

Citizen's Watch



Opening Week for UN Nuclear Ban Treaty

The opening moment of the opening day of negotiations on a “legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading towards their total elimination” at the United Nations in New York was, at once, literal and deeply metaphorical.

Inside, countries from around the globe convened formal deliberations on an international nuclear weapons ban treaty in the stately UN General Assembly Hall. **Outside**, US Ambassador Nikki Haley held a press conference to criticize the proceedings and reiterate a US boycott. A small cadre of nuclear-armed allies and client states could be seen behind Haley. No questions were allowed, and the energy seemed flat. Meanwhile, the air in the Hall crackled with excitement and new possibility. There was no mistaking where the action was taking place.

The opening session ran from March 27 to 31. More than 130 nations - and about as many non-governmental organizations including ours - shared ideas about what should be covered in the treaty's preambular language, core prohibitions, and institutional arrangements.

As the countries made formal statements and negotiations unfolded, areas of broad agreement could be seen. Most countries noted that the ban should create an unequivocal prohibition on the use, deployment, development and possession of nuclear weapons, with clear obligations to eliminate all nuclear arsenals.

Other countries would also prohibit financing the bomb or allowing one to be transported across a signatory's national boundaries. Still others spoke for a prohibition on the threat to use nuclear weapons, which, if adopted, would delegitimize the basis for nuclear deterrence.

Many delegates spoke of how a ban treaty could strengthen international law and support existing treaties, like the Non-Proliferation Treaty, although there were differences in the details. Numerous countries spoke of incorporating “positive obligations” like nuclear victim assistance and cleanup of contaminated areas.

Further, there was general agreement that the ban treaty should be a clear, concise document focused on outlining the prohibitions relating to nuclear weapons. The general idea is that subsequent, more detailed agreements could tier off of the ban treaty to focus on more granular provisions covering what the

verified elimination processes for nuclear weapons would look like and how governance mechanisms would work in a world free of nuclear weapons.

The precursor for this visionary and productive negotiation session can be found in the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons conferences held, beginning in 2013, in Norway, Mexico and Austria. With input from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Vatican and civil society, these conferences shifted the debate from abstract security postures to a deep consideration of the unparalleled catastrophe of a nuclear war. One can draw a line from the humanitarian initiative to this first week of negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

The next step will be the preparation of a draft text. The elected President for the negotiations, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez of Costa Rica, will prepare a draft treaty based on the full proceedings of the opening session. Her text will likely be distributed later this month.

Then, the second round of negotiations will resume at the UN for three weeks beginning on June 15. Participating states will work through the draft text with the goal of concluding the ban treaty on or before July 7, 2017. This is an extremely ambitious schedule but with continuing good faith efforts, it is achievable.

Ray Acheson, writing in the “Nuclear Ban Daily,” noted a sea change at the United Nations more broadly. “The majority of states came together at the UN to start negotiating a treaty that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (aka the P5) – and the other nuclear-armed states – do not want. This alone is transformative. It is extremely rare, if not unheard of, for anything to get done at the UN if the P5 collectively oppose it.” (See reachingcriticalwill.org)

The positive energy was palpable. Words like historical come readily to mind. We at Tri-Valley CAREs were honored to participate, to present on a panel covering US nuclear weapons policy in the context of the ban treaty, and to help in garnering international support for this effort. (See trivalleycares.org)

We invite you to get involved, write letters, talk to friends, and, if you are able, come to New York for the “Women's March to Ban the Bomb” on Saturday, June 17 to support the ban treaty as negotiations enter the home stretch. We can do this! We must!



The IW-1 would be a mash-up of design elements from multiple warheads and would diverge significantly from anything in the stockpile. The Navy has raised serious technical and cost concerns. Others have noted that the extensive mash-up, along with proposed novel components, could push the US to resume nuclear explosive testing to certify it.

GAO has been tasked to analyze its technical, cost and other program risks later this year. The IW-1 funding delay should continue pending GAO analysis. We believe GAO's investigation will substantiate the stated concerns, and that the program should then be terminated.



