

Spring 2009

# Reflections

Y A L E D I V I N I T Y S C H O O L

THE FIRE NEXT TIME:  
FAITH AND THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS



*"There is violence and injustice in our world that must be confronted. We must confront it not by splitting apart but by standing together as free nations, as free people. I know that a call to arms can stir the souls of men and women more than a call to lay them down. But that is why the voices for peace and progress must be raised together."*

*– President Barack Obama, Palm Sunday 2009, Prague*

#### COVER ARTWORK: MAKOTO FUJIMURA

FRONT COVER *"Water Flames Vermillion"*

BACK COVER *"Precious Grace"*

*Makoto Fujimura, born in 1960 in Boston and educated bi-culturally between the U.S. and Japan, is a New York-based artist.*

*His work reflects a sustained meditation on relations between art and faith, beauty and reconciliation. His essays and blogs at [www.makotofujimura.com](http://www.makotofujimura.com) suggest his keen interest in a contemporary world in the throes of transformation, anxiety, and hope. In 1990, he founded The International Arts Movement, which gathers creative artists to wrestle with issues of faith, humanity, and creativity.*

*Critic Robert Kushner has written: "The idea of forging a new kind of art, about hope, healing, redemption, refuge, while maintaining visual sophistication and intellectual integrity, is a growing movement, one which finds Fujimura's work at the vanguard."*

#### PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL SHAMBROOM

*Born in New Jersey and now living in Minneapolis, Paul Shambroom has made a photographic career exploring the relationship between American power and culture.*

*The images seen in these pages were selected from his book of 83 color photos called Face to Face with the Bomb: Nuclear Reality after the Cold War (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).*

*At [www.paulshambroomart.com](http://www.paulshambroomart.com), he writes: "The ending of the Cold War raised great hopes that justification for nuclear weapons would tumble along with the Berlin Wall. To date, such hopes have been unfounded. ... I hope my photographs will connect viewers to the continuing legacy of these events, and help them to confront and define their own attitudes about the nuclear present and future."*

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*For a free subscription or to buy additional copies of this issue, please go to [www.yale.edu/reflections](http://www.yale.edu/reflections), or call 203-432-5359. Reflections study guides, summaries of back issues, and other information can be found on the web site as well.*

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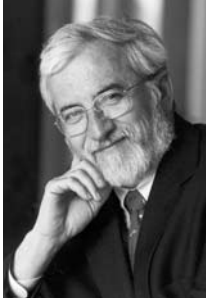
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THE FIRE NEXT TIME:  
FAITH AND THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS



# From the Dean's Desk



Harold W. Attridge

Dean of Yale Divinity School  
& Lillian Claus Professor  
of New Testament

We baby boomers have lived with the threat of nuclear holocaust all of our lives. Some of us remember vivid images from our childhood, grainy videos of test bomb blasts and pictures of the mushroom clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We also remember the false security of “duck and cover” exercises at school and concrete bomb shelters in basements, stacked with food and drink. Such images remind us of the nation’s profound fear and desperate need for reassurance in a dangerous time.

Since the height of the Cold War the dangers have changed but not disappeared. We now live in what experts are calling the “Second Nuclear Age,” where the deterrence and international controls established in the Cold War era have lost effectiveness, proliferation pressures are surging, and non-state actors (terrorists) seek the weapon. The context requires new thinking and renewed commitment to the elimination of the nuclear threat.

Religious voices are not new to the debate about nuclear weapons. Some have argued for strict control, some for abolition, but all have recognized that there are significant moral and theological issues at stake. Yale’s religious voices have not been silent. In 2005, we celebrated the ministry of William Sloane Coffin, long a leader in movements to end the nuclear threat. The event was the occasion of Bill’s last address at Yale before his death. Though frail and in ill health, he issued a clarion call for renewed efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, declaring: “We are practicing nuclear apartheid. Either all nations or no nations should possess nuclear weapons.”

Responding to his call for a new national interfaith initiative, the organization Faithful Security emerged. Several members of that initiative participated in the 2008 Sarah Smith Memorial Confer-

ence at Yale Divinity School, which addressed the theme: “Are We Safe Yet? Vulnerability and Security in an Anxious Age.”

As this *Reflections* issue was going to press, President Obama issued an eloquent challenge to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons from the world. In Hradčany Square in Prague, he told a large crowd of Czech citizens: “When we fail to pursue peace, then it stays forever beyond our grasp. We know the path when we choose fear over hope. To denounce or shrug off a call for cooperation is an easy but also cowardly thing to do. That’s how wars begin. That’s where human progress ends. ... I know that a call to arms can stir the souls of men and women more than a call to lay them down. But that is why the voices of peace and progress must be raised together.”

A major contributor to the shaping of this timely issue has been YDS alum Tyler Wigg-Stevenson, who served as guest contributing editor of this *Reflections*. Tyler has emerged as one of the leading voices on this issue as policy director for Faithful Security and as leader of the new Two Futures Project, which is also dedicated to providing a religious perspective on the issue of nuclear disarmament. The thoughtful essays by Tyler and the other contributors here will, we hope, assist all in the religious community to reflect deeply and to act in support of efforts to abolish the nuclear threat.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold W. Attridge". The script is fluid and cursive.

Harold W. Attridge  
Dean

# Contents

## The Fire Next Time: Faith and the Future of Nuclear Weapons

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<i>From the Dean's Desk</i>	2
<i>A New Age of Diplomacy</i> – George Shultz	5
<i>One Superpower, Under God</i> – Tyler Wigg-Stevenson	10
<i>The Call to a New Moral Imperative</i> – Jonathan Granoff	15
<i>Our Chance to Change the World</i> – Naila Bolus	21
<i>Security, Vulnerability, Theology</i> – Miroslav Volf	26
<i>Profile: Douglas Roche – Resilient Voice</i>	29
<i>Confronting an Age of Fear</i> – M. Jan Holton	31
<i>Transcending Ambivalence: A History of Engaging the Bomb</i> – David Cortright	35
<i>The Search for a Peacemaking Culture</i> – Amanda Hendler-Voss	40
<i>Now is Humanity's Climactic Moment</i> – An Interview with Jayantha Dhanapala	43
<i>The Nuclear Peril: "Genesis in Reverse"</i> – Jonathan Schell	51
<i>Profile: Barbara Green – Defying Stalemate</i>	53
<i>In Defense of Courage</i> – Scott Bader-Saye	55
<i>Nuclear Weapons, Evangelicals, and the Sanctity of Life</i> – David Gushee	57
<i>God's Security Strategy: Reconciliation Up, Out, and Down</i> – Lisa Schirch	61
<i>Moral Leadership in a Dangerous World</i> – Sergio Duarte	65
<i>From the Editor: Hidden Things</i>	72

## Poems:

- Half-life of Sorrow* – Roger Greenwald (p. 19)
- The Garden* – Dorianne Laux (p. 25)
- The Children of Chernobyl* – Mary Crescenzo (p. 34)
- A Vigil at a Missile Silo* – Mark Sanders (p. 39)
- Shoulders* – Naomi Shihab Nye (p. 49)
- Survivor* – Laura Manuelidis (p. 56)





# The New Age of Diplomacy

By George P. Shultz

*The goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is of transcendent importance. So far as the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their potential use is concerned, we are at a tipping point. The danger is all too real. The simple continuation of present practice with regard to nuclear weapons is leading in the wrong direction. We need to change the direction.*

Two essays in *The Wall Street Journal*, which I wrote with William Perry, Henry Kissinger, and Sam Nunn\*, and which have been endorsed by many others, developed the case for a world free of nuclear weapons. I will not repeat here the arguments we made in those essays, but I do want to underline a central argument made there. We set out a vision, and we examined in some detail the steps needed if we are to attain that goal. These points are interrelated. As we wrote, "Without the bold vision, the actions will not be perceived as fair or urgent. Without the actions, the vision will not be perceived as realistic or possible."

My objective here is to advance the argument by setting out some guideposts that will help us attain our objectives. I have entitled this article "The New Age of Diplomacy" because these guideposts all involve an immense effort in diplomacy, using that term in the broadest sense.

The first guidepost is the need for a firm grasp of the problem and of the stakes involved. Only with this reality in the gut as well as in the head of the body politic will difficult actions be possible. The stakes are huge, and people on every continent have a major interest in the outcome.

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\* Shultz was secretary of state from 1982-89. Perry was secretary of defense from 1994-97. Kissinger was secretary of state from 1973-77. Nunn is former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

There is more tension than ever in today's world as destructive weapons, even nuclear weapons, appear in more hands, as the international system for limiting their spread erodes, and as loosely structured arrays of Islamic extremists, some supported by Iran, hope to use these weapons of terror. The nation-state, the historic way of organizing civilized life and governmental activity, is under attack, and all too many parts of the world are barely governed. Such places, used by terrorists for training and launching attacks, are a grave danger to the civilized world.

The number of states seeking nuclear weapons or their precursors is in the process of expanding. The prospect of increased numbers of nuclear power plants means that the problems of controlling the process of uranium enrichment and dealing with spent fuel must be addressed with urgency.

## Post-Cold War Complacency

During the Cold War, nuclear weapons served the purpose of deterrence. Though deterrence worked, anyone who was closely involved is all too aware of some close calls. The more states that have nuclear weapons, the more fragile is the application of deterrence strategy as a way of preventing their use, and the less credible is Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which commits states with nuclear weapons to phase down their reliance on them and even finally phase them out. Of course, the terrorists who now seek nuclear weapons essentially cannot be

deterred. If they get a weapon, they will use it.

Somehow, the world's perception of the nuclear threat receded after the end of the Cold War. Often, problems are not given the attention they deserve until a tragedy occurs. We cannot wait for a nuclear Pearl Harbor or 9/11. We must get ahead of the game to prevent an even more catastrophic event than those that have been seared into our memories. If we wait – if a nuclear event occurs – the world will be changed so dramatically that we will not recognize it.

So wake up, everybody. The danger is real and the potential consequences are of catastrophic proportions.

The second guidepost for a successful effort is to reassure people that a sensible, practical process exists to deal effectively with the problem. Sometimes problems are described in such a way that people simply throw up their hands in frustration. Well, the problem is staggering, but identifiable steps can be taken that will put us on the road to success. We need to let people know that an action program is available and then get that program started.

In our second essay in particular, we reflected on papers presented at a conference in October 2007 at Stanford University's Hoover Institution in collaboration with Sam Nunn's Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), where these steps were discussed in detail. Many were identified as actions that could be taken promptly to make for a safer world.

### **Diplomatic-Scientific Imagination**

I have said this must be the age of diplomacy. We must consider the immense diplomacy needed to take the steps that have been identified. Diplomatic leadership from the very top is essential. No doubt foreign ministries will be expected to organize the effort. Quite obviously, that effort must be taken side by side with ministries of defense.

But I would like to highlight another ingredient of the diplomacy of the future. Almost all the steps involved will require a major scientific and technical component. Foreign ministries, with all due respect to their great gifts of persuasion and intelligence, are seldom able to grapple on their own with these issues.

Take the problem of the nuclear fuel cycle of nuclear energy power plants. What is required in enrichment capacity to produce the fissile material needed for a bomb? How would we go about detecting the presence of such capability? What means are available to deter or, if detected, to eliminate that effort? An alternative is needed. Under international supervision, can there be a set of facilities where

uranium is enriched, but not to weapons-grade material? Can the world be brought to agree that such facilities, which would work to provide power plant fuel at a reasonable price, would suffice? That is a diplomatic undertaking of enormous difficulty and importance that can only be accomplished by teams that include scientific capability, private as well as public.

The same can be said for the problem of dealing with spent fuel. Can an agreement be reached with complete confidence that spent fuel will be retrieved and dealt with satisfactorily? How can we keep it from being turned into the plutonium needed to produce a bomb? Or, as the number of weapons is reduced eventually to zero, how do we

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### **Who is the human being with the right to use a modern nuclear weapon, knowing the awesome human consequences?**

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assure ourselves against possible cheaters? These questions highlight the importance of a combined diplomatic and scientific approach for scoping out alternative public policies.

Countries must consider ways of promoting this kind of diplomatic/scientific collaboration. I have asked myself if I could have organized the conferences held at the Hoover Institution on my own. The answer is no. Could scientists have done so by themselves? I doubt it. There is simply no substitute for interaction between diplomats and scientists. Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation, as an example, has a long and productive history of putting physicists, biologists, and social scientists together to work at tough problems. Sid Drell, a top-notch physicist and my colleague in organizing these conferences, co-founded this organization 25 years ago. Scott Sagan, one of the current co-directors, is an eminent political scientist, and his co-director, Siegfried Hecker, is a materials scientist who was formerly the director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

There is still another side to achieving the needed steps. Among the seemingly intractable political tensions around the world, some may lead the parties involved to turn to nuclear weapons. Examples are the Israeli-Palestinian problem, the dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan, and the all-too-many areas of conflict in Africa.

One way to classify problems is to put them in two piles: problems you can solve and problems that seem insoluble. In the construction business, for example, if someone asks you to build a bridge



from A to nearby B, you can solve the problem. By contrast, if someone asks you to create a construction site free of accidents, you can put up guardrails and other safety devices, but the minute you think the problem is solved, you've lost. The issue is all about attitudes. You have to realize that the problem is not soluble but needs constant attention and work. Only then do you have a way to minimize or maybe even eliminate accidents.

### Two Kinds of Problems

Some of the most intractable international issues are like the second class of problems. Palestinians and Israelis claim the same land and so play a zero-sum game. Anyone can write down a solution on paper, but the answer goes deeper. You have to work at the problem all the time and be willing to take on possibilities, not just probabilities. Constant attention can keep the situation from deteriorating and, eventually, an accommodation might emerge, as in Northern Ireland. When considering our work on any problem, especially those presented by nuclear weapons, we should ask: Are these rules being applied and, if not, why not? To paraphrase President Teddy Roosevelt, even if you have a big stick, speak softly, firmly, and in a manner that will be sustained by the evolving facts. And remember that surprises always lie down the road, especially for those who are complacent.

The third guidepost is developing support in key and powerful constituencies in country after country. Obviously, in the end, heads of government are the essential leaders in this effort. In the Hoover Institution-Nuclear Threat Initiative approach, we have endeavored to cast the issue as *non-partisan* rather than *bipartisan*. We realize there are plenty

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**Practical steps toward the goal of a world without nuclear weapons have been identified. Attainment of the goal is a real possibility.**

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of issues to argue about, but we urge that they be discussed on their merits without getting mired in partisan divides. I am glad to say, for example, that three-fourths of the former Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Defense, and National Security Advisers alive today, Democrats and Republicans, support our efforts as outlined in *The Wall Street Journal* essays. I am glad to add that even those who have not signed on to the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world agree that many of the steps are desirable. I am heartened by the positions taken recently by the

Prime Minister of Great Britain, and I note that the current Defense Minister and the Foreign Minister in the predecessor government made similar comments. In a speech given in New Delhi on Jan. 21, 2008, Prime Minister Gordon Brown declared:

And let me say today: Britain is prepared to use our expertise to help determine the requirements for the verifiable elimination of nuclear warheads. And I pledge that in the run-up to the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference in 2010 we will be at the forefront of the international campaign to accelerate disarmament amongst possessor states, to prevent proliferation to new states, and to ultimately achieve a world that is freer from nuclear weapons.

I also attach great importance to a speech before the Plenary Session of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on February 12, 2008, by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Referring to our essays, he said that we "argued in a convincing manner in favor of the need to continue nuclear disarmament," and he noted that these ideas are "in line with Russia's initiatives, though there are, of course, aspects that call for further discussion in seeking agreement on specific ways of resolving these not-that-simple tasks."

And now on his newly established White House web site, President Obama has posted this statement:

Obama and Biden will set a goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and pursue it. Obama and Biden will always maintain a strong deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist. But they will take several steps down the long road toward eliminating nuclear weapons. They will stop the development of new nuclear weapons; work with Russia to take U.S. and Russian ballistic missiles off hair-trigger alert; seek dramatic reductions in U.S. and Russian stockpiles of nuclear weapons and material; and set a goal to expand the U.S.-Russian ban on intermediate-range missiles so that the agreement is global.

Finally, there's the problem of timing. How do you know when the moment has arrived to make a push? Once a process is started and gains support, I believe, momentum will be built. That is already happening. I believe also that success in such an undertaking will have highly desirable side consequences. People throughout the world will heave a sigh of relief. They will be able to say to themselves,

“There are leaders in this world with the capacity to deal with difficult problems.” Maybe other problems, such as climate change, can fall in line. Free of nuclear weapons, the world will be safer and saner in every respect.

I have tried to identify the great variety of important diplomatic tasks that lie ahead. Here are five undertakings that every country should embrace:

1. The issues involved are of transcendent importance, so the heads of government must be the chief diplomats. This is their issue. A key task is to help them exercise their awesome responsibilities.
2. Foreign ministers should expect to be at the center of organizing this effort, working in tandem with ministers of defense and others. Broad training is essential, particularly in the ability to work with technological issues and scientific people. Ways must be devised to retain seasoned officers and to engage senior people with political backgrounds. Young people should be encouraged to take careers in the foreign service.
3. The principal diplomatic task is to ensure that key constituencies in each country, groups that have an impact on the body politic, are brought on board, kept informed, and made a part of this process.
4. Scientists and diplomats must learn to work together on issues. When they do so successfully, they will experience the thrill of learning important things about areas with which they normally have little contact.
5. Finally, work must be undertaken, right from the outset, on a global scale. When I was in office and

dealing with members of Congress, I learned that one of the rules of the road is: If you want me with you on the landing, be sure I’m with you on the take-off.

The world is trending toward an increase in danger from nuclear weapons. That trend must and can be turned around. Support is building. Doable steps toward the goal of a world without nuclear weapons have been identified. Attainment of the goal is a real possibility.

Finally, from a personal perspective, I will do everything I can to turn possibility into reality. I have been touched by this issue almost from the day the first atomic bomb was exploded. I remember vividly the pictures of a devastated Hiroshima. I served alongside President Reagan as we were responsible for national security. Who is the human being with the right to use a modern nuclear weapon, knowing the awesome human consequences? Ronald Reagan believed that nuclear weapons are immoral, and so he sought their complete elimination, and I agreed – and still do with deep conviction. In the end, this is a matter of profound morality.

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*George P. Shultz is the Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford Distinguished Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He served as U.S. Secretary of State from 1982-89. He was also Secretary of the Treasury from 1972-74, and Secretary of Labor from 1969-70. This article draws heavily on "Diplomacy for the Future," a paper by George Shultz and Henry S. Rowen that was presented at the "Reykjavik Revisited" Conference at the Hoover Institution in 2007, and on a keynote address by Shultz at a conference on "Achieving the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons" convened by the Government of Norway in Oslo in 2008.*

### The Nuclear Powers by the Numbers

	NUCLEAR WARHEADS OPERATIONAL (estimates)	NUCLEAR WARHEADS TOTAL INVENTORY (estimates)
USA	4,075	5,400
Russia	5,192	14,000
UK	160	160
France	348	348
China	176	240?
Israel	?	100–200?
Pakistan	?	24–48?
India	?	50–60?
North Korea	?	fewer than 10?

Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative  
[http://www.nti.org/db/disarmament/stockpile\\_chart.html](http://www.nti.org/db/disarmament/stockpile_chart.html)

## Four Political Figures, Two Op-Eds, One Documentary

The world's languishing debate about nuclear proliferation was re-ignited when four prominent Cold War patriarchs went public in 2007 with an urgent plea to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely. George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, and William Perry roused a resistant political establishment with two op-ed essays in *The Wall Street Journal*, the first in January 2007, then a follow-up a year later.

A documentary featuring the four co-authors will soon be released by the Nuclear Security Project ([www.nuclearsecurityproject.org](http://www.nuclearsecurityproject.org)), an initiative of former Senator Sam Nunn's Nuclear Threat Initiative. A complimentary DVD of the documentary will be sent to all *Reflections* subscribers. Non-subscribers can order a free copy of the film online at [www.twofuturesproject.org/nsp-dvd](http://www.twofuturesproject.org/nsp-dvd).

The four co-authors were prompted to write their op-eds in the face of several worrisome global trends. In the post-Cold War world, they wrote, the old super-power doctrine of deterrence was less and less effective. North Korea's effort to build a nuclear weapon, and Iran's refusal to stop its uranium-enrichment program, place the world on a "precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era."

