

Letter on De-Alerting/NoFirstUse FAXED to US Govt, Congressional Cttees

Written by John Hallam
Thursday, 04 August 2016 16:15 -

The letter below, urging support for De-Alerting and No First Use, to POTUS and to the US Congressional subcommittees on strategic forces has been successfully sent to the following fax numbers:

Secy of State Kerry 0011-1-202-647-6434, 0011-1-202-647-6047
US-UN Mission 0011-1-212-415-4443

House Strategic Forces Subcommittee (all 0011-1- from Australia)

Mike Rogers Chair, 202-225-5820
Trent Franks Ariz, 202-225-6328
Doug Lambourn Calif, 202-226-2638,
Mike Coffman Colo, 202-226-4623

Joe Wilson S. Carolina, 202-225-2455
Michael Turner Ohio, 202-225-6754,
Rich Nugent Fla, 202-226-6559,
Jim Bridenstine, Okla, 202-225-9187,
Jim Cooper Tenn. (Ranking Member) 202-226-1035,
Loretta Sanchez Calif, 202-225-5633,
James Langevin RI, 202-225-5976
Rick Larsen Wash, 202-225-4420
Marc Veasey, Tx, 202-225-9702

Senate Strategic Forces Subcommittee
Senator Marc Udall Chair, 202-224-6471
Senator Sessions, Ranking, 202-224-3149
Senator Reed 202-224-4680
Senator Mc Caskill 202-228-6326
Senator Donnelly, 202-224-5011,
Senator King 202-224-1946,
Senator Vitter, 202-228-5061
Senator Lee 202-228-1168

Signatories of NFU Letter:

Senator Ed Markey 1-202-224-8525

Senator Jeffrey Merkley 1-202-228-3997

Senator Patrick Leahy 1-202-224-3479
Senator Dianne Feinstein 1-202-228-3954

Senator Bernard Sanders 1-202-228-0776

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Senator Sherrod Brown 1-202-228-6321

Senator Ron Wyden 1-202-228-2717

Barack Obama, President, United States

Members of House of Reps and Senate Committees on Strategic Nuclear Forces

Dear President Obama (Copied to members of Congressional Committees on Strategic Forces):

Mr. President, you recently received a letter from ten Senators based on recent reports that you intend to review and make further changes to US nuclear posture before leaving office in January 2017.

The specific changes that have the highest priority were a move to 'no first use' of nuclear weapons, and the lowering of alert status so that Presidents and senior military do not have to take utterly apocalyptic decisions based on inadequate or absent data in minutes or seconds, with the ever-present possibility of a mistake that could/would be catastrophic for civilization worldwide. (Indeed, the only truly rational and moral option in such a situation would be unconditional nuclear withholding – i.e. a refusal ever to push the button or to permit others to do so.)

The Senators letter also focused rightly on other matters such as the need for a decrease in the overall role played by strategic nuclear forces in US security policy, and the cancellation of specific destabilizing and budget-busting programs such as the Long Range Standoff Cruise missile.

Disarmament NGOs whether from within the US or from outside, have a stake in US nuclear posture, and hence in the policies emanating from the Administration as well as in the relevant Congressional subcommittees. As NGOs both worldwide and in the US itself, we have a vital interest both in accelerating progress toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons – to global zero – and a more immediate-term focus on reducing nuclear risks. We see these matters as truly existential priorities.

This is especially the case in light of:

--The May 2016 meeting of the Open Ended Working Group at the United Nations in Geneva. Though the U.S. and other Nuclear Weapons States did not attend this meeting, a very large and representative number of governments and nongovernmental organizations participated including many U.S. allies currently relying on extended nuclear deterrence. It was clear at this meeting (attended by authors of this letter):

--That any use of nuclear weapons would be catastrophic;

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--That the risk of such use is as great as it has ever been;
--That governments worldwide are no longer prepared to take 'no' or even 'later' for an answer, when they ask about fulfillment by the nuclear weapon states (including the U.S.) of Article VI obligations under the NPT. They want immediate action.

States not reliant on nuclear weapons, and NGOs globally, see the current situation as both intolerable and terrifyingly dangerous.

--Statements by senior retired US and Russian military and by former US Defense Secretary Perry, as well as estimates by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 'Doomsday Clock', to the effect that the danger of an (accidental or otherwise) nuclear apocalypse, followed by the collapse of civilization, is as great, or greater, than it has been since the early 1980s.

--The Tbilisi Declaration adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA) on July 5, 2016, which included nuclear-risk reduction language considered in the subcommittee chaired by Senator Roger Wicker (Republican, United States) and approved by all OSCE parliamentary delegations. The Tbilisi Declaration, inter alia,

“...Calls on all OSCE States with nuclear weapons or under extended nuclear deterrence relationships to reduce the risks of a nuclear war by taking nuclear weapons off high-alert and by adopting no-first-use policies;...”

