

Peace Action

Past, Present, and Future

Edited by Glen Harold Stassen and Lawrence S. Wittner
Paradigm Publishers, 2007, 170 pages (paper)

Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security?

U.S. Weapons of Terror, the Global Proliferation Crisis and Paths to Peace

An Assessment of the Final Report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission and Its Implications for U.S. Policy

Edited by Michael Spies and John Burroughs

Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, 2007, 275 pages (paper)

www.WMDreport.org

Reviewed by Alice Slater in Fellowship, Winter 2008 (www.forusa.org/fellowship)

Despite 50 years of movement building and dedicated leadership to ban the bomb, we still face the nuclear sword of Damocles that President Kennedy hoped to avert when, under enormous public pressure, he promoted and passed the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty. Sadly, that treaty merely banned atmospheric nuclear tests, sending the toxic explosions underground.

From there, the arms race, driven by the weapons labs, continued helter-skelter between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. It was interrupted by a number of successful grassroots campaigns over the years for arms reductions – eliminating certain classes of weapons like the MX Missile and, most recently, the nuclear bunker-busting earth penetrator. Today there are 26,000 nuclear weapons on the planet, 25,000 of them in the U.S. and Russia, with about 3,000 warheads poised to be fired in minutes. The U.S. has plans to replace its entire nuclear arsenal with a new hydrogen bomb, the “reliable replacement warhead,” and announced its Vision 2030 to rebuild the whole nuclear weapons complex while the manufacture of new plutonium bomb cores has already begun at Los Alamos Laboratory.

Opportunities to abolish nuclear weapons were squandered after the Cold War when Russia would not go along with our Star Wars scheme to dominate the earth from the heavens above. Four new countries, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea, joined the nuclear club with Russia, the U.S., China, France, and the U.K. having pledged to eliminate their nuclear weapons in the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty. More menacingly, in an industry-driven onslaught promoted by corporate spinmasters as a “solution” to the coming climate crisis, many more countries are seeking so-called “peaceful” nuclear technology. This was promised to them in the Non-Proliferation Treaty in return for their pledge to forego nuclear weapons. More deadly bomb-making material will metastasize in reactors around the world, creating new targets for preemptive war by an unchecked imperial U.S. Witness today the turmoil over Iran seeking to exercise its lawful right under the treaty to enrich uranium for nuclear power.

Peace Action, Past, Present, and Future and *Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security?* make valuable contributions to understanding how we got to where we are today, some of the lessons learned, and future opportunities. *Peace Action* is a 50th anniversary compilation of essays by movement leaders reflecting the history of the anti-nuclear movement. It begins with the 1957

founding of SANE, to its merger with the Freeze movement of the 1980s, to its present-day incarnation as Peace Action.

Tracing the highs and lows of the peace movement and its constituencies – women, religious leaders, internationalists – it reports on the early terrifying days of confrontation with the Soviet Union. World leaders, in an effort coordinated by SANE founder, Norman Cousins, signed newspaper ads engendering thousands of public responses that resulted in the first nuclear testing moratorium. The editors close with a proposal for a campaign to reframe the issue in the new millennium in terms of international cooperation, freedom from weapons of mass destruction, and support for human rights.

Contributors provide lively eyewitness accounts and critical observations of a succession of campaigns over the years. SANE's 1961 ad in the *New York Times* after the moratorium failed, "Doctor Spock Is Worried," was widely reproduced. It led to the passage of the Limited Test Ban Treaty, an early half-measure that, in retrospect, did not move us closer to nuclear abolition. Marcus Raskin gives an excellent analysis of the tension between incrementalists in the peace movement, who advocated for measurable steps and arms reductions, and those who had begun to question the whole premise of U.S. foreign policy, reflecting the turmoil of the Vietnam war. "[I]t became clear that what was at stake was the meaning of democracy itself, under threat from the military-industrial complex Eisenhower had warned against and the expanded national security state that burdened American and international life beyond what Eisenhower would have imagined."

Certainly, after the Cold War it became apparent that in order to end the nuclear scourge it would take a great deal more than a series of arms reduction agreements. Indeed, as Jacqueline Cabasso suggests in *Nuclear Disorder*, it would require a whole new definition of security which must be viewed "within the framework of a new concept of global (not national) security based on human needs and ecological values, and not on the threat of horrific annihilation." Cabasso gives the most comprehensive analysis and data on how the U.S. weapons labs undermined the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, making a Faustian bargain with Clinton in 1996 for billions of dollars annually to enable them to continue research, development, and computer-simulated testing. This has been coupled with 27 "subcritical" nuclear tests to date at the Nevada test site (detonating plutonium and chemical explosives without a chain reaction), which has enabled the labs to produce designs for an entirely new and modernized nuclear arsenal.

In *Nuclear Disorder*, three key leadership organizations [Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, Western States Legal Foundation, Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom] in the Abolition 2000 Global Network for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, launched at the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, analyze the recommendations of the Blix Commission and make many excellent recommendations of their own in response. The authors note that Abolition 2000 called for a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons, not for arms reductions. This call recognized that the "inextricable link between nuclear weapons and nuclear power" requires the phase-out of nuclear power to achieve a nuclear-free world.

The editors take issue with the Blix Commission for its conclusion that nuclear power can be controlled. At the same time, they have high praise for the WMD Commission's documentation of U.S. disdain for international law and its drive to maintain absolute global superiority in weapons. There is excellent material on Iran, global climate change, gender issues, and implications of space weaponization by prominent experts in the nuclear abolition arena. If you really want to understand the dimensions of the obstacles and opportunities on the road to nuclear disarmament, put *Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security?* on your reading list.

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