Most alarming, they said, is the increasing likelihood that non-state terrorists will obtain a nuclear weapon.

Ending these threats to global security demands action on several fronts. The authors argue for a re-invigorated commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which envisions the elimination of the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear powers.

The authors believe the United States must lead a joint international effort to rekindle the vision of President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev of two decades ago, when the two leaders shocked experts by calling for the elimination of nuclear arms.

The four co-authors urged several proposals, including:

- Initiate a bipartisan process with the Senate to achieve ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. (This agreement would ban all nuclear explosions. But it has not yet come into force because nuclear powers such as the U.S. and China have not ratified it.)

- Provide the highest possible standards of security for all stocks of weapons, weapons-usable plutonium, and highly enriched uranium everywhere in the world. There are nuclear weapons materials in more than 40 countries around the world, and recent reports allege attempts to smuggle nuclear material in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

- Halt the production of fissile material for weapons globally; phase out the use of highly enriched uranium in civil commerce; and remove weapons-usable uranium from research facilities around the world and render the materials safe.

The authors noted many responses of support for their arguments. Supporters include prominent figures: Madeleine Albright, Richard V. Allen, James A. Baker III, Samuel R. Berger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Frank Carlucci, Warren Christopher, William Cohen, Lawrence Eagleburger, Melvin Laird, Anthony Lake, Robert McFarlane, Robert McNamara, and Colin Powell.

"Progress must be facilitated by a clear statement of our ultimate goal," the co-authors wrote. "Indeed, this is the only way to build the kind of international trust and broad cooperation that will be required to effectively address today's threats."

See [www.nti.org](http://www.nti.org), the web site for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, for in-depth information and briefings on nuclear weapons issues.

See [www.nuclearsecurityproject.org](http://www.nuclearsecurityproject.org), the web site for the Nuclear Security Project, for more on the goals outlined in the two op-ed essays.

# One Superpower, Under God

By Tyler Wigg-Stevenson

*For far too long the American church has failed in any sort of critical engagement with the exercise of U.S. state power. We have erred on the liberal side toward a reflexive mistrust of America, the tepid pacifism of those whose relative wealth and citizenship insulate them from the worst violence of evil, and a tacit disbelief in God's sovereignty over human history. We have been blinded on the conservative side by an un-Christian American exceptionalism with deep cultural roots in our nation's religious history, but none whatsoever in the revelation of God.*

The former position is bad enough, but I leave it to liberal Christianity to right its own wrongs. I come from the latter wing of the church, where our conventions lead much too easily to a default approval of any American use of force. Because America and its purposes are righteous, the unarticulated logic often goes, so are any actions it employs in the national interest. And we have allowed a cultural distaste for secular peace activists – morally loose, unpatriotic, long-hairs; we all know the stereotypes – to diminish in our own imaginations that work of peacemaking that Christ called *blessed*, conferring upon those who practiced it an inheritance of being named *sons and daughters of God* (cf. Matt. 5:9).

## **Reawakening Fear of the Lord**

In taking an uncritical position on the exercise of American power, we pride ourselves on being “realists.” *Contra* the proverbial peaceniks, we think we see the hard reality of a fallen world and sinful human nature and realize the toughness needed to survive within it. But this attitude fails to account for the fact that realism is variable, not absolute: it depends entirely on one's perspective about what is *real* – about the facts determining a given situation. Narrow realism may seem to yield immediate success, but fail in the longer term due to a lack of

perspective about the larger forces at play. And the broadest perspective of all is the Biblical scope of God's rule in which we all dwell. Every tyrant in human history has been a consummate realist about the power dynamics of his given situation. What all have lacked, however, is the wisdom – in Biblical terms, the fear of God – to recognize the divine sovereignty that inexorably subordinates all temporal perceptions of the real.

As a people for whom the fear of God is a paramount value, evangelicals should have a far more robust theological perspective regarding security, violence, and peace. We should do so first and foremost because it represents fidelity to our calling as followers of Jesus Christ. But we should also do so because our times demand it.

Two converging yet conflicting factors define our present situation. First, the economic and demographic forces fuelling globalization are moving us toward what Os Guinness and others have termed a polycentric world. In the coming decades, all roads will not lead to Rome, or London, or Washington. Converging is not something roads will even *do* anymore; instead, they will trace a network between Washington-Beijing-Delhi-Tokyo-Brussels-London-Rio-Dubai-Singapore-etc.

Second, even leaving aside America's other forms of power, the U.S. is responsible for nearly half of the 1.3 trillion military dollars spent globally each year. We presently spend as much on our military as every other nation on earth does on theirs – combined – and our globe-spanning technologies give

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**If we do not seek to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether, we inevitably face nuclear proliferation leading to eventual use, whether in war, terrorism, or by accident.**

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us an astonishing (though not limitless) capacity to project our power around the world.

These two factors suggest we are emerging in a world that is not ours to rule by fiat – the multiple centers preclude the success of any imperial ambitions – but within which we will continue to exert extraordinary dominance and influence. We are like a trucker steering a giant rig down a steep and crowded road: we cannot drive as though the other cars will simply clear out of our way; neither can we simply leap from the wheel and let the machine go where it will. Either extreme leads to horrific violence. And American Christians find ourselves with a hand on the wheel. What shall we do?

### **Rethinking American Power**

In other words, we need to deal with the problem of our national power. This is not to say that American power is bad *per se*. The very God who judges the nations also ordained human government and created it for human good. The state's authority to use violent force was given as a necessary measure in a fallen world, so that the social order might be maintained and wrongdoing might be punished (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). But this ordination of state power is given to *each* nation that *all* peoples might be protected and secured against the chaos of human sinfulness. God's purpose for peace and order is no respecter of borders – he wants American state power to benefit Americans to the same degree that he wants Canadian state power to benefit Canadians.

The very existence of a superpower, then, presents a dilemma for Christian thinking. A superpower, by definition, has accumulated vastly more power than it requires to maintain its own social order. A modern superpower – especially the world's only superpower – can exercise its will across the globe. The problem thus becomes a matter of how a superpower will handle its overwhelming influence. America has been and should be a force for good in the world, but we cannot assume, as many

have, that any exercise of American force is therefore good. It is within our capacity to become an imperialism, global policeman, or tyrant; certain appeals to temporal realism might advise such a course. Doing so, however, would fail to consider a God-fearing realism – in which we recognize that *power in excess of national need is power divinely intended for the global common good, not national interest*. Such conditions constitute a hard call to responsibility for American Christians.

The case is not that America is responsible for the world – a hubristic, idolatrous fallacy that no Christian can support – but rather that we are responsible for the way in which American power affects other nations. This is the difference between a parent's responsibility for an infant and a peer's responsibility for a peer. A recognition of God's sovereignty should keep us ever mindful that, from a heavenly perspective, a superpower is no more than an overgrown child on a crowded playground. If we arrogate to ourselves God's sovereign care over the earth, then we place one foot on a slippery slope toward justifying any means – like torture, or nuclear weapons – that we deem necessary in the exercise of that responsibility. Thus lies the path toward tyranny, however well-intentioned. The question for us is, instead, one of stewardship: in light of God's dominion over all nations, how do we responsibly exercise the excess power that we have accumulated?

Our proverbial big rig careening down the hill of history is, as George Shultz writes, the sort of insoluble problem that requires constant vigilance. We have to keep steering around every turn. I propose two ancient principles of wisdom that can serve as rules for the road: *universality* and *reciprocity*.

Universality is simply the condition of something applying to everyone: the recognition, to extend our metaphor, that we are all on the same road, whether we are driving a Mack truck or a Cooper Mini. Reciprocity is the mechanism for attaining it – most simply expressed in the Golden Rule of doing/not doing to others as you would have them do/not do to you. The greatest asset that American Christians have in pursuing these principles is the fact that they are the very ideals enshrined in the two great commandments that govern our faith: love the Lord your God – who is God of all (universality) – and love your neighbor as yourself (reciprocity).

These principles are important for all nations, and perhaps increasingly so in proportion to a nation's power, because they serve as guarantors of the divinely ordained common good. They ensure that the well-being and security of one party does

not come at the flagrant expense of another. And the singular test case by which we will judge how these principles govern the responsible exercise of American power over the coming decades is that of nuclear weapons.

Elsewhere in this *Reflections*, others argue persuasively that the present crisis of nuclear-weapons proliferation stems from the codification of a two-tier system of nuclear haves and have-nots. But the family of nations is no longer willing to accept such an arrangement indefinitely – which is why global leaders can no longer plausibly seek the security benefits of nonproliferation without simultaneously working toward universal nuclear disarmament.

If we pursue disarmament we have a chance to end the atomic age without the detonation of another nuclear weapon. On the other hand, if we do not seek to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether, we inevitably face nuclear proliferation leading to eventual use, whether in war, terrorism, or by accident. The physical and environmental fallout from even a single nuclear weapon would kill tens or hundreds of thousands; and, in a globalized world, the political and economic fallout would cause massive upheaval and suffering. There is no moral legitimacy to such an act, regardless of the interest it purports to serve. Yet this will someday be the consequence of maintaining a two-tier status quo.

This evaluation means quite simply that the only responsible use of state power concerning nuclear weapons is their careful, multilateral elimination and abolition. President Obama shouldered this responsibility in his groundbreaking Palm Sunday address in Prague, declaring:

Just as we stood for freedom in the twentieth century, we must stand together for the right of people everywhere to live free from fear in the twenty-first century. And as a nuclear power ... the United States has a moral responsibility to act. We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it. So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

The declaration of our collective goal of nuclear abolition imparts moral nobility to an unavoidably laborious political process and guides our way toward a nuclear-weapons-free world. It also gives purpose to the timely implementation of measures that would immediately reduce nuclear tensions and forbid the use of the weapons themselves. This is a good start to the long, hard middle course of steady

global leadership – working with our nuclear peer, Russia, and the family of nations to chart out the phased, multilateral process that is the only nuclear disarmament that will work.

### **A Case of Timidity**

The question of nuclear weapons is again rising to the forefront of public awareness. And it presents a stark challenge to the American church. These weapons represent a terminal rejection of universality and reciprocity: they treat the globe and human history as mere collateral for one party's interest and shatter any attempt at the international give-and-take necessary for those cohabitating God's creation. The unequivocal condemnation of nuclear weapons by the church would certainly enable our elected officials to act with greater boldness in speeding their abolition.

Unfortunately, we have a long way to go. At the YDS conference in September 2008 that gave rise to this *Reflections*, Ambassador Sergio Duarte was gracious to praise, as a diplomat and the UN disarmament chief, the contribution that religious leaders have made to the cause of nuclear disarmament. I am not a diplomat, however, and I hope that I might

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**An indefinite reliance on nuclear weapons elevates America – and all other nuclear powers – above that which God has ordained any nation to be.**

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have the prerogative of noting as one religious leader to others that our contributions have not been nearly enough, not by half. Consider that one of the achievements Ambassador Duarte duly noted was the decision, in 2000, of a group of religious leaders who agreed to join with the UN in calling on the nations to abolish nuclear weapons.

"Agreed to join?" "Calling on the nations?" These are the words of a people who imagine the issue in question to be an attractive option, a nice moral principle, a goal perhaps preferable to the alternative – but not a theological imperative of life and death. Would we merely "agree to join" in a call to abolish slavery, establish civil rights, end sex trafficking? Or, faced with these evils, would we grab our leaders by the lapels and stare them in the eyes and say with all our strength: these things are abhorrent to God?

Ambassador Duarte's essay in this magazine aptly describes disarmament as the "fusion of idealism and realism ... the right thing to do, and it works." If we take theology's long view, however,



the fusion of idealism and realism is thoroughly unremarkable. The two are eternally conjoined in the will of the righteous God who has already authored history's conclusion; whose moral universe, as Dr. King said, bends in a long arc toward justice. It is only in our mortal myopia that unrighteousness appears to be efficacious. The adoption of wickedness as a "necessary" stop-gap is enacted atheism, a vote of no confidence in the authority of God; it is disbelief in the reality, timeliness, and justice of his sovereign judgment.

The temperate viewpoint on nuclear weapons will not lack for advocates. So let me close with an exhortation far more immoderate. An indefinite reliance on nuclear weapons elevates America – and all other nuclear powers – above that which God has ordained any nation to be. And this places us squarely in the face of his coming judgment.

I know it is horribly unfashionable, embarrassing, and even impolite to talk about the wrath and judgment of God. But I do not know how to read

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### **Calling America to restrain its power is only anti-American if there is no God.**

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the Bible, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, without believing that that which he saves us from is nothing less than the righteous judgment of *El Elyon*, God Most High, whose anger against this blood-soaked world is the proof that what we do to each other matters to God.

The level of destructive power we have arrogated to ourselves with nuclear weapons makes an idol out of national interest. This is the ultimate perversion of state power because it categorically subordinates the welfare of every other nation to its own interests – sacrifices even itself, given that nuclear weapons would be devastating to their user as well. These weapons fatefully mark the entire world as *herem*, set apart for total destruction. No temporal power has the right to do this. A nation that imagines it is an authority unto itself might do so. But a nation that recognizes itself to be under God, fearing God, will quail at such a prospect.

If this is the case, then anything but the active pursuit of global nuclear disarmament constitutes a fundamentally godless course of action. Those who fear God know that immoral security in temporal affairs is simply vulnerability deferred. Christians who fail to note what is happening in plain sight – or worse, who recognize this blasphemy but fail to name it as such – are without excuse.

I am not suggesting that we face some imminent exercise of supernatural wrath, nor that we can read the tea leaves of history for God's intention, as some Christians do in the wake of natural disasters. As per Reinhold Niebuhr, the purposes of history far outstrip our mortal scope of discernment. However, a God-fearing realism and fidelity to the Biblical witness should lead us to seek the strains of divine judgment in what might otherwise seem accidents of history or coincidences of cause and effect. The creator of the nations wrote the laws of causality into the fabric of the universe.

This is a test of our belief. This is a test of whether we truly fear God. If the God we worship is less than we believe him to be, then would-be tyrants can walk with their heads held high. But if God is real then we cannot bear lightly a nation's flagrant blasphemy in his sight. Perhaps we are afraid of being called "anti-American" or "unpatriotic" if we call upon America to limit its ambitions. We are accustomed to equating patriotism and love of country with support for the unlimited acquisition of national power. But these are atheistic definitions of the terms. If we acknowledge that we are under the authority of God, nothing could be *more* pro-American or *more* patriotic than to see our nation employ its power with a humility that merits divine favor.

Calling America to restrain its power is only anti-American if there is no God. Leave it to the critics who fear neither human beings nor God to take their pick. For our part, sister and brother Christians, let us speak the truth in fearless fury.

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# The Call to a New Moral Imperative

By Jonathan Granoff

(Adapted from the author's remarks at the Sarah Smith Memorial Conference at YDS in September 2008, with research assistance from Matt Werner)

*Nuclear weapons represent a thoroughly modern dilemma, whereby the means of pursuing security actually undermine security itself. The more we perfect these deadly devices, the less security we obtain.*

In our time it appears we have forgotten the “why” and become preoccupied with the “how.” We end up with art without beauty, philosophy without truth, medicine without healing, law without justice, religion without transcendence or moral compass – and weapons without security.

Nuclear weapons pose insupportable, intolerable ethical problems because of their overwhelming destructive capacity on innocents, the environment, and future generations. A core hypocrisy underwrites it all. The possession of these weapons and the readiness of a handful of countries to use them upgrades their perceived value and thus stimulates their proliferation and undermines efforts to control their spread. As Brazil's former Ambassador Sergio Duarte said in 2005: “(O)ne cannot worship at the altar of nuclear weapons and raise heresy charges against those who want to join the sect.”

Yet neither the contradiction in policy nor the unacceptable risks posed get sufficient public notice.

## Love of Power vs. Power of Love

Psychologist Robert Jay Lifton, formerly of Yale, once described our failure to deal clearly and rationally with nuclear weapons as a collective form of psychic numbing. When one contemplates the horrific capacity of nuclear weapons and the readiness and preparation for their use sustained through enormous costs of money and intelligence, one must either confront this evil of destructive creativity head on and grasp it in its fullness, or turn away and turn off. Most people find it too difficult to face.

That is just one reason why it is so important that all religious leaders give people the spiritual,

psychic capacity to deal with this issue. I believe the only way of overcoming such an evil is through a committed engagement based on love. This love must be founded on a deep sense of the reverence for the miracle and sanctity of life and respect for personal moral duties.

Nuclear weapons represent the ultimate quest of the love of power, and the opposing theological message must be that we truly believe in the power of love. This sovereign faith lives in the human spirit regardless of the evidence of the times. It is a faith in God's blessing and the human capacity to manifest its essence in action. The message of real faith is to rely on the redemptive capacity of this love despite the fact that history may appear to deny the possibility of such redemption.

Is not faith all about the possibility of redemption? Is not the preparation to destroy life on the planet in an afternoon to defend an idea or a “way of life” a denial of such faith?

Let us bring some sense of reality to all this. A relatively small device, approximately 15 kilotons or 15,000 tons of TNT equivalent, was dropped on Nagasaki in World War II. This is the size of merely the triggering mechanisms on most of today's huge weapons.

When the International Court of Justice addressed whether the threat or use of a nuclear weapon is legal under international law in 1995,<sup>1</sup> Mayor Iccho Itoh of Nagasaki testified as follows:

“The explosion of the atomic bomb generated an enormous fireball, 200 meters in radius, almost as though a small sun

◀ One-megaton nuclear bombs, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. These gravity bombs are designed to be dropped from bombers. One megaton is the equivalent of one million tons of TNT explosive. The atomic bomb at Hiroshima equaled about 14,000 tons.

had appeared in the sky. The next instant, a ferocious blast and wave of heat assailed the ground with a thunderous roar. The surface temperature of the fireball was about 7,000 degrees C, and the heat rays that reached the ground were over 3,000 degrees C.

The explosion instantly killed or injured people within a two-kilometer radius of the hypocenter, leaving innumerable corpses charred like clumps of charcoal and scattered in the ruins near the hypocenter. In some cases not even a trace of the person's remains could be found. The blast wind of over 300 meters per second slapped down trees and demolished most buildings. Even iron-reinforced concrete structures were so badly damaged that they seemed to have been smashed by a giant hammer. The fierce flash of heat, meanwhile, melted glass and left metal objects contorted like strands of taffy, and the subsequent fires burned the ruins of the city to ashes.

Nagasaki became a city of death where not even the sounds of insects could be heard.

After a while, countless men, women, and children began to gather for a drink of water at the banks of nearby Urakami River, their hair and clothing scorched and their burnt skin hanging off in sheets like rags. Begging for help, they died one after another in the water or in heaps on the banks.

Then radiation began to take its toll, killing people like a scourge of death expanding in concentric circles from the hypocenter. Four months after the atomic bombing, 74,000 were dead and 75,000 had suffered injuries. That is, two-thirds of the city population had fallen victim to this calamity that came upon Nagasaki like a preview of the Apocalypse."

The mayor noted that those who were lucky enough to survive continue to this day to suffer from the lasting effects unique to nuclear weaponry.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States were locked in a deadly waltz that on several occasions, because of computer miscalculations as well as human error, nearly turned into the final danse macabre. Arguably, because both sides believed they faced mutual existential threats, there was a coherent rationale for maintaining a mutual deterrence policy. Each side had thousands of nuclear weapons at the ready in order to discourage the other from ever using them. Each maintained a sufficient capacity to inflict unacceptable retaliatory damage to ensure that the other side would not use

its weapons. The entire enterprise was and still is riddled with paradox – the willingness to use the weapons serves as a core principle to prevent their use. It only works if your adversary is convinced you are willing to use the weapons.

Now, more than a decade has passed since the Cold War ended. Russia and the United States, with more than 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, are no longer existential threats to one another. Yet, we still place at the ready more than enough nuclear weapons to bring about nuclear winter several times over. This will continue to be the case even if we go down to 1,000 warheads each.

What is the great threat that we pose to one another that causes us to continue to place the very web of life at risk? Are we such enemies to warrant this readiness to kill billions of innocent people? What is our attitude toward the right of future generations to inherit this planet?

