

NUCLEAR FREE INDIA

NUCLEAR PROMISES

by Zia Mian

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The leaders of the nuclear weapon states, led by President Barack Obama, are promising to abolish nuclear weapons. It is a good sign. But we have been here before. This time the world needs more than promises. To demonstrate that they are serious, nuclear weapon states should announce clear policies to move irreversibly and quickly toward nuclear weapons elimination.

In his now famous Prague speech in April, President Obama said:

"As the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act... So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Obama is not the first American president to offer a vision of nuclear disarmament. Many now recall that Ronald Reagan agreed with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 to abolish nuclear weapons.

More powerful still was the call by President John F. Kennedy. In a famous September 1961 address to the United Nations, President Kennedy described the profound nuclear danger that hung over mankind and called for the abolition of nuclear weapons:

"Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us."

Nothing came from these earlier efforts. Instead of nuclear disarmament, Kennedy and his successors presided over a nuclear arms race. Today, almost 50 years after Kennedy's speech, the United States has an estimated 5,200 nuclear warheads, of which about 2,700

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are operational warheads, with another 2,500 warheads in reserve and yet another 4,200 warheads in the queue to be dismantled over the next decade or two.

The Long and Winding Road

While presidents have made promises, for over 60 years civil society groups around the world have worked toward abolishing nuclear weapons. The hibakusha, the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, gave witness to the horrors of nuclear weapons. Scientists and physicians warned of the dangers of arms races and nuclear war. Artists and writers, film-makers, and poets gave expression to collective fears and hopes. Countless citizens petitioned leaders, marched, and protested. It was perhaps the first truly global social movement. Its story is being recovered by the historian Lawrence Wittner.

This has been a difficult struggle in the face of determined opposition from nuclear weapons states and their allies and supporters. Time and again, those who hoped for a world without nuclear weapons were forced to justify themselves. But this campaigning has worked. Global opinion polls now show that overwhelming majorities of people around the world support the abolition of nuclear weapons.

From the start, some states chose not to pursue nuclear weapons. The United Nations has shown the commitment of the majority of states to nuclear disarmament since the General Assembly passed its very first resolution in 1946. In the shadow of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the UN called for plans "for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction."

But the United States sought to keep its monopoly and the Soviet Union sought parity. In 1949, the Soviet Union carried out its first nuclear test. The United States and the Soviet Union then developed thermonuclear weapons (hydrogen bombs). Britain, France, and then China made and tested nuclear weapons. By 1968, Israel may have had nuclear weapons but did not test them.

Fearing that the further spread of nuclear weapons would limit their ability to intervene in other parts of the world, the United States and Soviet Union agreed on a nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It came into force in 1970. As part of the NPT, the nuclear armed states who signed the treaty promised good faith talks leading to nuclear disarmament.

In the almost 40 years since then, those promised talks on nuclear disarmament have never materialized. No NPT nuclear weapon state has given up its arsenal. Instead, for many years, arsenals grew. India, Pakistan, and North Korea made and tested nuclear weapons.

South Africa remains the only state to have made nuclear weapons and then given them up. If it had not been for the success of the freedom struggle led by the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela, South Africa today could still have nuclear weapons.

The UN General Assembly has sought to intervene. It asked the International Court of Justice for a legal opinion about nuclear weapons. In 1996, the court issued an advisory opinion, which included the unanimous judgment that the signatories of the NPT had "an obligation to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

This means that along with the "moral responsibility to act" on nuclear disarmament that President Obama recognized, there is an international legal obligation.

The Nuclear Test

While promising in his Prague speech to work for nuclear disarmament, President Obama also said, "Make no mistake: 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." The contradiction between the two policy goals remained unexamined in his speech.

There is a simple test of the direction of policy: follow the money. In 2008, the United States spent at least an estimated \$52 billion on its nuclear weapons program. The budgets of other nuclear armed states are more opaque.

Nuclear weapons states can only prove that they are serious about the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons if they stop investing in modernizing and improving their nuclear weapons capabilities. The United States has a chance to signal such intent in the coming year by the debate over U.S. Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has already made his opinion clear. "To be blunt, there is absolutely no way we can maintain a credible deterrent and reduce the number of weapons in our stockpile without either resorting to testing our stockpile or pursuing a modernization program," he has said. If this approach becomes policy and the United States ratifies the CTBT — but ties that to new investments in capabilities for maintaining the capacity to design, develop, and produce new warheads or to modify existing warhead types — then it is fair to question their commitment to getting rid of nuclear weapons. It also poses a profound question about the value of the test ban treaty.

Where the United States leads, others will follow. It is easy to imagine nuclear policy makers in Russia, Britain, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and yes, even North Korea, talking about the need to maintain and modernize their weapons. Once new nuclear weapons facilities are built, new nuclear weapon scientists hired and trained, there will be yet greater resistance to letting go.

To prove to each other and to the world that they are serious about nuclear disarmament, all the nuclear armed states must stop modernizing their nuclear weapons research and production complexes and stop investing in new delivery systems for nuclear weapons.

The Real Challenge

The challenge of nuclear weapons is fundamentally political. Nuclear weapons, first and foremost, are weapons. They are instruments of violence and the threat of violence. The strategies and policies for their development, deployment, and use are not contained within them. Nuclear weapons are given meaning and purpose by the politics of nuclear weapons states.

The nuclear weapon states, and the international community as a whole, need to change the politics around nuclear weapons. One way to do this would be for states to write into international law the 1961 UN General Assembly declaration that states, "using nuclear and

thermo-nuclear weapons is to be considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and as committing a crime against mankind and civilization."

But if we are to achieve the goal of nuclear abolition, we must acknowledge that states and people cannot feel secure when great powers can unleash almost overwhelming conventional military force anywhere in the world. Lesser powers pose the same problem on a regional scale.

President Kennedy in 1961 recognized the importance of this. Speaking to the United Nations he proposed that "disarmament negotiations resume promptly, and continue without interruption until an entire program for general and complete disarmament has not only been agreed but has actually been achieved." This program, he said, should involve "a steady reduction in force, both nuclear and conventional, until it has abolished all armies and all weapons except those needed for internal order and a new United Nations Peace Force."

General and complete disarmament is a commitment under the NPT. It is binding on the United States and other signatories. The treaty calls on states to negotiate and reach agreement on "a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." It is time to remember and to fulfill this promise.

Zia Mian is a physicist with the Program on Science and Global Security at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and a columnist for Foreign Policy In Focus (online at www.fpif.org).

For Nuclear Sanity

by Praful Bidwai

(Frontline, April 25 - May 08, 2009)

India should welcome Obama's call for a nuclear weapons-free world and launch a spirited campaign for the rapid elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide.

PRESIDENT Barack Obama's April 5 speech in Prague calling for a world free of the scourge of nuclear weapons is a major foreign and security policy initiative that deserves applause. If he pursues its logic through to the end with the same sincerity and passion with which he outlined his commitment "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons", he could be the first United States President to go beyond nuclear arms control and to put nuclear weapons elimination on the global agenda. That would mark a turning point for strategic thinking the world over and open up new avenues through which to seek security.

This remains a big "if". Obama has not yet worked out the doctrinal, strategic and practical consequences of his fundamental premise that a secure world without nuclear weapons is

both possible and desirable. His speech only outlines some necessary steps but without specifying their sequence or time frame, numbers (of weapons to be de-alerted or destroyed), the roles of different actors, the function of legally binding treaties, and so on.

