NUCLEAR BAN *DAILY*

Reaching Critical Will

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IN THIS ISSUE

Nuclear Ban Daily is produced by Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) during meetings related to the UN conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their elimination, taking place 27-31 March and 15 June-7 July 2017. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of WILPF.

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READY, STEADY, GO: TIME TO BAN THE BOMB

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Today we begin negotiations of a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

We all know the determination and creativity it took to get here. Decades of activism against the bomb. Endless engagement with nuclear-armed states. The collection of baby teeth. Millions of people marching in the streets. Commitments made and broken. Pleas from survivors of nuclear weapons use and testing. Many, many conversations in various UN forums. Countless UN resolutions. Multiple joint statements. Three humanitarian impact conferences. Two open-ended working groups. One Humanitarian Pledge. And then, an historic resolution in the UN General Assembly last October.

We also know the opposition we've faced. The nuclear-armed states have hurled vitriol at governments and NGOs championing this process. They have ordered allies not to attend, they have accused us of undermining existing international law and sending international relations into chaos, and they have even suggested these negotiations might lead to the use of nuclear weapons—presumably out of spite.

Nevertheless, we persisted. And today at the UN, we make history. It is historic because these negotiations symbolise a fundamental shift in the power dynamics behind nuclear weapons—a challenge to an unjust international system. That itself is a victory.

Hard work is still ahead of us, of course. We must now move to details and decisions. We are tasked with developing a strong treaty that stigmatises and categorically prohibits the most dangerous weapon ever created in order to facilitate actual change in the policies and practices of states that have so far perpetuated global injustice and the spectre of mass extinction by supporting nuclear weapons.

While it may seem daunting, fulfilling this task is fully within our means. In theory, it is an obvious thing to ban something so abhorrent. We have banned chemical and biological weapons, landmines and cluster munitions, and we even preemptively banned blinding laser weapons. We did this even without the support of users and producers of some of these weapons. We are motivated by the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the risk of their use, and the deplorable waste of resources currently being sunk into the ongoing arms race. We understand the global injustice these weapons represent, and we are morally, ethically, and legally compelled to categorically prohibit these weapons of mass destruction once and for all.

States will spend this week putting forward their views on what the treaty should contain. Civil society groups with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which is largely responsible for shepherding this process alongside governments, have some ideas of what states should consider. ICAN has put out four briefing papers for governments to consider ahead of negotiations. The Women's International League for Peace

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Editorial, continued

and Freedom (WILPF), an ICAN partner and member of the campaign's international steering group, put out a longer discussion paper on the principles and elements of a nuclear weapon ban treaty. It looks concretely at how this instrument could build on existing norms and reinforce existing legal instruments but also strengthen the rejection and stigmatisation of these weapons. Civil society will also provide views this week in working papers, interventions to the conference, and side events.

The treaty banning nuclear weapons is born of humanitarian and environmental concerns. Its principles, objectives, prohibitions, and positive obligations will need to reflect this. This is an opportunity for governments that reject nuclear weapons to change the way nuclear weapons are treated in law, politics, economics, and in the eye of the public. Thus above all else, it is imperative that this treaty makes all aspects of the possession, use, threat of use, or preparation for use of nuclear weapons categorically illegal, without exception, in order to help propel us towards a nuclear weapon free world

It is a moment to celebrate, and we must throw our determination and creativity now into developing the strongest ban treaty possible. It's an exciting time and the world is ready! Let's ban the bomb. •

US Nuclear Modernization Under President Trump: Implications for the Ban Treaty Process

Tuesday, March 28 • 10:00 am to noon
(with opportunity for ongoing discussion until 1:00)
United Nations Conference Room B

Jay Coghlan: *Plutonium bomb core production plans*
Nuclear Watch New Mexico

Ralph Hutchison: *Uranium and bomb secondary production*
Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance

Marylia Kelley: *Stockpile stewardship and A return to nuclear testing?*
Tri-Valley CAREs

Hans Kristensen: *New military capabilities in modernized weapons*
Federation of American Scientists

Matthew McKinzie: *New military capabilities in modernized weapons*
Natural Resources Defense Council

Rick Wayman: *Moderator; disarmament overview*
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

The US is poised to continue "modernization" of its nuclear stockpile at a cost of more than $1 trillion over 30 years while expanding its nuclear weapons capabilities in novel directions under the Trump Administration.