If this is not an abomination that every minister in this country should address, then I don't know what is. This posture of perpetuation of the doctrine of deterrence and failure to negotiate universal, legally verifiable nuclear weapons abolition flies in the face of our national identity as a nation based on the rule of law. Both by the unanimous declaration of the International Court of Justice and under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we are under an obligation to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons<sup>2</sup>.

The NPT entered into force in 1970. After the 1962 Cuban missile crisis both the KGB and the CIA concluded that without some legal constraint there would be dozens of nuclear weapons states by the 1970s. The NPT contains a bargain. Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. – the five nuclear weapons states under the treaty – promised to move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, and in exchange 182 states have by now commit-

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**If any group can look people in the eye and give them the courage to deal with the nuclear issue in a rational fashion, I think it is faith-based people.**

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ted to restrain themselves from developing nuclear weapons. Moreover, the treaty guarantees the right of non-nuclear nations to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear technology and energy.

In 1995, the 187 nations of the world who are parties to the NPT assembled, under a clause in the treaty that compelled its review after 25 years, to decide whether the treaty would be indefinitely

extended. All five nuclear weapons states, including the United States, pledged explicitly to move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons in exchange for the indefinite extension of the NPT – and that promise contained within it an agreement that every five years nuclear disarmament progress would be reviewed.

In 2000, all but three nations in the world (India, Pakistan, and Israel stayed outside the treaty) agreed unequivocally to undertake the total elimination of nuclear weapons and laid out 13 practical steps toward that goal, while at the same time lowering no country's security interests.

What were some of those practical steps? Look at how reasonable they were – a test-ban treaty, a cut-off in the production of fissile material in order to keep control of the materials, a lowering of the operational status of the weapons, and making the nuclear-arsenal cuts in Russia and the United States more transparent and irreversible.

Our ambassador at the time, Robert Grey, said those commitments are the guiding light for the nonproliferation and disarmament efforts of the United States.

Yet at the 2005 Review Conference of the NPT, the U.S. said it would not have its previous commitments reviewed and insisted there should only be discussion of nonproliferation issues. We declared we would not have our disarmament commitments reviewed, essentially saying that the promises we make to this NPT body today we will not be held to account for tomorrow. This was an attack on the institution of the rule of law itself.

### **“What Is America About?”**

This situation must change. We must live up to our commitments to fulfill our legal responsibilities. As citizens we cannot allow our promises to the rest of the world to be tossed aside flippantly, wantonly, brazenly, egregiously. We cannot leave the rest of the world wondering, “What is America about? Your Constitution says treaties are the supreme law of the land. You’ve made this commitment. Should you not be held to account like the rest of us? Is not law to be applied to the powerful as well as the weak? Are not the police also subject to the same laws as everyone else?”

As we face the ultimate evil, if we don’t have the reins of law and morality, then what tools of organizing human conduct are we relying upon?

This is such a basic moral issue – and yet it’s not being preached from the pulpit, it’s not being taught at Yale Divinity School as a moral imperative, it’s not being taught in the evangelical community as the

greatest affront to the reverence of life, and it’s not being talked about in any sane rational way in the media. How do we overcome this inertia?

I think we stand at a unique moment in history, where a profound and perennial spiritual imperative has become an urgent, practical admonition. The spiritual imperative – to love my neighbor as myself – is something nations have to start taking

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### **In America there are two major theological narratives – the egalitarian and the domination models.**

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quite seriously. We need to treat other nations as we want to be treated. There has always been a spiritual admonition to see the human family as one, to have love in your heart, to not kill. What’s unique now is that policies that realize our common interests have become a practical necessity. The practical and the moral have come together.

Nukes are not just about nukes. The issue is how we deal with our intellectual gifts and the application of science and technology. How do we protect the global commons, the living systems we depend upon – the climate of the oceans, the ozone, the rainforests? What we need is a universal regime replete with customs, codes, laws, and treaties based on our shared interests in a healthy environment. In a world in which the security of some is claimed to be so superior to the security of others, where eight nuclear nations say, in effect, “We have a right to weapons of mass destruction and we claim an excessive amount of the global commons of security” – in such a world, do you think that other countries will forsake short-term economic or political opportunity for long-term environmental responsibility and work together as one human community to protect the global commons, which includes the oceans and the climate? I don’t think they will. I think this issue is the symbolic litmus test for whether we will work as a human community – or pursue this domination model, which I think is impractical, immoral, and illegal.

This temptation to domination goes to the heart of how we shape the debate about nuclear weapons. In America, for instance, I think there are two major theological narratives regarding the legitimacy and authority of the State – the egalitarian and the domination models. The first is the narrative of Tom Paine, the philosophy of John Locke, and the Quakers in Philadelphia who said the light of God is in everybody. They tried to move that way at the beginning of the republic, never quite fully suc-



ceeding. Yet the idea survived that the authority and legitimacy of the State comes from the will of the people, and that the conscience of the people can speak in the State as the basis of that authority. It's an egalitarian spirituality, a unique American idea and political philosophy. Addressing those others who believed their singular interpretation of Scripture is the be-all and end-all and the only legitimate source of authority, they said we must put a barrier

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### What if you started a debate that said Yale should not invest in companies that make weapons of mass destruction?

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between Church and State. They were very aware of the hazards of religious manipulation and how easily it could succeed.

#### Full-spectrum Dominance

The second narrative, the domination model, says we should go back to the covenant at Plymouth Rock as the basis of America's authority and legitimacy. We thus claim a special status as a nation: we have a special destiny, a right and a duty to impose our will on the world. It rationalizes for a few who would claim superior insights to rule through law rather than being ruled by law. Claims of manifest destiny, special duties such as waging wars in countries in the developing world to save them for democracy, and other self-serving visions usually resort to this American exceptionalism to rationalize such exercise of state power. This hierarchical model is consistent with the discredited interpretation of a unitary executive above judicial review or legislative oversight. It is implicit in the policy calling for the ability to dominate the whole planet earth as well as outer space and a global precision strike force to enforce that dominance. The policy was called "full-spectrum dominance" in documents such as *Joint Vision 2020* created during the 1990s and robustly funded during the Bush administration. Though the phrase is no longer emphasized, the policy it expresses remains viable as evidenced by the practices of STRATCOM, the government agency tasked with nuclear planning.<sup>3</sup> I think that is a theological concept, and I think it is blasphemy – the idea that any small group of people would want to have "full-spectrum dominance" of the world. That's God's duty.

This aspiration for global dominance is ironic. America was created in reaction to an overreaching empire. What happened?

This kind of domination thinking issues forth from fear. Playing to the narrative of fear ensures conservative voting. I call it the "Ching Ling Lang Abdul Gomez Borovsky Syndrome." The archetype of the ugly "other" whom I shall call Ching Ling Lang Abdul Gomez Borovsky can manifest as Manuel Noriega, Hugo Chavez, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, or a guy named Borovsky. He is the dark fearful shadow in our culture. But he doesn't have nuclear weapons. If he had nuclear weapons, he would have used them. He would have threatened to use them, for sure.

There are evil forces out there, no doubt, but if we're serious about making ourselves safe, the first thing we would do is put real money into safeguarding the nuclear materials needed to make a bomb. We need to get the facts out. For instance, the International Atomic Energy Agency has never spent more than \$120 million in an entire year to do its inspections throughout the whole world. We spend far more than that in a day in our country alone on the nation's nuclear arsenal. We spend more than \$52 billion a year on this hazard-inducing venture.

If we were serious about making ourselves safe, we would strengthen the international inspection regime and ensure strict international control of the more than 3,500 tons of fissile materials, plutonium and highly enriched uranium that have collected all over the world. That is an essential step in addressing the dangers of terrorists getting a bomb.

But progress is being thwarted because progress means truly working in a cooperative way based on law with many nations, and such steps, so think our military planners, constitute a constraint on U.S. military choices that could lead eventually to actual nuclear disarmament.

So we must ask exactly against whom are the weapons useful? Nuclear weapons are of no value against terrorists, they're suicidal to use against a country that has them, and it's patently immoral to use them against a country that doesn't have them. So why do we have them? We have them because of this fear of Ching Ling Lang Abdul Gomez Borovsky, an abstract imaginary threat. We have them because we're operating under the paradigm of "weapons bring strength, and the ultimate weapons bring ultimate strength," and we don't want to let it go. But the fact is, our possession of the weapon is stimulating the proliferation of the weapon.

#### Challenging Reckless Theologies

So I think the best thing we could do is undertake an honest debate about it. Challenge the reckless theology of those who feel that the whole world is



fallen, and that only their group is saved – challenge their eschatology and declare that they don't have a right to put creation at risk. Challenge the political rhetoric of fear rather than reason whenever it is brought up. When Condoleeza Rice threw a cloud of fear over the U.S. by saying, "Don't let the next 9/11 be a mushroom cloud," knowing full well her implication was a distortion of factual threats, she effectively cut off rational debate, and our policies suffered.

If any group can look people in the eye and give them the courage to deal with the nuclear issue in a rational fashion, I think it is faith-based people. Religious leaders must give people enough faith simply to deal with the truth of how the world really is. "Veritas fortissima" – truth is the strongest.

What is the next step? First we must demand of all our political leaders: what are you doing to eliminate nuclear weapons?

Second, what if the religious community took the position that their funds can't be invested in companies that made weapons of mass destruction? That's what we did here in the U.S. with apartheid in the 1980s.

What if Yale University adopted such a policy today? What if you started a debate that said Yale should not invest in companies that make weapons of mass destruction? What if you made that a debate right here at Yale Divinity School, starting tomorrow? Make it a moral call from Yale's school of divinity to say: this is an issue of moral concern to us, and as horrific as apartheid is, what about nuclear apartheid? It is wrong that some countries can say, "We are privileged, we have a right to destroy the creation, and you don't." The answer is not that everybody should have the right; the answer is that no one should have the right, and Yale should start a debate right now.

It would not be alone. Norway is currently the third largest oil exporter in the world. In order to capitalize on its oil wealth, the Norwegian Parliament established the Government Petroleum Fund in 1990. Today it is the second largest sovereign wealth fund in the world. The Fund is considered one of the world's finest in terms of its transparency. More controversial, however, has been Norway's implementation of ethical guidelines to govern the Fund's investments. Since 2002, 27 companies have been excluded from the portfolio on ethical grounds. The total value of these exclusions is approximately \$3 billion.

The ethical guidelines are based on two key premises – to generate wealth in a socially responsible fashion and to exclude investments that pose

an unacceptable risk of contributing to violations of fundamental humanitarian principles, human rights, corruption, or environmental degradation.

Would it not be an enormous contribution to a safer, saner world if Yale could be the first American university to challenge the madness of nuclear weapons by adopting guidelines in the investment of its funds as Norway has done? Might that not start a similar investment review in other universities and churches, synagogues, and mosques? At least let us open the subject up to serious, morally informed debate. Our silence allows the ultimate risk to persist.

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*Jonathan Granoff is an attorney, author, and public advocate advancing ethical foundations for the rule of law, greater levels of interfaith cooperation, peace, and the universal legally verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. He is president of the Global Security Institute. (see [www.gs institute.org](http://www.gs institute.org))*

## Notes

- 1 International Court of Justice, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=4&code=unan&case=95&k=e1>
- 2 Granoff, Jonathan. "Nuclear Weapons, Ethics, Morals, and Law." *Brigham Young University Law Review* 4 (2000), 1413-1442, [http://www.gs institute.org/gsi/docs/gran\\_12-9-00.pdf](http://www.gs institute.org/gsi/docs/gran_12-9-00.pdf)
- 3 For analysis: [http://www.gs institute.org/docs/Vision2020\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.gs institute.org/docs/Vision2020_Analysis.pdf)  
As policy: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=45289>

## THE HALF-LIFE OF SORROW

is about five years.

The decaying, scintillating dust  
sits in the small cells of the lung  
and colors your breath,  
sits in the marrow and colors your blood,  
sits in the bile duct.

The half-life isn't hard  
to understand.

It means the sorrow  
will be half gone in five years,  
what's left will then take five again  
to diminish by half.

So it will never stop flashing  
in your life, though your life  
will stop it eventually.

– Roger Greenwald

## A New Day: A Summary of Recent Faith-based Action

**FAITHFUL SECURITY: THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTNERSHIP ON THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS DANGER** is urging letters of thanks to President Obama for recent remarks in support of nuclear arms reductions.

Faithful Security is a multi-faith coalition dedicated to the permanent elimination of nuclear weapons. It offers a downloadable toolkit of study materials called “Breaking Faith with Nuclear Weapons” for religious communities. The kit includes ideas for taking action, prayers, bulletin inserts, organizing tips, and national resources.

A section called “Six Things People of Faith Can Do” urges people to know the facts, pray, get together, pass a resolution against nuclear weapons, build momentum, and speak truth to power. See [www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org).

**THE TWO FUTURES PROJECT**, a new initiative led by a rising generation of evangelicals, focuses on rallying support among American Christians for nuclear weapons abolition.

A charter statement declares: “We believe that we face two futures: a world without nuclear weapons or a world ruined by them.” Other declared commitments include:

“We renounce nuclear weapons as sin against God and neighbor.

“We repent of apathy toward devices that cause indiscriminate destruction.”

The Two Futures web site includes details on nuclear treaties, the practicalities of disarmament, and the urgency of the issue politically and theologically. Director Tyler Wigg-Stevenson is guest contributing editor to this *Reflections* issue.

See [www.twofuturesproject.org](http://www.twofuturesproject.org).

**PAX CHRISTI** promotes peacemaking as a priority among American Catholics. It recently launched “A New Moment for Nuclear Disarmament” campaign, aiming to mobilize people to support efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons globally.

Organizers hailed President Obama’s recent speech on nuclear arms as a turning point in U.S. policy.

“President Obama’s commitments to seek Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, negotiate an end to the production of nuclear materials

for weapons, and negotiate deep cuts in the Russian and U.S. arsenals offer real hope that we have turned the corner on the dangerous and destabilizing policies of the past eight years,” Pax Christi director Dave Robinson. See [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org).

**UNITED METHODIST BISHOPS** are poised to update their historic 1986 pastoral letter against nuclear arms. A Council of Bishops task force is holding denominational hearings and gathering input for a new document in a new century.

The 1986 letter, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, declared “a clear and unconditional” rejection of use of nuclear weapons. It was intended as a prophetic guide to lead the church in study, prayer, and action.

The new pastoral letter will likely address poverty, environmental degradation, and the arms trade.

**THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION (FCNL)** is the largest peace lobby in Washington, D.C., and a historic presence in faith-based opposition to nuclear weapons.

Founded by Quakers in 1943, FCNL is promoting an online petition for citizens to sign that urges senators to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

FCNL says its advocacy on arms reduction, tax policy, hunger, civil rights, and other issues “connects historic Quaker testimonies on peace, equality, simplicity, and truth with peace and social justice issues which the United States government is or should be addressing.” See [www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org).

**THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES** and three other church coalitions recently urged NATO to update its strategies so they reflect a vision for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

The letter was signed by leaders of the WCC, the National Council of Churches of Christ USA, the Canadian Council of Churches, and the Conference of European Churches.

“The emerging vision of a world without nuclear weapons is giving citizens and churches in every NATO country cause for hope,” the letter declared.

The letter calls for the removal of the 150-250 U.S. tactical nuclear weapons still based in five NATO countries – Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Turkey. See [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org).

# Our Chance to Change the World

By Naila Bolus

*It was just before midnight on election night, November 4, and millions of dewy eyes trained on Barack Obama. Here was our new leader, a former community organizer, embodiment of hope, proof that nothing is impossible. True to form, he took the microphone and challenged us. “This victory alone is not the change we seek,” he said. “It is only the chance for us to make that change. And that cannot happen ... without you.”*

The chance is now for us to make that change. For more than twenty years I have worked to end the nuclear threat, and with the election of President Obama I now believe it's possible. But not just because we have a new president. A confluence of historical currents is creating powerful momentum for change – a new generation of global leaders less wedded to policies of the past and more open to new strategies; a recognition of the failure of past administrations' nuclear policies; and, perhaps most important, a growing movement of civil society that is providing leadership for a bold new vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

Surprising to some, even in this arcane field of nuclear doctrine and weaponry, the citizen activists and non-governmental organizations that constitute civil society have consistently played a highly influential and catalytic role in nuclear arms reduction. In the 1950s and early '60s, women mobilized against nuclear testing by the United States and Soviet Union, decrying the strontium-90 that was contaminating breast milk and babies' teeth because of fallout from atmospheric testing. Their protests were central to bringing about the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty.

Indeed, the history of the nuclear age is accented with the heroic efforts of ordinary people doing small things with great impact. People like Sally Lilienthal, my friend, mentor, inspiration, and founder of the

Ploughshares Fund. At age 62, when most people were preparing to enjoy retirement and looking *back* on their accomplishments, Sally decided to tackle the biggest issue of the modern era – the threat of nuclear annihilation. She founded Ploughshares Fund in 1981 with next to nothing, but she put all her energy into it and with the guts that she brought to everything she did, she set about building an institution that would make its mark on the world.

Many years later, in an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sally was asked what made her do it, given her background as a sculptor and human rights activist. She replied, “The possibility of a nuclear war was the very worst problem in the world, I thought, and I just felt I had to do something about it. It was really as simple as that. But what could I do? I certainly knew nothing about nuclear science – I still don't – and I knew nothing about physics and very little about weapons. But I thought that if a lot of people felt the same way I did but didn't know what to do about it, we might get together and search for new ways to get rid of the nuclear weapons that we knew were threatening us all.”<sup>1</sup>

Sally helped build Ploughshares Fund into one of the largest foundations making grants in the peace-and-security field, helping bring about monumental achievements like the first international treaty to ban an entire class of weapons of mass destruction; the establishment of the first Russian non-

governmental organizations with influence over the public, media, and policymakers; and the lock-down of nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union. She incarnated the belief that an individual with vision and commitment can mobilize support for a cause that will make a better world.

So did Randy Forsberg. An arms control expert with the rare ability to articulate a simple idea and a compelling moral vision, her four-page article “Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race” was the spark that ignited the Nuclear Weapon Freeze Campaign. She argued for a “mutual, verifiable halt to the testing,

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**Each of us can do small things with great impact. We embody the “new spirit of patriotism” that President Obama defined in his acceptance speech.**

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production, and deployment” of all U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons and their delivery systems as a key step toward eventual nuclear disarmament.

By 1982, the Freeze campaign was a phenomenon. Some 370 city councils and 23 state legislatures had endorsed it, 2.3 million people had signed a Freeze petition, and, most significantly, it passed as a ballot initiative in eight out of nine states and in dozens of cities and counties. That constituted the largest single referendum in U.S. history.<sup>2</sup> Author John Tirman described the impact: “A large demonstration in Central Park on a sunny summer day and articles in policy journals were one thing, and possibly negligible; thirty-six victories in thirty-nine referendums – including eight of nine states – was something Washington took to heart.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Oblivious, Almost**

The year 1982 was pivotal for the movement to stop the nuclear arms race, and I was almost oblivious. Almost. Except for a remarkable Australian pediatrician who warned that unless we – I – shook off our indifference, change our life priorities, and work to prevent nuclear war, our chances of survival were slim.

I was a high school junior, and that year’s award-winning documentary, “If You Love This Planet,” was in many ways the precursor to “An Inconvenient Truth.” Labeled “foreign political propaganda” by the Justice Department, it featured a lecture given by pediatrician Helen Caldicott to students at SUNY Plattsburgh and went on to win the Academy Award for Best Short Subject Documentary in 1982. It changed me and thousands of others, the same way

that Al Gore’s PowerPoint would later move throngs of young people to action. From there it was a short path for me after college to the doorstep of Women’s Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND), based just outside of Boston, Mass., the organization that Helen Caldicott founded in 1981.

By then, Gorbachev was in power in the Kremlin, and there was a chilling number of nuclear weapons across the globe – more than 70,000. But there was also an astonishing number of non-governmental initiatives pressing to reduce those weapons – doctors who joined en masse Physicians for Social Responsibility (another organization heavily influenced by Helen Caldicott) and educated others in the medical establishment about the horrors of nuclear war; professionals who spent countless hours volunteering at rallies, educational forums, and meetings with their congressional representatives; women, students, and people of faith.

