

MEMO TO DELEGATES TO FIRST COMMITTEE

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

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HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

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ABOLITION 2000 WORKING GROUP ON NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION

<http://www.abolition2000.org/en/nuclear-risk-reduction/>

NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

TPNW (BAN TREATY)

Dear Delegate:

I write to urge that, in the upcoming First Committee, you support the following measures, amongst many others. You are urged to do so without prejudice to the many other actions that need to be taken to further nuclear disarmament, and to assure global security and strategic stability:

You/your government are urged to:

- Support immediate and urgent measures to reduce the rising risk of nuclear conflict.**
- To sponsor and support a resolution setting a new date for a High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, to replace the one 'indefinitely postponed' last May (2018).**
- To sign, ratify, and to vigorously lobby others to sign and ratify, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.(TPNW, or 'Ban Treaty')**

These actions at First Committee should be taken without in any way decreasing your commitment to any other actions you/your Government will be taking at First Committee. A wide range of actions needs to be taken on other areas, notably CTBT-EIF, the negotiation of an FMCT, bilateral arms reduction measures, extension of New START, a successor to New START, etc. There must be no reduction in commitment to these existing measures.

However, Risk Reduction, a re-scheduling of the High Level Conference, and support for the TPNW have especial immediate salience, and require specific actions in First Committee.

Some of you may feel unable for a variety of supposed 'reasons' to support the TPNW. I would urge you/your government to reconsider your position, and to reconsider again. Most if not all of the arguments contra the TPNW are entirely spurious if not downright dishonest, while some of them (ie that it makes 'extended deterrence' more difficult) are in reality arguments FOR not against, the TPNW.

However if, to your shame, you are completely 'unconvertable' (or unable to convert your capital decision-makers), I nonetheless urge you to support as strongly as you can, both the Risk Reduction measures, and the re-scheduling of the High Level Conference. Ideally,

please support all three dot points, but please, do find ways to support as much as you possibly can.

I write because the risk of nuclear war, accidental or otherwise, via madness, malice, miscalculation, malfunction, or malware, is as high as it has ever been, and there is 'alarmingly too little alarm' (and hence not nearly enough action) over it.

I am hardly the first to suggest we are 'sleepwalking' into potential catastrophe. But it is so.

That catastrophe might take place in a number of ways – because relations between the DPRK and the US break down and an ill-thought tweet causes the DPRK to 'pre-pre-empt' a presumed US pre-emptive strike, or because China enters into hostilities that have already commenced, or because of a confrontation in the South China sea, or because of miscalculation arising over nuclear-armed Russian and NATO exercises that spirals out of control into an accidental apocalypse. All of these options have been grimly canvassed many times by others much more distinguished than myself.

I need hardly remind all of you that the consequences of large scale use of nuclear weapons will be unimaginably catastrophic. A 'mini' nuclear war between say, the DPRK and the US will create tens of millions of casualties. One between India and Pakistan will create anything between 150million and 300million immediate casualties and catastrophic global climatic effects that linger for at least a decade. A conflict between the US and Russia (or NATO and Russia) would essentially end what we call 'civilization', as also will a relatively small number of relatively large weapons exploded in space above continental landmasses (via the effects of EMP). A large US-Russia or Russia-NATO conflict would also likely involve China. Such a conflict might make long term human survival problematic.

All this, clearly, makes immediate-term nuclear risk reduction imperative, not only for those of us who do NOT have nuclear weapons and who are NOT involved in 'extended deterrence' relationships, but even more so for those of us who ARE (misguidedly) involved in such relationships. Those of us who ARE so involved (most of Europe, Japan, Australia, RoK, Canada) will perish if buttons get pushed, our very involvement making us immediate nuclear targets. Extended deterrence, far from protecting anyone, makes targets of us. Its demise is a gain in security, not a loss of security, whether we are Poland, a Baltic state, Romania, Japan, or Australia.

Vital Immediate – term risk reduction measures include, but are not limited, to:

- No First Use commitments.(NFU)
- De-Alerting and other measures designed to increase the decision-making time available to Presidents and senior military in crisis situations
- Improved or re-established military-to-military communications, especially between the US, NATO, and Russia.
- Final establishment of the Joint Data Exchange Centre (JDEC) in Moscow, first agreed on between the US and Russia in 1998, reaffirmed numerous times and never implemented
- Avoidance of potentially provocative military exercises, particularly ones located anywhere near the Baltic States, Poland, the Black Sea or Ukraine. This applies to all and any exercises,

but obviously especially to any that involve nuclear weapons, or nuclear-capable equipment whether actually nuclear-armed or not.

A full list of nuclear risk reduction measures is at:

<http://www.abolition2000.org/en/nuclear-risk-reduction/>

I cannot stress enough the importance of modest measures that build trust and re-establish lines of communication in making an accidental apocalypse less of a global risk, nor the absolute existential priority of avoiding catastrophic outcomes. Furthermore these are measures that ALL governments can take or support – not merely those who happen to support the TPNW, important though that is.

High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament

The indefinite postponement, for a number of complicated reasons, of the proposed High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, scheduled for May 2018 in NY and postponed within days of when it would have opened, was a deep disappointment for many of us. The conference would have:

- Put nuclear disarmament at the highest level of Governmental consideration
 - Provided a venue outside EITHER the moribund CD, the almost equally moribund proceedings of NPT prepcoms and revcons, in which could be discussed:
 - Nuclear Risk reduction measures;
 - The TPNW;
 - Nuclear disarmament measures **other** than the TPNW, notably bilateral US-Russia disarmament measures including New START and a successor treaty;
 - Nuclear relationships other than US-NATO-Russia, notably India-Pakistan.
 - Measures to facilitate progress at NPT conferences and the CD;
 - Measures to facilitate CTBT-EIF,
- All at the highest level.

You are therefore urged to re-schedule the proposed High Level Conference either for a date in 2019 or 2020, that will be suitable to as many governments as possible.

Finally, I urge all of you to sign, ratify, and to lobby others to sign and ratify, the TPNW. ('Ban Treaty')

While the TPNW is NOT the 'only show in town', and while it does not directly demolish even one warhead, it absolutely does serve to marginalize and to stigmatize their possession, and (contra nuclear weapon states arguments) it powerfully serves to help to establish a norm in customary law that does so.

It serves notice on those who do possess nuclear weapons that they are in effect operating outside normal, 'civilized' standards.

Contra nuclear weapon state arguments it does NOT:

- Weaken the NPT framework - Rather it strengthens and compliments that framework.
- Establish a 'confusing' or 'competing' parallel process. It works with, reinforces and compliments, existing processes.

--Compete with the 'progressive' disarmament process. Rather it lends urgency to that very process and can hope to be the logjam-breaker that the 'progressive' process, notable precisely for its **lack** of progress, needs.

You have already received copies of a much longer letter addressed to my own (Australia's) Government, to 29 other Governments, and copied to UNGA, in which I demolish paragraph by paragraph, arguments against the TPNW and urge support for the same dot-points as does this memo. For good measure I attach it once more underneath this one.

In summary, actions to reduce nuclear risks and to make progress to the elimination of nuclear weapons are as high a priority as they have ever been.

I hope that Governments and First Committee delegates can understand the existential significance of this, and can come up with creative and positive responses that help to assure the survival of civilization and of humans as a species.

These measures are of existential importance. There just couldn't be anything more important for all of you to do in First Committee.

John Hallam

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