But Obama has stated some premises upfront and emphasised their moral-political rationale in a way no major global leader has done in recent years. Thus, he said, “the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War”; these are “the ultimate tools of destruction”, which can erase the world “in a single flash of light”. The global non-proliferation regime is in crisis and “the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up”; soon, “we could reach the point where the centre cannot hold”.

“We are not destined,” said Obama, “to live in a world where more nations and more people possess [nuclear weapons]. Such fatalism is a deadly adversary, for 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.” Logically, fighting fatalism means putting “an end to Cold War thinking” and reducing “the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy”.

This sets Obama miles apart not just from George W. Bush but also from Bill Clinton. Obama is effectively reversing a long tradition beginning with the Ronald Reagan presidency towards either a hardening of the U.S. nuclear posture, or the development of new weapons such as “Star Wars”-style ballistic missile defence (BMD), itself premised on even more dangerous doctrines than that of nuclear deterrence, which is fatally flawed.

Thus, the U.S. has failed, even two decades after the Cold War ended, to move beyond relatively paltry reductions in its nuclear arsenal through the Moscow Treaty of 2002. Under Bush, it refused to take 2,200 weapons off “launch on warning” alert. The U.S. military establishment wants to develop a Reliable Replaceable Warhead for existing ones, find new uses (for example, bunker-busting) for old weapon designs, and has yielded to pressures from the nuclear weapons laboratories to modernise and refine existing armaments and do experimental work on fusion weapons at the expensive National Ignition Facility.

Bush was not only obsessed with perpetuating America’s nuclear superiority. He gave it a particularly deadly edge through BMD deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic, thus exacerbating tensions with Russia and destabilising strategic balances worldwide. Bush also blurred vital distinctions between conventional and nuclear weapons, unsigned the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and abrogated the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia.

Bush’s BMD programme will militarise and nuclearise outer space, in which the U.S. seeks “full-spectrum” dominance. His paranoid response to the September 11 attacks resulted in the worst-ever fiasco in the history of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at its important review conference in 2005, liquidating all the significant gains made at the 2000 review.

Obama promises to change course, radically. He has spoken more boldly and honestly in favour of a nuclear weapons-free world than any other U.S. President in decades. He has gone further than any other in acknowledging that the U.S. bears a “moral responsibility” for nuclear disarmament because it is the only power to have used the horror weapon. This speaks of exemplary moral clarity, as does his statement that the U.S. must take the lead

on disarmament. However, that cannot be said about four other propositions in Obama's speech. First, he betrays an unpardonably naive faith in nuclear deterrence: "Make no mistake. As long as [nuclear] weapons exist, the U.S. will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary...." He also believes in extended deterrence – deploying nuclear weapons in non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries.

This column has dissected the fallacy of nuclear deterrence far too often to warrant further comment other than that it is a fallible, fragile and unreliable basis on which to premise security (via a balance of terror). It involves unrealistic assumptions about capabilities and doctrines, symmetrical perceptions by adversaries of "unacceptable damage" means, and the complete absence of miscalculations and accidents – 100 per cent of the time.

Second, Obama continues to repose faith in BMD – he congratulated the Czech for their "courage" in hosting it – although he qualifies his support by saying BMD must be "cost-effective and proven". This ignores BMD's primitive, as-yet-premature status in intercepting missiles, and worse, the danger of escalating military rivalry to uncertain and risky levels where an adversary could feel tempted to neutralise a putative BMD advantage by amassing more missiles or launching wildcat strikes.

Third, Obama, like Bush and Clinton, makes a specious distinction between responsible/acceptable/good nuclear powers (the Big Five-plus-Israel-plus-India-plus-non-Taliban-Pakistan) and irresponsible/dangerous ones (Iran, North Korea). This permits double standards and detracts from the universal urgency of abolishing all nuclear weapons. Obama's endorsement of Bush's Proliferation Security Initiative – unilateral interception at sea of suspect nuclear-related materials – follows from this.

Finally, Obama believes that disarmament may not be achieved in "my lifetime". Such pessimism is unwarranted. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's thoughtful plan for global nuclear disarmament, presented to the United Nations General Assembly in 1988, set a 15-year timeline for complete nuclear elimination. This is realistic – if the U.S. and the international community musters the will for an early disarmament initiative.

If Obama effects deep cuts in U.S. nuclear weapons through the promised Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia this year, and launches a drive for banning nuclear testing and ending fissile production worldwide, the momentum can be accelerated, especially if U.S. policy shifts to no-first-use. After all, even the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – George P. Schulz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn – believe that nuclear weapons abolition can be achieved in the foreseeable future.

Obama's speech provides an opportunity to all those who believe in complete nuclear weapons elimination, a cause kept alive by the peace movement, a coalition of states, and several expert commissions. India too professes a commitment to this goal and must seize this opportunity.

India's lukewarm response

Regrettably, Indian policymakers have extended a lukewarm, if not cold, welcome to Obama's speech. So fearful are they of pressure on India to sign the CTBT that they are clutching at straws. One such is Obama's statement that "my administration will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the CTBT". This is different from what he wrote in a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh before he was sworn in: "I will work with

the U.S. Senate to secure ratification of [CTBT] at the earliest practical day, and then launch a major diplomatic initiative to ensure its entry into force.” (The letter was suppressed by South Block.)

Indian policymakers are also reportedly relieved that Obama has not reiterated his letter’s reference to India’s “real responsibilities – [including] steps to restrain nuclear weapons programmes and pursuing effective disarmament when others do so”. They are also pleased that Obama has appointed Ellen Tauscher, a Democrat Congresswoman, as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security rather than Robert Einhorn, described by India’s nuclear hawks as “an ayatollah of non-proliferation”.

Such timidity is unbecoming of a nation that claims to be proud of its pro-disarmament record and has pledged to fight for a nuclear weapons-free world. India opposed the CTBT in 1995-96 not for its intrinsic flaws or demerits but because it wanted to test nuclear weapons. Having done so in 1998, India should sign and ratify the treaty. Even Arundhati Ghose, who famously declared that India will not sign it “not now, not ever”, now says that she sees no problem with its signature. This may show a deplorable level of cynicism, but it is nevertheless a ground for correcting course and returning to the disarmament agenda.

Logically, this includes several steps such as the CTBT, Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, regional nuclear risk-reduction and restraint measures (including forswearing missile test-flights and keeping delivery vehicles apart from warheads) and, of course, deep cuts in nuclear weapons by all the nuclear weapons states, beginning with the U.S. and Russia.

India must boldly seize the initiative by updating the Rajiv Gandhi plan, opposing BMD and proactively arguing for rapid strides towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Here lies the litmus test of India’s commitment to a nuclear weapons-free world and of its creative and principled diplomacy.

Another nuclear anniversary

by Pervez Hoodbhoy

(Dawn, May 28, 2009)

Once upon a time making nuclear bombs was the biggest thing a country could do. But not any more; North Korea’s successful nuclear test provides rock-solid proof. This is a country that no one admires.

It is unknown for scientific achievement, has little electricity or fuel, food and medicine are scarce, corruption is ubiquitous, and its people live in terribly humiliating conditions under a vicious, dynastic dictatorship. In a famine some years ago, North Korea lost nearly 800,000 people. It has an enormous prison population of 200,000 that is subjected to systematic torture and abuse.

