, 1946, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus its very first resolution, Resolution 1 (I): which established a commission of the UN Security Council to ensure:

1. the 'control of atomic energy to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes,' and
2. 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.'ⁱ

Yet in 1951, the Western Shoshone Territory was seized by executive order of President Harry Truman to create the Nevada Test Site, which has become known as the most bombed nation on earth. The 928 American and 19 British nuclear explosions conducted in Newe Sogobia between 1951 and 1992 have been classified by the Western Shoshone National Council as bombs rather than "tests" because the purpose of a bomb is to destroy while the idea of a test is to introduce something new. About 1,350 square miles of their total territory of about 43,000 square miles has been destroyed by hundreds of craters and tunnels, which are de facto uncontrolled underground nuclear waste dumps.ⁱⁱ

Since 1945, there have been 2,056 nuclear weapons tests by at least eight countries. Most of these tests have been conducted on the lands of indigenous and colonized people. The United States conducted 1,030 of those tests in the atmosphere, underwater, and underground, while the USSR carried out 715 nuclear test detonations.

Not only did these nuclear test explosions fuel the development and spread of new and more deadly types of nuclear weapons, but hundreds of thousands of people have died and millions more have suffered—and continue to suffer—from illnesses directly related to the radioactive fallout from nuclear detonations in the United States, islands in the Pacific, in Australia, China, Algeria, across Russia, in Kazakhstan, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and elsewhere.

A 1990 National Cancer Institute study concluded that fallout from nuclear blasts at the Nevada Test Site may have caused 10,000 to 75,000 thyroid cancers. There were few, if any, Americans in the contiguous 48 states at the time who were not exposed to some level of fallout.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 1995, the then-Mayor of Hiroshima, Takashi Hiraoka, described the unimaginable violence of nuclear weapons in testimony before the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

“The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki shattered all war precedent. The mind-numbing damage these nuclear weapons wrought shook the foundations of human existence....

Beneath the atomic bomb's monstrous mushroom cloud, human skin was burned raw. Crying for water, human beings died in desperate agony. With thoughts of these victims as the starting point, it is incumbent upon us to think about the nuclear age and the relationship between human beings and nuclear weapons....

The unique characteristic of the atomic bombing was that the enormous destruction was instantaneous and universal. Old, young, male, female, soldier, civilian - the killing was utterly indiscriminate. The entire city was exposed to the compound and devastating effects of thermal rays, shock wave blast, and radiation....

Above all, we must focus on the fact that the human misery caused by the atomic bomb is different from that caused by conventional weapons. [H]uman bodies were burned by the thermal rays and high-temperature fires, broken and lacerated by the blast, and insidiously attacked by radiation. These forms of damage compounded and amplified each other....

[T]he bomb reduced Hiroshima to an inhuman state utterly beyond human ability to express or imagine....”

And he concluded: “History is written by the victors. Thus, the heinous massacre that was Hiroshima has been handed down to us as a perfectly justified act of war... It is clear that the use of nuclear weapons, which cause indiscriminate mass murder that leaves survivors for decades, is a violation of international law”.

The United States, the only nation that has used nuclear weapons in war, has never acknowledged or apologized for the “heinous massacre that was Hiroshima” and Nagasaki.

So where are we now?

President Trump’s decision last year to withdraw the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, followed by Russia’s, signaled a deepening crisis among the nuclear-armed states. Following the 2002 U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, it imperils the entire structure of arms control and disarmament, including prospects for extension of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) which expires in February 2021, and could contribute to new, unpredictable rounds of arms racing. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently warned: “The only treaty constraining the size of the world’s largest nuclear arsenals is set to expire early next year, raising the alarming possibility of a return to

unconstrained strategic competition.”^{iv} Prospects for U.S.-Russian agreement on extension of START in the next few months are dicey.

Also last year the U.S. withdrew from - violated really – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA – Iran deal) and reimposed sanctions on Iran (which is now suffering so severely from the coronavirus pandemic.) This is a major blow to international governance and to peace and disarmament in the region and the world.