We have Moved!

Tri-Valley CAREs has moved to a new office in Livermore. Our new address is:

Tri-Valley CAREs
4049 First St. Suite 139A
Livermore, CA 94551

You can come visit us anytime, including at one of our monthly meetings which now take place in our conference room on the 3rd Thursday of every month. Check out our next meeting on June 15th from 7:30 - 8:30 pm.

As part of our effort to save the environment (and some \$ while we are at it), we have opted to send out our paper newsletter fewer times per year. Instead, we send out monthly electronic newsletters.

We may not have YOUR email, so if you have not received our e-newsletters recently please send us your email. Send it to **marylia@trivalleycares.org** or call us at 925-443-7148.

❖ **Print Bites** ❖ *All the News that Fits to Print*

❖ **Call to Restrict Trump!** This month policy groups delivered 500,000 petitions to Congress supporting action to limit President Trump's authority to start a nuclear war. Additional petitions were hand-delivered to local Bay Area representatives. Presently, there is no check or balance on the President's ability to launch a nuclear strike at any time, against any country, for any reason. The petitions all support the "Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017" introduced by Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) and Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA-33). The Senate bill is S. 200 and has 7 co-sponsors so far, including Senator Feinstein. The House bill is H.R. 669 with 33 co-sponsors, including Bay Area Reps. Garamendi, Lee, Lofgren, Speier and Thompson. Additional co-sponsors are being sought. Call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to say "thank you" to your elected officials who are co-sponsors - and ask the others to add their names today! Check congress.gov and trivalleycares.org for updates.

❖ **Hanford Cave-In.** Thousands of workers at the DOE's Hanford nuclear reservation in WA were forced to take cover indoors, and were then evacuated, following the discovery of a cave-in at one of two tunnels used for plutonium processing operations. Railcars full of nuclear wastes had been "sealed" in the tunnels for cleanup at some future date. A 20-foot by 20-foot hole unexpectedly opened. Workers reportedly detected radiation "shine" in the area, leading to the discovery of the tunnel collapse. DOE said, however, that there was no indication of a radiation release. Tri-Valley CAREs and other watchdog organizations noted that there are hundreds of abandoned, contaminated, deteriorating sites that, like the Hanford tunnel, could collapse at any time. Livermore Lab has 4 of the 10 most hazardous facilities owned by DOE NNSA, including the shuttered [radioactive] Heavy Element Facility that poses a risk of fire and other releases and a decommissioned reactor with radioactive and toxic metal contamination in walls that are cracking. Tri-Valley CAREs is demanding that funding be obtained to clean up these facilities, which brings us to budget issues...

❖ **Budget Issues.** President Trump released an outline of his fiscal 2018 budget request in mid-March. The administration dubbed it the "skinny budget" because it was a scant 64-pages containing "top line" numbers only - no detail. The DOE NNSA is slated to get a \$1.4 billion increase over its present funding, a rise of 11.3%. This represents the largest percentage increase anywhere in the government - and would give NNSA a total of \$14.3 billion for fiscal 2018. The increase would go to nuclear warhead "life extensions" and new bomb plants, according to the minimal sentences contained in the "skinny budget." The same document notes a \$54 billion, 10% increase for the Pentagon. DOE cleanup gets a modest increase, but not enough to meet cleanup obligations. Budget losers include basic science, environmental protection, weatherization assistance for poor families, and similar programs. Tri-Valley CAREs will provide additional detail - and action alerts - when the full Trump budget goes to Congress. Rumors say that will happen on or about May 23, 2017, which would coincide with our "DC Days" meetings with Congress. Stay tuned!

❖ **Marshall Islands.** This spring a 3-judge panel at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral argument in the litigation filed by the Republic of the Marshall Islands against the United States for its failure to disarm pursuant to its obligations under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Tri-Valley CAREs and allies provided support for Laurie Ashton, chief counsel for the RMI. Following the hearing, groups held signs and banners and conducted a press conference outside the courthouse. Photos and a link to our staff attorney's interview on KPFA can be found on our website.