Ideas gaining new currency in the era of Trump include extremely low-yield options for use in a conventional battlefield and, potentially, a return to explosive nuclear testing.

What may surface in the new Nuclear Posture Review? Will lawmakers and NGOs in the US and globally effectively counter these plans? What does US "modernization," begun by Obama and now accelerating, mean for nations and NGOs at the UN this week? Can nuclear modernization and a Ban Treaty coexist?

Join us in Conference Room B to learn more about US plans and to discuss concrete steps for addressing them in the context of nuclear weapons abolition.

Sponsored by the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability
a network of 35 organizations at US nuclear weapons facilities and national NGOs

ENSURING THE NUCLEAR WEAPON BAN TREATY IS A HUMANITARIAN TREATY

Matthew Bolton | International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

The nuclear weapon ban treaty negotiations are the culmination of the Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons. It has emerged from conferences (in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna) and UN General Assembly discussions that have demonstrated the horrifying suffering caused by nuclear weapons. Given that the motivation for the nuclear weapon ban is first and foremost humanitarian, diplomats and advocates involved in these negotiations must make sure that the eventual treaty actually meets the norms and standards of a humanitarian disarmament treaty.

Humanitarian treaties seeking to limit the impact of weapons (such as the 1907 Hague Conventions, landmine and cluster munition bans, and the explosive remnants of war protocol) differ from other arms control and nonproliferation treaties in at least three ways:

1) Humanitarian framing
2) Strong prohibitions
3) Harm-limiting positive provisions

Taken together, these three aspects ensure that a humanitarian disarmament treaty establishes a clear normative framework. The power of humanitarian disarmament treaties derive from their ability to generate a stigma around a weapon and address the human suffering it causes.

First, the preambles of humanitarian disarmament treaties frame the object and purpose of the instrument not in narrow national security terms, but rather in terms of preventing unacceptable harm to people. Indeed the legitimacy of the instrument draws from its humanitarian intention. As a result, the preamble of the nuclear weapon ban treaty must include an acknowledgement of the harm caused by nuclear weapons and their testing and a commitment to reduce that suffering. It should include a reference to the Martens Clause, an expression of states' duty to follow the laws of humanity and dictates of public conscience. In asserting the treaty's moral, ethical, and legal imperatives, the preamble should note the role of the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, faith leaders, and civil society (including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), as representative voices of the public conscience. Since the work of disarmament continues after this treaty is negotiated, the preamble should also commit states to ongoing normative development, declaring intent continue pursuing both nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

Second, humanitarian disarmament treaties impose strong prohibitions on weapons or practices that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm. As a result, the ban treaty should include a comprehensive prohibition on production, transfer, transit, stationing, deployment, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons—without exceptions. Indeed, other humanitarian disarmament treaties have prioritized a water-tight prohibition over detailed verification and compliance measures. This is because the normative impact of a categorical ban is very powerful. The landmine ban, for example, has succeeded in massive reductions in the production and use of anti-personnel landmines, despite the lack of formal verification measures. The nuclear weapon ban treaty should also include provisions that commit states to "respect and ensure respect" for the prohibitions. This means that states must avoid engaging in behaviour that undermines the norm and should call out others that do so (look at Article 21 of the Cluster Munition Convention for an example). Whether specifically enumerated or broadly expressed, these provisions should make it clear it is unacceptable for a state party to countenance nuclear weapons testing, financing, research, and development, as well as accepting "extended deterrence" or colluding in nuclear war planning.