Organizations like the American Friends Service Committee, Clergy and Laity Concerned, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation introduced a new dimension to the debate – the questionable ethical implications of nuclear deterrence. And in 1983 the National Conference of Bishops published a pastoral letter that dramatically shifted the way Catholics and other faith communities thought, discussed, and acted in response to the nuclear build-up.

### **Civil Society Surge**

At the same time Nobel laureates and weapons scientists were having extraordinary impact in making technical arguments to U.S. policymakers against new and lethally destabilizing weapons systems and leading the way in forming collaborations with their counterparts in Moscow. A story that has become legendary at Ploughshares Fund involves physicist Tom Cochran of the Natural Resources Defense Council and Soviet Academy physicist Yevgeny Velikov. In May 1986, amid impasses in U.S.-Soviet arms reduction talks, Cochran negotiated a simple two-page agreement with the Soviet Academy of Sciences to install seismic monitoring equipment near the nuclear test sites in both countries. All they needed was money to transport their equipment to the Soviet test site at Semipalatinsk. Within a day of their request, Ploughshares Fund gave its largest emergency grant ever to Cochran, and one month later monitoring began.

The exercise proved that verification was not an obstacle to a nuclear test moratorium or test ban treaty. This was a monumental technical breakthrough that “not only bolstered the public relations

value of the test ban, but actually influenced Gorbachev's thinking about issues of nuclear stockpile maintenance, verification, and the like."<sup>4</sup>

For me, it proved that civil society actors can influence global security in ways that governments cannot – small things with big impact.

By the time I became executive director of Ploughshares Fund in 1997 there were many more stories like this – the people living in the shadows of U.S. nuclear weapons plants who challenged the production and testing of nuclear weapons on the basis of the environmental devastation they cause and helped shutter the offending facilities; the experts who sounded the alarm about possible “brain drain” (former Soviet weapons scientists trading their knowledge to would-be nuclear states) and “loose nukes” in the post-Cold War period; the activist citizens around the globe who pushed their governments to extend indefinitely the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. All this contributed to a dramatic decline in the number of nuclear weapons, from about 60,000 in 1990 to some 34,000 at the end of the decade.

### Peril and Possibility

Today there remain more than 20,000 nuclear weapons globally, 96 percent of them in U.S. and Russian hands. Problem solved? Not really. Though we no longer fear nuclear annihilation, “The world is now on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era.”<sup>5</sup> So say four men who should know – George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn. In their now-famous *Wall Street Journal* op-eds, the so-called “four horsemen” warned, “Unless urgent new actions are taken, the U.S. soon will be compelled to enter a new nuclear era that will be more precarious, psychologically disorienting, and economically even more costly than was Cold War deterrence.”<sup>6</sup>

What should those urgent new actions be? Their conclusion surprised many in the nuclear establishment: “We endorse setting the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and working energetically on the actions required to meet that goal.”<sup>7</sup>

These words galvanized civil society and sent ripples through official capitals from Washington to Beijing. Certainly there have been movements for disarmament or “abolition” before, but this time is different. Proliferation expert Michael Krepon examines the four historic “waves of abolition” since the end of World War II in a recent essay, “Ban the Bomb. Really.” He concludes that because of the leadership of Shultz, et al., this “fourth wave has

more potential than its predecessors.”<sup>8</sup> Like previous civil society initiatives, he writes, this wave is values-based. “Many serious thinkers, religious leaders, and former practitioners of the art of the possible have reached a similar conclusion.”<sup>9</sup>

A new effort, Global Zero, has taken hold with an impressive launch last December in Paris. More than 100 military officials, high-level policymakers, and celebrity civic leaders – representing all political persuasions – from across the world have signed a declaration that calls for eliminating all nuclear weapons globally. They are joined by other efforts such as Faithful Security, a multi-faith community that engages in study and action to eliminate nuclear dangers. Underlying Faithful Security's work is an unapologetic insistence on keeping the moral imperative at the heart of work for total nuclear disarmament, while working toward the practical, verifiable steps that will bring this vision into being.<sup>10</sup>

We have an unprecedented opportunity, as civil society, to support and facilitate this agenda, leading the way with innovative ideas, pivotal analyses, and key political support. Each of us can do small things with great impact. We embody the “new spirit of patriotism” that President Obama defined in his acceptance speech that night in Chicago's Grant Park, that spirit of “service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder” to create a better world. This is our chance.

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*Naila Bolus is Executive Director of Ploughshares Fund, a San Francisco-based foundation investing in innovative peace and security initiatives worldwide. This year the fund will award close to \$6 million in grants aimed at building a safer world.*

### Notes

- 1 David Perlman, “Sally Lilienthal: Banning the Bomb,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 29, 1996.
- 2 Randy Kehler, “A New Vision of Security: Remembering Randall Forsberg,” *Peacework Magazine*, Issue 381, December 2007-January 2008.
- 3 John Tirman, “How We Ended the Cold War,” *The Nation*, November 1, 1999.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2007.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Michael Krepon, “Ban the Bomb. Really,” *The American Interest*, (January/February) 2008, 88.
- 9 Ibid., 92.
- 10 See <http://www.faithfulsecurity.org/html/issues.html>

## Ten Books on Nuclear Perils and Global Hopes

### **Arsenals of Folly: The Making of the Nuclear Arms Race**

by Richard Rhodes (Knopf, 2007)

The author produces his latest in a series of histories of the nuclear era.

*"Far from victory in the Cold War, the superpower nuclear – arms race and the corresponding militarization of the American economy gave us ramshackle cities, broken bridges, failing schools, entrenched poverty, impeded life expectancy, and a menacing and secretive national – security state that held the entire human world hostage."*

### **The Bomb: A New History**

by Stephen Younger (Ecco, 2009)

A nuclear weapons scholar provides a fresh overview.  
*"It would be irresponsible if such policies [that produce too many nuclear weapons and fail to protect nuclear facilities' security] continued after an informed and comprehensive debate. What is unconscionable is that such a debate has yet to occur nearly two decades after the end of the Cold War."*

### **Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons**

by Joseph Cirincione (Columbia University Press, 2007)

A noted expert ruminates on challenges and solutions.  
*"Vast areas of the world – entire continents – are nuclear-weapon free. ... Rather, the states of proliferation concern are in an arc of crisis that flows from the Middle East through South Asia up to Northeast Asia. In other words, the concern is in regions where unresolved territorial, political, and religious disputes give rise to the desire to gain some strategic advantage by acquiring nuclear weapons. Countries have given up nuclear weapons and programs in the past only when these disputes have been resolved."*

### **A Desperate Passion: An Autobiography**

by Helen Caldicott (Norton, 1996)

A physician looks back on an eventful life of anti – nuclear activism.

*"The problem of impending nuclear war was to me an acute global clinical emergency. What needed to be done was to delineate the history of the nuclear arms race: to present a kind of clinical examination of the planet: the number of bombs and where they had metastasized; the pathology of a nuclear attack; the aetiology, or cause, of this crisis, which involved human psychology; and the cure – a universal commitment by the global community to abolish these weapons."*

### **The Future of Immortality and Other Essays for a Nuclear Age**

by Robert Jay Lifton (Basic Books, 1987)

A psychologist examines the nuclear threat's numbing effects on emotional life.

*"There is a significant individual step that each of us must take, the movement from the destructive and self-destructive stance of resignation and cynicism toward one*

*of confronting the problem, feeling responsible to it, joining with others in taking a stand. That step is a significant personal watershed ... If we numb ourselves to the forces that threaten the existence of our civilization and our species, how can we call ourselves students of humankind? How can we call ourselves teachers and mentors?"*

### **Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age**

by Sallie McFague (Fortress Press, 1987)

A prominent theologian brings distinctive arguments to global themes.

*"The model of God as friend defies despair. ...We ask God the friend to support, forgive, and comfort us as we struggle together to save our beleaguered planet, our beautiful earth, our blue and green marble in a universe of silent rock and fire."*

### **Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**

by Paul Lettow (Random House, 2005)

The author re-evaluates a pivotal president's nuclear policies.

*"Reagan's antinuclearism is one of the best kept secrets of his political career, for it fails to conform to conventional wisdom. Reagan's quest to abolish nuclear weapons is only now becoming widely known, sixty years after it began."*

### **The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger**

by Jonathan Schell (Metropolitan Books, 2007)

A leading thinker offers his latest ideas on the bomb in the twenty-first century.

*"The deeper issue is how, in the long run, we can manage a world in which it is possible to build nuclear weapons without actually doing so. ...The bomb was born in the mind. Let it return there."*

### **The Way of the World: A Story of Truth and Hope in an Age of Extremism**

by Ron Suskind (HarperCollins, 2008)

A journalist weaves a narrative about nuclear black markets, American values, and humane solutions.

*"[The book is] about how people, in America and abroad, are trying to grab hold of what may be one of the most powerful forces on earth – moral energy – which flows, most often and most fully, from the varied and connected chambers of the human heart."*

### **Why Nuclear Disarmament Matters**

by Hans Blix (MIT Press, 2008)

A former chief UN weapons inspector weighs in.

*"A crucial mark of a civilized society is that the citizens have given up the personal possession of arms and conferred upon public authorities a monopoly on the right to possess and use arms in accordance with law. Societies must travel a long road to reach this stage, and the road remains bumpy in many places ... but there are some hopeful signs."*



## THE GARDEN

We were talking about poetry.  
We were talking about nuclear war.  
She said she couldn't write about it  
because she couldn't imagine it.  
I said it was simple. Imagine  
this doorknob is the last thing  
you will see in this world.  
Imagine you happen to be standing  
at the door when you look down, about  
to grasp the knob, your fingers  
curled toward it, the doorknob old  
and black with oil from being turned  
so often in your hand, cranky  
with rust and grease from the kitchen.  
Imagine it happens this quickly, before  
you have time to think of anything else;  
your kids, your own life, what it will mean.  
You reach for the knob and the window  
flares white, though you see it only  
from the corner of your eye because  
your're looking at the knob, intent  
on opening the back door to the patch  
of sunlight on the porch, that garden  
spread below the stairs and the single  
tomato you might pick for a salad.  
But when the flash comes you haven't  
thought that far ahead. It is only  
the simple desire to move into the sun  
that possesses you. The thought  
of the garden, that tomato, would have  
come after you had taken the knob  
in your hand, just beginning to twist it,  
and when the window turns white  
you are only about to touch it,  
preparing to open the door.

— Dorianne Laux

# Security, Vulnerability, Theology

By Miroslav Volf

*Why security? That seems so obvious. We live in an insecure world, and probably no other event as much as 9/11 has brought that fact to our public consciousness. Anything could happen at any time. Our lives could change and our livelihoods could be endangered in profound ways. But of course 9/11 did not create an insecure world; it became for us only an indicator, a symptom of the insecure world in which we live now.*

It's true that human beings have always lived with insecurity. Yet in the contemporary world, the modern world, we have peculiar forms of insecurities, of vulnerabilities, that we need to attend to.

It's probably right to say – though maybe some sociologists might disagree with me – that we live in what Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens have called a “risks society.” By “risks society” they mean that unlike in previous eras, when the majority of our risks came from natural sources, we live today in a society of what they call “manufactured risks.” These are risks produced by human activity, and above all they concern technological innovation because with technological innovation we are always entering new and unpredictable situations, so we do not quite know what kinds of risks we are going to incur by our own activities.

For example, last summer there appeared this news summary: higher levels of chemicals often found in plastic food and drink packaging are associated with cardiovascular disease. So something that seemed innocuous as an innovation potentially carries significant risk. The greater the technological prowess involved, the more risk potential it carries for society.

## **Risk Averse in a Risks Society**

Interestingly, our life in a risks society – where risk is produced by human activity – also seems to have made us increasingly averse to risk. If human activ-

ity creates risk, we reason, human activity can also prevent risk. Hence we insist on high margins of security, primarily enforced by government agents and regulations. Children getting off and on school buses are protected; workers repairing our roads are protected with flashing police cars; homes and businesses are protected with locks and laws; nations of course protect themselves. One of the main functions of government is precisely to “securitize” a nation.

Consonant with the idea of enlarging the margins of security is the reduction of risk, even to the level of inviolability. Not only is the loss of any life one loss too many; more radically, the loss of anything of value is loss that we cannot quite accept. From one perspective it seems like the most natural of all goals. Why should one not seek inviolability? Why should one not seek total security? But: can we achieve it? More importantly: at what cost can we achieve such levels of security that approach inviolability?

We often think of economic costs in this regard, demonstrated by the fact that almost never does an American politician have to defend increases in military spending. But here I have in mind primarily human costs. What does it cost to achieve high levels of security with regard to how we understand ourselves and live our lives?

As we observe these dimensions of the security question today across the broad spectrum of our

life, we also, being at a theological school, try to take a look at religious faith and theological traditions to see what they might have to say about security. And to our surprise, we find very little reflection on such a fundamental issue.

This lack is certainly not due to an omission of primary religious statements on security in the tradition and in the Scriptures in which our traditions are based. The psalmist, for instance, often prays to God as “my refuge.” Or take a look at the very end of the New Testament, which concludes with the image of the New Jerusalem, a city that is utterly and completely secured – the city that can never be conquered, the city that can never be undone.

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**I intend a friendly challenge to my fellow theologians – that we would consider these themes with far greater intensity and seriousness than we have done in recent years.**

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Yet theologians have, by and large, slept through their reading of these aspects of the Bible. We haven’t taken up this issue of security, or reflected much on what Biblical traditions say about security and how they relate to our contemporary search for security. The resources of our traditions are significant for these very pressing considerations of contemporary security.

### **A Theology of Finitude**

Security may be obvious. But why then vulnerability? Well, vulnerability is clearly the reason why we pursue security. If we were not vulnerable, the question of security would never arise. I am a theologian, and presumably I can say with some degree of confidence that God needs no security force to protect God’s throne. God is by definition inviolable. Human beings are not by definition inviolable – quite the contrary. We need to have our existence and our well-being secured. That is why those lights flash on the buses when kids get on and off; that’s why we lock our homes day and night; that’s why we have a police force, and so on.

But vulnerability also touches on security in another way: human vulnerability places a limit on the pursuit of security. It determines in part, or at least shapes in part, the nature of what it means to be secure. For vulnerability is fundamental to who we are as human beings. To be inviolable is to be divine; to be human is to be, and I think is always to remain, vulnerable. This principle manifests itself in Genesis 3, when God expels Adam and Eve from

the garden lest they eat from the tree of life and live forever in their fallen state. The condition of pain and frustration is introduced into their lives, now delimited also by death. But even quite apart from the fall, our very finitude entails fragility. Vulnerability thus becomes the essential condition of human life. No vulnerability, no human life.

Now that has very important implications for what it means to pursue security and, I think, places certain limits on security. We tend to think that the more secure we are, the better off we will be. But inherently vulnerable persons can never be fully secure, if that means creating the conditions of inviolability.

Consider some of the contradictions we encounter when we pursue security *ad absurdum*. Would it be good to create a world of total security? What kind of world would it be – and who and what would be secure in it? At a certain point it would seem that the pursuit of inviolability would force us to choose between the individual and the institution purporting to guarantee the individual’s security, since the total security of one precludes the total security of the other. Certainly freedom and unpredictability – the latter being related fundamentally to the former – would not be secure in an inviolable world.

Further, inviolable security taken on an individual level would profoundly threaten or undermine the interdependence that qualifies us as human beings and makes our lives rich. Wouldn’t inviolability be the equivalent of being an individual fortress, a completely autonomous individual or nation? And given human nature, would we not as such precisely be a danger to others?

One does not have to turn this soil very much to realize that theological riches abound in it. So I intend this essay as something of a friendly challenge to my fellow theologians – that we would consider these themes with far greater intensity and seriousness than we have done in recent years. Let me stake out one particular problem, in addition to the speculative questions articulated above, which might yield productive investigation.

I am particularly concerned that we consider how our technological aspirations to security actually intensify our vulnerability. To a large degree we seek security by the deployment of force aided by technology. Yet there’s a problem when we employ that approach: we reinforce the competitive relationship that exists between the thing we want to secure, and the threats to it. That’s an inherently unstable situation. The means of security call forth ways of undermining that security, and new ways

of undermining security demand new means for achieving security. We are made vulnerable not just by external threats but by the very means we keep them at bay. So there is the potential of an ever escalating threat – and therefore the potential of increased vulnerability.

### **Mutually Assured Insecurity**

This very dynamic was abundantly clear in the nuclear arms race during the Cold War, in which the U.S. and Soviet Union continually sought to maintain an edge over the other's nuclear capabilities. The only way to slow this furious escalation was to enshrine a mutual vulnerability between the two nations codified by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which ensured that neither could build defenses against the other's ICBMs. It was negotiated and signed precisely because both nations realized that the alternative was an endless cycle of offense-defense that would bankrupt them both. The 1986 Reykjavik summit between Gorbachev and Reagan, which came extraordinarily close to eliminating all

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**Nuclear weapons pose not only an escalating threat but also serve as a prime example of a presumed means of security morphing into a clear threat to security.**

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nuclear weapons worldwide, broke down over the fervent U.S. desire to pursue missile defense research, and the equally determined Soviet desire to prevent it. The U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the treaty in 2002, and today the question of missile defense is still a major irritant to U.S.-Russian relations; the U.S. seeks security from "rogue" ballistic missile threats like Iran or North Korea, and Russia perceives American advances in that direction as a stepping stone toward U.S. hegemony. The very means with which we seek security can stimulate actions by others that actually increase our net vulnerability.

A related situation occurs whenever new means of "securitization" create their own risks. One of the reasons we decided to pursue the nuclear question at the YDS Sarah Smith Conference in 2008 is that it is a paradigmatic case of the vulnerability-security paradox: nuclear weapons pose not only an escalating threat but also serve as a prime example of a presumed means of security morphing into a clear threat to security. As Mikhail Gorbachev said in 2007, "It is becoming clearer that nuclear weapons are no longer a means of achieving security. In fact,

with every passing year, they make our security more precarious." The weapons that the nuclear powers built to deter their use are in fact now the greatest stimulant to the global proliferation that would virtually guarantee use via regional war, accident, or terrorism.

We are confronted with an unenviable situation: damned if we hold on to them, maybe not damned if we don't – hardly the sort of security guarantee that our varied global publics demand from their elected leaders. That character of increased risk created by the means of security must be dealt with as an essential component of analyzing risk in a technologically driven risks society.

I close with the hope that this will be the beginning of a renewed theological investigation of security and vulnerability. What human loss is entailed in pursuing security to the point of inviolability? Is the pursuit of inviolability ultimately a vain show of hubris and pride, something to be renounced? What modes and means of security are appropriate to beings whose vulnerability belongs to their very character? What contribution can religious tradition, in our case the Christian faith, make to rethinking the security issue?

I hope that the question of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, resurgent in this second nuclear age, will be a key test case for these and other challenges to which theologians will apply ourselves today.

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*Miroslav Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at YDS and the founding director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. He is also a member of the Global Agenda Council of the World Economic Forum. He is the author of Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace (Zondervan, 2006) and other books. Born in Croatia, he regularly lectures in Central and Eastern Europe.*

PROFILE: DOUGLAS ROCHE  
RESILIENT VOICE

Senator Douglas Roche, Canadian peacemaker, Roman Catholic layman, journalist, and former politician, thinks in big numbers, big dreams.

He won't let the world forget that it has spent \$12 trillion on nuclear weapons since 1945, an inconceivable sum and a pitiless theft from the world's poor, the 2.8 billion people who live on \$2 a day. Even now, U.S. taxpayers spend \$110 million every day to maintain the nation's nuclear arsenal in a post-Cold War world that no longer justifies such a scale of firepower.

But gloomy statistics of the global war machine don't get the last word. Roche sees evidence of a rising, countervailing global conscience, a civilizing instinct slowly taking root. The endurance of the United Nations, with its ambitious Millennium Development Goals, is one such evidence. The ten million people who in 2003 protested the looming Iraq War was an unprecedented witness. Barack Obama's election was a hinge moment too.

"We're in a transformational moment – the last such was 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall, opening up tremendous possibilities," he says.

"I don't want to underestimate the massive problems – the proclivity to greed, the militarism. But we are seeing the lifting up of humanity to higher levels of civilization, sometimes in spite of ourselves."

Another encouraging signal, he says, is the fledgling Alliance of Civilizations, though few people know about it. He blames an indifferent media. The Alliance was started in 2005 under the auspices of the UN (and initiated by Spain and Turkey) in order to promote partnerships across cultures and defy extremism.