Why does a miserable, starving country continue spending its last penny on the bomb? On developing and testing a fleet of missiles whose range increases from time to time? The answer is clear: North Korea's nuclear weapons are instruments of blackmail rather than means of defence. Brandished threateningly, and manipulated from time to time, these bombs are designed to keep the flow of international aid going.

Surely the people of North Korea gained nothing from their country's nuclearisation. But they cannot challenge their oppressors. But, as Pakistan celebrates the 11th anniversary of its nuclear tests, we Pakistanis — who are far freer — must ask: what have we gained from the bomb?

Some had imagined that nuclear weapons would make Pakistan an object of awe and respect internationally. They had hoped that Pakistan would acquire the mantle of leadership of the Islamic world. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 1998 tests, Pakistan's stock had shot up in some Muslim countries before it crashed. But today, with a large swathe of its territory lost to insurgents, one has to defend Pakistan against allegations of being a failed state. In terms of governance, economy, education or any reasonable quality of life indicators, Pakistan is not a successful state that is envied by anyone.

Contrary to claims made in 1998, the bomb did not transform Pakistan into a technologically and scientifically advanced country. Again, the facts are stark. Apart from relatively minor exports of computer software and light armaments, science and technology remain irrelevant in the process of production. Pakistan's current exports are principally textiles, cotton, leather, footballs, fish and fruit. This is just as it was before Pakistan embarked on its quest for the bomb. The value-added component of Pakistani manufacturing somewhat exceeds that of Bangladesh and Sudan, but is far below that of India, Turkey and Indonesia. Nor is the quality of science taught in our educational institutions even remotely satisfactory. But then, given that making a bomb these days requires only narrow technical skills rather than scientific ones, this is scarcely surprising.

What became of the claim that the pride in the bomb would miraculously weld together the disparate peoples who constitute Pakistan? While many in Punjab still want the bomb, angry Sindhis want water and jobs — and they blame Punjab for taking these away. Pakhtun refugees from Swat and Buner, hapless victims of a war between the Taliban and the Pakistani Army, are tragically being turned away by ethnic groups from entering Sindh. This rejection strikes deeply against the concept of a single nation united in adversity.

As for the Baloch, they deeply resent that the two nuclear test sites — now radioactive and out of bounds — are on their soil. Angry at being governed from Islamabad, many have taken up arms and demand that Punjab's army get off their backs. Many schools in Balochistan refuse to fly the Pakistani flag, the national anthem is not sung, and black flags celebrate Pakistan's independence day. Balochistan University teems with the icons of Baloch separatism: posters of Akbar Bugti, Balaach Marri, Brahamdagh Bugti, and 'General Sheroff' are everywhere. The bomb was no glue.

Did the bomb help Pakistan liberate Kashmir from Indian rule? It is a sad fact that India's grip on Kashmir — against the will of Kashmiris — is tighter today than it has been for a long time. As the late Eqbal Ahmed often remarked, Pakistan's poor politics helped snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Its strategy for confronting India — secret jihad by Islamic fighters protected by Pakistan's nuclear weapons — backfired terribly in the arena of inter-

national opinion. More importantly, it created the hydra-headed militancy now haunting Pakistan. Some Mujahideen, who felt betrayed by Pakistan's army and politicians, ultimately took revenge by turning their guns against their sponsors and trainers. The bomb helped us lose Kashmir.

Some might ask, didn't the bomb stop India from swallowing up Pakistan? First, an upward-mobile India has no reason to want an additional 170 million Muslims. Second, even if India wanted to, territorial conquest is impossible. Conventional weapons, used by Pakistan in a defensive mode, are sufficient protection. If mighty America could not digest Iraq, there can never be a chance for a middling power like India to occupy Pakistan, a country four times larger than Iraq.

It is, of course, true that Pakistan's nuclear weapons deterred India from launching punitive attacks at least thrice since the 1998 tests. Pakistan's secret incursion in Kargil during 1999, the Dec 13 attack on the Indian parliament the same year (initially claimed by Jaish-i-Muhammad), and the Mumbai attack in 2008 by Lashkar-i-Taiba, did create sentiment in India for ferreting out Pakistan-based militant groups. So should we keep the bomb to protect militant groups? Surely it is time to realise that these means of conducting foreign policy are tantamount to suicide.

It was a lie that the bomb could protect Pakistan, its people or its armed forces. Rather, it has helped bring us to this grievously troubled situation and offers no way out. The threat to Pakistan is internal. The bomb cannot help us recover the territory seized by the Baitullahs and Fazlullahs, nor bring Waziristan back to Pakistan. More nuclear warheads, test-launching more missiles, or buying yet more American F-16s and French submarines, will not help.

Pakistan's security problems cannot be solved by better weapons. Instead, the way forward lies in building a sustainable and active democracy, an economy for peace rather than war, a federation in which provincial grievances can be effectively resolved, elimination of the feudal order and creating a society that respects the rule of law.

It is time for Pakistan to become part of the current global move against nuclear weapons. India — which had thrust nuclearisation upon an initially unwilling Pakistan — is morally obliged to lead. Both must announce that they will not produce more fissile material to make yet more bombs. Both must drop insane plans to expand their nuclear arsenals. Eleven years ago a few Pakistanis and Indians had argued that the bomb would bring no security, no peace. They were condemned as traitors and sellouts by their fellow citizens. But each passing year shows just how right we were.

The writer teaches nuclear physics at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

What good is the A-bomb?

As the country celebrates another Youm-e-Takbeer holding its 'national asset' of nuclear capability no less dear than the 'ideology of Pakistan' itself, as the strategists hold forth on the virtues of doctrine of nuclear deterrence, as the peaceniks sit aside and watch the country celebrate its capacity to annihilate the enemy, TNS tries to understand what the fuss is all about...

by Farrukh Saleem

If you have the A-bomb you cannot be beaten. True or false? Here's the record: On 16 July 1945, the US Army Corps of Engineers under the command of General Leslie Groves -- directed by a professor of theoretical physics, J. Robert Oppenheimer -- undertook "Trinity," the first-ever, human-engineered, controlled nuclear explosion. From 1959 till 1975, the US military with all its service branches, including the US Army, US Air Force, US Marine Corps and US Navy, fought with the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Vietcong. Fatalities: Anywhere from 3 million to 4 million Vietnamese; at least 2 million Cambodians and Laotians and more than 58,000 US soldiers.

President Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, had the A-bomb but President Richard Nixon, the 37th President of the United States, was beaten back by Pol Pot, Ho Chi Minh and Pham Hung. America had the A-bomb but it was beaten by a hotch-potch, rag-tag Vietcong, Khmer Rouge and the North Vietnamese.

If you have the A-bomb you cannot be beaten. True or false? Here's the record: In August 1949, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) under the administrative supervision of Lavrentii Beria, the head of People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, Russia's secret police organisation, and under the scientific supervision of physicist Igor Kurchatov, detonated its first nuclear device. From 1979 to 1989, KGB's Independent Special-Purpose Motorised Brigade, Russia's foreign military intelligence directorate along with the 40th Army of the Soviet Union's Red Army fought with rag-tag Afghan militias.

Josef Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, had the A-bomb. More than 40 years later, Sergei Leonidovich Sokolov, Marshal of the Soviet Union, General Valentin Varennikov, Commander-in-Chief of the land forces, and General Boris Gromov, Commander of the 40th Army, fought with Ahmad Shah Masoud, Jalaluddin Haqqani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Ismail Khan and Abdul Haq. Eventually, Mikhail Gorbachev, the last General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, lost and the Taliban won. Once again, the A-bomb was beaten.