Growing Nuclear Dangers

President-elect Donald Trump tweeted, “The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability...” The following day he said in reference to Russia, “let it be an arms race.”

On Inauguration Day, the new President was briefed on the US stockpile of 4,000 nuclear warheads and bombs plus the 2,800 nuclear weapons administratively “retired” but not dismantled - and the nuclear launch codes and “briefcase” containing them began accompanying him at all times.

President Trump has denounced the New START agreement limiting strategic (long range) deployed nuclear weapons equally between the US and Russia as a “bad deal.” He has rebuffed Putin’s inquiry about its possible extension, embraced a science advisory board’s recommendations to develop novel nuclear options including extremely low-yield nukes as a “tailored option for limited use” on a conventional battlefield, ordered a new Nuclear Posture Review using language mimicking the advisory board’s report, sparked calls for resumption of nuclear explosive testing in Nevada, and tweeted incorrectly that “we have fallen behind on nuclear weapons capacity...”

The nuclear risks are many and growing in the era of Trump. A new nuclear arms race is gaining speed. The US and Russia today possess more than 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons. Former Secretary of Defense William Perry noted in January, “We are starting a new Cold War. We seem to be sleepwalking...”

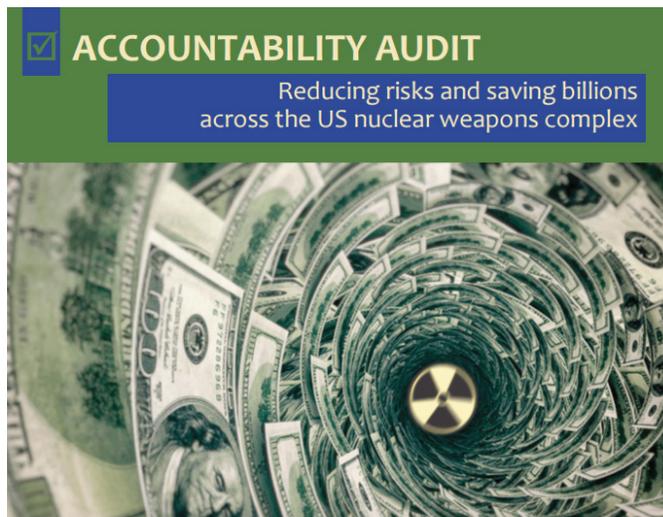
A February report by the Congressional Budget Office suggests that the trillion-dollar nuclear modernization program begun under Obama and now being accelerated by Trump may cost more than a trillion over the coming 30 years.

In March, the Trump Administration produced the outlines of its fiscal year 2018 budget with an 11.3% increase for the Dept. of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration, offering an extra \$1.4 billion for weapons development and production according to the “skinny budget.” As we go to press, a provocative war of words and posturing has arisen between Trump and North Korea’s Kim Jong-un.

Clearheaded thinking and a rational stance are necessary to de-escalate the rising nuclear dangers and ensure the safety of the American people and the world. The humanitarian consequences of a nuclear exchange are so profound that such a war “must never be fought and cannot be won,” to quote President Reagan.

Today, it is time to emphasize longstanding policy and treaty commitments, including but not limited to continuing the quarter-century ban on nuclear explosive testing and observance of New START and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It’s not in the interest of the US to return to the days of a Cold War arms race. Relations with adversarial countries like Russia should be addressed through diplomatic channels and not pitch back and forth between a bromance with Putin and erratic threats with blunt, immoral weapons of nuclear terror.

This article is adapted from “*Accountability Audit*,” a new report available on our website at www.trivalleycares.org.



◆ Alerts 4 U ◆

Thursday, June 1

Letter to the Editor Writing Party
5:30- 7:00 PM, TVC Office
4049 1st St. Suite 139A, Livermore
(925) 443-7148 for details

Write a letter to the editor of your favorite newspaper in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Our suggested topic this month will be nuclear policy in the Trump era. Or, you may choose to write on a different topic. We welcome beginners and experienced letter writers. Snacks and refreshments will be served.