Finally, humanitarian disarmament treaties include provisions that encourage states, civil society, and international organizations to ensure respect for the norms set by the treaties and limit harm caused by the weapons they address, through remediating areas made hazardous by use or testing, educating people about the risks posed by the weapon, and respecting the rights of victims. These measures ensure that states actively engage in promoting and enacting the norm, making it a process rather than just the one-off event of the treaty adoption.

The promise of the Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons has been to offer an alternative approach to nuclear disarmament from the stalled, non-transparent approach of the past. It has been open to the voices of survivors, ethicists, faith leaders, and civil society activists. It has enabled states that have long been excluded from nuclear arms control negotiations to drive the process. States now have the opportunity—even duty—to culminate this effort in a strong humanitarian treaty. This could then serve as a model of what disarmament—centered on human security for all—should look like. •

THE NPT AND A NUCLEAR WEAPON BAN TREATY

Nick Ritchie | York University

A number of statements and commentaries have expressed concern that a nuclear weapons ban treaty will undermine the NPT.[1] This is often framed as a diminution of the NPT's 'authority'. Authority, in this sense, refers to legitimized power: the acceptance of rules and the power relations they reflect as legitimate and expressed through habitual internalized compliance.[2] What is in play here is the institutional expression of the NPT's two core norms of non-proliferation and progress towards nuclear disarmament and how they relate to the NPT's authority.

The authority of the NPT has never been complete: the legitimacy of the power relations its rules reflect have long been contested based on its discrimination between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states. Legitimacy is part of the glue that holds multilateral institutions like the NPT together. An institution's authority will crumble and cease to have any meaningful effect if too many of its members stop complying with its rules and norms because their legitimacy is longer accepted.

The focus of concern for critics of a ban treaty is the authority of the NPT's non-proliferation norm and the reproduction of the NPT's power relations. Critics tend to accept the legitimacy of the nuclear power relations cemented by the NPT and tend to frame the NPT as chiefly an anti-proliferation instrument with a somewhat vague and aspirational commitment to nuclear disarmament. Their concern with a ban treaty is that it could allow non-nuclear weapon states to 'forum shop': they could either try to legitimize abrogation of, or withdrawal from, NPT and IAEA non-proliferation and safeguards commitments by using membership of a ban treaty as evidence they have no intention of manufacturing nuclear weapons; or they could frame a ban treaty as a valid alternative to the NPT and withdraw from the latter. It is also speculated that if a ban treaty destabilizes extant US nuclear security commitments some of its allies might withdraw from the NPT to initiate an indigenous weapons programme. Treaty withdrawals, new nuclear weapon programmes, and/or more extensive nuclear 'hedging' justified in some way by ban treaty ratification would certainly undermine the NPT's authority.

The focus of concern for proponents of a ban treaty is the authority of the NPT's norm of progress towards nuclear disarmament. They tend to challenge the legitimacy of the NPT's power relations and the proclivity of the nuclear weapon states to control global nuclear politics through the recognition accorded them in the NPT (and with it the structural and discursive power of the NWS-P5 consortium). They frame the NPT as an anti-proliferation *and* disarmament instrument and reject the idea that the NWS 'unequivocal commitment' to disarmament is open-ended. They tend to argue that non-proliferation is now deeply embedded and policed through a dense network of practices, norms, and institutions in contrast to nuclear disarmament that has no institutional framework and has now stalled. It is frustration with progress on nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT compounded by the major nuclear modernization programmes underway in nuclear-armed states that precipitated the 'humanitarian initiative' in 2010 culminating in the ban treaty negotiations. The purpose for its advocates is not to undermine the NPT but to realize its objectives under Article VI to develop 'effective measures' relating to nuclear disarmament. The legitimacy of the very idea of a ban treaty itself derives from the NPT rather than being contrary to it.