If you have the A-bomb then no country will dare invade you. True or false? Here's the record: Medinat Yisra'el, or the State of Israel, began building the Negev Nuclear Research Center -- with French help -- back in 1958. According to Mordechai Vanunu, a nuclear technician at the Negev Nuclear Research Center, Israel had built its first nuclear weapon in 1967-68.

In 1973, Muhammad Anwar Al Sadat ordered General Saad El Shazly, the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Army (350,000 plus 400,000 reservists) to invade Sinai. The Egyptian Air Force with 200 of its low-flying aircraft, including MiG-21s, attacked Israeli airbases. The

Egyptian land assault with some 30,000 soldiers captured each and every one of the Israeli fortifications (except for the one called Budapest). Israel had the A-bomb but the Egyptian Army invaded Israeli-controlled territory. Israel had the A-bomb but Egyptian MiG-21s attacked Israeli airbases.

In 1973, Hafez al-Assad ordered General Mustafa Tlass, the Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army (conscripted 400,000), to invade the Golan Heights. General Mustafa sent in 5 divisions along with 1,300 tanks to capture Mount Hermon, the Israeli stronghold. Remember, Israel had the A-bomb but the Syrian Army invaded the Golan Heights. General Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, had the A-bomb but General Mustafa sent his soldiers into Israeli controlled terrain.

If you have the A-bomb then no country will dare invade you. True or false? Here's the record: India had begun its nuclear programme back in 1967 (the origin of the nuclear weapons programme was the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre). Seven years later, nuclear scientists led by Dr Raja Ramanna detonated the Smiling Buddha at Pokhran test range; plutonium for the detonation came from the Canada-India-Research-US, or CIRUS, research reactor while the implosion system was developed under the supervision of Dr Satish Kumar at the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory in Chandigarh. According to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, India began work on a thermonuclear weapon in the 1980s.

India has so far conducted six nuclear tests; the last one conducted on May 13, 1998. Of the six, the largest yield was 250 kilotons and that was for the test undertaken on May 11, 1998 (the "Little Boy" that was dropped on Hiroshima was a 15 kiloton bomb).

In May 1999, around 5 battalions of Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry (HQ: Skardu) along with Kashmiri guerrillas entered Indian-controlled territories and captured areas of lower Mushkoh Valley, Kaksar, Dras and Chorbitla. India's inventory of A-bombs could not stop Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry.

If you have the A-bomb then you need not spend much on your conventional weaponry. True or false? Here's the record: India's defense allocation when India didn't have an A-bomb was around \$5 billion. India's defense budget has since reached a colossal \$35 billion. Pakistan's defense allocation when Pakistan didn't have an A-bomb was under Rs100 billion. Pakistan's defense budget has since reached a colossal Rs400 billion.

What good is the A-bomb? The A-bomb's 64-year history shows that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence belongs to the dustbin. Countries with large inventories of A-bombs have lost wars. Moreover, A-bombs have failed to stop invading armies.

(Reproduced from: The News on Sunday, 7 June 2009)

Nuclear Disaster in South Asia

by Brian Cloughley

(The Daily Times, January 14, 2008) At this time of tension between India and Pakistan, it is as well to reflect on the consequences of war. We all hope that something like the mock despatch, below, is never written. But given the interview with NDTV in which “the Home Minister said it would now be [up to] Pakistan to ensure that such acts [as the Mumbai attacks] are never repeated by its citizens against India, because the price they will pay if this is repeated will be enormous,” it is obvious there can be no assurance that India will not attempt a strike across the border. That would lead to all-out war.
-World Press Despatch. Washington.

The world was stunned today as nuclear devastation fell on the subcontinent. Enormous areas of Mumbai, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Delhi were reduced to radioactive rubble in the early hours of this morning. Both Hyderabad have been obliterated, as have Sargodha, Bahawalpur and Jaipur, by weapons thought to have had a yield of about 40 kilotons (the Hiroshima bomb was less than half that). An Indian strike against Karachi failed, when nuclear-armed Su-30 aircraft had to take evasive action and released their bombs about fifty miles east of Pakistan’s largest city — but then prevailing winds drove massive clouds of radioactive sand across the entire urban area and far along the coastline.

Ground zero for Pakistan’s nuclear missiles aimed at New Delhi appeared to be symbolic: India Gate. The city’s business area, centred round Connaught Place, no longer exists, and destruction was total in the diplomatic enclave of Chanakyapuri and north to Civil Lines, perhaps further. It is estimated that a million people have died or are dying in Delhi, about the same number as in La-

hore, Amritsar, Mumbai and Rawalpindi. Almost the entire population of Islamabad, where a missile landed, ironically, close to Zero Point, has vanished. The hearts of Pakistan and India have been laid waste.

There are smoking, contaminated, corpse-ridden ruins for hundreds of square miles. Millions of people have disappeared — evaporated into the filthy air — but there are countless more lingering, disgusting, hellish deaths yet to come from the effects of blast and radiation. Water supplies and crops have been poisoned. Many millions not directly affected by the explosions will soon die, and in particularly horrible ways.

The governments of both countries remain functioning in their respective emergency centres in Chennai and Quetta, and their leaders have said that they will fight on. But they, too, will die, with all their ministers and advisers, when the winds and rains spread radioactive death through the region.

The countries cannot fight on, or even survive as nations. Countless millions of refugees are flooding out of cities all over the sub-continent. Every main route is verge-to-verge with snail-paced vehicles carrying terrified and hysterical people. The Rawalpindi-Peshawar highway, in a bizarre development, has seen countless thousands of refugees from both cities meeting at Nowshera where there is catastrophic panic and confusion. To the west, the Khyber Pass is choked. Similar scenes are evident in satellite pictures of the Mumbai-Pune road and at Hapur, half-way between Delhi and Moradabad.

Nowhere on any escape routes are there hygiene or medical facilities that can cope with the exodus. Once refugees have exhausted their meagre supplies of food and water there will be hunger, looting, disease, violence and hideous death on a colossal scale.

Tension heightened in the subcontinent after the terrorist atrocities in Mumbai in September 2008, and both sides prepared for war. They sent reinforcements to the border and moved missiles and warheads to emergency deployment positions. This activity was detected by foreign intelligence services and even by commercial satellites, but international concern died down after an initial burst of comment.

In a tragic series of actions, both nations moved towards nuclear catastrophe. The cause was a comparatively minor airstrike by India against a supposed terrorist base in Pakistan, at first resisted by India's prime minister but insisted upon by extreme nationalists. Pakistan was expecting such action and struck back by bombing an Indian airfield. There were several more tit-for-tat operations; then all-out war began.