The United States has not ratified the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, one of eight remaining ratifications necessary for the treaty’s entry-into-force. Though the Senate voted against ratification in 1999, the U.S. has observed a moratorium on full-scale nuclear tests since 1992. However, in a very worrying development, it was reported in May that senior officials in the Trump administration were discussing resumption of underground nuclear testing.^v

In 2019 President Trump initiated withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord and shockingly, in the midst of the global pandemic, in July, the Trump administration formally moved to withdraw the U.S. from the World Health Organization.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet leader who signed the INF Treaty with President Ronald Reagan in 1987 has warned: “The United States has in effect taken the initiative in destroying the entire system of international treaties and accords that served as the underlying foundation for peace and security following World War II.”

We are living in a time of extraordinary nuclear dangers. Derek Johnson, executive director of Global Zero, has assessed today’s nuclear threat as “an unprecedented moment in human history. The world has never faced so many nuclear flashpoints simultaneously. From NATO-Russia tensions, to the Korean Peninsula, to South Asia and the South China Sea and Taiwan — all of the nuclear-armed states are tangled up in conflicts and crises that could catastrophically escalate at any moment.”

Renata Dwan, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, has declared that the risk of nuclear weapons being used again is at its highest since World War II, calling it an “urgent” issue that the world should take more seriously.

United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu has declared: “The specter of unconstrained nuclear competition looms over us for the first time since the 1970s. We are witnessing what has been termed a qualitative nuclear arms race, one not based on numbers but on faster, stealthier and more accurate weapons. Regional conflicts with a nuclear dimension are worsening, and proliferation challenges are not receding.”

And in January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the hands of its iconic Doomsday Clock to 100 seconds to midnight, the closest it’s ever been set since its inception in 1947, declaring:

“Humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers – nuclear war and climate change – that are compounded by a threat multiplier, cyber-enabled information warfare, that

undercuts society's ability to respond. The international security situation is dire, not just because these threats exist, but because world leaders have allowed the international political infrastructure for managing them to erode.”

Today, nearly 13,500 nuclear weapons, most an order of magnitude more powerful than the U.S. atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki— more than 90% held by the United States (6,185) and Russia (6,500), continue to pose an intolerable threat to humanity, and the dangers of wars among nuclear-armed states are growing. (The other nuclear-armed states are France (300), China (290), United Kingdom (215), Pakistan (150), India (140), Israel (80) and North Korea (25).)^{vi} Iran does not have nuclear weapons.

Donald Trump *entered* office with the U.S. poised to spend an estimated 1.2 trillion dollars over the next 30 years to maintain and modernize its nuclear bombs, warheads and delivery systems, and the infrastructure to sustain the nuclear enterprise indefinitely. This enormous estimate has already gone up to 1.7 trillion dollars and is growing.

Trump's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review carries forward existing plans for the replacement and upgrading of submarine, land, and air-based nuclear forces, while adding a new sea-based cruise missile. It also calls for near-term deployment of low-yield warheads on submarine-based missiles. And it describes how nuclear weapons might be used in response to attacks of a non-nuclear nature, including cyber-attacks against critical U.S. infrastructure. This *anti-disarmament* program envisions U.S. reliance on extensive and diversified nuclear forces for decades to come.

Mirroring the U.S. stance, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a March 2018 speech, boasted about new “invincible” Russian nuclear weapons, and gave a detailed description, complete with video animations, of an array of new nuclear weapons delivery systems, including a nuclear-powered cruise missile and an underwater drone.

All of the nuclear armed states are engaged in nuclear weapons modernization programs.

United States military spending grew by 5.3 per cent to a total of \$732 Billion in 2019 and accounted for 38 per cent of global military spending.

The Trump administration requested over \$740 Billion for the military in its FY 2021 budget proposal, far more than the United States spent for military purposes at the height of the Korean or Vietnam Wars or the peak of the Reagan buildup of the 1980s.

The biggest increase in the proposed FY 2021 budget is a nearly 20% increase in spending on nuclear weapons at \$45 Billion.