Indeed, the concern for the NPT amongst ban treaty supporters is that a continued commitment to nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence by the nuclear-armed will erode its authority and will find expression through serial failures of review conferences to reach consensus outcomes, reduced number and seniority of delegations, and diminishing support for additional non-proliferation measures. As Angela Kane, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, put it in 2015: "This overwhelming majority of States parties now believe that humanitarian considerations should be at the centre of all future disarmament deliberations. For other parties to remain deaf to this call could have damaging consequences for the role of the NPT as the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament."[3]

Concerns leveled at the ban treaty by critics are misplaced. Worries about new nuclear weapon programmes initiated by US allies in response to a perceived weakening of US *nuclear* security commitments have long preceded the humanitarian initiative. Moreover, such proliferation prognoses reflect a contested understanding of the drivers of nuclear weapons acquisition rooted in a deterministic notion of 'proliferation chains' that has been challenged by recent scholarship.[4] Concerns about nuclear hedging under the NPT enjoy a similar heritage.[5] There is also no evidence of agitation for a mass withdrawal from the NPT in debate on the humanitarian initiative and a ban treaty. Underpinning this is the fact that the humanitarian initiative emerged in *response* to the UN's deadlocked multilateral disarmament machinery but it did not cause the deadlock as some critics imply.

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The NPT and the nuclear weapon ban treaty, continued

Advocates of a ban treaty insist that a universal prohibitionary norm against nuclear weapons based on the moral unacceptability of nuclear violence *as well as* the NPT's non-proliferation norm are essential to realizing a world without nuclear weapons alongside other 'effective measures'. Ban treaty negotiators will be keenly aware of the importance of integrating explicit support for the NPT, its non-proliferation norm, and adherence to IAEA safeguards agreements into the treaty text.[6]

Two important parallels will no doubt be drawn on. The first is with treaties establishing nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) that are in no way in competition with the NPT. Indeed the first zone covering Latin America preceded the NPT and the NPT's Article VII stipulates that nothing in the treaty "affects the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories." NWFZ treaties require states parties to conclude a safeguards agreement with the IAEA to verify compliance of peaceful nuclear activities.[7] The most recent treaty establishing the Central Asian NWFZ went further and required members to conclude an Additional Protocol with the IAEA. The second parallel is with the Chemical Weapons Convention that clearly articulates its relationship with earlier treaties and rights and obligations therein. Here, its Article XIII stipulates that nothing in the Convention shall be interpreted as in any way limiting or detracting from the obligations assumed by any state under the 1925 Geneva Protocol or the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. A ban treaty would likely establish a comparable relationship with the NPT.

Fears for the NPT's authority are overplayed by critics of the ban treaty and often mask a worldview that sees the NPT's nuclear power relations as legitimate, necessary, and sustainable. These power relations are being challenged by the ban treaty process, but the NPT's non-proliferation norm is not. In all likelihood a ban treaty will strengthen and extend non-proliferation commitments by encompassing key prohibitions on nuclear practices like testing, possession, use, threat of use, transit, transfer, and stationing. This, as Treasa Dunworth has argued, will "complement and indeed reinforce the NPT, for example, by repeating obligations or making explicit what is already implicit in the NPT."[8] •