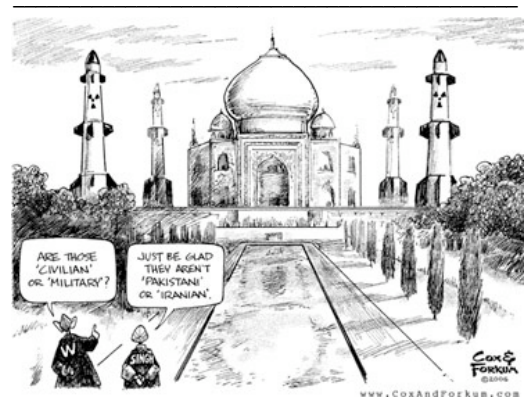
Update: The situation in the region is worsening minute by minute. Satellite pictures show clouds of nuclear dust being blown erratically in every direction. There have been torrential rains, carrying radioactive particles. Nuclear grime is dropping on the Karakoram and the Himalayas from where most water in the subcontinent originates, and all northern rivers will be terminally contaminated. Hot, swirling, nuclear-polluted sandstorms in the deserts of Rajasthan, Sindh and Balochistan have been driven into both Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. Reports from Colombo, Rangoon, Kathmandu and Kabul indicate rapidly increasing levels of radiation. The 70,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan are being evacuated, necessitating the world's biggest ever airlift. Iran has closed its borders, and the roads from Afghanistan to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are choked.

The UN Security Council is sitting in emergency session, but it is a hand-wringing colloquy rather than a meeting that could alleviate the staggering disaster. Some forty nu-

clear weapons have caused devastation on a scale not seen since the end of the dinosaurs. All the world can do is wait until nature takes its course, over the centuries.

The subcontinent is ceasing to exist, and no help will come from elsewhere, as even the most saintly of aid agencies will not hazard the lives of its workers. No government could order its troops into nuclear devastation to give assistance, no matter how desperate the situation. Survivors in India and Pakistan will see repulsive, terrifying and hideous scenes never before witnessed in the world — but there will be no outside eye to observe them, other than the lenses of dispassionate satellite cameras hundreds of miles above the earth that will record forever the desolation and carnage that are the result of pride, miscalculation — and nuclear weapons.

Brian Cloughley's book about the Pakistan army, War, Coups and Terror, has just been published by Pen & Sword Books (UK) and is distributed in Pakistan by Saeed Book Bank



National Alliance of Anti-nuclear Movements (NAAM) Launched with "The Kanyakumari Declaration"

Press Release

For Immediate Release

June 7, 2009

More than one hundred organizations, peoples' movements and concerned citizens from across the country came together for a National Convention on "The Politics of Nuclear Energy and Resistance" on June 4-6, 2009 at Kanyakumari.

They discussed all the different aspects of nuclear power generation and weapons production, the various stages of nuclearization from Uranium mining till waste management, and the commissions and the omissions of the government of India and the Department of Atomic Energy during the three-day-long convention.

Besides the scientific, technological, and socioeconomic dimensions, the Convention also considered the political side of the nuclear threat. The nucolonization (nuclear+colonization) policy of the Delhi government is poised to continue with a Russian outpost in Koodankulam, a French settlement in Jaitapur, an American joint in Haripur and many more such establishments around the country. India is going to look and feel like the colony of several East India Companies. The Citizens of India would become the energy slaves of these White and Brown power barons.

Most importantly, nuclearism is a political ideology that cannot stomach any transpar-

ency, accountability or popular participation. It snubs dissent, denounces opponents and creates a political climate of fear and retribution. With the India-US nuclear deal, and the deals with Russia and France and likely private participation in nuclear energy generation, the situation is going to get out of hand in our country. The combination of profiteering companies, secretive state apparatuses and repressive nuclear department will be ruthless and this nexus of capitalism, statism and nuclearism does not augur well for the country. These forces gaining an upper hand in our national polity will mean a death knell for the country's democracy, openness, and prospects for sustainable development.

In order to mobilize the Indian citizens against this growing nucolonization, to resist the nuclearization of the country, and to protect our people from nuclear threats and the environment from nuclear waste and radiation, an umbrella organization (tentatively named as the National Alliance of Anti-nuclear Movements) has been founded with eight committees on Documentation, Economic Analysis, Legal, Mass Media, International Liaison, Translation, Health, and Direct Action.

A statement known as "The Kanyakumari Declaration" was also passed by the National Convention.

Contact for More Info: Dr. S. P. Udayakumar, spudayakumar(at)gmail.com, 09865683735

The Kanyakumari Declaration

Statement of The National Convention on “The Politics of Nuclear Energy and Resistance,” June 4-6, 2009, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India

We, the undersigned organizations, peoples' movements and concerned citizens committed to building a world free from nuclear exploitation, nuclear business, nuclear power and nuclear weapons, do hereby declare the following:

1. In the context of the unprecedented threats facing the world due to global warming and the rapid depletion of conventional energy sources, the nuclear establishment is most opportunistically pushing nuclear energy as a climate-friendly energy source. However, all the activities associated with nuclear power generation - the mining and processing of uranium, the building of nuclear power stations involving huge amounts of cement and steel, the long construction process, the decommissioning of plants and the handling of radioactive waste - are highly unsafe and expensive, and cause enormous climate-changing pollution. Nuclear energy is not cheap, safe, clean or sustainable. It also does not offer a solution to our energy problems.
2. The government of India is aggressively expanding nuclear power generation and enhancing nuclear business with countries such as the United States, Russia, France, Kazakhstan and others without any regard for norms of democratic decision making. We express outrage over the fact that the newly-elected UPA government is conveniently choosing to interpret the verdict of the recent elections as a mandate for nuclearization.
3. A highly populated country like India does have an increasing need for energy. But for that very reason the energy options we choose must be economical, sustainable, safe and environmentally-friendly. Moreover energy distribution must be made more equitable, just and efficient.
4. In India, huge resources have already been wasted on nuclear power projects that are expensive, inefficient, hazardous and also potentially catastrophic. The Indian nuclear establishment has expressed interest in amending the Indian Atomic Energy Act, 1962 to facilitate privatization. While private companies will make money, Indian taxpayers and ordinary citizens will bear the cost of dealing with all the liabilities such as nuclear waste, decommissioning, possible accidents, public health issues and other dangerous consequences.
5. The workings of the nuclear establishment in the country are shrouded in mystery and protected by draconian laws of official secrecy in complete contradiction to our constitutional right to information. Legislation as secretive and repressive as the Indian Atomic Energy Act, 1962 should have no place in a democracy.
6. Nuclear energy establishments such as the Indian Rare Earths (IRE) in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Kalpakkam, Rawatbhatta and Jadugoda have already created major health problems for local citizens.

7. India's nuclear program has been and continues to be vigorously resisted by the people of this country whose struggles in the past have stopped two nuclear power stations – Peringome and Kothamangalam – from coming up. This convention declares total support and solidarity to the struggles of people resisting the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. It also declares support and solidarity to people in all other parts of the country such as Jadugoda, Meghalaya, Haripur and Jaitapur who are struggling against uranium mining and nuclear power plants.

In view of the above, we, the gathered participants of the National Convention on "The Politics of Nuclear Energy and Resistance" demand that:

1. Immediate compensation and health facilities be provided to people suffering from radiation illnesses such as cancer, genetic disorders, skin diseases, reproductive health problems and other major health effects caused by nuclear establishments, nuclear mining and fuel sites and other allied nuclear industries and activities.

2. All persons living in the vicinity of nuclear establishments and nuclear fuel sites be declared potentially radiation-affected and that clear-cut mechanisms be evolved for appropriate compensation.

3. All activities related to the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant be immediately stopped.

4. The proposed nuclear power plants at Haripur (West Bengal), Mithi Virdi (Gujarat), Madban (Maharashtra), Pitti Sonapur (Orissa) and Kovada (Andhra Pradesh) be immediately scrapped.