"The Alliance of Civilizations is still a tender, tender shoot but, given time, if we can avoid blowing up the world in the next fifty or sixty years, I believe the Alliance of Civilizations will mature and reflect the thinking of generations not yet born, who will have a more intuitive understanding that the culture of peace is a human right," he says.

Roche, who turns 80 this year, credits his hopeful outlook to his experiences as a public servant, ambassador, and journalist who saw the wounded world revive and take stock of itself after the carnage and genocide of World War II. His resume includes: senator in the Senate of Canada, member of Parliament, Canadian ambassador for disarmament, chair of the UN Disarmament Committee, and special advisor on disarmament and security to the Holy See delegation to the UN General Assembly.

For decades he has campaigned for post-war humanitarian ideas – development, disarmament, human rights, environmental protection – all rudimentary elements of a culture of peace.

The culture of war continues its domination, however. Roche warns that the nuclear powers want to make nuclear weapons permanent instruments of their military strategies.

"During the Cold War, the U.S. and Russia said their nuclear weapons were only for deterrence purposes; now they are part of war-fighting strategies," says Roche, author of *Beyond Hiroshima* (Novalis, 2005) and *The Ultimate Evil: The Fight to Ban Nuclear Weapons* (Lorimer, 1997), and other books.

"The nuclear weapons states refuse to give up their nuclear arsenals, and they feign surprise that other nations, seeing that nuclear weapons have become the currency of power in the modern world, are trying to acquire them. So are terrorists. No major city in the world is safe from the threat of a nuclear attack. The risk of accidents is multiplying daily. All these are characteristics of the Second Nuclear Age."

But he sees resurging passion for peace in civil society's efforts to dismantle the weapons. His web site ([www.douglasroche.ca](http://www.douglasroche.ca)) lists several kindred organizations. They include the Union of Concerned Scientists ([www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org)), the Middle Powers Initiative ([www.gsinitiative.org/mpi](http://www.gsinitiative.org/mpi)), and the Fellowship of Reconciliation ([www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)).

In September 2008, Roche delivered the final lecture of the YDS conference on the nuclear threat with a forceful endorsement of human creativity despite a world still roaring with violence.

"When I walk in the mountains and I see a flower growing wild in the rocks, I take such hope, such heart, because there I see that a beautiful flower survived the odds," he declared.

"So hostile the territory, and yet it overcame the odds. Those of us who want to work for peace, nuclear disarmament, and the human security agenda must have the same attributes. With global conscience, there is now a new hope for humanity. I believe it in my heart: the religions of the world are poised to reach out with commonality to speak to a world that is crying for hope based on faith."

— Ray Waddle





# Confronting an Age of Fear

By M. Jan Holton

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus gathered three of his disciples and asked them to stay vigilant and remain on watch as he prayed. Here, according to Matthew's account, Jesus struggled with the reality of what awaited him. In a powerful gesture, he brought others to bear witness to his fear and vulnerabilities.*

Yet, as crisis loomed, not once but three times the disciples fell asleep! This reaction reveals a terribly disappointing and utterly human response to fear and anxiety. Jesus, on the other hand, offers a liberating model of courage by standing fully in the face of his own death.

Many commentaries on nuclear terrorism seem to imply that the public generally responds to the potential for attack with a pattern of apathy similar, perhaps, to that of the disciples. The underlying message from these political, scientific, and academic experts suggests that fear should spur us into action. Embedded more deeply is the subtle hint that even panic would be a more appropriate response than doing nothing.

I must admit, while many global issues are of concern to me, nuclear catastrophe isn't usually at the top of the list. I am more likely to be mindful of the nasty environmental problem of nuclear waste than how nuclear materials could be used in bombs. I further admit I am suspicious of dire warnings that do not also consider the degree of probability that such attacks will occur. Experts, nevertheless, make it clear that all of us should be very worried about terrorist attacks utilizing nuclear materials that would lead to great loss of life and property.

If this is true, maybe it's a good question: why are we not more concerned? And, given the moral magnitude of our country's responsibility as contributors to nuclear proliferation, how are we to engage this issue in the Christian community? To

answer these questions, it may prove helpful first to look briefly at some of the fears we face and how we manage them.

Over the past decades, we have moved from threats of the old Cold War to those of the New Nuclear Age. No longer is total annihilation by the Soviet Union seen as our greatest nightmare. That's the good news. In its place, we now face unknown terrorists who could potentially steal nuclear materials and use them against the American population. That's the bad news. Dr. Henry Kelly, President of the American Federation of Scientists, paints a picture of what such an attack might look like:

Now imagine if a single piece of radioactive cobalt from a food irradiation plant was dispersed by an explosion at the lower tip of Manhattan. ... No immediate evacuation would be necessary, but in this case, an area of approximately one-thousand square kilometers, extending over three states, would be contaminated. Over an area of about three hundred typical city blocks, there would be a one-in-ten risk of death from cancer for residents living in the contaminated area for forty years. The entire borough of Manhattan would be so contaminated that anyone living there would have a one-in-a-hundred chance of dying from cancer caused by the residual radiation. It would be decades before the city was inhabitable again, and demolition might be necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Death from this attack would be slow and insidious, not at all the flaming vision of terror we witnessed on September 11. We can imagine the deserted streets of Manhattan only because of the cinematic effects of numerous doomsday thrillers and their depictions of our favorite urban island, abandoned, after a nuclear attack. In trying to understand the threat, we are caught between reference points of genuine horror and make-believe, either of which is overwhelmingly terrifying.

### **Daily Bombardment**

So, why are we not more actively concerned about the nuclear threats we face today? Americans are bombarded with reminders of how our existence is threatened. For many, worrying about anything outside of surviving this day or month is a luxury. Parents wake up wondering if their child will make

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### **Why are we not more actively concerned about the nuclear threats we face today?**

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it home through the gang-infested neighborhood without getting shot or how to get a sick child to the clinic when the only parent must work a double shift. Thousands of the newly unemployed toss and turn, wondering how they will pay the mortgage, put food on the table, or keep health insurance. When we try to escape into an evening of television, we are alerted to the fact that heart disease is the leading cause of death and we should know the signs of stroke – it could save our lives. Hospital X has the cutting edge technology to increase survival rates for cancer patients and, oh, by the way, cancer is the second leading cause of death. Sudden deaths of loved ones and our own near-misses allow the tenuous nature of life to break through in startling ways.

And, of course, no one has forgotten 9/11. Could a terrorist attack *really* be around any corner? Since September 11, we have been barraged with security alerts and dire warnings from the Department of Homeland Security. Those who fly must endure threat-level-warning announcements playing overhead on a continuous loop as they move through the airport.

I have often heard the statement that the world is not the same place – 9/11 changed everything. In some sense this is true. But, in another sense, we are living with many of the same fears introduced by the Cold War and the onset of the “first” nuclear age. Robert Lifton and Richard Falk identify the concept of a “double life” in their analysis of an early study

on the psychological effects of the nuclear air-raid drills during the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> They write this about the individuals in the study:

[They] knew that everything ... could be extinguished in a moment. Yet they and everyone else seemed to go about business as usual. To some extent they felt they had to; how else could they get through the day, pursue their lives, do what they had to do? But some sensed it was at a price ... that had to do with the expansion of numbing to other areas of life, with gaps between what one knew and what one felt and did. ... We all live a double life.<sup>3</sup>

A similar sense of double life continues today as we confront terrorism in our midst. This sense exists not because people are ignorant but because we cannot sustain the everyday tasks of our lives while constantly living on the edge of fear.

Theologians have long wrestled with the notion that humans live in a perpetual state of anxiety over the vulnerability that emerges from the knowledge of our own demise. According to Paul Tillich, the fact that we will die and cannot prevent this creates existential anxiety of such magnitude that humans cannot stand in its full presence for more than a moment.<sup>4</sup> Americans, and I think many in the West, fend off this anxiety in a number of ways. In spite of certain underlying biological causes, I am convinced that on a spiritual level, the widespread substance and behavioral addictions in our culture point to the attempt to numb fears we can't quite name. Others of us attempt to bolster the illusion that we have control over our lives by buying more stuff, building bigger houses, and driving faster cars. The trappings of this strategy have now come crashing down around us, and we feel more vulnerable than ever. Our energies are absorbed in fending off everyday worries, terrorism alerts, and nameless fears just so we can maintain our day-to-day lives. It is not surprising that we might appear apathetic about nuclear threats.

### **Between Apathy and Sheer Terror**

The truth is, even without the threat of terrorism, if we actually had to stand in the *full* reality of how vulnerable we really are as human creatures, it would very likely paralyze us. We simply would not make it past the front door. It is necessary to have at least some level of psychic defense that holds back the full force of this vulnerability in order to function. Beyond this, we usually live somewhere between two extreme reactions to the everyday threats that surround us. On the one end is the state of psycho-

logical and spiritual slumber similar to that of the disciples. Some people, perhaps all of us to some degree, shut down their fear response when it becomes overloaded. Others move toward the opposite extreme and live in a state of panic, outwardly fearful of everything. Again, most of us will obviously move in between these two extremes. If frightened enough, however, we can all be pushed to the point of shutting down or sheer panic. The more threatened we feel, the more limited our coping strategies may become, and the greater the possibility our productive functioning will shut down. This is one reason that we may not be spurred to productive action by warnings of catastrophic nuclear disaster. Fear is not an effective incentive for sustained action in support of policy change or safeguards against nuclear attacks. Politicians would do well to realize this.

### Eyes Wide Open

There is, however, another option for how to confront our fears. At Gethsemane, Jesus showed the disciples how to feel fear and vulnerability without giving in to apathy or panic. As a Christian community, we are urged to move through the world

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### At Gethsemane, Jesus showed the disciples how to feel fear and vulnerability without giving in to apathy or panic.

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with our eyes wide open. Only then can we set out to change ourselves and the world. Many in the community of faith work hard not to look the other way when we pass someone who is hungry, lost, or in pain because we understand that there is a moral responsibility to tend to those in need.

But it is much more difficult for us to grasp that we have the same responsibility to pay attention when our family, neighbors, and this earth, which has been entrusted to us, are at risk from any variation of nuclear attack. How do we begin to see the dangers in this world with open eyes? Tillich suggests that it takes a particular kind of courage, a courage grounded in God that moves us beyond apathy and sustains us with a strength that resists panic.<sup>5</sup> This courage does not make us fearless; rather, it gives us strength to acknowledge and stand in the face of our vulnerabilities.

If the scene at Gethsemane can offer us any pointers about how to face crisis, I think it includes three fundamental aspects. The most important among these is community – understanding how we are connected to others. Jesus intentionally calls

out three of the disciples to accompany him through this time of personal crisis. Now, there are many interpretations as to why the disciples are present at Gethsemane. I believe, though, we need to pay attention to the possibility that Jesus wanted, even needed, human companionship. Could he have been pointing to the fact that in our humanity we are fundamentally connected to each other?

Even non-theologians recognized this as a necessary step toward change in the post-Cold War era. Lifton uses the helpful though altogether unappealing term *species mentality* to describe a way of thinking that recognizes our human connectedness not only to each other but to future generations.<sup>6</sup> I must note here that while we gain strength as Christians through the faith we hold dear and true, creating change of this magnitude requires the help of those from *all* religious orientations and even those with none. We are not only a Christian family but a human one.

Secondly, we must maintain a state of prayerful attentiveness. We cannot find the spiritual underpinnings that ground us in a lasting sense of courage without this fundamental spiritual practice. Jesus models this on the night of his arrest and, indeed, throughout his ministry. Prayer opens us to seeing the daily needs and risks around us that we may prefer not to see. In this time of terrorism, prayer can deepen our ability to find alternative responses to shrinking away from the fear or giving in to panic.

Finally, as threat approached on that night, Jesus asked his disciples to enter a time of vigilant watchfulness. I suggest that this is not a passive but rather a bold state of attentiveness that leads to action. It is hard to know what this will look like for individuals and their community of faith in regard to nuclear terrorism or solving the problem of nuclear disarmament. But it must include an informed understanding of the issues. We can begin by pursuing alternative news sources that dig at the truth behind our current state of nuclear security and provide information about global conversations around nuclear disarmament. This will help us become alert both to exaggerated threats that are intended to bolster support for political or personal agendas and to subtle indications of government or private irresponsibility. Navigating the political, scientific, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the nuclear challenges we face requires that we intentionally take on the task of grasping the issues and what we can do about them.

Only when we see our world more clearly through eyes that embrace our human connectedness,

prayerful attentiveness, and vigilant watchfulness can we effectively advocate for change. Though all change comes in small steps, we start by naming the grand vision toward which we work. In the case of nuclear weapons, this should be full global disarmament. We may need to humble ourselves and acknowledge our own national complicity in creating and using weapons that have no purpose other than catastrophic loss of human life. On some level, this may also mean acknowledging our personal complicity through silence as a first step toward action. Advocacy will then compel us to evaluate our gifts and resources and to use them generously even when it comes at a cost.

On the one hand, a world without nuclear weapons seems impossible. Isn't it a bit like trying to put the genie back in the bottle? I am tempted to wonder if only academics and diplomats have an inclination to speak of such grandiose ideas as if they were real possibilities. But if leading a Christian life means believing that all things are possible and living into the moment when we will see it revealed before us, then we are uniquely prepared for the task.

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## THE CHILDREN OF CHERNOBYL

Pripyat – Spring, 1986

A mother tells her daughter, "Hurry, it's time for school. Your brother is ready to go."

"Brother, did you see the trucks watering the streets?"  
 "Sister, keep walking, we will be late."

The teacher gives the day's lesson:  
 "Stay indoors when you return home.

Seal the windows. Change your clothes.  
 Take these pills. Don't panic."

An office decides, "Let's not evacuate them, let's avoid panic." Three days pass before

the children are removed to a pioneering camp on the Black Sea converted into a holding station.

Parents receive assurances that all is normal, but the children's blood tests are abnormal.

Children romp and play on the grass waiting to go home to nowhere.

— Mary Crescenzo

# Transcending Ambivalence: A History of Religious Engagement with the Bomb

By David Cortright

*When the first nuclear explosion took place in New Mexico in July 1945, at a site ironically called Trinity, the scientists and military officers who witnessed the blast – who otherwise professed no religious faith – recounted their reactions in theological terms.*

General Thomas Farrell, deputy director of the Manhattan Project, described the “strong, sustained, awesome roar which warned of doomsday and made us feel that we puny things were blasphemous to dare tamper with the forces heretofore reserved to the Almighty.”<sup>1</sup> J. Robert Oppenheimer, director of the Los Alamos scientists and a savant of Eastern religion, reflected on passages from the Bhagavad-Gita, the sacred Hindu epic:

If the radiance of a thousand suns  
Were to burst into the sky,  
That would be like  
The splendor of the Mighty One ...

As the sinister mushroom cloud rose in the distance, Oppenheimer was reminded of another line from the Gita: “I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds.”

Religious leaders were horrified by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 20, dozens of Protestant leaders issued a statement declaring their “unmitigated condemnation.”<sup>2</sup> In March 1946 a Federal Council of Churches commission headed by YDS theologian Robert L. Calhoun urged the United States to renounce the further production of nuclear weapons and place atomic energy under strict international control. In developing and using the bomb, the commission said, “We have sinned grievously against the laws of God.” Signers of the commission report included Reinhold Niebuhr, John C. Bennett, and Georgia Harkness.<sup>3</sup>

In condemning a weapon of mass annihilation, church leaders were reflecting the irenic principles

in Christ’s commandment to love all, including enemies. The pacifism of early Christians had given way to just war doctrine, but peace principles were kept alive over the centuries by the historic pacifist churches – Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends – and gained new life in the late nineteenth century with the rise of social gospel Christianity and Catholic social teaching. Mainstream Christians embraced a mission of bringing justice and reconciliation to a broken world, often influenced or tempered by Niebuhrian realism. The horrors of world war and totalitarianism seemed to confirm the brutish character of *realpolitik* – although these realities also intensified the urgency of seeking peace and international cooperation, especially in an era of weapons of ultimate destruction.

## “Duck and Cover”

This ambivalence shaped the early Christian response to the nuclear age. As the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s, some of those who had greeted the bomb with horror now came to accept it as a necessary deterrent against godless communism and the perceived threat of totalitarian aggression. In the Catholic Church and among evangelical Christians in particular, anti-communism overrode moral doubts about the legitimacy of weapons of mass destruction. Even the liberal Federal Council of Churches declared in 1950 that atomic weapons were necessary for defense and that their use was “justifiable” as retaliation against nuclear attack.<sup>4</sup>

Pacifist Christians rejected this Cold War consensus and warned against accommodating the bomb.

In 1954 the American Friends Service Committee, the Brethren Service Committee, and the Mennonite Central Committee published an ad in *The New York Times*. Beneath a graphic image of the cross and a mushroom cloud, their statement compared two futures: “one standing for redemptive love and forgiveness, for the acceptance of suffering, for hope, for life; the other for hatred and massive retaliation, for the infliction of suffering, for fear, for death.”<sup>5</sup>

A resolute opponent of the bomb was Dorothy Day, founder of the *Catholic Worker* and an ardent pacifist who had refused to support World War II, fearing that the unleashed forces of militarism would lead to ever more terrifying forms of destruction.<sup>6</sup>

The development of atomic weapons seemed to confirm Day's worst fears. As nuclear anxiety intensified in the 1950s, government officials ordered

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### **It was not until the early 1980s that religious communities shed their hesitancy about responding to the nuclear danger.**

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communities to practice air raid drills, and school children were instructed to “duck and cover.” When the state of New York announced a mandatory drill in 1955, Day and a few determined colleagues publicly disobeyed the order. At the appointed hour, as New Yorkers scurried into subways and basement shelters, Day sat conspicuously in City Hall Park and refused to budge. Her statement declared, “We do not have faith in God if we depend upon the atomic bomb.”<sup>7</sup> The initial protest failed to attract much interest, but as air raid drills continued and radioactive fallout from atmospheric atomic testing began to poison the environment, public opposition to nuclear weapons spread.

#### **Finding Resolve**

The growing chorus of public concern about nuclear testing led to the founding of secular disarmament groups such as SANE and Women's Strike for Peace. It generated political pressure that led to the signing of the Atmospheric Test Ban Treaty in 1963. While some religious bodies spoke out against the nuclear danger, most remained silent. Among the few who endorsed the early efforts of SANE were the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Paul Tillich, and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It was not until the early 1980s that religious communities shed their hesitancy. The catalyst for the change of heart was the accelerating arms race and the deployment of new nuclear missiles in Europe. A pervasive fear of nuclear war gripped human

consciousness, especially in the U.S. and Europe. Discovery of the “nuclear winter” effect and publication of Jonathan Schell's *Fate of the Earth* added to this anxiety, raising the shattering prospect of the destruction of all life, the ultimate sin against God's creation.

According to a Gallup poll in September 1981, 70 percent of Americans felt that nuclear war was a real possibility.<sup>8</sup> An analysis by pollster Daniel Yankelovich found a “sea change” in public thinking – pervasive nuclear fear combined with a deep desire for action to stop the drift toward destruction.<sup>9</sup>

The result was an unprecedented surge of citizen activism for disarmament, embodied in the U.S. by the nuclear weapons freeze campaign. The grassroots movement for a bilateral halt to the arms race swept across the country like a proverbial prairie fire. Hundreds of local governments and professional associations adopted resolutions endorsing the freeze. The most dramatic outpouring of support came in June 1982, when nearly one million people marched to New York's Central Park for a rally to halt the arms race, the largest peace demonstration in U.S. history. That same year a quarter of the U.S. electorate voted on nuclear freeze ballot initiatives. Across the nation, 18 million Americans voted on the freeze proposition, with 10.7 million, or 60 percent, voting in favor.

The religious community played a significant role in these efforts. Nearly every major religious organization in the U.S. raised its voice for disarmament. Churches and Jewish organizations issued pastoral letters, conducted educational campaigns, organized conferences, joined in lobbying campaigns, and in some cases supported nonviolent protest. The religious community became an essential part of the movement to end the arms race. In the hearts of millions of Americans, God was on the side of peace, against the bomb.