Notes

1. Robert Einhorn, "Non-proliferation challenges facing the NPT", *Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Series Paper 15*, The Brookings Institution, March 2017; Adam Mount and Richard Nephew, "A nuclear weapons ban should first do no harm to the NPT," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 7 March 2017. Available at <http://thebulletin.org/nuclear-weapons-ban-should-first-do-no-harm-npt10599>.
2. See Nick Ritchie "Legitimising and Delegitimising Nuclear Weapons" in Borrie, J. and Caughley, T. (eds) *Viewing Nuclear Weapons Through a Humanitarian Lens* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2013).
3. Angela Kane, "The Home Stretch: Looking for Common Ground ahead of the 2015 NPT Review Conference", Annecy, France, 13 March 2015.
4. Philip Bleek and Eric Lorber, "Security guarantees and allied nuclear proliferation", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2014, 58: 3, pp. 429-454.
4. For a discussion of nuclear hedging and nuclear latency see Wyn Bowen and Matthew Moran, "Iran's Nuclear Programme: A Case Study in Hedging?", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 2014, 35:1, pp. 26-52.
5. See the detailed discussion in John Borrie et al, *A Prohibition on nuclear weapons: a guide to the issues* (UNIDIR and ILIP: Geneva, 2016).
6. For a comparison see Article 36, "Nuclear weapon-free zones and banning nuclear weapons", briefing paper, April 2014.
7. Treasa Dunworth, "Strengthening the NPT: International Law and Effective Measures for Nuclear Disarmament", Discussion Paper, New York, October 2015.

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STIGMATIZE. PROHIBIT. ELIMINATE.

John Loretz | International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)

Those three words from the Humanitarian Pledge are the benchmarks of the four-year initiative that has made ban treaty negotiations a reality.

The international conferences in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna were all about stigmatization. The medical, environmental, and humanitarian evidence presented at those conferences by IPPNW, the ICRC, climate scientists, UN relief agencies, and the leading international federations representing doctors, nurses, and public health professionals, went a long way toward accomplishing that objective. At the open-ended working group in Geneva, the large majority of participating countries not only condemned nuclear weapons on humanitarian grounds, but also rejected arguments that some kind of balance needed to be found between consequences and the security arrangements made by states that currently rely upon nuclear weapons.

The stigma was reconfirmed in October and December by the UN General Assembly, which considered the evidence again and adopted resolution L.41 by another overwhelming majority.

The humanitarian evidence can be summed up as follows:

- Unlike conventional weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons instantaneously wipe out entire populations, level cities, and devastate the environment;
- Radioactive contamination from nuclear weapons causes cancers and other illnesses that can persist across generations;
- The environmental consequences of nuclear war, including severe climate disruption, can lead to global famine and, in the most extreme case, human extinction; and
- No meaningful medical or disaster relief response to the detonation of nuclear weapons is possible.

The ban treaty should build upon the successful stigmatization of nuclear weapons by citing this evidence as the humanitarian basis for prohibition—objective two of the Pledge. A comprehensive prohibition on development, production, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons will also rule out deterrence as a rationale for continued possession by a handful of states.

Deterrence is the elephant at the negotiating table, and the legal gap can't be fully closed without coming to terms with it. Many of the states boycotting these negotiations have said participation would call their extended deterrence relationships into question. They are right about that, but the problem is with deterrence itself, not with the process that has been established to prohibit nuclear weapons.

There are many valid criticisms of deterrence; two stand out from a humanitarian perspective. When—not if—deterrence fails, all of humanity will suffer the consequences. Prohibition should forbid any state from imposing that risk on the rest of us, regardless of unwarranted faith that the deterrence system will never fail.

Second, deterrence itself is a threat—backed up with the means of delivery—to inflict indiscriminate, catastrophic, and unacceptable consequences not only on an adversary, but also on the rest of humanity. From the humanitarian perspective, deterrence is nothing more than nuclear terrorism. Prohibition should forbid any state from making such a threat, regardless of the rationale.

The nuclear-armed and nuclear-reliant states recognize that a comprehensive prohibition against nuclear weapons will finally close the legal gap when it comes to deterrence. They will then have to choose between implementing the prohibition by eliminating weapons that have been declared illegal or being tagged as international outlaws.