Worth noting: According to a recent study, the amount of money spent in one year by the U.S. on nuclear weapons could instead provide 300,000 ICU (intensive care unit) beds, 35,000 ventilators and 75,000 doctors' salaries.

An alarming but often overlooked trend is the increased scale and tempo of war games by nuclear-armed States and their allies, including nuclear drills. Ongoing missile tests, and frequent

close encounters between military forces of nuclear-armed states including the U.S. and Russia, the U.S. and China, and India and Pakistan exacerbate nuclear dangers.

In the early 1980's, U.S. deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles to western Europe stoked fears that Europe would serve as the battleground in a U.S.-Soviet nuclear war. It was this fear that mobilized a massive global anti-nuclear movement, leading to negotiation of the INF Treaty.

On June 21, 1982, at the conclusion of the United Nations (UN) Second Special Session on Disarmament, a million people rallied in New York City's Central Park calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and huge solidarity demonstrations took place around the world.

That day I was among some 1,500 people arrested nonviolently blocking the gates to the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Laboratory. The Livermore Lab is one of two U.S. Laboratories that have designed and developed all U.S. nuclear weapons and continue to do so. The other is the Los Alamos Lab in New Mexico, the site of the original Manhattan Project. (The Livermore Lab is currently developing a refurbished W80-4 warhead for use in the Air Force's Long Range Standoff cruise missile^{vii} and the W87-1, a completely new replacement warhead to be paired with an updated reentry vehicle and a new ICBM delivery system.)^{viii}

Yet following the end of the Cold War, nuclear weapons fell off the public's radar screen. It was almost as if the planet itself breathed a huge sigh of relief. People around the world hoped and believed that they had escaped a nuclear holocaust, and largely put nuclear weapons out of their minds. Most people believed that the threat of nuclear war had ended. But it hadn't.

Deeply embedded in the U.S. military-industrial complex, military planners and scientists at the nuclear weapons labs conjured up new justifications to sustain the nuclear weapons enterprise. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1991 Colin Powell, then-Chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared: "We no longer have the luxury of having a [specific] threat to plan for. What we plan for is that we're a superpower. We are the major player on the world stage with responsibilities... [and] interests around the world."

U.S. national security policy has been remarkably consistent since 1945. "Deterrence," *the threatened use of nuclear weapons*, has been reaffirmed as the "cornerstone" of U.S. national security by every President, Republican or Democrat, since President Harry Truman, a Democrat, oversaw the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In his famed 2009 Prague speech, President Obama declared: "To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same." But this was immediately followed by: "Make no mistake: *As long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies.*"

Sure enough, a November 2010 White House Fact Sheet, entitled, '**An Enduring Commitment to the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent**,' announced the Obama Administration's plans "to invest more than \$85 billion over the next decade to modernize the U.S. nuclear weapons complex that *supports our deterrent*.... This level of funding is unprecedented since the end of the Cold War."

This didn't include an additional \$100 Billion by 2020 to modernize the missiles and delivery systems that carry U.S. nuclear warheads.

This huge sum was the price exacted by the US military-industrial complex and its representatives in the Senate for Senate ratification of the new START treaty (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) on December 22, 2010. The political conditions attached to Senate ratification in the US and mirrored by Russia, effectively turned START into an anti-disarmament measure.

This was stated in so many words by Senator Bob Corker, a Republican Senator from Tennessee, whose state is home to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, site of a proposed multibillion-dollar Uranium Processing Facility. "I... am proud that as a result of ratification we have been successful in securing commitments from the administration on modernization of our nuclear arsenal and support of our missile defense programs, two things that would not have happened otherwise. In fact, thanks in part to the contributions my staff and I have been able to make, the new START treaty could easily be called the "Nuclear Modernization and Missile Defense Act of 2010."

Paradoxically, this is the same START treaty the Trump administration is threatening to scuttle.

The resolution of ratification adopted by the United States Senate included commitments to massive investments in the nuclear weapons infrastructure and modernization program and to continued development of national missile defenses. The Senate also successfully obtained assurances that the Treaty places no limits on the development and deployment of new kinds of non-nuclear missiles and delivery vehicles with non-ballistic trajectories, such as the boost-glide concepts being explored for prompt global strike.

