

Letter to US Congress Subcttees on Strategic Nuke Forces

Written by John Hallam

Friday, 27 February 2015 20:02 - Last Updated Friday, 27 February 2015 20:06

**HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT RE:
FORWARD DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR FORCES IN EUROPE**

**URGENCY OF COMPLETE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: NUCLEAR WEAPONS A CLEAR
AND PRESENT DANGER TO HUMAN SURVIVAL**

VIENNA CONFERENCE OF DEC 8-9 2014

**MIKE ROGERS, CHAIR, STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE MIKE
TURNER, CHAIR, TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE**

ALL MEMBERS OF HOUSE AND SENATE SUBCOMMITTEES ON STRATEGIC FORCES

SECY OF DEFENCE

SECY OF STATE

CC

Chair, Joint Chiefs of Staff

General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe

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Dear Members of Congressional Subcommittees on Strategic Forces:

The Human Survival Project is writing to you out of deep concern over your proposals to forward-deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe, detailed in a letter to President Obama of 22 Jan. We agree with and commend to you the letter you have received or will be receiving from FCNL, stating that this would be dangerous in the extreme and will decrease, not increase, global, European and US security and increase the risk of catastrophic nuclear war.

In addition, we would wish to draw your urgent attention to a number of developments that underline the risks that nuclear weapons pose to the world as a whole and to human survival itself. These risks have existed at least since the early 1960s and make every year a kind of Russian or American roulette. However in recent months they have drastically increased. This uptick in catastrophic nuclear risk makes a forward nuclear deployment such as that you propose all the more ill-advised.

These developments are:

--The recent (Dec8-9) Vienna Conference on Humanitarian consequences of Nuclear Weapons. The Vienna Conference was attended by 158 governments including that of the U.S. The Chairs Summary and the additional Austrian Pledge as well as presentation after presentation at the conference itself (at which the authors of this letter were present), make it abundantly clear that nuclear weapons are indeed, a clear and present danger to civilisation and possibly to human survival. Once it is accepted that this is indeed so, then the imperative to preserve civilisation, and the human species, surely takes precedence over any specifically national considerations of national security and power. The imperative becomes (and in legal terms of Article VI is already), to eliminate nuclear weapons as of yesterday. The elimination of nuclear weapons is not a utopian vision but a hard-headed survival imperative.

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-- The recent move by the board of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, founded by Albert Einstein and others in 1945, and consisting of roughly a dozen nobel prizewinners and highly distinguished scientists, to move the hands of the 'Doomsday Clock' from 5 minutes to midnight to 3 minutes to midnight. The clock has only been previously at 3 mins to midnight during the most perilous periods of the cold war. The editor of the Bulletin in a subsequent interview has noted that the hands of the Doomsday Clock 'are not moved lightly or for transient reasons'. The move to 3 minutes to midnight betokens an assessment on the part of people who have spent their lives forming judgements about these matters, that civilisation and the human race are in extreme peril.

--The recent article in the conservative mainstream German newspaper

Der Spiegel

that the current situation in Ukraine has given rise to risks of nuclear confrontation that are actually

greater

than those of the cold war. This largely confirms the judgement of the Bulletin and its committee of Nobels, but points specifically to the risks posed by the Ukrainian confrontation. Once more it is a powerful argument that the forward-deployment of nuclear weapons of any kind as proposed in your Jan22 letter would be risky in the extreme. The response to irresponsible threats from one party to the dispute is not further threats by the other party.

The risks of nuclear conflict posed by the Ukraine conflict are real and will be immeasurably aggravated by forward deployment of anything whatsoever. They will clearly also be aggravated by the supply of conventional weapons to Ukraine. The imperative is to de-escalate the situation and to take the temperature down before matters spiral out of control into a civilisational catastrophe. If nuclear weapons get to be used in any number it will be quite irrelevant who was 'right' or 'wrong', or who can be labelled as the 'aggressor' in Ukraine. The fragile fabric of civilisation will have been shredded.

Those risks also underline (as do the deliberations of the Vienna Conference) the absolute necessity for the subcommittees on strategic nuclear forces to focus

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not

on the strengthening of those forces but on the

prompt implementation of the US's (and Russia's) article VI NPT obligations to completely eliminate their nuclear forces at an extremely early date

This has now become, and becomes more and more, an urgent necessity not simply for US and Russian security (which it certainly is) but for human survival itself.

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