

Lobbyists Urge Lower Operating Status at US Nuke Posture Review

Written by John Hallam

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The press-release below has been sent as a lobbying document to a massive list of fax numbers starting with President Obama, Hilary Clinton, Ellen Tauscher, Defence Secretary Gates, and the relevant committees of the US Congress.

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PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NSW NUCLEAR FLASHPOINTS PROJECT
ASSOCIATION OF WORLD CITIZENS SAN FRANCISCO
AUSTRALIAN PEACE COMMITTEE
MARRICKVILLE PEACE GROUP
PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (PND) W.A.,

LOBBYISTS CALL ON US NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW TO 'TAKE THE APOCALYPSE OFF THE AGENDA'

Nuclear disarmament lobbyists Steve Starr, John Hallam, Alyn Ware, and Doug Mattern whose efforts helped persuade the UN to pass resolutions aimed at reducing the danger of accidental nuclear war in 2007 and 2008, have called on the Obama administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) to 'Take the Apocalypse off the Agenda' by lowering the alert levels of US and Russian nuclear weapon systems.

The Nuclear Posture Review, now scheduled to be delivered to the US Congress by 1 March (or later), details US nuclear weapons policies, including the 'alert status' of US nuclear weapons systems.

The United Nations General Assembly, the recent International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), many non-nuclear weapon states, along with concerned citizens from all over the world, have all called for US and Russian nuclear weapons to be taken off high-alert, quick-launch status. Lowering the alert status of nuclear weapons would reduce the danger of their unauthorised use and eliminate the danger of accidental nuclear war based upon a false warning of attack.

A recent letter by prominent US nuclear weapons experts coordinated by Washington lobbyists has also made the same call.

Recent peer-reviewed studies predict that the detonation of a tiny fraction of the deployed and operational US-Russian nuclear arsenals would cause catastrophic damage to the global environment and climate, which would threaten the lives of all peoples and nations. Keeping thousands of nuclear weapons on high-alert status makes absolutely no sense, particularly since this makes accidental nuclear war possible.

According to the ICNND, "The prospect that a catastrophic nuclear exchange could be triggered by a false alarm is fearful and not fanciful."

And:

"...The issue of most immediate concern which certainly does not have to wait for reductions in weapon numbers, is the huge number of weapons that remain on dangerously high alert,

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planned to be launched more or less immediately on receiving information (or what is believed to be information) about an opponents attack."

The ICNND recommends, "...It is crucial that ways be found to lengthen the decision - making fuse for the launch of any nuclear weapons and in particular - while recognising the difficulty and complexity of the negotiating process - that weapons be taken off launch-on-warning alert as soon as possible."

President Obama's election manifesto included a commitment to do just that - to negotiate with Russia to lower the alert levels of US and Russian nuclear weapons systems. We urge that the ongoing US Nuclear Posture Review and START negotiations take on board this recommendation of the ICNND.

By lowering the alert status of nuclear weapon systems, the US (and Russia) will enhance its own security by eliminating the danger of accidental nuclear war.

We therefore urge the Obama administration to show leadership and keep its promises on this utterly vital issue and to - literally - take the apocalypse off the agenda, as it promised to do when elected.

Contact:

John Hallam
PND Nuclear Flashpoints
Phone: 9810-2598 m0416-500-793

Steven Starr
Senior Scientist, Physicians for Social Responsibility
604 West Blvd. South
Columbia, MO 65203
www.nucleardarkness.org

Doug Mattern Association of World Citizens (San Francisco)
1-650 326 1409

Alyn Ware,
Vice-President International Peace Bureau, (Right Livelihood/'Alternative Nobel' Award) 021
260 3727

Don Jarrett, President, Australian Peace Committee, Adelaide,

Nick Deane, Marrickville Peace Group

Jo Vallentine, PND-W.A., 08-9272-4252