Final ratification of the New START Treaty by the Russian Duma was subject to its own reciprocal conditions, including the Russian President's obligation to undertake a program to modernize the Russian Federation's strategic nuclear forces. Grounds for the Russian Federation's withdrawal include the unilateral deployment by the United States of missile defense systems and the adoption of strategic non-nuclear (prompt global strike) weapon systems by the United States without the Russian Federation's approval.

These conditions illustrate the complications of what is referred to as "strategic stability", the intrinsic relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons. Russia has consistently called for inclusion of strategic stability in nuclear arms control discussions, while the U.S. has categorically refused.

At a high-level conference in Rome in 2009, Mikael Gorbachev warned that the pursuit of "military superiority would be an insurmountable obstacle to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Unless we discuss demilitarization of international politics, the reduction of military budgets, preventing militarization of outer space, talking about a nuclear-free world will be just rhetorical."

What does deterrence mean? (the Latin root of deterrence is terror) A typical understanding of Cold War deterrence meant maintaining the capacity to inflict a devastating retaliatory second strike, or “mutually assured destruction,” if either the United States or the Soviet Union attacked the other with nuclear weapons. But what did it really mean? And what does it mean now? “Deterrence” encompasses the entire military-industrial complex and the national security state and elites that it serves (not only in the United States). Deterrence is an ideology which has outlived its Cold War origins and is used by nuclear weapon states to justify the perpetual possession and threatened use – including first use – of nuclear weapons.

Deterrence in post-Cold War US national security doctrine goes well beyond the threat of retaliation. As stated in a September 2008 Department of Defense Report on the Air Force’s Nuclear Mission:

“Though our consistent goal has been to avoid actual weapons use, the nuclear deterrent is ‘used’ every day by assuring friends and allies, dissuading opponents from seeking peer capabilities to the United States, deterring attacks on the United States and its allies from potential adversaries, and providing the potential to defeat adversaries if deterrence fails.”

In other words, the U.S. uses the threat of nuclear attack the same way a bank robber might use a gun held to temple of a bank teller.

In his 2007 book, “Empire and the Bomb: How the U.S. Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World,” Joseph Gerson wrote: “On at least 30 occasions since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, every U.S. President has prepared and/or threatened to initiate nuclear war during international crises, confrontations, and wars – primarily in the Third world.”

To name just two, in 1996, President Clinton made a covert nuclear threat against an alleged underground chemical weapons facility in Libya, and in 2002 President Bush had contingency plans drawn up for battlefield use of nuclear weapons in Iraq.

According to the Obama Administration’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR): “The United States is... not prepared at the present time to adopt a universal policy that the ‘sole purpose’ of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States and our allies and partners,” though it vaguely commits to “work to establish the conditions under which such a policy could be safely adopted.” And the NPR does not rule out first use.

In a January 2010 Wall Street Journal op-ed entitled, “How to Protect Our Nuclear Deterrent,” the “four horsemen,” George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn declared “Maintaining high confidence in our nuclear arsenal is critical as the numbers of these weapons goes down.... The United States must continue to attract, develop and retain the outstanding scientists, engineers, designers and technicians we will need to maintain our nuclear arsenal, whatever its size, for as long as the nation’s security requires it.”

And, they warned: “[T]he deadliest weapons ever invented could fall into dangerous hands,” calling for a substantial increase in funding for the U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories and a modernized nuclear weapons infrastructure to prevent this from happening.

The “four horsemen’s” analysis and recommendations were endorsed by Vice-President Joe Biden ten days later, in a Wall Street Journal op-ed announcing the Administration’s inflated Fiscal Year 2011 budget request.

Unfortunately, this circular reasoning is very short-sighted. Investing in a modernized nuclear weapons infrastructure will be viewed as hypocritical by other nations. And – as we are seeing now, it will provide the next President and future Presidents the means to design and build new nuclear weapons if they so choose, and thus spark new arms races.

