

## Keep Faith On Nuclear Weapons Policy

Written by John Hallam

Tuesday, 20 January 2009 10:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 25 June 2009 05:11

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### LETTER TO PRESIDENT - ELECT BARACK OBAMA

#### KEEP FAITH ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY

On the eve of the inauguration of President Barack Obama, organisations from around the world dedicated to the cause of the elimination of nuclear weapons have written to him urging him to keep faith with, and implement swiftly, the nuclear disarmament policies on which he was elected.

In his election manifesto, President Obama had said that he would:

"...Set the Goal of a Nuclear-Free World: Barack Obama will show the world that America believes in its existing commitment under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to work to ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons. Barack Obama fully supports reaffirming this goal, as called for by George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn, and the specific steps they propose to move us in that direction. He has made clear that America will not disarm unilaterally."

and:

"...Seek Real, Verifiable Reductions in Nuclear Stockpiles: Barack Obama will seek deep, verifiable reductions in all U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons and work with other nuclear powers to reduce global stockpiles dramatically by the end of his presidency."

Obama said he would:

"...Work with Russia to Increase Warning and Decision Time: Keeping nuclear weapons ready to launch on a moment's notice is a dangerous relic of the Cold War. Barack Obama believes that we must address this dangerous situation. As President, Barack Obama will aim to work with Russia to end such Cold War policies in a mutual and verifiable manner."

He also stated that:

"... a world without nuclear weapons is profoundly in America's... and the world's interest" and stated that he would "make the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide a central element of US nuclear policy" adding that "if we want the world to de-emphasize the rule of nuclear weapons, the United States and Russia must lead by example".

The letter, signed by a range of distinguished signatories including former UN Secretary for Disarmament Jayantha Dhanapala, (former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs 1998-2003 and President of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference), representatives of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (awarded the nobel prize in 1985), the US -Based Global Security Institute, the deputy president of the European Parliament and a number of MEP's and Parliamentarians, a range of US disarmament organisations, as well as the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, and European nuclear disarmament groups, was faxed and emailed to the transition team in the leadup to the inauguration. It is being released in Sydney Australia by coordinator John Hallam of PND Nuclear Flashpoints Campaign on 20 Jan (Sydney time).

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According to Mr Hallam:

“There will be massive pressure placed on President Obama to back off from these policies. Already, conservative think – tanks are preparing papers effectively saying he should forget about the policies that, as he was being elected, gave hope to those of us who believe the fate of humans depends on being able to eliminate nuclear weapons. It really is essential to the fate of humans that he does nothing of the kind. Nuclear weapons, particularly those on high – alert in the US and Russian arsenals, remain entirely capable of making the planet completely uninhabitable in about 40 minutes on the ultimate bad – hair day. It is beyond belief that if we don't get rid of the worlds still massive nuclear arsenals then by madness, malice, miscalculation or malfunction they will be used. Only if we eliminate them can we ensure this never happens.”