

# PREVENTING NUCLEAR USE: THE HUMANITARIAN IMPERATIVE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT



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Nuclear threats STILL affect us all...

To prevent the use of nuclear weapons, we must address their consequences and pursue their elimination



SO, WHAT DO YOU  
WANT TO BE WHEN YOU  
GROW UP?

ALIVE...  
IF IT'S NOT TOO  
MUCH TROUBLE....

GROUND ZERO  
1 MEGATON  
WARHEAD  
YOU ARE VAPORIZED

5 MILES  
YOU ARE  
COOKED

2 MILES  
YOU ARE  
VERY DEAD



# We need to recast the nuclear weapons problem

=> NW cause **unacceptable harm** and humanitarian disaster with catastrophic regional and global consequences.

=> **Nuclear weapons use** needs to be recognized and treated as a **crime against humanity** and **war crime**, as is the use of chemical and biological weapons. This would create strong disincentives, have impact on doctrines and ambitions, and pave the way for  
**A GLOBAL LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE BAN**

**ARMS CONTROL IS NOT ENOUGH**  
**NOW over 19,000 weapons + 9 nuclear-armed**  
**states PLUS proliferation incentives, drivers**  
**+ nuclear terrorism risks**



## **Current arsenals 2012**

**>19,000 weapons**

**>2,000 Mt**

Down from peak arsenals  
(1986)

- 70,000 weapons
- 15,000 Mt

**BUT NOWHERE NEAR ZERO!**

# WE NEED NEW THINKING TO TRANSFORM CURRENT TOOLS

The 2010 NPT Review Conference –  
transition point from arms control to  
disarmament?

“The [NPT 2010] Conference expresses its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”

# What catastrophic humanitarian consequences?

- > Heat, blast, EMP, uncontrollable fires
- > radiation contamination and sickness
- > soot and debris pushed into the atmosphere to circulate for years
- > abrupt climate disruption and cooling
- > agricultural failures, even collapse
- > widespread famine

**THE LIVING WOULD ENVY THE DEAD**

**“Reliance on nuclear weapons for [deterrence] is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective.”**

**Kissinger, Schultz, Nunn and Perry, WSJ Jan 2007**



**Trident submarine near Faslane, Scotland**



# So when NW are used because nuclear deterrence didn't work?

## New research on environmental and climate effects of nuclear explosions

Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss., 6, 11745–11816, 2006  
[www.atmos-chem-phys-discuss.net/6/11745/2006/](http://www.atmos-chem-phys-discuss.net/6/11745/2006/)  
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## Atmospheric effects and societal consequences of regional scale nuclear conflicts and acts of individual nuclear terrorism

O. B. Toon<sup>1</sup>, R. P. Turco<sup>2</sup>, A. Robock<sup>3</sup>, C. Bardeen<sup>1</sup>, L. Oman<sup>3</sup>, and  
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# RESEARCH ON LIMITED NUCLEAR USE

**Evaluated effects of 100 'small' nuclear explosions (15 kt, Hiroshima size) on urban centres:**

- **Less than 0.5% of today's nuclear arsenals**

- ⇒ **Up to 20 million immediate deaths**

- ⇒ **5 m tonnes radioactive soot and debris into upper atmosphere**

- **Lofting, circulation and persistence of smoke/dust clouds for ~ 10 years**

- ⇒ **Global temperatures drop 1.25-1.5 deg**

- ⇒ **Substantial + long lasting climatic effects would cause widespread global famine**



Even if you live in a  
NWFZ like Africa...  
**If others use nuclear  
weapons it will have  
terrible  
consequences for  
innocent people →  
1 billion dead  
from starvation  
alone?**

Starvation and  
lowered immune  
systems

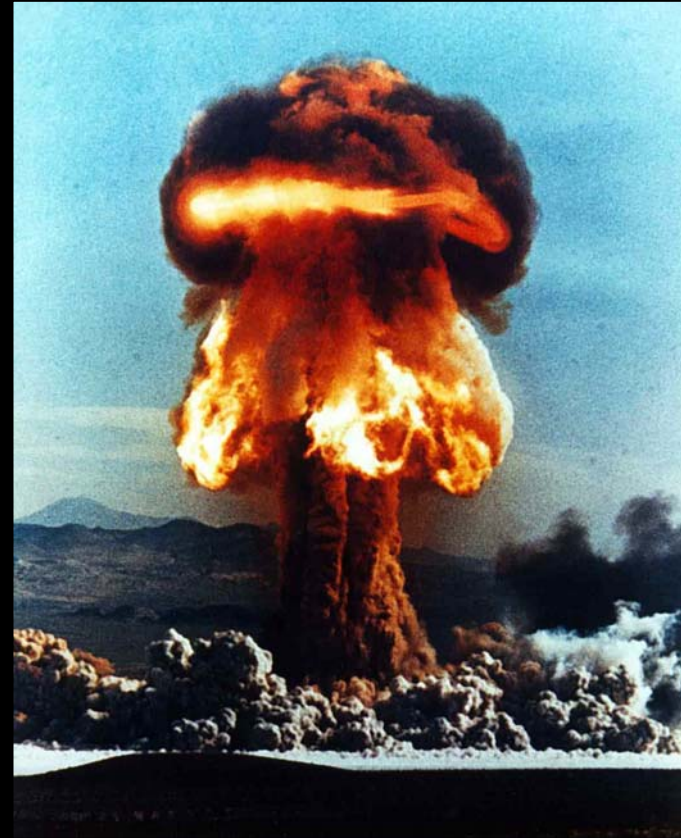
→ **Epidemic  
Diseases**

- Cholera, other diarrhoeal disease
- Plague
- Malaria
- Typhus



# Desperation, Conflict and Further wars

- Food riots
- Disruption of trade
- Hoarding
- Intra-state 'civil' wars
- Wars between nations
- and further nuclear uses?