Prohibition is the bridge between stigmatization and the elimination of nuclear weapons. The negotiators of the ban treaty must now rise to the challenge of constructing a solid and serviceable bridge capable of fulfilling all three Pledge objectives. •

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
08:00	Morning interfaith vigil	Isaiah Wall
09:00-09:50	ICAN campaigners meeting	CR B
10:00-13:00	Opening of meeting; high-level segment	GA Hall
12:00-13:00	Demonstrate to outlaw nuclear weapons	Isaiah Wall
13:15-14:30	*Side event*: Banking on a ban (PAX, Future of Life Institute)	CR B
13:15-14:30	50 years of the Treaty of Tlatelolco (OPANAL)	ECOSOC Chamber
15:00-18:00	High-level segment, *continued*	CR 4

STANDING WITH THE NONWHITE WORLD TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Vincent J. Intondi | Montgomery College

With the election of Donald Trump, nuclear weapons are receiving attention they have not seen since the 1980s, and rightfully so. Since the campaign, Trump has repeatedly voiced his disdain for the Iran nuclear deal, asked why we cannot use nuclear weapons, and made clear his intention to follow through on the $1 trillion modernization plan and possibly resume nuclear testing. Trump has suggested that other nations produce their own nuclear weapons and in perhaps the most alarming news to date, Reuters reported that while on the phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump paused to ask aides what the New Start treaty was and then told Putin it was a "bad deal." With all that said, is there any hope to avoid nuclear war? In a word, yes.

History was made last October. While most of us were watching video of Trump bragging about sexually abusing women, the United Nations adopted a landmark resolution to begin negotiations on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. With the passage of this resolution, talks will be held in March, June, and July to finally negotiate a "legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination."

As most of the nine nuclear-armed nations voted against the resolution in addition to many of their allies, an overwhelming amount of nations in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific voted in favor and are likely to be key players at the negotiating conferences. Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) explains that this treaty would "strengthen the global norm against the use and possession of these weapons, closing major loopholes in the existing international legal regime and spurring long-overdue action on disarmament." While Fihn admits the "treaty won't eliminate nuclear weapons overnight," she makes clear "it will establish a powerful new international legal standard, stigmatizing nuclear weapons and compelling nations to take urgent action on disarmament."

It is no surprise that this current attempt to eliminate nuclear weapons is being led by many nonwhite nations. In 1955, ten years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, twenty-nine nations of Asia and Africa gathered in Bandung, Indonesia and declared "freedom and peace are interdependent." The "Bandung Conference" highlighted the need to eliminate European colonialism, white supremacy, and nuclear weapons. Delegates declared that nuclear weapons threatened the human race and disarmament was imperative to save mankind from "wholesale destruction." Nuclear disarmament was "an absolute necessity for the preservation of peace" and it was their "duty" to bring about nuclear disarmament. Delegates requested the UN and all concerned countries prohibit the production, testing, and use of nuclear weapons as well as establish international control to ensure this outcome.

The significance of the first all Asian-African meeting was not lost on African Americans, who since 1945 had fought for nuclear disarmament. Richard Wright and Adam Clayton Powell attended the Bandung Conference. The NAACP sent a message of support to the delegates. Paul Robeson wrote to the group, "Discussion and mutual respect are the first ingredients for the development of peace among nations. If other nations of the world follow the example set by the Asian-African nations, there can be an alternative to the policy of force and an end to the threat of H-Bomb war."

In 1959, civil rights leader Bayard Rustin led a team in Ghana to stop the French from testing a nuclear weapon in the Sahara. Two years later, Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, joined by African American activists, held the "World Without the Bomb" conference. African leaders remained focused on disarmament throughout the 1960s. Nkrumah and Haile Selassie expressed deep concern to the Soviet Union about their intent to test a 50-megaton bomb and Nnamdi Azikiwe, governor general of Nigeria, urged President Kennedy to "redouble his efforts" to prevent nuclear war.

While China, North Korea, Pakistan, and India have produced nuclear weapons, the overall trend of the nonwhite world pushing for nuclear abolition has only grown over time with the passage and ratification of the Tlatelolco Treaty (Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean) and the Pelindaba Treaty (African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty).