In their op-ed, the four horsemen invoked the specter of nuclear weapons falling into “dangerous hands” three times. Yet in whose hands are nuclear weapons “safe”? (The only hands that have so far used them?) As the Hans Blix-led WMD Commission stated in its 2006 report, Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms: “The Commission rejects the suggestion that nuclear weapons in the hands of some pose no threat, while in the hands of others they place the world in mortal jeopardy.” As they wisely observed: “Governments possessing nuclear weapons can act responsibly or recklessly. *Governments may also change over time.*” In short, nuclear weapons are dangerous in anyone’s hands.

The policy of nuclear deterrence is not passive, and it is not benign.

In late 2018, President Trump, claiming that Russia has violated the INF Treaty, issued a threat to the entire world. Referring to the U.S. nuclear stockpile he warned: “Until people come to their senses, we will build it up. It’s a threat to whoever you want... it includes China, and it includes Russia, and it includes anybody else that wants to play that game.... We have more money than anybody else by far.... We’ll build it up until they come to their senses.”^{ix}

On July 7, 2017, I was at the UN to witness the adoption, by the majority of the world’s countries, of a historic treaty to prohibit the possession, development, testing, use and *threat of use* of nuclear weapons. The vote, by 122 to 1, unambiguously demonstrates—by one measure – that most of the world has indeed come to its senses regarding nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), opened for signature at UN headquarters in New York on September 20, 2017. Once 50 nations have ratified or acceded to it, it will enter into force for those countries. So far, 84 countries have signed; 46 have ratified. It is expected that the TPNW will enter-into-force by early next year.

One of the strengths of the Ban Treaty is its focus on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and the clear recognition during the negotiations that there could be no adequate response to any use of nuclear weapons. From the preamble:

“Cognizant that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations,....”

This comes into sharp focus as we experience the unfolding reality of governments and public health systems completely unprepared to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and looming global economic collapse.

But we stand at a nuclear crossroads, in a sharply divided world. While the TPNW represents the total repudiation of nuclear weapons by most of the states that don't possess them, the U.S. and the eight other nuclear-armed states boycotted the negotiations, along with Japan, Australia, South Korea and all but one of the 28 NATO member states – all countries under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. In a joint statement following the vote, the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom declared: “We do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to [the Treaty].” (Note: the majority of the world's population lives in nuclear-armed countries or countries under the U.S. nuclear umbrella; these are also the world's largest economies.)

In October 2016, President Obama's UN Ambassador, Robert Wood, condemned the TPNW in the General Assembly: “Advocates of a ban treaty say it is open to all, but how can a state that relies on nuclear weapons for its security possibly join a negotiation meant to stigmatize and eliminate them”.

The 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the five-original nuclear-armed States (US, UK, USSR/Russia, France, and China). Article VI spells out the disarmament obligation: **“Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”**

The NPT's disarmament obligations, enshrined in the Preamble and Article VI, have been reiterated and reinforced by agreements made in connection with the 1995 Extension Decision, the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, and the International Court of Justice's 1996 Advisory Opinion, which provided the authoritative interpretation of Article VI. The Court found unanimously, “There exists an obligation to pursue *in good faith* and *bring to a conclusion* negotiation leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”^x

The “Principles and Objectives for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament” adopted in connection with the 1995 NPT extension decision^{xi}; the 13 “practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, including: “*An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI,*”^{xii} adopted by the 2000 Review Conference; and the 64-point Action Plan, which includes concrete steps for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, adopted at the conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference,^{xiii} created expectations on the part of the non-nuclear weapon states parties – 184 countries that have foresworn nuclear weapons – that nuclear disarmament was a work in progress.