5. The draconian Indian Atomic Energy Act, 1962 be revoked forthwith.

6. The Right to Information (RTI) Act be amended to apply to all aspects of the nuclear establishment.

Toxic link: the WHO and the IAEA

A 50-year-old agreement with the IAEA has effectively gagged the WHO from telling the truth about the health risks of radiation

by Oliver Tickell
(The Guardian, 28 May 2009)

Fifty years ago, on 28 May 1959, the World Health Organisation's assembly voted into force an obscure but important agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency – the United Nations "Atoms for Peace" organisation, founded just two years before in 1957. The effect of this agreement has been to give the IAEA an effective veto on any actions by the WHO that relate in any way to nuclear power –

and so prevent the WHO from playing its proper role in investigating and warning of the dangers of nuclear radiation on human health.

The WHO's objective is to promote "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health", while the IAEA's mission is to "accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". Although best known for its work to restrict nuclear proliferation, the IAEA's main role has been to promote the interests of the nuclear power industry worldwide, and it has used the agreement to suppress the growing body of scientific information on the real health risks of nuclear radiation.

Under the agreement, whenever either organisation wants to do anything in which the other may have an interest, it "shall consult the other with a view to adjusting the matter by mutual agreement". The two agencies must "keep each other fully informed concerning all projected activities and all programs of work which may be of interest to both parties". And in the realm of statistics – a key area in the epidemiology of nuclear risk – the two undertake "to consult with each other on the most efficient use of information, resources, and technical personnel in the field of statistics and in regard to all statistical projects dealing with matters of common interest".

The language appears to be evenhanded, but the effect has been one-sided. For example, investigations into the health impacts of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine on 26 April 1986 have been effectively taken over by IAEA and dissenting information has been suppressed. The health effects of the accident were the subject of two major conferences, in Geneva in 1995, and in Kiev in 2001. But the full proceedings of those conferences remain unpublished – despite claims to the contrary by a senior WHO spokesman reported in *Le Monde Diplomatique*.

Meanwhile, the 2005 report of the IAEA-dominated Chernobyl Forum, which estimates a total death toll from the accident of only several thousand, is widely regarded as a whitewash as it ignores a host of peer-reviewed epidemiological studies indicating far higher mortality and widespread genomic damage. Many of these studies were presented at the Geneva and Kiev conferences but they, and the ensuing learned discussions, have yet to see the light of day thanks to the non-publication of the proceedings.

The British radiation biologist Keith Baverstock is another casualty of the agreement, and of the mindset it has created in the WHO. He served as a radiation scientist

and regional adviser at the WHO's European Office from 1991 to 2003, when he was sacked after expressing concern to his senior managers that new epidemiological evidence from nuclear test veterans and from soldiers exposed to depleted uranium indicated that current risk models for nuclear radiation were understating the real hazards.

Now a professor at the University of Kuopio, Finland, Baverstock finally published his paper in the peer-reviewed journal *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* in April 2005. He concluded by calling for "reform from within the profession" and stressing "the political imperative for freely independent scientific institutions" – a clear reference to the non-independence of his former employer, the WHO, which had so long ignored his concerns.

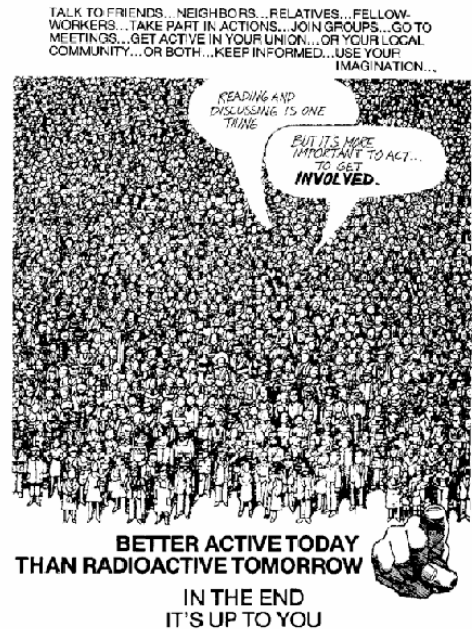
Since the 21st anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster in April 2007, a daily "Hippocratic vigil" has taken place at the WHO's offices in Geneva, organised by Independent WHO to persuade the WHO to abandon its the WHO-IAEA Agreement. The protest has continued through the WHO's 62nd World Health Assembly, which ended yesterday, and will endure through the executive board meeting that begins today. The group has struggled to win support from WHO's member states. But the scientific case against the agreement is building up, most recently when the European Committee on Radiation Risk (ECRR) called for its abandonment at its conference earlier this month in Lesbos, Greece.

At the conference, research was presented indicating that as many as a million children across Europe and Asia may have died in the womb as a result of radiation from Chernobyl, as well as hundreds of thousands of others exposed to radiation fallout, backing up earlier findings published by the ECRR in *Chernobyl 20 Years On: Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident*. Delegates heard that the standard

risk models for radiation risk published by the International Committee on Radiological Protection (ICRP), and accepted by WHO, underestimate the health impacts of low levels of internal radiation by between 100 and 1,000 times – consistent with the ECRR's own 2003 model of radiological risk (The Health Effects of Ionising Radiation Exposure at Low Doses and Low Dose Rates for Radiation Protection Purposes: Regulators' Edition). According to Chris Busby, the ECRR's scientific secretary and visiting professor at the University of Ulster's school of biomedical sciences:

"The subordination of the WHO to IAEA is a key part of the systematic falsification of nuclear risk which has been under way ever since Hiroshima, the agreement creates an unacceptable conflict of interest in which the UN organisation concerned with promoting our health has been made subservient to those whose main interest is the expansion of nuclear power. Dissolving the WHO-IAEA agreement is a necessary first step to restoring the WHO's independence to research the true health impacts of ionising radiation and publish its findings."

Some birthdays deserve celebration – but not this one. After five decades, it is time the WHO regained the freedom to impart independent, objective advice on the health risks of radiation.



The Catastrophic Economics of Nuclear Power

by Harvey Wasserman

(counterpunch.org, May 29-31, 2009)

In a devastating pair of financial reports that might be called "The Emperor Has No Pressure Vessel," the New York Times has blazed new light on the catastrophic economics of atomic power.

The two Business Section specials cover the fiasco of new French construction at Okiluoto, Finland, and the virtual collapse of Atomic Energy of Canada. In a sane world they could comprise an epitaph for the "Peaceful Atom". But they come simultaneous with Republican demands for up to \$700 billion or more in new reactor construction.

The Times's "In Finland, Nuclear Renaissance Runs Into Trouble" by James Kanter is a "cautionary tale" about the "most pow-

erful reactor ever built" whose modular design "was supposed to make it faster and cheaper to build" as well as safer to operate.

But four years into a construction process that was scheduled to end about now, the plant's \$4.2 billion price tag has soared by 50% or more. Areva, the French government's front group, won't predict when the reactor will open. Finnish utilities have stopped trying to guess.

Finnish inspectors say Areva allowed "inexperienced subcontractors to drill holes in the wrong places on a vast steel container that seals the reactor." The Finns have also cited Areva for "the attitude or lack of professional knowledge of some persons."

Areva hopes to build similar reactors in the US. Its boosters have promised cheaper, cleaner, faster nuke construction with standardized designs like the one at Okiluoto. But "early experience suggests these new reactors will be no easier or cheaper to build than the ones a generation ago" whose price tags soared by 700% and more, and whose completion schedules ran into the decades.