Of course the recent UN vote, much like the history of nuclear weapons, reeks of colonialism. Indeed, the U.S. has called on its NATO allies to join in boycotting the upcoming negotiations. Moreover, one only needs to look at Trump and Putin, two authoritarian leaders controlling most of the world's nuclear weapons, both expressing a white nationalist world-view, while much of the nonwhite world joins together to ban nuclear weapons to see how race, colonialism, and nuclear weapons are linked.

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Standing with nonwhite world, cont'd

In addition to those calling for a boycott, there remain those who characterize a nuclear weapons ban as naïve and idealistic, arguing that "arms control," rather than abolition should be the focus. That said, this summer nations will gather inside the UN to negotiate a ban on nuclear weapons. From the moment there was even a possibility of a Donald Trump presidency, I along with many others have been calling for a return to the 1980s when over one million people marched at the UN for nuclear disarmament. Now may be that time. There is nothing more important at this moment than eliminating nuclear weapons. We must support those nations fighting to save humanity, raise our collective voices, and demand: "No More Hiroshimas." •

Vincent J. Intondi is an Associate Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Race, Justice & Community Engagement at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, Maryland. In 2009, Intondi was named Director of Research for American University's Nuclear Studies Institute in Washington, DC. His research focuses on the intersection of race and nuclear weapons. He is the author of the book, "African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement" with Stanford University Press. This article was first published in The Huffington Post on 15 February 2017.

ACTIVISTS AT NUCLEAR BASES

Susi Snyder | PAX

In the last week, actions have taken place at air bases across Europe. These activities are in support of the nuclear weapon ban treaty negotiations in New York. Actions at Aviano (Italy), Kleine Brogel (Belgium), Büchel (Germany) and Volkel (the Netherlands) generated significant local attention to the negotiations.

Activists in Belgium, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands call on their governments to participate constructively in the nuclear negotiations and remove the nuclear weapons from their countries.

"For decades we have tried to get these weapons out, and been refused at every step." said Pieter Teirlinck, from Vrede in Belgium, "Now that nuclear weapons will be illegal, it is finally time for them to go."

In addition, parliaments in Belgium and Italy are discussing resolutions calling on their governments to participate in good faith in the negotiations, as the Netherlands has already committed.

For more information, or for more photos of the actions, see www.NoNukes.nl. •

PAX team at Volkel airbase © PAX

PSYCHIC NUMBING VS THE HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE

Kathleen Sullivan | Hibakusha Stories

"I thought about the psychic numbing involved in strategic projections of using hydrogen bombs or nuclear weapons of any kind. And I also thought about ways in which all of us undergo what could be called the numbing of everyday life." — Robert Jay Lifton

In 1982, Dr. Robert Jay Lifton first wrote about psychic numbing in The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, in his article entitled "Beyond psychic numbing: a call to awareness". This psychic closing down that he identifies can be a societal response as well as an individual response to an experienced or perceived trauma or threat. Lifton has written extensively about this, particularly as a coping mechanism for atomic bomb survivors—as a means to endure their lived experience of unimaginable, catastrophic suffering.

On a societal level, psychic numbing can also exist in the denial of nuclear dangers. When the Cold War ended and the Berlin Wall came down, so too fell an awareness of nuclear risk, even as these dangers continued to grow. Although there are far fewer nuclear weapons on the planet today, the estimated 15,000 that remain provide more than enough radioactive violence to destroy our world many times over.

To address the still escalating problem of the nuclear threat, we have over the last five years shifted the narrative from the military doctrine of deterrence to the Humanitarian Initiative, uniting non-nuclear-armed and NGOs in a call to nuclear possessor nations—and those who stand with them—to begin a real-time process for nuclear disarmament.

Thanks to the extraordinary commitment and vision of particular governments, civil society, academics, and atomic bomb survivors we have arrived at the start of nuclear weapon ban treaty negotiations, the most significant advance for disarmament in a generation.