-- The letter to you in February 2010, endorsed by over 200 Japanese parliamentarians, including three members of Prime Minister Abe's current Cabinet and two former foreign ministers, supporting a move by the United States to 'sole purpose' and affirming their commitment to ensure Japan never acquires nuclear weapons as the U.S. undertakes nuclear disarmament measures.

--Recent commentary points to NATO–Russia confrontation in Ukraine and around the Baltic Sea as especially dangerous. The situation would be hazardous even if Russian statements and threats were entirely absent. We are allowing/creating an escalation in tensions that could, all too soon, take the world over a precipice.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors, in its June27 Indianapolis meeting, called for action to reduce nuclear risks and nuclear arsenals. They noted that:

“...the nuclear-armed countries are edging ever closer to direct military confrontation in conflict zones around the world, and the largest NATO war games in decades, involving 14,000 U.S. troops, and activation of U.S. missile defenses in Eastern Europe are fueling growing tensions between nuclear-armed giants, and according to former Defense Secretary William Perry: “The probability of a nuclear calamity is higher today, I believe, than it was during the cold war.”; (Hard copy of mayors conf statement appended)

Both an immediate reduction in the risks of nuclear warfare, and much more substantial

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progress to the elimination of nuclear weapons altogether, are urgently called for.

Making U.S. posture one of No First Use, and lowering the alert status of U.S. nuclear forces so you are no longer required to make decisions that might destroy civilization within 90 minutes, are two key elements that would dramatically reduce nuclear risks and would pave the way to a nuclear weapon-free world. So too would the other measures in the Senators' recent letter. Taking these steps would go some way to redeeming the promises and expectations raised in the rest of the world by your 2009 Prague speech and your recent visit to Hiroshima.

We do not for a moment underestimate the forces both within the U.S. government itself, and from your political opponents, that will try to persuade you NOT to do these things. We believe however, that to take these steps, and hopefully others, will leave the world a safer and more secure place. This is bigger than making history: It is making history possible.

Signed: (Identification purposes only)

John Hallam, People for Nuclear Disarmament NSW/Human Survival Project

Prof. Peter King, Human Survival Project,

Gareth Evans, Fmr Foreign Minister, Convenor, Asia-Pacific Leadership Network, Co-chair International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament

Judy Blyth, People for Nuclear Disarmament W.A.,

Jo Vallentine (Fmr Senator) Anti-Nuclear Alliance of Western Australia, Perth W.A.,

Prof. Michael McKinley, Visiting Fellow, Australian National University, Canb,

Jim Bolger ONZ, Former Prime Minister NZ,

Richard Northey, Chair, International Affairs and Disarmament Committee, Aotearoa Peace Foundation, NZ,

Cdr. Rob Green RN (Ret'd), Disarmament & Security Centre, Christchurch NZ,

Bob Rigg, fmr chair, NZ National Consultative Committee on Disarmament, Wellington NZ,

Alyn Ware, World Future Council, Lond, UK,

Jenny Maxwell, Secretary, Hereford Peace Council UK,

Bill Kidd MSP, Scottish Parliament, Co-President PNND,

Aaron Tovish, Executive Advisor, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, Hiroshima, Japan,

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Marylia Kelley, Executive Director, Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment), Livermore, CA, USA,

David Krieger, President, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation,(NAPF) Santa Barbara, Calif, USA,

Steven Starr, PSR, Missouri, USA,

Charles G Baynton MD, PSR (member), St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.

Joseph Wasserman, No Nukes No War, Hartford, Ct, USA,

John Kim, Esq., Member, American Branch of International Law Association, USA

Fergus Watt, Executive Director, World Federalist Movement, Canada, Ottawa

Phyllis Creighton, Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day Coalition, Toronto, member

Janis Alton, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, Canada,

Pascale Fremond, Religions for Peace, Canada,

Hikomichi Umebayashi, Special Advisor, Peace Depot Inc. Japan

Kazuhiko Tamaki, President, Peace Depot, JAPAN

Akira Kawasaki, Executive Committee member, Peace Boat, Japan,

Shashi Tyagi, Asia-Pacific Leadership Network (member), Fmr chief Indian Air Force, Fmr chair Chiefs of Staff Committee,

Prof. R. Rajaraman, Emeritus, Physics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, (JNU) New Delhi, India,

Sukla Sen, EKTA (Committee for Communal Amity), Mumbai, India

Dr. J. Enkhsaikhan, Chairman, Blue Banner, Mongolia,

John Scales Avery, Assoc. Prof. Emeritus, Univ. Copenhagen, Chair, Pugwash Denmark,

Giorgio Nebbia, Professor Emeritus, Univ.Bari, Italy, former member of the Italian Parliament1983-1992

Michele Di Paolantonio, MD, President of AIMPGN (IPPNW Italy)

Lisa Pelletti Clark, Beati i costruttori di pace, Italy

Jean-Marie Matagne, PhD, Président, Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN), France

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Wolfgang Schlupp-Hauck, Friedenswerkstatt Mutlangen, Germany,

Prof. Andreas Nidecker, MD, IPPNW Switzerland, Basel, Switzerland,

Birgitta Johndottir, Parliamentarian, Iceland,