A key leader in this effort was the Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr., the former Yale University chaplain who in 1977 began a ten-year term as senior minister at New York's historic Riverside Church. One of Coffin's first acts upon arriving at Riverside was to establish a disarmament program, which sponsored annual conferences attracting thousands of clergy and laity from churches throughout the country. Another early leader was the Rev. Jim Wallis, founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine. Wallis was an initiator of the nuclear weapons freeze campaign and along with Coffin helped articulate the moral and religious argument for reversing the arms race. Religious peace organizations such as the Ameri-



can Friends Service Committee, Pax Christi, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation provided essential leadership for the founding of the freeze movement. Also lending early support were rabbis Alexander Schindler and David Saperstein of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which sponsored local educational events in synagogues and among community groups across the nation.

### **The Bishops Write a Letter**

The most significant statement from U.S. religious leaders during the 1980s was the pastoral letter of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, issued in 1983. Written by the Rev. Bryan Hehir for a committee of bishops chaired by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, the bishops' pastoral letter had a profound public impact. The letter from the normally conservative and staunchly anti-communist Catholic hierarchy challenged the very foundations of U.S. nuclear policy and opposed key elements of the Reagan administration's military buildup.

While avoiding the phrase "nuclear freeze," the bishops declared their support for "immediate bilateral agreements to halt the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons systems." They endorsed a policy of no-first-use and a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. They condemned any use of nuclear weapons and opposed even retaliatory strikes that would threaten innocent life.

The logic of this position should have led the bishops to reject the very possession of nuclear weapons and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence,

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### **The risk that nuclear weapons might actually be used somewhere is arguably greater now than during the Cold War.**

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since these are predicated on the threat of nuclear weapons use. The bishops chose instead to offer an interim "strictly conditioned" acceptance of nuclear deterrence, with the proviso that "nuclear deterrence should be used as a step on the way toward progressive disarmament."<sup>10</sup> The Catholic journal *Commonweal* called the pastoral letter "a watershed event" not only for the church but for society as a whole. George Kennan wrote in *The New York Times* that the bishops' letter was "the most profound and searching inquiry yet conducted by any responsible collective body into the relations of nuclear weaponry, and indeed of modern war in general."<sup>11</sup>

Many other religious bodies and church denominations issued statements condemning nuclear

weapons during the 1980s. Most of the Protestant churches went further than the Catholic bishops in condemning the existence of nuclear weapons. The previous uneasy acceptance of nuclear deterrence gave way in many instances to the endorsement of nuclear abolition. Not only the use but the very possession of nuclear weapons became unacceptable. The executive ministers of the American Baptist Churches USA called the existence of nuclear weapons and the willingness to use them "a direct affront to our Christian beliefs."

One of the most far-reaching declarations was *In Defense of Creation*, published in 1986 by The United Methodist Church. Addressing the ambiguity left by their Catholic colleagues, the Methodist bishops declared that nuclear deterrence "must no longer receive the churches' blessing, even as a temporary warrant." The Methodist statement addressed the economic consequences of the arms race, condemning the squandering of wealth in the arms build-up while hunger, malnutrition, and disease afflict the world's poor.<sup>12</sup>

The involvement of the religious community gave important legitimacy to the demand for arms reduction. In Coffin's words it cast a "mantle of respectability" over the freeze movement.<sup>13</sup> When religious leaders spoke out for reversal of the arms race, it became easier and more acceptable for others to express similar views.

A 1983 article in *Foreign Affairs* described the mobilization of religious opinion as "to some extent an irresistible force in American affairs." Given the scale of religious engagement with the nuclear issue, the article observed, "No government in Washington can afford not to pay attention; no statesman can be indifferent to the debate."<sup>14</sup> The White House responded to these pressures by pursuing arms negotiations with Moscow. Reagan's instinctive anti nuclearism was matched by Gorbachev's desire for disarmament, as the two leaders agreed to deep reductions in nuclear stockpiles that brought an end to the Cold War. The religious community had significant influence in shaping the political climate that made these historic changes possible.

### **New Dangers, Old Thinking**

In the post-Cold War era many expected and hoped that nuclear arsenals would steadily shrink and disappear altogether, as scientists and religious leaders had urged at the dawn of the atomic age. Former national security officials produced important reports arguing for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, as Reagan and Gorbachev had envisioned at Reykjavik in 1986. In Washington and other capitals,

however, political leaders clung to outmoded thinking and maintained their arsenals, albeit at reduced levels, as the world entered what Jonathan Schell termed “the second nuclear era.”<sup>15</sup>

In this new age the greatest danger has become nuclear proliferation – the steady expansion of Israel’s nuclear arsenal, the spread of the bomb to India and Pakistan, North Korea’s nuclear program, the nuclear ambitions of Iran, and most alarmingly al-Qaeda’s declared intention to acquire and use nuclear weapons. The danger of a catastrophic nuclear exchange threatening all life has greatly diminished, but the risk that nuclear weapons might actually be used somewhere is arguably greater now than during the Cold War, and may increase in the years ahead.

In response to these dangers religious leaders are called again to speak out in defense of life. In 2005, shortly before his death, William Sloane Coffin appealed for renewed religious commitment to nuclear disarmament. The result was the creation of Faithful Security, a network of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim organizations working to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons dangers. Evangelical Christians voiced their support for a world without nuclear weapons, notably in the Two Futures Project campaign.

Religious opposition to nuclear weapons has broadened because the moral argument for disarmament that crystallized in the 1980s has become more compelling than ever. Long gone is the ambivalence born of anti-communism. In the post-Cold War era, nuclear weapons no longer serve a deterrent function. By their very existence they are an inducement for others, including non-state actors, to acquire the capacity for mass destruction. These new dangers have added motivation and moral clarity to the continuing quest to lift the threat of annihilation that first clouded the human future more than 60 years ago.

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*The former executive director of SANE, David Cortright is Director of Policy Studies at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas (Cambridge University Press, 2008).*

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- 14 Bruce Van Voorst, “The Churches and Nuclear Deterrence,” *Foreign Affairs* 61 (Spring 1983), 828.
- 15 Jonathan Schell, *The Gift of Time: The Case for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons Now* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 7, 10, 17.

## A VIGIL AT A MISSILE SILO

Because I did not marry a bomb,  
nor impregnate a bomb,  
nor watch a bomb swell in the belly  
of a bomb,  
because I did not study the bomb  
in Lamaze classes,  
nor watch a bomb crown and deliver and cry,  
nor hold the bomb purple and cold and scared  
in the bomb's white light,  
nor walk the floor late at night  
with the bomb sucking its bottle.

Because I do not have bombs for friends,  
nor relatives, nor pets,  
nor students, nor habits,  
because I do not smoke the bomb  
or eat it or drink it,  
because I do not want to sleep with a bomb  
or hear a bomb snore,  
because I do not want to dream bombs  
and wake sitting up, my heart a bomb.

Because I do not want bombs for neighbors,  
nor have them park their bombs  
in my driveway,  
nor have them leave their bombs unmowed,  
nor allow their bombs to bark all night.  
Because I do not want to pick up  
their filth,  
nor bathe with the bomb  
looking in the window,  
or calling me on the phone,  
or reading the newspaper over my shoulder,  
or selling me chances in a raffle.

Because  
the world should not be a bomb,  
a nation should not be a bomb,  
a man should not be a bomb  
or have ideas that are bombs.

A bomb should not be a bomb.

— Mark Sanders

# The Search for a Peacemaking Culture

By Amanda Hendler-Voss

*Takashi Tanemori was eight years old when the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. He lived less than a mile from ground zero, and his mother and sister were killed instantly. He and his younger brother, at school that morning, managed to survive. His father died within a month. Beside his grave, Takashi swore he would avenge his loved ones' deaths.*

Telling his story recently, he reflected, "My greatest enemy is the darkness in my own heart." Forty years after the bombing, Takashi had a vision of his father and recalled his dying words: "Live for the benefit of others." He now confesses, "Forgiveness is setting my heart free – and yours may be set free too." The effects of radiation continue to attack his body, but his spirit has discovered the path to wholeness. Though he is going blind, Takashi sees clearly that the nuclear threat is – at its core – a spiritual problem.<sup>1</sup>

The advent of nuclear weapons permanently altered the ethical discourse about war and peace. Nuclear weapons bequeath toxicity leaching across borders, radiation cycling through generations, and revenge feeding on the spirits of the young. These weapons mock the sanctity and dignity of life. What could be more offensive to God?

If the nuclear threat is a spiritual problem, then the good news for people of faith is that it requires a spiritual remedy. We have the opportunity – in our homes and houses of worship – to create cultures of peace, encourage creative conflict resolution, and engage in Christ-like reconciliation. This is our task, the work of spiritual formation and *shalom*.

## **A Theology of *Shalom***

If nuclear weapons pose a unique threat to God's creation, why are so many congregations silent? One pastor I know calls it "a distance issue" that we mistake as irrelevant to our daily lives. Even

more perilous, there exists a national narrative that always threatens to eclipse the Biblical narrative. This national narrative insists that the U.S. alone can possess nuclear weapons responsibly. Our use of nuclear weapons in World War II, this narrative asserts, was justified (if not just). The bald-faced hypocrisy of claiming our right to a weapon we forbid others to have, the clear evidence that the possession of nuclear weapons does more to endanger than to deter, the unrelenting hazard of nuclear waste – all is silenced by this national narrative. The question for people of faith is whether we will legitimize such a narrative at the expense of the Biblical call to peacemaking.

Though the dictionary defines peace as "the absence of war," Walter Brueggemann describes *shalom* as God's persistent vision that all of creation be as one, each in community with the other, "living in harmony and security toward the joy and well-being of every other creature."<sup>2</sup> As a Christian educator, my highest hope for our children is that through their spiritual formation, they will lead lives rich with *shalom*. The richness of *shalom* moves well beyond a "war is not the answer" placard. It invokes God's healing of the violence in our hearts, communities, and world. If *shalom* is the palpable presence of healing, wholeness, and harmony, then war must be actively prevented, not passively avoided. A theology of *shalom* is practical – it can't be nurtured privately without affecting how we engage public life.

So how do we build cultures of peace in our homes and houses of worship? How do we resist a national narrative that stifles moral outrage? Perhaps we begin by asking good questions. How do we communicate about conflict? Are we developing the practice of deep listening? When do we carve out time for reflection and meditation? Is prayer a priority? How do we confess, forgive, reconcile?

Assessing our current spiritual and political practices, we might see the Biblical narrative anew. Jesus' final days offer a powerful witness to peacemaking. On the eve of his betrayal, Jesus broke bread with the one who would betray him. Embodying servanthood, he washed the feet of each disciple. In the garden, Jesus wrestled with God in prayer, grappled with death, and offered himself as an instrument of God's will. He did this not because suffering is good as an end in itself, but because he was engaged in the life-giving struggle against evil.

The church re-enacts the final supper (and practice of foot-washing) to remember that all are welcome at God's table to a meal that fills our deepest hunger for communion. We acknowledge that no act, however violent or repugnant, is powerful enough to separate us from God's love. We repeat Jesus' prayer, asking God to forgive us as we forgive others. The table of reconciliation is a central loca-

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### **Women know that international violence and terror bleed down into culture, communities, and homes.**

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tion for peacemaking. We must guide our children to God's table, break bread with friends and adversaries. We must remember the significance of the forgiveness, grace, and reconciliation that God holds out again and again.

#### **First Things First: Spiritual Formation**

Spiritual formation that pushes us to pursue peace pushes us to imagine alternatives to war. Though just war theory and pacifism constitute two Christian responses to war, another alternative is emerging – just peacemaking. Just peacemaking works to prevent war by attending to the root causes of international conflict, strengthening the social fabric in areas where conflict persists, holding nations accountable to the rule of law through international institutions, reducing poverty, building partnerships through direct diplomacy, securing loose nuclear materials, and upholding treaties that diminish nuclear arsenals.

Pursuing a nuclear-weapons-free world is one of the most powerful ways that Christians across the theological spectrum can unite to forward God's agenda of *shalom*. Calling your members of Congress, writing to the newspaper, taking to the streets – all valuable actions. But they are sustained by a spiritual commitment to peacemaking that listens for God's whisper over the clamor of culture.

Bring peacemaking into the Christian calendar by marking significant annual events. Gather prayers and stories to commemorate August 6 with a healing service. Offer time for reflection, small-group discussion, and opportunities for action.

Since 9/11, the religious communities of Eugene, Oregon, have gathered on the eleventh day of each month for an interfaith worship service, an occasion to honor our common humanity and pray for peace. Worshipping with those of other religious traditions, we meet God anew in the stranger. If the world's major religions unite in the belief that a world free of nuclear weapons is essential, surely we can build it.

Remarkable education materials are available that address the nuclear threat. The "Faith Seeking Peace" curriculum by Women's Action for New Directions (WAND) offers a study of nuclear weapons that includes exercises that appeal to diverse learning styles and materials for worship. Other resources include the "Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Weapons Danger" – a booklet about Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim perspectives on nuclear weapons for inter-religious dialogue. Faithful Security offers an organizing toolkit. Consider creating an ongoing Sunday school class that uses these resources.

Churches can host community meetings that address war, peace, and nuclear weapons. When the enormity of the issue overwhelms us, communities of faith can offer prayer and reflection. An interfaith group in Atlanta pauses on the sixth of every month, facing in the direction of Hiroshima, to pray for peace.

Children can create cards, artwork, or blankets to send to a sister church in places like Hiroshima, Pakistan, or Iran. Georgia WAND director and nuclear expert Bobbie Paul remarks: "Children ask the world of us. They deserve people who want to preserve and protect life." Advocacy for peace, she states, "is not a choice. But it can start with one person in a faith community." She accepted a peacemaking award on behalf of Georgia WAND from the Atlanta Presbytery with the words, "I am my sister's keeper, my brother's keeper ..."

Kit Frisinger, a member of Oregon WAND who leads an interdenominational group of women through the “Faith Seeking Peace” curriculum, emphasizes the significance of women gathering, talking, and pursuing peacemaking. In her group, women empower one another to work in their own churches, speaking out in places where the national nuclear narrative complicates discussions of peacemaking.

### **Women and the Nuclear Threat**

Women in particular have long understood that the nuclear threat is not just a practical issue, but a spiritual one. Though 9/11 brought our national security to the fore, many women had not felt safe for some time in a world where the nation with the biggest guns dominates. Because we have lacked job, economic, and health security, women often define national security in broader terms. We lament the dollars spent to maintain these weapons rather than to rebuild crumbling schools or curb climate change.

Furthermore, women know that international violence and terror bleed down into culture, communities, and homes. Iraqi author-activist Zainab Salbi states, “War often enters homes through the kitchen door. Women sense war’s onset early, as they deal with shortages of food, the closing of schools, and often their own reduced freedoms. ... What happens to women is often an indicator of what is to come for the rest of society, be it war or peace.”<sup>3</sup> That is why women belong, arm in arm, on the front lines of the movement for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

The night Jesus was betrayed, he prayed for believers, that we might “all be one.” On the eve of

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### **This threat to God’s creation cannot be ignored by those who strive to love the world the way God does.**

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that terrible confluence of events, which began with a kiss of betrayal and ended in his tortured death, Jesus was preoccupied with the unity of believers. Though his own body would be crucified, Jesus prayed for the communion of his followers – the fellowship we call the body of Christ.

As history trudges through the crises of our day from nuclear weapons to climate change to global recession, it is perilous to pretend that we are somehow separate from the rest of God’s creation. There’s a reflection of God’s image – a spark of that divine Spirit – endowed by our Creator in each one of us. Jesus’ prayer was offered in the hope that we would honor the unity that courses through

the heart of God’s diverse creation. He disclosed a divine vision that the strength of what binds us together would defy all attempts to divide us.

Like climate change, the nuclear weapons danger is an era-eclipsing issue bringing Christians together. Out of the insular corners of our denominational and ideological echo chambers, we glimpse a truth that unites: nuclear weapons pose an existential threat to our common life and humanity. This threat to God’s creation cannot be ignored by those who strive to love the world the way God does. Conservatives may hearken back to Ronald Reagan’s declaration: “We seek the total elimination one day of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.” Liberals may quote Martin Luther King Jr.: “I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation.”

The shared vision of these two giants of American history is one that all Christians can affirm in our time: the safeguarding of our children’s future by building a nuclear-weapons-free world. May it be said by our children’s children that by attending to this vision, we lived more fully into Jesus’ prayer for the unity of all believers.

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*The Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss is the Faith Communities Educator for Women’s Action for New Directions (WAND) and author of WAND’s “Faith Seeking Peace” curriculum. She is ordained in the United Church of Christ and lives in Asheville, NC, with husband, Seth, and toddler, Myles.*

### **Notes**

- 1 The author wishes to thank the Rev. Joyce Hollyday for recounting Tanemori’s story in a sermon, “Holy Week – Hiroshima 2006” April 9, 2006, at Circle of Mercy Congregation, Asheville, NC. Tanemori published a memoir, *Hiroshima: Bridge to forgiveness* – Takashi Tanemori’s *Hiroshima Story*, in 2007.
- 2 Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976), 15.
- 3 Zainab Salbi, *The Other Side of War: Women’s Stories of Survival and Hope* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2006), 15.



# This is Humanity's Climactic Moment

## — An Interview with Jayantha Dhanapala

*Jayantha Dhanapala is a leading international advocate for global peace and the reduction of nuclear arms. In a long diplomatic career serving both his native Sri Lanka and the United Nations, he has been forcefully engaged in easing nuclear tensions and strengthening treaties that commit nations to a nuclear-weapons-free future.*

*Dhanapala won wide recognition for his efforts as president of the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, crafting a landmark decision that indefinitely extended the treaty's non-proliferation aims and renewed hope for the prospects of peace.*

*Ambassador Dhanapala began his diplomatic career by entering his nation's foreign service in the 1960s. He later spent a decade in senior management roles at the United Nations. There, his work included an appointment as under-secretary general in 1997 to reestablish the Department of Disarmament, where he piloted the UN's efforts to reduce proliferation of land mines, conventional weapons, and weapons of mass destruction.*

*In 2007 Dhanapala was elected president of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, which assemble influential global scholars and public figures in hopes of reducing armed conflict and seeking cooperative solutions. Pugwash takes its name from the Nova Scotia village where the first meeting was held in 1957, a gathering initiated by Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, and others worried about the threat of thermonuclear weapons.*

*Recently Dhanapala spoke with Reflections by phone from Sri Lanka. The interview was conducted by guest contributing editor Tyler Wigg-Stevenson and editor Ray Waddle. The following is an edited version of their conversation.*

**REFLECTIONS** The mood around the nuclear issue looks very mixed right now. There's renewed optimism about the prospects for nuclear disarmament, and there's also deep worry about new threats of proliferation. Some call this a pivotal moment for a "disarmament reawakening." What accounts for the urgency now?

**DHANAPALA** After the winter of discontent under the Bush/Cheney administration, I thought we were moving, with regard to nuclear disarmament, into a springtime of hope with the onset of the Obama presidency and the two op-ed articles in *The Wall Street Journal* by Shultz, Kissinger, Nunn, and Perry. However, my optimism has now been tempered by the emergence of what has been called "anti-nuclear-nuclearism." That is, there are people who are posturing about being anti-nuclear but still say that they have to retain nuclear weapons because of Iran, DPRK (North Korea), and terrorist groups who might acquire nuclear weapons.

But we cannot maintain an apartheid system of nuclear "haves" and nuclear "have-nots" without spawning a whole new group of wannabes, people who aspire to nuclear weapons because they're seen as a secure weapon to have in a very insecure world — and because they are a status symbol. We now have eight nuclear weapons states, five of them within the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), three of them outside, and if you count DPRK, that makes it nine. And there will be proliferation, whether we like it or not, because some countries advocate for themselves the right to have these weapons. The only solution is total abolition of nuclear weapons.

We have still 25,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Of those, 95 percent are held by the United States and the Russian Federation. There is a lobby working very intensively in the Pentagon to insist that the United States needs to retain nuclear weapons.

**REFLECTIONS** Is there no international momentum against the bomb?

**DHANAPALA** We do need to energize global public opinion around this subject. There has been complacency since the end of the Cold War. Global public opinion, as *The New York Times* once said, is the other superpower. We have achieved great things

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**Faith organizations have taken positions against nuclear weapons. But they have not been sufficiently influential with regard to the nuclear weapons states.**

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through public opinion. We have a mine-ban convention (treaty). We have a cluster-bombs convention. We can also have a nuclear-weapons convention. Of the three weapons of mass destruction, biological weapons have been delegitimized and outlawed, chemical weapons have been delegitimized and outlawed.