The ban treaty movement signifies a waking up to the real risks and inspiring real actionable measures by UN member states to prohibit nuclear weapons as a necessary step in their ultimate abolition. The best way to wake up, to shrug off the decades old cloak of psychic numbing, is not only through awareness of the harm that nuclear weapons can and will do, but also by identifying who and what we love as a motivation to make disarmament a reality.

As we delegates and NGOs, UN staff, and visiting government representatives occupy UN conference rooms and meet casually in hallways and cafes over this next week, let us remember to pause each day in deference to future generations. To think of those who will be born on earth, human and non human, plant and animal beings, and what sort of habitat will await them. These historic meetings can guarantee their rightful place, or not.

Let us make it a daily ritual to remember who we love and what we cherish.

Dare to be specific, to think in details of your loved ones, partners, your children, and family members past and present —to see the wrinkle in their forehead or the way their mouth rests in a smile. Think of and hear in your mind's eye your favorite music, what inspires or soothes you. Imagine a place you loved as a child, allow a vivid sense memory to stir you, of mountains or cityscapes, of deserts or deep woods, or the coastal regions of oceans, rivers and lakesides. Think of the art and literature that you cherish, the beauty of the natural world. Sit in that wonder and understand exactly what we are gathered together to pursue. What we are committed to protect.

Nuclear weapons threaten everything and everyone we hold dear, every moment of every day. And to that threat, and those would wield it, we can state: we are motivated by positive, life affirming obligations to each other, our world and the future. This is the Humanitarian Initiative. We are here because of who and what we love.

TRIBUTE TO ANTINUCLEAR CAMPAIGNERS

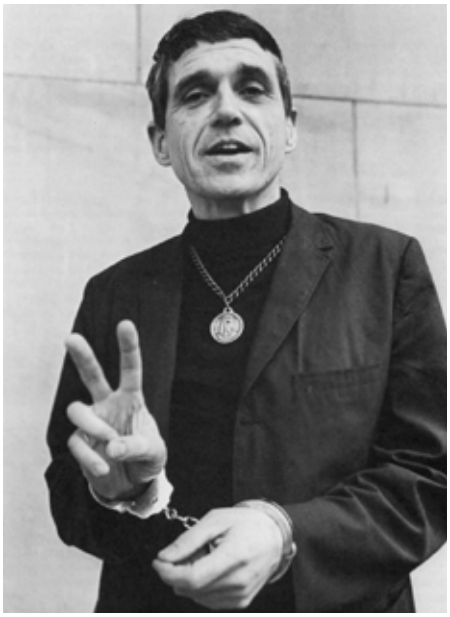
In 2016 and 2017, the movement to abolish nuclear weapons has had some great losses. As we begin negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons, we want to recognise the courageous contributions of the following campaigners. They will be missed at this crucial step in the process and we hope to honour their memories with our dedication and creativity in the coming months as we ban the bomb.

Dr. Bill Williams, Australia

Bill 's vision led to the founding of ICAN in 2007. He became Chair ICAN Australia and was also a leading figure in IPPNW and the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. His conviction and clarity on things from land rights to gender equity to solidarity activism have lit up the world.

John Ainslie, Scotland

John was widely known as the the quiet, unassuming heart of the peace movement in Scotland for the last 25 years. He was both a frontline activist and an internationally respected researcher and policy analyst. He backed Scottish independence as a way of triggering UK nuclear disarmament.



Father Daniel Berrigan, USA

Dan Berrigan was a legendary priest and poet, playing an instrumental role in inspiring the anti-war and antidraft movement in the late 1960s, as well as the movement against nuclear weapons.

Dr. Robert Mtonga, Zambia

"Dr. Bob" worked tirelessly across many humanitarian disarmament campaigns. His warm heart, big smile and poetic way of speaking won him many friends around the world, and he will be deeply missed.