Areva's second "new generation" project at Flamanville, France, is also over budget and behind schedule. Cracks have turned up in critical steel and concrete components, along with revelations that critical work has been done by unqualified welders.

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission has not approved the Areva design in use at Okiluoto and Flamanville. Four other designs under consideration are also mired in process. Some are still being altered. A post 9/11 issue is their ability to withstand a jet crash, which the 104 US reactors currently licensed to operate were not forced to consider.

The fiascos in Finland and Flamanville have thrown Areva into economic chaos now being mirrored at the Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited. Once touted as a global flagship, AECL sucked up 1.74 billion Canadian dollars in subsidies last year and has been a long-term money loser which the government has now announced it wants to sell.

AECL's natural uranium/heavy water design has flopped in the world market. "Design issues" with its installed plants require heavy maintenance. AECL's Chalk River research facility, which suffered a major accident in 1952 (in which former President Jimmy Carter served as a "jumper") needs 7 billion Canadian dollars for clean-up work. Its 51-year-old medical isotope facility recently popped a major leak that may close it forever.

The Paris-based energy expert Mycle Schneider reports that of 45 reactors being built worldwide, 22 are behind schedule and nine have no official ignition schedules.

Despite the torrent of bad economic indicators, Republicans like Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) continue to demand massive government funding for new reactor construction. Alexander says he wants the US to build as many as 100 new reactors here, even though the private sector won't finance or insure them. The media is citing the idea as a \$700 billion package, but in fact the project price of building new reactors is on the rise, and by some estimates has already exceeded \$10 billion each. The Department of Energy has cited four finalists for \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees voted in with the 2005 Bush Energy Plan. Florida and Georgia have raised rates to pre-pay proposed new reactors.

But Missouri has turned down a proposed rate hike for a new Areva project. And green activists have three times beaten proposed \$50 billion federal loan guarantee

packages to fund "new generation" construction. Grassroots battles are now raging to prevent the re-licensing of aging reactors like Vermont Yankee and New York's Indian Point.

As Congress deals with a wide range of energy-related legislation, the nuclear industry is desperately grabbing for any federal money it can get. One bill after another has been floated with nuclear hand-outs hidden in various nooks and crannies.

As the comparative price of efficiency and renewables plummets, the window may be closing fast on the possibility of building new nukes in the US, raising the industry's desperation level.

This battle will certainly rage for years to come. But the appearance of such brutally bad news from Finland and Canada in the Business Section of the New York Times bodes ill for an industry that, after fifty

years, cannot get private funding or liability insurance, cannot deal with its wastes, and now cannot demonstrate the ability to produce new product anywhere near on time or budget.

At very least, Paul Joskow of MIT tells the Times, the rollout of new nukes may be "a good deal slower than a lot of people were assuming."

Harvey Wasserman has been writing about atomic energy and the green alternatives since 1973. His 1982 assertion to Bryant Gumbel on NBC's TODAY Show that people were killed at TMI sparked a national mailing from the reactor industry demanding a retraction. NBC was later bought by Westinghouse, still a major force pushing atomic power. He is the author of SOLAR-TOPIA! Our Green-Powered Earth, A.D. 2030, is at www.solartopia.org. He can be reached at: Windhw@aol.com

INDIA: THE PUBLIC HEARING IN JADUGODA



27 May 2009

The much-awaited public hearing by the Uranium Corporation of India Ltd (UCIL) is over. There were lots of public and there were also lots of policemen and members of different security forces. For every one person not in uniform, there was one person from the forces in uniform, some wielding batons, others with rifles and some in riot

gear. UCIL has about 2000 permanent workers and nearly 1000 people who are either on casual or temporary employment. So the total number of beneficiaries is about 3000, if you add the other members in the families of the beneficiaries, then UCIL family has more than 15,000 people. Though most of the workers are exposed to dangerous levels of radiation, most of them consider themselves fortunate and lucky. That is quite expected in a country where the wage rates/returns in farming is very low and there is not any other job opportunity.

Yesterday 200 villagers of Matigoda entered the UCIL premises and started ploughing the land. Even though the land was acquired long back, the villagers were paying the tax. They were not paid any compensation. Nobody got a job either. The situation became

tense. They were invited for a negotiation after few hours. They were taken to the local police station. The meeting lasted for a few hours and ended with some promises, but no document was signed.

The public hearing was held in the private land of UCIL, near the camp of the Central Industrial Security Forces. Early morning, hundreds of UCIL workers and other beneficiaries had occupied the chairs kept in the hall for the public hearing. The real public, who have lost their lands for the mines and whose health has been damaged due to radiation, had no place in the entire process.

The hearing was held to get the peoples' consent for a capacity addition of 20% (from current 2020 tpd to 2500 tpd of uranium ore to be milled) and for another tailing pond to house the radioactive mill tailing. The total tailing that will be let off in the pond will be about 850,000 tons per year. About 15 acres of forest land has also been sought for these. UCIL got all what they sought.

UCIL sponsored group carrying different banners supporting UCIL and its activities came and entered in the venue and placed their banners. Some of these banners were carried by small children, who did not understand the meaning of what was written on them. One banner carried by the supporters read: "when compared with hunger, pollution is a small issue. Save UCIL".

When JOAR and other groups carrying their banner trying to enter the venue, UCIL supporters man-handled, few women activist were beaten up and Pargana Charan Murmu was pushed away. He and some others fell down. Police and other security forces were mute spectators to this denial of a place to sit and air their grievances. Finally, the company supporters and the forces pushed the villagers out of the hall.

No one was allowed to enter the hall and allow to speak, in this situation JOAR and other organization decided to boycott the

public hearing. We also joined them with shouting slogan – "public hearing is farce" – "stop false public hearing" – "land water and forest is ours" we came out and sat for a Dharna.

UCIL succeeded in convincing the workers that those who were critical of the project were working towards closing down the mining and milling activities in Jadugoda. The slogans shouted by the workers and other beneficiaries and the placards they were carrying all said about saving UCIL. Incidentally, the critics position that they are demanding safe operations for workers, people in the neighborhood and the ecop-system was unheard.

Around 11 AM, the General Manager of UCIL read out a document listing the details of the project. The GM appeared like reading from a science text book. There were technical terms like Becquerel, in his speech. A journalist who was covering the event asked one of us: what does a Becquerel mean? The presentation by the general manager lasted for about 30 minutes. After this, the organizers announced the names of the speakers from the 'public'. Everybody was unanimous on one issue – UCIL provides jobs, food, clothing and houses. All talks about radiation is anti-national propaganda. UCIL has to be protected at any cost. There is no need to hear any viewpoint which is against the interests of the company.

JOAR and other organizations fighting on environmental issues related to radiation, livelihood issues related to loss of land due to mines and contamination of farmlands and water bodies decided to boycott the drama called public hearing, as there was no possibility of presenting the view of the affected people. Ghanashyam Biruli, Dumka Murmu and Charan Murmu of JOAR briefed the press. Among their demands are (a) no new uranium mine (b) bring the existing mine under the international safety guide lines (c) return of tribal land acquired earlier,

but not utilized for mining (d) provide livelihood and rehabilitation to the displaced people. (f) clean up of the contamination (g) an independent study about the environmental contamination and health effects among the people (h) continuous monitoring of the water bodies to ensure that the radionuclides do not seep into the aquifer, the life line of more than 100,000 people. The activists also reiterated their position that there is no compelling need to expand the capacity of UCIL as the country can now buy uranium from international market.