The only category of weapons of mass destruction not outlawed are nuclear weapons – 25,000 of them, more than 10,000 on launch-ready status, which means that in only 15 minutes they can wipe out whole cities and kill millions of people.

**REFLECTIONS** You can imagine the deep psychological resistance in the United States to relinquishing these weapons after so many decades. How would you persuade us that it's the only way? Can Americans feel safe without its nuclear arsenal?

**DHANAPALA** The United States has already a huge advantage in conventional weapons. Today, 45 percent of the \$1.339 trillion that is globally spent per year on arms is spent by the United States. So the U.S. already enjoys tremendous superiority in conventional weapons. It does not need the nuclear weapons in order to ensure that it is secure in a very dangerous world. You don't need the nuclear weapon because this weapon only has to be used once by a terrorist group, and even the great United States has no infallible way of defending itself.

**REFLECTIONS** Do you see reasons for optimism despite this very sobering assessment?

**DHANAPALA** One encouraging trend is that after eight years of negative developments by the Bush/Cheney administration, the Obama administration has announced a desire to resubmit a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) for ratification by the Senate. And I hope the Senate will ratify it. If

the United States does so, the other eight countries which have so far not done so, including India and Pakistan, will definitely follow the example of the only surviving superpower in the world, and we will have that treaty in full force.

Also, we have the announcement that the U.S. would now enter into serious negotiations with the Russian Federation with regard to concluding new treaties that would replace the treaties that are expiring in December 2009 and in 2012. That hopefully will mean there will be a considerable reduction in the existing arsenals. Henry Kissinger is reported to have already undertaken a secret mission to Moscow in order to sound out the Russian Federation with regard to going down to 1,000 nuclear weapons each. If that is true, this is good news, even though it is not getting down to zero.

The third reason for optimism is the growing movements internationally for the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons. We have the Pugwash Conferences, which I am privileged to lead. More recently, the Global Zero Campaign held its inaugural meeting in Paris in December, subscribing to the view of going down to zero. Many other groups are campaigning for a nuclear weapons convention. But these movements need to be more widespread and more acceptable to international public opinion in order to put the pressure on governments to follow the way in which people think.

**REFLECTIONS** The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is widely known as the bedrock for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. But many of us are not familiar with the intricacies of it, especially the indefinite extension that was achieved at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, which you oversaw as president. Many people might think the indefinite extension was a foregone conclusion, yet that's not true. How was indefinite extension achieved?

**DHANAPALA** The indefinite extension in 1995 gave the NPT a new lease on life that would never have been possible if not for the fact that the nuclear weapons states gave us certain commitments which they have regrettably not fulfilled. Remember that in 1968, when the NPT was signed, there was already a bargain struck, an unequal bargain. The nuclear weapons states wanted the non-nuclear weapons states to renounce legally any acquisition of nuclear weapons and subject themselves to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy would not be diverted into non-peaceful uses. In return, under Article VI, the nuclear weapons states undertook



to negotiate genuinely toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, and they never did so.

Article VI remains a dead letter. Yet the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has an Advisory Opinion that says the nuclear weapons states are required under international law to engage meaningfully in good-faith negotiations on the elimination of nuclear weapons and bring those negotiations to a conclusion. So there is a great sense of dissatisfaction amongst the non-nuclear weapons states – dissatisfaction which at some point is going to break out into the open and cause serious damage to the treaty.

**REFLECTIONS** Has the treaty otherwise succeeded?

**DHANAPALA** Admittedly there have been leakages as far as the obligations of the non-nuclear weapons states are concerned. We had the problem with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. We have the DPRK, which quit the NPT and has conducted testing of its own. We hope that through diplomacy the DPRK will renounce its nuclear weapons and come back. Libya was found to be developing nuclear weapons, but fortunately skillful negotiations with the European Union and the UK in particular kept them within the NPT after abandoning their nuclear weapon development. Now we have some uncertainty about Iran and its program, which hopefully again will be the subject of diplomatic negotiations.

But the good news is that we've had many countries like South Africa, which had seven nuclear devices, destroy them and come into the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state. We've also had several other countries, such as Brazil and Argentina, which were reportedly threshold states, come into the NPT. So the NPT has been largely successful in its non-proliferation dimension.

Where it has not been successful is in regard to Article VI. This double bargain, the bargain at the birth of the treaty not being fulfilled, leads to tension and deep dissatisfaction. There is another factor – the Indo-U.S. nuclear cooperation deal conferred on India, a country outside the NPT, a country that has been a persistent critic of the NPT, with benefits that are even denied to non-nuclear weapons states within the NPT.

**REFLECTIONS** What are your hopes as we approach the 2010 review conference? What would yield a successful result? What are the consequences if we don't change course?

**DHANAPALA** At a minimum we need the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and we need the manifest be-

ginnings of negotiations between the Russian Federation and the U.S., with deep cuts in their nuclear arsenals. Thirdly, I believe the beginning of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should take place in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which has been stalemated for more than 10 years. Beyond that, we hope the Obama administration

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**This is a weapon like no other. And it has to be eliminated by international law. Once it is eliminated, the likelihood then of it spreading to terrorist groups will be zero because we would have a very tightly controlled system for verification.**

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should state that it would like to move towards a nuclear-weapons-free world as the Hoover Plan has stipulated.

We need no longer to have this fork-tongued kind of dialogue that goes on, with a mismatch between the policy ideas being described and the actual, practical action being taken by the nuclear weapons states. Things are clotting up unless dramatic decisions are taken. Otherwise I would see the NPT non-nuclear weapons states wanting to move into amendments of the treaty, and that would entail convening an amendment conference or actually breaking out to become proliferant states. Just imagine if the Indo-U.S. nuclear cooperation treaty was replicated with Israel. I would see the Arab states leaving the NPT en masse.

Let us remember: This is the most destructive weapon invented by mankind. Its very existence on earth is a crime against humanity. All the religions of the world would oppose the use of this weapon. Its very existence predicates a possible use, either by accident or by design. And if these weapons lie around, the time will come sooner than later when a terrorist group will acquire one of these weapons and use it without any compunction. And that will be the death knell of humanity as it now exists. This is a weapon with the capacity to cause major ecological impact, kill millions of people, destroy cities, and have lasting genetic effects. The nuclear winter thesis has been proven over and over again by scientific evidence. This is a weapon like no other. And it has to be eliminated by international law. Once it is eliminated, the likelihood then of it spreading to terrorist groups will be zero because we would have a very tightly controlled system for verification, as we have now with regard to chemical weapons and

so many other weapons. And that will give confidence to everybody.

**REFLECTIONS** What role does religion play in these debates? Are religious organizations helpful or destructive in these deliberations – or irrelevant? Do they have potential as brokers of peace?

**DHANAPALA** They do. I do not think they have fulfilled their potential. Among the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) movements, faith-based organizations have been very helpful. They have taken positions against nuclear weapons. But they have not been sufficiently influential with regard to the nuclear weapons states. I believe nuclear weapons states and military-industrial complexes in nuclear weapons states have a momentum of their own that not even religious organizations as powerful as the Vatican, for example, are able to neutralize.

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### Loving your neighbor as yourself would ensure that your security does not result in the insecurity of others.

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But that does not mean that we must not continue to encourage them to persist. Numerous organizations, Pax Christi and others, have adopted strong anti-nuclear postures, and I welcomed their participation when I was Undersecretary-General for Disarmament Affairs in the United Nations. I think the NGOs in general, whether or not they are influenced by religious philosophies, have been very much influenced by humanist philosophies and that includes Pugwash, where the words of Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, the “Remember Your Humanity” manifesto, continue to be relevant.

**REFLECTIONS** You’ve often connected nuclear proliferation to the fuel crisis. That is, as fossil fuels decline, more and more countries will be tempted to adopt nuclear power, and ramifications will follow because of the nuclear materials generated by all those nuclear plants. Are current treaties strong enough to monitor a landscape where more and more countries have nuclear power?

**DHANAPALA** Article IV of the NPT guarantees to non-nuclear weapons states the inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. And that use is subject to safeguards that the IAEA supervises. Unfortunately because of the experience we had with Iraq, we found that the safeguards were not sufficient proof that a country was not using nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes. So an Additional

Protocol was negotiated and adopted by many countries with more sophisticated safeguards.

Unfortunately this is still not being regarded as sufficiently secure, and this is why we have difficulties with regard to Iran. Now what Iran is doing with regard to the enrichment of uranium is not specifically forbidden by the NPT, but because of the lack of trust with Iran there is a fear that this might be a prelude to the development of nuclear weapons. We have to find a way around this.

There are reportedly about 40 countries in the queue to having nuclear reactors for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As for me and my country, I’m not a believer in nuclear energy. I would prefer the use of other sources of renewable energy – wind power, solar power, thermal power, and so on. But, of course, every country has the right to make a choice of its own. We need more discussion around the scientific possibilities of developing proliferation-resistant technology, so that you don’t have reactors that could produce highly enriched uranium. Instead, you could have low-enriched uranium reactors. That’s another way to get around this difficulty.

There are innumerable opportunities for us to find ways out of this dilemma so that it’s not a situation where you have to say, if you develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy, you will become, *ipso facto*, a nuclear weapons state.

**REFLECTIONS** You just turned 70 – congratulations to you – and you have spent more than half of your life in diplomatic service. What have been the greatest lessons from your experiences?

**DHANAPALA** I had an experience as a boy of 18, visiting the United States to participate in a World Youth Forum, organized by the *New York Herald-Tribune*. This was a defining experience in my life: I believe that having a dialogue amongst people from different nations is vital to achieving international peace and understanding. I returned to my own country to go to university, with the objective of going into the diplomatic service. I felt very strongly that diplomacy was a bridge-builder among nation-states in order to defuse situations. I felt we were in fact the first line of defense of peace, and therefore there was a particular moral obligation on diplomats to ensure that while they pursued their national interests internationally, they also pursued certain higher objectives of the human community. So I believe very strongly in the ideas of the UN Charter, I believe very strongly in the web of treaties that help to achieve disarmament and control and regulate the way in



which armaments are used. I must say I have derived great satisfaction from being a diplomat both for my own country as well as for ten years with the United Nations. It was a very morally fulfilling experience, and it is something I would recommend to anyone who wants to enter public service.

There are, of course, difficulties. You lead a very nomadic life where you don't stay in one place long enough to acquire a permanent set of friends. You don't have your children educated in one place; they perhaps have their education disrupted somewhat. But they gain in other ways, and so you do find the pluses overcoming the minuses.

My conviction deep down is that the human family is one, and we have to maintain our fundamental

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**We need to work together at this very climactic moment in human history so that globalization will enhance human solidarity rather than disrupt it.**

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unity, especially given the crises we face today – climate change, the financial crisis, international terrorism – where we have to cooperate. The highly integrated political and economic system that we have today in contrast to what existed centuries ago only enhances the bonds of the human family. We need to work together at this very climactic moment in human history so that globalization will enhance human solidarity rather than disrupt it.

**REFLECTIONS** Our readership is mostly clergy and lay people in the Christian tradition. What advice might you have for them?

**DHANAPALA** Civil society has greater potential than it realizes, and I think this is the moment to act according to your Christian conscience and try to ensure that the governments that you elect reflect what is in fact the Christian ethic. Loving your neighbor as yourself would involve, for example, a greater concern about the bottom billion in the world. Loving your neighbor as yourself would also ensure that your security does not result in the insecurity of others. Therefore when you build a nuclear weapon, you don't challenge others to also build nuclear weapons as a deterrent for their protection. And that the best way is peaceful coexistence – and discussion – so that we have a more civilized order, with the UN Charter as the basis of rule of law internationally rather than the rule of the jungle.

I don't think the people at large who subscribe to the Christian ethic, or those in other countries –

Islam or Buddhist or Hindu countries – want any kind of hostile relationship with each other or the elimination of entire populations, which nuclear weapons are capable of. We have to find other ways of living with each other rather than have this eye-for-an-eye, which, as Gandhi said, will make us all blind eventually.

**REFLECTIONS** What specific steps can individuals take?

**DHANAPALA** Individuals must speak out much more forcefully and get involved in policy-making at the grassroots. They must ensure that their representatives in legislative bodies reflect what they think, and demand that the policies of the parties reflect this situation. You have to ensure that the lobbying groups – the military-industrial complex, for instance, which General Eisenhower himself, despite being a military man, railed against in his final address as president – don't use arms as a means of making money. Because if you look at the arms merchants of the world, they largely come from the developed, Western countries. You only have to look at the yearbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute to realize how many countries profit from the arms trade. We have to ensure that there are other ways to achieve healthy commerce between countries rather than through arms, which only kill people.

We have to have people boycotting arms companies. Remember the anti-apartheid campaign, how effective it was when countries withdrew investments in South African companies. That was a way in which the South African government was forced to abandon apartheid. Apartheid was seen then as one of those immutable systems. Today the nuclear weapon is also seen as something unlikely to disappear, but we can work together on citizens' action, boycotting the investments in the arms merchants companies. We can make an impact together and ensure that they convert their industries from arms to something much more beneficial to the human condition.

**REFLECTIONS** UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has proposed a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty. Is such a treaty plausible?

**DHANAPALA** In the past, the elimination of nuclear weapons was regarded as utopian – pie in the sky, as Margaret Thatcher put it. But we are not trying to dis-invent nuclear weapons. We are trying to outlaw them. As we saw with biological weapons and chemical weapons, it is possible to outlaw nuclear



weapons. When you delegitimize these weapons, you make them completely taboo as far as the international community is concerned. On the agenda of the UN at the moment is a draft of a nuclear weapons convention on which many people have worked, submitted by Costa Rica and Malaysia. That is what Ban Ki-moon referred to in his October speech in New York, where he went much further than any UN secretary-general had ever done, by proposing a five-point plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons. With such a convention negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament we will get a treaty that the international community can coalesce around.

We are not going to eliminate nuclear weapons overnight. We all know that. Chemical weapons, although there is a convention banning their manufacture, their use, their stockpiling, have not altogether been reduced, because existing stockpiles are only gradually being destroyed. It will take some time and some money to destroy these weapons. In the same way, nuclear weapons arsenals are not going to disappear overnight with the signing of a nuclear weapons ban convention.

But what is significant is, when you sign a nuclear weapons convention, you demonstrate your legal commitment to eliminate these weapons. The implementation may take time, and is subject to verification, but you have the confidence that it is going to be done. But if you merely say, "This is our intention," and say it in very broad, generalized terms as many countries keep doing all of the time while retaining nuclear weapon arsenals, it doesn't mean anything.

## SHOULDERS

A man crosses the street in rain,  
stepping gently, looking two times north and south,  
because his son is asleep on his shoulder.

No car must splash him.  
No car drive too near to his shadow.

This man carries the world's most sensitive cargo  
but he's not marked.  
Nowhere does his jacket says FRAGILE,  
HANDLE WITH CARE.

His ear fills up with breathing.  
He hears the hum of a boy's dream  
deep inside him.

We're not going to be able  
to live in this world  
if we're not willing to do what he's doing  
with one another.

The road will only be wide.  
The rain will never stop falling.

— Naomi Shihab Nye



# WARNING

## Restricted Area

It is unlawful to enter this area without permission of the installation Commander.

Sec. 21, Internal Security Act of 1950; 50 U.S.C. 793

While on this installation all personnel and the property under their control are subject to search.

Use of deadly force authorized.

# The Nuclear Peril: “Genesis in Reverse”

By Jonathan Schell

(Adapted from the author’s talk at the September 2008 YDS Sarah Smith Memorial Conference)

*We should begin by admitting that our subject — nuclear danger — has pretty much fallen off the political agenda in recent years.*

In the first years of the post-Cold-War period, it was virtually scoured from the public mind, as if the end of that shadowy, epochal struggle had brought the end of the nuclear age with it. More recently, the accelerating dangers of nuclear proliferation and the peril of a terrorist use of nuclear weapons have brought the matter back to the edges of popular consciousness, but attention is still fitful. It may be useful, therefore, to think anew about the place of the dilemma in our time, with the hope of bringing it back into view.

We can now see that the explosions in 1945 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki inaugurated something even more comprehensive than the nuclear age. We might call it the age of extinctions. I use the plural because at first it seemed that it was only our own extinction that was on the agenda — the issue seemed to amount to a collective variation of Hamlet’s “To be or not to be.”

## The Age of Extinctions

That was true, but there was more. With the publication of Rachel Carson’s *A Silent Spring* in 1962 people began to realize that other species were also at risk of extinction by human hands. Now we are told by the scientific community that something like half of existing species are at risk of elimination by the end of this century. We have learned in the same years that the nuclear threat was not the only truly global threat to the ecosphere; there also was, among other things, global warming and ozone depletion. Carson, in fact, had an inkling of all this. She began her book with a quotation from Albert Schweitzer, who said, “Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall — he will end by destroying

the earth.”

Nuclear danger thus no longer stands in its former forbidding isolation. It takes its place as one of many instruments of destruction — still the most cataclysmic but still only one — whereby human beings threaten the foundations of terrestrial life, including, of course, human life.

There were understandable reasons why the essential unity of this broader crisis was overlooked early on. Nuclear weapons were born of war, and for decades were discussed mainly in that context, as a

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**The Maker made an unmaker, and that is us, though it is a role we can escape if we choose.**

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matter of “security.” The other ecological perils grew out of economic production and were at first discussed in *that* context. The destructiveness of war and the productiveness of economic activity seemed a world apart, requiring independent discourses. Gradually, however, it has become clear that production, too, is colossally destructive — destructive of the environment. Joseph Schumpeter’s phrase “creative destruction,” so beloved of economists to describe the procedures of capitalism, already pointed in this direction. What he meant, of course, was that the new works of capitalism devastate the old: the steamship sends the sailing ship to the bottom of the sea; the rise of agribusiness shutteres the family farm. But now we know that this destructive force of production cuts deeper, into the support systems of life. Ozone molecules, after all, don’t care whether the chemicals processes that destroy

them are initiated by aerosol cans or by hydrogen bombs; they simply decamp from the atmosphere in obedience to the applicable physical laws.

We should also note, if only in passing, that a third dimension to this imbalance between human power and nature is developing: the creation of new organisms through genetic engineering. Though this is truly a power to create, it is not, unfortunately, a power to restore the environment but rather to interfere with it and unbalance it further, with consequences over the long term that are truly beyond reckoning.

Since the defining feature of our growing mismatch between the bulk and power of the human artifice on the one hand and the natural artifice on the other is the danger and fact of extinctions, it may be well to reflect for a moment on what extinction is and means. It is not the death of the living individu-

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**It's as if we are flinging the creation back in the Creator's face, as if to say: What You gave us wasn't good enough.**

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als, horrible as that is, but the cancellation of the unborn. Extinctions, although usually accompanied by slaughter in the present, are thus essentially assaults upon the future. This is true within the human as well as the natural order. Whether we are speaking of genocide, the extinction of humankind, or the extinction of other species and ecosystems, the critical distinction is between that which is created and the power that creates it – between the loom and the cloth, the die and the product.

### **A Market Price on Eternity**

The stable forms that underlie individual species – the genomes – are the most sharply defined. The stable forms that underlie ecosystems – the fixed or slow-changing inter-relationships among species on which all depend for their survival – are likewise physically definable. The stable forms that underlie the cultures and traditions of peoples cannot be so easily identified, but are no less real for that. It is the integrity and perdurance of these life forms, which are truly the books of life, that endow each “kind” – whether this is one of the peoples that make up the human species, the human species itself, other species, or ecosystems – with an immortality that is unshared by their individual members.

That is why it is appropriate to speak of extinction as a second death. For a species or an ecosystem, like a human society, is an immortal body composed of mortal beings. To be mortal is not to be *at risk* of death, it is to be *fated* to die, which is

why some pessimistic philosophers have said that life is an illness from which no one recovers; but the immortal bodies, though killable, are exempt from this fatality.

It is these immortal bodies, in all their tremendous yet finite variety, that our new power of extinction threatens to destroy. In doing so, human power attacks life at a level that killing, even mass killing, did not reach. Killing removes a sentient individual from life. Acts of extinction mutilate, deform, reduce, or destroy the living world *from which* killing removes the individual – a living world that is also, of course, the one *in which* and *through which* the individual lives and seeks fulfillment if left unkilld.