Friday, June 9

Peace Vigil at Livermore Lab
3:00 – 4:00 PM, Vasco Rd. &
Westgate Dr.
(505) 379-6942 for details

Members of the Catholic Worker movement conduct this monthly peace vigil at LLNL under the leadership of Chelsea and Marcus Page. All are welcome.

Thursday, June 15

Tri-Valley CAREs meeting
7:30 – 8:03 PM, TVC Office
4049 1st St. Suite 139A, Livermore
(925) 443-7148 for details

Tri-Valley CAREs’ monthly meeting will be held at our new office! We welcome new and long-time members alike. Our monthly meetings are a place to get acquainted, informed, and motivated.

Tuesday, June 27

Mailing Party & Action Planning
3:00 - 7:30 PM, American Friends
Service Committee, 65 9th St, SF
(925) 443-7148 for details

TVC and others will gather at AFSC from 3 - 6 PM for a mailing party to get the word out about the August 9 action at Livermore Lab. From 6 - 7:30 PM, will be a planning meeting. Everyone is welcome for one or both. The more hands – and action planners – the merrier. Snacks provided.

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Congress Should Cut Nuclear "Life Extensions"

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has overlapping nuclear weapons Life Extension Programs (LEPs) and a major alteration lined up at the funding trough: the W76-1, B61-12, W80-4, and W88 Alt370. In addition, some weapons designers are pressing to resume development of an "interoperable warhead" deferred by Congress and the prior administration until fiscal 2020.

Trump's top-line "skinny budget" released in March cuts social programs while it calls for a \$1.4 billion increase for NNSA and singles out LEPs as a beneficiary. Congressional leaders should examine the W80-4 mission and schedule; take a fresh look at estimates for the B61-12; and investigate the IW-1 technical uncertainties and cost.

1. Cancel the LRSO warhead and missile: The Air Force plans to field approximately 1,000 Long-Range Stand Off (LRSO) cruise missiles, which will be "uniquely destabilizing" according to former Secretary of Defense William Perry. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Andy Weber has called on the Trump Administration to cancel LRSO and pursue a global ban on nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.

Estimates for the missile and warhead top \$30 billion. Livermore Lab would design a new warhead for LRSO, called the W80-4. An April 2017 Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit found the W80-4's low-range cost estimate



lacks credibility. The Senate "Nuclear Cruise Missile Reconsideration Act" (S.574) would limit LRSO funding. Said co-sponsor Dianne Feinstein, "The LRSO is a new nuclear weapon that by the Pentagon's own admission would have a role 'beyond deterrence.' Congress shouldn't fund dangerous new nuclear weapons designed to fight unwinnable nuclear wars."

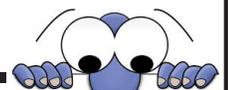
2. B61-12 lacks NATO cost sharing: The B61-12 introduces significant modifications to the design of an already tested weapon. Of the approximately 480 B61s slated to become B61-12s, about 180 will be deployed at six bases in five NATO countries, with the remainder at four US bases. According to GAO's April 2017 analysis, the B61-12 will cost 35% more than NNSA has budgeted for it. The GAO's \$10 billion estimate agrees with an earlier Defense Dept. analysis that NNSA called inaccurate. Additionally, the B61-12 will be fitted with a \$1.8 billion guided tail-fin kit designed by the Pentagon.

While Trump talks about NATO countries sharing costs, US taxpayers alone are footing the bill due to widespread resistance in Europe to its deployment there.

3. Cancel the "Interoperable Warhead": Livermore Lab wants to develop new warheads that could be launched from both land- and sea-based platforms (i.e., be "interoperable"). The first one (called IW-1, or W78/88-1) is low-ball estimated at \$12.4 billion, although technical uncertainty and changes in the weapons complex needed to implement the program will add tens of billions more. Obama delayed IW-1 development until fiscal 2020. Livermore weaponeers are lobbying to get it funded now.

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