VT Padmanabhan, Genetic Epidemiologist, Bangalore

Dr Meher Engineer, Physicist, Ex Director, Bose Institute, Calcutta

Pradip Dutta, Writer and People Science Activist, Calcutta

Shriprakash, Film maker, Ranchi

jadugoda.Jharkhand.org.in

Ghanshyam Biruli, President JOAR

Dumka Murmu, Secretary JOAR

Charan Murmu, Pargana

REPORT

UCIL – NO NEED OF EXPANSION NOW, CLEAN UP THE MESS THAT HAS BEEN CREATED, PAY JUST COMPENSATION FOR THE AFFECTED PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

The Uranium Corporation of India Ltd (UCIL) has applied for renewal of mining lease for uranium and also for fresh allotment of 15 hectares of forest land for the construction of tailing pond that will house the radioactive waste generated during the milling of uranium ore. Even though the uranium mining has a history of over 30 years, this is the first time that they have mentioned the real objective of uranium – making bombs. Incidentally, this expansion plan is happening after the Government of India signed the Indo-US Nuclear deal and IAEA guidelines for nuclear co-operation with the Nuclear Supplier's group.

The Poor Quality Ore

The EIA mentions that the ore present in Jadugora in West Singhbhum district is of poor quality (0.06% of natural uranium) and in other countries, this will not be considered as a uranium ore. The current milling capacity is 0.6 million tons. If concentration of U238 is 0.06%, they should be able to recover about 300 tons of natural uranium without any capacity addition. UCIL has sought to increase the milling capacity by 20%. This would mean

that the production will be raised to 360 tons a year. (This is less than one percent of the global uranium production).

Once India is permitted to buy uranium from the international market, the only purpose of the local production will be to cater for the defense needs. Since the DAE has a huge stockpile of high-level waste (containing plutonium), generated during the past thirty years, there seems to be no need of additional fissile material, if the strategic imperative is 500 war-heads (which is what other smaller nuclear powers like China, UK etc have). Mining and milling of low-grade uranium not only economically unviable, but also is ecologically unsustainable.

Ecological Problems Already Known

Several independent researchers have conducted environmental and epidemiological studies in and around Jadugoda. Notable among them are the GreenPeace team's study of radon in air, Dr MV Remana's (Princeton University) and Hiroaki Koide's (Research Reactor Institute at Kyoto University) study of environmental radioactivity. Environmental Contamination

Prof Koide's findings are summarized below: 1. The external gamma dose rate exceeds 1 mSv/y in the villages, and reaches 10 mSv/y around the tailing ponds. 2. The soil surrounding the tailings ponds is contaminated by uranium. Particularly high contamination levels were found in the village of Dungridih that borders tailings pond No.1. In other villages, no serious contamination was found. 3. Radon emanated from tailings ponds etc spreads contamination. 4. Waste rock from the mine used for construction material spreads contamination. 5. The tailings pond No 1 shows contamination by cesium. This fact shows that high-level radioactive wastes were brought in from a source other than an uranium mine. 6. Product uranium concentrate is dealt with carelessly and was found dispersed at Rakha Mine railway station.

The dumping has directly affected 15 village clusters, Jadugora town, Narwapahar town, and the areas around the Rakha railway station. Altogether, the areas have a population of over 30,000.

Health Effects

Health studies were conducted by Dr Sanghamitra Gadekar of Anumukti and recently by the Indian Doctors for Peace and Development, the Indian affiliate of the International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). Conducted in two different phases, while one survey concentrates on villages within the radius of 2.5 km from the mines, a similar one was undertaken in villages about 30 km from the mining areas. A total of 2,118 households in the first category, while another 1,956 households were studied in the second category. According to the survey, more children - about 9.5 per cent of the newborns - are dying each year due to extreme physical deformity, primary sterility is becoming common with 9.6 per cent of women not being able to conceive even three years after marriage. Cancer deaths in nearby villages are about 2.87 per cent and 68.33 per cent people are dying before the age of 62. The EIA Report quotes about the health studies conducted by UCIL. There is no mention about methodology or the details of the experts who conducted the study. There is no abnormalities, whatsoever, which could be attributed to the operations of UCIL. While the independent researchers have published their reports in detail, the

UCIL researchers have not made their reports public. As such, it is impossible to review them.

The same is true about the radiation measurements. All the readings quoted in EIA are more or less within the normal limits. If measurements are done at non-contaminated places, there will be no abnormality. The road through which the ore is transported to the mill is a place where contamination could be higher. On the road again, places near the speed-breakers have higher contamination than other places.

Radon Balance Sheet

According to EIA, uranium mines, mills and the tailing ponds emit 100 Giga Becquerel of radon per day. This is equal to 100,000,000,000 atoms disintegrating every second. Radon has a half life of 3.6 days. Radon is a radioactive gas and emits highly energetic alpha radiation. This means that any time, there will be 360,000,000,000 atoms of radon disintegrating every second somewhere in Jadugoda. Each of the above disintegration can mutate a cell, which can lead to cancer or other diseases to the exposed persons or genetic diseases among their offspring.

Pipe Burst

Every day, more than three thousand tons of radioactive waste in slurry form is discharged from the mill. While more than half the uranium in the ore would be extracted by the mill, all other major radionuclides in the Uranium-chain, accounting to about 80% of the original radioactivity in the ore, will be found in the slurry. Burst of these pipes have almost become a routine event in UCIL. Such accidents and callous mismanagement after the accident have caused contamination of the people land and water sources.

Impact of Aquifer

Jadugoda uranium facility is sitting on a rich aquifer of about 20sq km, which is the lifeline of 30,000 people. This aquifer has a total annual replenishable recharge of 4.3 million cubic meters of water. There has been leakage radioactivity from the tailing pond. Well water in Chati Kocha has been severely contaminated. Though the impact is now felt in one village alone, the radionuclides can migrate and contaminate the entire aquifer.

The EIA mentions about the studies on radiological quality of ground and surface waters. These are based on smaller number of unrepresentative samples. Sampling has not been done for a full year. A more systematic study of the aquifer is the need of the hour. It has to be noted that (a) the waste generated annually is huge – about 600,000 tons a year (or some 6 million tons during ten year), (b) the aquifer could also be linked to other nearby water bodies. This will threaten the life and well-being of people living far away from Jadugoda.

CONCLUSION

There have been several research studies conducted by independent experts showing adverse environmental and health impacts among the people involved in mining and the communities living downwind and downstream the facilities in Jadugoda. Besides the scientific studies, the plight of the local population has been captured in an award winning docu-

mentary film –Buddha Smiles at Jadugoda. These evidences cannot be ignored or dismissed as anti-national propaganda.

We saw that India is producing less than one percent of the total uranium produced in the world. Nowhere in the world can one find a uranium mine and mill in the midst of thickly populated villages. Here, the distance between the tailing pond and the residence of the communities is less than a few meters.

UCIL has been operating for over four decades now. Many of the social problems like the just compensation for the land acquired, cost of medical treatment for radiation-caused illnesses among the workers and the local population, contamination of land, water and air have not been addressed at all. UCIL has to realize its corporate responsibility towards the First People of Singhbhum district, who has been forced to make sacrifices for attaining nuclear capability.

NFI Editorial Team:

S.P.Udayakumar
Harsh Kapoor
R.Ramesh

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