However, the failure of the nuclear-armed states to make good on their disarmament obligations, and to the contrary, in the face of new arms racing, the long-term viability of the NPT is being questioned by some. The 5-year NPT Review Conference that had been scheduled for May 2020 – the 50th anniversary of the treaty - was postponed due to the pandemic and will be rescheduled no later than April 2021. It was come at a critical time in the international nuclear discourse. Given the global stakes, it's hard to understand how the subject of nuclear weapons has been entirely absent from the 2020 Presidential campaign. At least one constituency, American's mayors, tried to change this. Led by U.S. members of Mayors for Peace, an international organization of nearly 8,000 mayors in 164 countries headed by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the non-partisan association of more than 1,400 cities with populations over 30,000, at its 2019 annual meeting unanimously adopted a resolution "Calling on All Presidential Candidates to Make Known Their Positions on Nuclear Weapons and to Pledge U.S. Global Leadership in Preventing Nuclear War, Returning to Diplomacy, and Negotiating the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons". Unfortunately, the wise counsel of America's mayors has largely fallen on deaf ears in both parties.

Some concluding observations

We are living in an incredible, unprecedented time. One year ago, who could have imagined a deadly global pandemic, economic collapse, and massive racial justice uprisings. Add to the this the rise of authoritarian nationalist leaders around the world, including in at least six of the nuclear-armed states, the alarming crisis of democracy in the United States, and hurricanes, wild fires and sea rise of historic proportions, and it is safe to say that we are living in a period of greater uncertainty than at any time in many of our lifetimes."

Whoever is occupying the White House and Congress next year, nuclear weapons will remain an existential threat, demanding our vigilance, our advocacy and our engagement.

Changes, both bad and good, are happening incredibly fast and there is a new openness to critically examining the U.S. history of racism and violence. Now is a good time to take a critical look at the official U.S. justification that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were necessary to end the war and save American lives. In this time of national reckoning, we are called to examine the implications of the U.S. decision to use atomic bombs in 1945. In an out-of-control pandemic, as we confront escalating police violence and the imposition of federal troops in our cities, it is imperative for us to question the nature of state violence and national priorities, past and present.

We must move from the irrational fear-based ideology of deterrence to the rational fear of an eventual nuclear weapon use, whether by accident or design, by some nuclear weapon possessing state that places the threatened use of nuclear weapons at the core of its national security policy. We also need to stimulate a rational hope that security can be redefined in humanitarian and ecologically sustainable terms that will lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons and dramatic demilitarization, freeing up tremendous resources desperately needed to address universal human needs.

We are in a brave new world. In the midst of turbulent uncertainties, it is difficult to predict how progress on the elimination of nuclear weapons, much less efforts to restore modest arms control measures, can succeed. But one thing is clear. While we can and must support renewed multilateralism, we cannot depend on national governments to protect “we the peoples.” Civil society must come together as never before to build durable, broad, diverse, multi-issue coalitions, networks and networks of networks based on our shared commitments to universal, indivisible human security

ⁱ <https://www.unfoldzero.org/time-to-implement-un-resolution-1-1/#:~:text=On%20January%2024%2C%201946%2C%20the%20United%20Nations%20General,ensure%20its%20use%20only%20for%20peaceful%20purposes%2C%E2%80%99%20and>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.russellmeansfreedom.com/tag/treaty-of-ruby-valley/>

ⁱⁱⁱ **Closing the Door on Nuclear Weapons Testing** Civil Society Statement to the 11th Article XIV Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT Sept. 25, 2019

^{iv} <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-10-02/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-meeting-commemorate-and-promote-the-international-day-for-the-total-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons-delivered>

^v https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/trump-administration-discussed-conducting-first-us-nuclear-test-in-decades/2020/05/22/a805c904-9c5b-11ea-b60c-3be060a4f8e1_story.html?utm_campaign=wp_post_most&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpsrc=nl_most

^{vi} <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>

^{vii} <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2019/04/f61/2019-04-16-FACTSHEET-W80-4.pdf>

^{viii} <https://www.llnl.gov/news/warhead-replacement-program-passes-first-key-milestone>

^{ix} <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/22/politics/donald-trump-russia-china-inf/index.html>

^x *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1996*, p. 226, para. 105(2)(F)

^{xi} https://unoda-web.s3-accelerate.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/assets/WMD/Nuclear/1995-NPT/pdf/NPT_CONF199501.pdf

^{xii} <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2000/docs/2000FD.pdf>, p. 14

^{xiii} <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2010/FinalDocument.pdf>, p. 19