

Call to Action
Sacramento August Peace Event
August 5, 2012
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Today we gather to reflect on the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and join over 75 communities across the United States who will also be remembering those who died and who will also call for nuclear disarmament. It is painful to be reminded of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and that the United States is the only country that has used them.

But we remember so that we will never use nuclear weapons again.

And we are not just remembering in our country.

In two days (August 7) 40 young activists will begin cycling in southern Japan showing their solidarity with the victims and survivors of nuclear weapons, nuclear testing, uranium mining, nuclear energy, and nuclear accidents during the past 67 years. This year's annual bike tour¹, organized by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace prize, will begin in Nagasaki and end in Hiroshima, where the 20th IPPNW World Congress will take place later this month.

As the only country that has been devastated by nuclear bombs, Japan was particularly traumatized last year not only by the earthquake and tsunami but by the Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdowns and radioactive contamination.

I quote from the Mayor of Nagasaki, Mr. Tomihisa Taue, who gave the Nagasaki Peace Declaration of August 9, 2011²:

¹ <http://www.ippnw-students.org/Japan/index.html>

² <http://www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/peace/english/appeal/>

This March, we were astounded by the severity of accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station... With some of the station's reactors exposed to the open air due to explosions, no residents are now to be found in the communities surrounding the station. There is no telling when those who have been evacuated because of the radiation can return home. As the people of a nation that has experienced nuclear devastation, we continued the plea of "No More Hibakusha!" How has it come that we are threatened once again by the fear of radiation?

Have we lost our awe of nature? Have we become overconfident in the control we wield as human beings? Have we turned away from our responsibility for the future? Now is the time to discuss thoroughly and choose what kind of society we will create from this point on.

No matter how long it will take, it is necessary to promote the development of renewable energies in place of nuclear power in a bid to transform ourselves into a society with a safer energy base.

Here in California, the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station has been in emergency shutdown since January 2012 because of a radiation leak in a steam generator tube. Southern California Edison has subsequently removed about 1300 tubes because of unexpected wear after less than two years of use.³

Physicians for Social Responsibility has called for a moratorium on building more nuclear power plants until the issue of safety and radioactive waste disposal has been addressed.⁴ We are particularly concerned in California because San Onofre and Diablo Canyon nuclear

³ <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/17/local/la-me-adv-san-onofre-tubes-20120517>

⁴ <http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/nuclear-power-and-public-health.pdf>

plants are both near known earthquake fault lines with over 18 million, and over 800 thousand people living within 50 miles of each, respectively.⁵

Nuclear power is also expensive with a quadrupling of costs since 2000. Each new reactor now costs over \$8 billion each.

We were reminded of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons earlier this year when Dr. Ira Helfand, of PSR and IPPNW, released a report at the Nobel Peace Laureates Summit in Chicago titled “Nuclear Famine: A Billion People at Risk.”⁶

Previously, in the 1980s, scientific modeling studies showed that a large scale nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union could cause a “nuclear winter” in which worldwide change in climate would cause significant decrease in precipitation and temperature. Awareness of this by all parties may have been a factor in subsequent reductions in nuclear arms.

The recent nuclear famine report detailed the devastation that would occur if there was a limited, regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan (with 50 Hiroshima-sized bombs used by each side). Up to 20 million people would die and there would be global climate disruption that would lead to severe declines in agricultural production. It is estimated that there would then follow at least a 10% reduction in food consumption. The resulting nuclear war-induced famine would lead to starvation and death affecting over one billion people.

After former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev learned of these findings, he said: "I am convinced that nuclear weapons must be abolished. Their use in a military conflict is unthinkable; using them to achieve political objectives is immoral.”

Is there any good news for us today? Well, yes and no. No, because we still have nuclear arms, wars, and massive war spending.

⁵ <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2008publications/CEC-100-2008-009/CEC-100-2008-009-CMF.PDF>

⁶ <http://www.psr.org/nuclear-weapons/nuclear-famine-report.pdf>

Yes, because there are fewer nuclear weapons. Since the first Sacramento August Women's Peace Event, as it was called in 1987, the number of nuclear weapons in the world has decreased from about 65,000 to 19,000⁷. These reductions began with the passage of the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in 1991. The new START treaty between the United States and Russia, which went into effect in February 2011, further decreased each countries deployed strategic nuclear warheads by 30%.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is widely considered to be one of the most successful security agreements in history with every nation of the world a member except for Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea.

In the 1960s, 23 countries had nuclear weapons, were conducting weapons-related research, or were considering obtaining weapons⁸. Since then, more countries have given up nuclear weapons or programs than have started them.

Today, 9 countries have nuclear weapons--United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea.

Another positive sign is a re-awakening of health professionals about the urgency of preventing nuclear war.⁹ In March 2012, a group of 35 prominent and respected deans of schools of medicine and public health signed an open letter organized by PSR calling for nuclear weapons abolition. Dr. Claire Pomeroy of UC Davis and Dr. Roger Hadley of Loma Linda University were among School of Medicine Deans who Sacramento PSR contacted and who signed onto the letter.

⁷ <http://www.ploughshares.org/world-nuclear-stockpile-report>

⁸ These countries included Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and West Germany. Source: Cirincione, *Bomb Scare*, p. 126, 2007

⁹ <http://ajpmonline.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/reawakening-to-threats-of-nuclear-weapons-an-issue-for-prevention/>

Despite the decrease in nuclear warheads and passage of the New START treaty, nuclear spending in the United States is out-of-control and continues to increase at a rate twice as fast as the rate of inflation.

Last year, we sent postcards to our Representatives asking them to oppose these escalations in nuclear weapons spending. I'm happy to report that the proposed new facility to produce new nuclear weapons at Los Alamos (CMMR), projected to cost up to \$5.9 billion, has been dropped from the FY2013 budget and has been "postponed for five years."

Unfortunately, hundreds of billions of dollars are still budgeted for nuclear weapons funding over the next ten years for other projects. This year's action will try to address this.

We are asking that you write to our Representatives seeking their support for Representative Ed Markey's bill, H.R. 3974, the SANE Act-the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures Act of 2012.¹⁰ The SANE Act would save \$117 billion over the next 10 years by cutting or freezing more than a dozen nuclear weapons programs. These smart cuts would not only save billions and reduce the deficit, but would reduce the nuclear threat.

For example, \$4 billion would be eliminated for the Life Extension Program for the outdated and unnecessary B61 gravity bomb. It would eliminate funding for the risky mixed-oxide (MOX) plutonium fuel fabrication plant. The funding would, instead, be shifted to the *Global Threat Reduction Initiative* which will secure loose nukes.

Thank you, everyone, for joining with us today in remembering the bombings and saying "No more Hiroshimas, No more Nagasakis." Please sign the postcards being handed out to you and they will be hand-delivered to your Representative. Remember to include your complete address. Thank you.

¹⁰ [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.R.3974.IH:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.R.3974.IH)