# COSTS: 9 countries spent over \$100 billion on nuclear weapons in 2011

	2011 in \$ billions
US	61.3
Russia	14.9
UK	5.5
France	6.0
China	7.6
Israel	1.9
India	4.9
Pakistan	2.2
DPRK	0.7
TOTALS	104.9

This is \$100 billion they did NOT spend on **climate security**, health, education, food, water, development....



# Time to ban nuclear weapons

“Weapons of mass destruction cannot be uninvented. But they can be **outlawed**, as biological and chemical weapons have been, and their use made unthinkable. Compliance, verification and enforcement rules can, with the requisite will, be effectively applied. And with that will, even the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons is not beyond the world’s reach.”

*Weapons of Terror*, Report of the WMD Commission,  
June 2006

# **When weapons are delegitimized and stigmatized as 'inhumane', it becomes necessary (and easier) to ban and eliminat them**

## **Examples from other weapons:**

- **asphyxiating chemicals**
  - 1925 Geneva Protocol (use)→1993 CWC (all aspects)
- **biological and toxin weapons**
  - 1925 Geneva Protocol (use)→1972 BTWC
- **antipersonnel landmines**
  - 1997 Mine Ban Convention (use, stockpiling, production and transfer...)
- **cluster munitions**
  - 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM prohibits use, production, stockpiling and transfer...)



# Stepping Stones so far...

- NPT 2010 Outcome doc, refs to humanitarian consequences and need for a treaty/framework to “achieve and maintain” a world without NW
- **Red Cross resolution on ‘Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons’ (Nov 2011)**
- N-16 statement on humanitarian consequences to 2012 NPT PrepCom (May 2012) co-sponsored by 35 countries at UN FC (Oct 2012)
- **Norwegian government initiative to hold ‘humanitarian consequences of NW’ conference 4-5 March 2013**



**Our world. Your move.**

Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross  
and Red Crescent Movement  
Geneva, 26 November 2011 – For humanity



**EN**

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adopted

**COUNCIL OF DELEGATES**

**OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS  
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

Geneva, Switzerland  
26 November 2011

**Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons**

**Resolution**

**Document prepared by**

The International Committee of the Red Cross in consultation  
with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
and National Societies

**Red Cross gets active –  
2011 Resolution pledges:  
to ensure that nuclear  
weapons are never again  
used...**

- to pursue in good faith and  
conclude with urgency and  
determination negotiations  
to prohibit the use of and  
completely eliminate nuclear  
weapons through a legally  
binding international  
agreement, based on  
existing commitments and  
international obligations....

[www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

**In Nov 2011 the Red Cross  
passed a new resolution on NW  
– first since 1982**

# New thinking to coordinate **civil society**



initiatives and work closely with governments to reframe NW and pave way for banning them on humanitarian terms

By themselves, the current arms control and NPT regimes fail to stem proliferation. They perpetuate nuclear value and status quo

>Crucial task is to **discredit and delegitimize** nuclear weapons and their justifications, including deterrence, status and other drivers of proliferation

## ARMS CONTROL and NON-PROL APPROACH

## HUMANITARIAN APPROACH

Regulating a high value, desirable weapon

Abolishing an inhumane, unusable weapon that is contrary to humanity's interests

Emphasis on reducing numbers and preventing new acquisition

Emphasis on banning use, deployment and production as well as reducing arsenals

Maintain strategic stability, especially among NWS

Enhance global and human security and prevent harm to potential victims

Primary actors: nuclear weapons states, military and technical experts

Initiating drivers: nuclear-free states and global civil society

Contradictions between words and action, e.g.  
“America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons”

“If we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some way we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable”

Pres. Obama, Prague 2009

2010: New START gets ratified

“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.”

Pres. Obama Prague 2009

2010: US nuclear labs get \$85 bn

# NEW PRACTICAL APPROACHES:

- Raise awareness of **humanitarian consequences** of nuclear weapons and inhumane nature of nuclear policies
- Reinforce International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
- Change political context for pursuing reductions, halting additions
- Revive and strengthen tools for national and regional security without using NW as deterrents
- Implement NPT obligations fully and embed existing agreements like CTBT, CWC, BTWC

# **Banning nuclear weapons: the next step, not the last step**

**Pursue a new Global Treaty under IHL to ban nuclear weapons**

This PARADIGM SHIFT will change the way technical disarmament and verification are worked on, and speed up the elimination of current arsenals while deterring modernization and proliferation

- **Make it clear in international law that using NW is a crime against humanity**

**Nuclear Disarmament becomes more achievable when pursued as Humanitarian and Security Action**



# Change Mindset to meet the Challenges

Need to let go of weapons of mass destruction before it is too late!

- Consider international relations (deterrence, military and political relations) without NW: a different calculus
- Leadership roles for China and the US? if you have the vision to step out of the cold war nuclear box...
- Leadership roles for non-nuclear-armed countries and civil society: What can we all do?
- **LET'S DISCUSS HOW NOT IF !**

**It Can be Done: Women's actions on USAF nuclear silos at Greenham Common, England, New Year's Day 1983**



# NUCLEAR WINTER – an ultimate apocalypse

Cold War Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev paid tribute to European peace movement and scientists as well as US Pres. Reagan for making Reykjavik possible, and in 1994 recalled:



"Perhaps there was an emotional side to it... I knew the report on 'nuclear winter'... Models made by Russian and American scientists showed that a nuclear war would result in a nuclear winter that would be extremely destructive to all life on Earth; the knowledge of that was a great stimulus to us, to people of honor and morality, to act in that situation." (1994 interview)

# Empty nuclear weapon silos after INF Treaty: Greenham Common, UK