None of this is to say that extinction is necessarily more awful than unsystematic killing. It is only to say that it is new and different, that it damages life on a new scale and at a new level, and therefore demands new thought and a new response.

Recently, a number of economists have sought to measure the importance of global warming by placing a price tag on it. Their approach is to put a dollar value on the losses, and use that as a measure of how much should be spent to avoid the disaster. Is it necessary to say that something seems wrong with this approach? Extinction is eternal, and how do you put a market price on eternity?

Well, we are gathered here at the Divinity School, and when eternity comes into the equation, surely we are dealing with matters spiritual. Thus, let me use religious language for a moment. I would say it's more and more as if we are flinging the creation back in the Creator's face, as if to say: what You gave us wasn't good enough for us. We expected something better. We find we aren't as rich as wanted to be, or not powerful enough, or didn't have a big enough car. In acting thus, we have begun to enact Genesis in reverse. The One whom James Joyce called the Great Artificer made a destroyer. The Maker made an unmaker, and that is us, though it is a role we can escape if we choose.

Such it seems to me are the terms of the dilemma, comprising *all* of the threats to life, nuclear and other, on earth, that have been set before us – or that we have set before ourselves.

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*Jonathan Schell is the Harold Willens Peace Fellow at The Nation Institute and a visiting lecturer at Yale University. His books include The Fate of the Earth (Knopf, 1982) and The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger (Metropolitan Books, 2007).*



## PROFILE: BARBARA GREEN

### DEFYING STALEMATE

During some of the worst days of the Cold War, a young YDS grad was sent to East Berlin to get people to talk across the rigid ideological divide.

The year was 1977, when nuclear-tipped nervousness was high and East-West trust was low. Into this bleak climate moved Barbara Green (M.Div., 1976), deputized by the National Council of Churches to organize dialogues of European clergy and scholars with the NCC around peace and nuclear-arms reduction.

Successes there renewed her belief in the human capacity to transcend stalemate. She represented a rising generation of church leaders whose mentors encouraged ecumenical peacemaking on a global scale. They included former Yale chaplain William Sloane Coffin Jr., whose campus services she regularly attended.

The experience would shape Barbara Green's vocation for the next 30 years.

"I found it was possible to challenge the stereotypes that the world functions by," says Green, a Presbyterian minister. "It was possible to talk across lines of tension. Reaching out across those lines was vocationally defining for me."

After her Eastern bloc adventures, the New Jersey native returned to the U.S. in the mid-1980s. (True to form, the East German secret police kept a thick, meticulous file on her; she examined it with bemusement on a return visit years after the Iron Curtain fell.) For the next 15 years, she was a policy advocate for the Presbyterian Church (USA), working on security issues and international relations.

Today, her focus on nuclear-weapons elimination – and building partnerships against the grain – is still strong. She is a senior adviser to Faithful Security: The National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger, a leading interfaith force that advocates "the permanent elimination of nuclear weapons by empowering religious communities to take action at a local level."

Faithful Security was stirred into being by Bill Coffin shortly before he died in 2006. "Only God has the right to destroy all life on the planet," he was fond of saying. "All we have is the power."

Faithful Security would embody his abiding passion for nuclear disarmament.

"People might not realize that an awful lot of U.S. and Russian missiles are still pointed at each other," Green says. "I'm convinced there is no right use for nuclear weapons. They serve no useful military purpose. What gives us the right to kill millions of

people? This is not what God intends God's creatures to do. God's way is to be creative, not annihilating."

Faithful Security ([www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org)) is funded by the Fourth Freedom Forum (based in Goshen, Ind.) and by the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy (based at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.). Green has been executive director of the Churches' Center since 1998.

Her work at Faithful Security combines moral imperative and hardnosed practicality for the long-term goal of a human civilization free of nuclear weapons. The organization tracks efforts to deactivate missile systems, uphold treaties, and strengthen security regimes, while networking among religious communities, insisting on "the moral imperative at the heart of work for total nuclear disarmament."

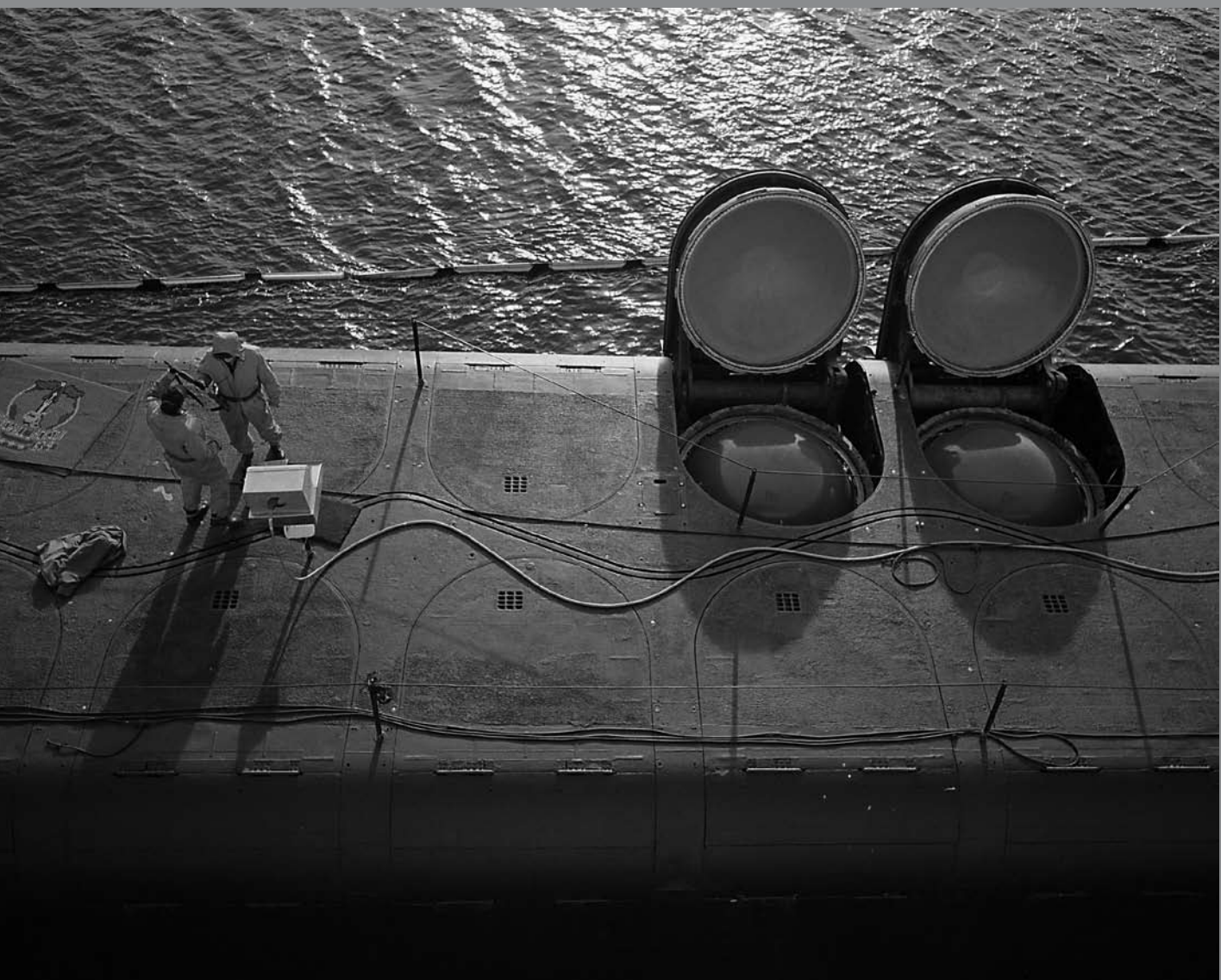
One notable work is the Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Weapons Danger. This effort sponsors local dialogues using Faithful Security study materials and a joint Muslim-Christian statement that spells out the nuclear threat. Participants are urged to ask their elected officials, "What is your plan to eliminate nuclear weapons?"

"The issue is more urgent than it was five years ago," Green says. "We know there are so many urgent issues in the world that demand people's time, but the nuclear threat needs to find its place among the panoply of challenges. We have erred badly everywhere by reaching for military violence as the solution."

Green's Germany experience enriched her another way. She is a recognized scholar and translator of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German minister-theologian who left the safety of the U.S. in 1939 to return to Nazi Germany and, during World War II, was executed for taking part in the plot to assassinate Hitler. Before her Yale Divinity days, she spent two years studying theology at the University of Heidelberg, working in the language that would serve her ever since. (YDS has recently announced plans to enhance student exchange programs at Heidelberg and two other German universities.)

"Bonhoeffer's life shows how seriously in a theological sense he took the events of his era," she says. "It's as if he said: 'OK, God, these ghastly things are happening. What does it mean to have faith in you under these circumstances?' He acted."

— Ray Waddle





# In Defense of Courage

By Scott Bader-Saye

*Even as a new administration takes office in Washington, questions about nuclear security remain both urgent and contested. Yet wise reflection on these matters will be hard to come by as long as the politics of fear, in subtle or explicit ways, continues to drown out measured deliberations.*

From the Republican Convention's use of 9/11 video footage to Hillary Clinton's "It's 3 a.m." campaign ad, fear retained its hallowed place in the most recent election cycle. Its effectiveness was questionable, however, and the rhetoric of hope seems, for now, to have trumped the rhetoric of fear. This is welcome, but we still need to find ways to ask some honest questions about security without the distorting lens of excessive fear. I suggest that the most pressing political question is: What kinds of vulnerability are we willing to accept in order to pursue those goods that are greater than our security? Is self-preservation an end in itself, or are there social and political goods that are more important than survival and for which we are willing to take risks?

## **Illusions of Invulnerability**

The Christian tradition understands human life as fundamentally vulnerable and dependent. We are creatures whose lives are bounded by birth and death and whose loves are threatened by transience and contingency. This vulnerability reflects something of how God chose to create us. God populated the earth with varieties of creatures whose lives were dependent upon one another. Eden was not just a beautiful backdrop for individual self-realization; it constituted an ordering of relations by which the differences of creation might contribute to the flourishing of all. It was not good for Adam to be alone; he needed another with whom to give and receive blessing. Theologically speaking, we live not simply for the sake of living but in order to reflect the self-giving love of the Trinity in our own relations of

reciprocal generosity. Only in such relations do we flourish, yet such love requires a vulnerability to the other that is at times uncomfortably disarming. This truth seems to be behind Jesus' words, "Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25).

In a world that requires the risks of vulnerability for personal and communal fulfillment, courage becomes a central virtue – not simply because it helps us face our fears, but because courage helps

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**The desire to be invulnerable is not courage, but an attempt to make courage unnecessary.**

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us fend off the temptation to make security our highest good. Courage helps us keep fear at bay long enough to pursue those relationships and activities that constitute the good life. Courage – whether it is understood paradigmatically in the life of the soldier, as Aristotle held, or in the life of the martyr, as Aquinas would have it – remains intimately connected to vulnerability, since courage is the willingness to make oneself vulnerable to threat in order to pursue a good (such as honor, faithfulness, or justice) that represents a higher calling than mere survival.

The desire to be invulnerable is not courage, but an attempt to make courage unnecessary. The invulnerable person has no fear and thus does not need courage, since courage has everything to do with feeling fear yet refusing to be dominated by it. The security promised by combining a missile defense

system with a still-prodigious nuclear arsenal provides an interesting example of the illusion that we can become invulnerable. Yet such invulnerability is purchased at the cost of the increased vulnerability of others. In this way a security-driven politics exports fear only to find that the increased anxiety outside our borders returns to us in the form of resentment and rage.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, while at Union Seminary in New York in 1939, wrote to Reinhold Niebuhr, “I shall have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people. ... Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose: but I cannot make this choice in security.”<sup>1</sup> What is so remarkable here is not simply that Bonhoeffer was willing to embrace danger courageously in the name of a higher good, but that he was willing to make his nation more vulnerable, since the survival of the nation was not as important as the survival of a Christian vision of life that was in principle separable from the security of any particular state.

### Fear’s Binding Power

In the end, the most important question is how we can keep our desire for security from threatening the goods that exceed mere survival. Of course, the question of how we name and rank the higher goods in a liberal democracy is a difficult one, given that liberalism as political theory refuses to make final judgments about the good. What this leaves us with, unfortunately, is the tendency to embrace what Judith Shklar called a “liberalism of fear” – that is, a politics in which we turn to fear as the glue that binds us together in the absence of agreement on the nature of the good. If we cannot agree on what final goods we should pursue together, we may at least agree on what evils we wish to avoid together. But such a “liberalism of fear” feeds a politics of security-at-all-costs, which in turn threatens goods such as hospitality, generosity, and peacemaking. The danger comes when survival and security rise from being penultimate goods to being ultimate goods – closing off any room for reciprocity and engagement with the stranger.

An important political question follows from this: can the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, or preemptive war, or the torture of enemy combatants be consistent with human flourishing, or do such prac-

tices, undertaken in the name of security, actually diminish our humanity along with theirs?

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### Notes

- 1 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), xvi-xvii.

## SURVIVOR

He comes home the hero

but there is no one to greet him.

The streets are empty except for unlit lampposts

and the blue balloons of illusions

with no string to hold them down, disappearing

or popping like expected accidents

on spears of wrought iron fences.

Down the promenade of salt no brassy trumpets strut saluting

the fife and tin soldier drums

in early summer’s tinsel: our winning memorial days.

Instead, a serpentine shadow

Floods past the intersections where honking cars

and gaily-colored pedestrians were supposed to be cheering.

Odysseus continues to walk on, alone.

His skin hangs rough and warty, like the toads:

and so he has become invisible;

Only the blind would call him beautiful now

or his wife, who has difficulty lifting herself from bed

Equally old as the rosy fingered dawn.

— Laura Manuelidis

# Nuclear Weapons, Evangelicals, and the Sanctity of Life

By David P. Gushee

*In June 2007, I sat in a three-tiered classroom at the Hoover Institution in Palo Alto and listened in astonishment as former Secretary of State George Shultz told an influential group of evangelical leaders that the Republican icon Ronald Reagan had favored the total abolition of nuclear weapons. He further asked us to get on board with a plan proposed by (gulp) Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, William Perry, and himself to establish getting to zero nuclear weapons as the policy goal of the United States.*

It took me back almost 25 years, to my college days, to a speech I gave representing the Class of 1984 Phi Beta Kappa inductees at The College of William and Mary. I dug through my files recently and found this hand-written speech.

Drawing on my major in religion, I compared our graduating class with the first-century Christians of Thessalonica, who had come to believe that Jesus would be returning very soon to end human history and usher in the kingdom of God. I said the urgency of this expectation had created a problem: "If Christ was due tomorrow, why build a house, or build a church, or do anything at all? It was pointless if this world was doomed to imminent destruction."

And then: "Today we face a strikingly similar situation – a new waiting, a new awareness of the possibility of the imminent destruction of this world. This time nobody waits with joyous expectancy. The threat of nuclear annihilation bears with it the same psychological effects as did the hope for the Second Coming. In both cases, it saps the human ability to plan for the future with confidence."

## **Nuclear Winter of Discontent**

As a graduating senior at the end of President Reagan's first term, I was honest in saying that "today's nuclear arsenals threaten my belief that the plans I have so carefully made for my future will actually

have a chance to reach fruition." It was the second major wave of the Cold War. The conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet Union seemed to be intensifying. Battlefield nuclear weapons were being placed in central Europe. "The Day After," a 1983 TV movie depicting a nuclear attack on the United States, reflected the fears of the moment; it had been seen by tens of millions. I was one of those millions who contemplated the nuclear destruction of, as I recall, Lawrence, Kansas. The movie was a major event of the early 1980s and accurately reflected the fears of those times.

And now, more than twenty years later at Stanford, George Shultz was telling us that Ronald Reagan considered nuclear weapons a great evil and had wanted to eliminate them completely. This was shocking enough. But it might have been just as shocking that he was asking the evangelical leaders assembled in that room to help carry forward this aspect of Reagan's vision.

This request would have been inconceivable apart from a generation of evangelical political engagement that put our faith community on the map in such a way that no morally significant public policy issue can be addressed successfully without our involvement. Ironically, much of that political engagement has been badly flawed. Certainly evangeli-

cals have been no leaders on this issue of nuclear weapons. The Christian Right, which dominated evangelical politics from the late 1970s until 2006, never treated nuclear weapons and their horrible destructive power as a major moral issue in their portfolio. No, they were (and are) concerned about the “life” issues of abortion, stem cells, and euthanasia, and the “family” issues of pornography and gay marriage.

### **Indifference to Disarmament**

I have been among those arguing for some time (see *The Future of Faith in American Politics*, published in 2008 by Baylor University Press) that this truncated moral agenda is wrong at every level. It is wrong biblically, because no fair reading of the Bible can support such a limited understanding of the moral vision of Scripture, Israel, the church, or, well, Jesus. It is wrong in terms of Christian tradition, which at its best has stayed connected to Scripture sufficiently to attend to a wide range of issues that have gone far beyond abortion and homosexuality. It is

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**Perhaps we have been tempted to believe that American virtue is sufficiently ironclad that our nation could be trusted never to use these terrible weapons wrongly.**

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wrong logically, because it never even made rational sense to restrict the threats to “family” and “life” to these few moral issues. It is not hard to see that the use of even one nuclear weapon would be a catastrophe for “the family” and for “life.”

It is very clear by now that conservative evangelical leaders, beginning in the 1980s, never undertook any real effort to craft a broader, holistic, morally comprehensive public policy vision. They settled on a strategy of nestling within the Republican Party and specializing there on a small range of sex-related moral issues. They left both economic issues and security issues to the conservative leadership in those fields, leaving them essentially untouched by thoroughgoing Christian reflection. This means that they never joined, but instead actively opposed, efforts that many of us were involved in throughout the latter days of the Cold War to reverse the escalating arms race and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Even though they adored Ronald Reagan, conservative evangelicals never caught his vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world. It was evident from listening to George Shultz at Stanford that

most members of Reagan’s own national security team never caught that vision either.

These days it is clear that the old conservative evangelical leaders do not hold sway over all of America’s tens of millions of evangelicals. From recent polling it is doubtful if they represent even half of all (white) evangelicals. The evangelical political landscape is fracturing. The first major breach came from what has long been called the “evangelical left,” embodied in leaders such as Jim Wallis and Tony Campolo. I argue in my book that there is a distinct evangelical center as well, led by newer voices such as megachurch pastors Rick Warren and Joel Hunter, activist-lobbyists such as Rich Cizik, younger evangelicals such as Jonathan Merritt and Gabe Lyons, and academic leaders at Christian schools such as Wheaton and Calvin.

Meanwhile, black, Hispanic, and Asian evangelicals are at last gaining a “place at the table” in public policy discussions both in Washington and wherever evangelical leaders gather. So people like Gabriel Salguero, Kirbyjohn Caldwell, Sam Rodriguez, T.D. Jakes, and Cynthia Hale are breaking the white monopoly in evangelicalism and diversifying the voice of our community in a much-needed way. The election of Barack Obama, who has actively cultivated relationships with this diverse group of moderate and progressive evangelicals, will undoubtedly help to accelerate current trends.

### **A New Evangelical Moment?**

As the narrow definition of “life” and “family” articulated by the Right recedes, a more comprehensive public policy agenda is gaining ground in this new evangelical moment. Centrist and progressive evangelicals generally have embraced an agenda that includes issues that more conservative evangelicals have previously done little to address, such as immigration, poverty, torture, the environment, and health care.

It is my belief that nuclear disarmament must take a prominent place in this expanded portfolio of issues that evangelicals and other Christians engage in days to come. Whenever any of us articulate what a post-Christian Right public policy vision will look like, the nuclear question must be included among the concerns at the very top of our agenda.

The “global zero” platform articulated by conservative establishment stalwarts Kissinger, Nunn, Perry, and Shultz is exactly the right goal, and puts us in great company to begin or renew our efforts on this issue. Their credentials as foreign policy specialists are unquestionable. Their promotion

of gradual nuclear disarmament with the goal of abolition carries enormous credibility. The dream of nuclear abolition that some of us have cultivated since the 1980s (or long before) has now been embraced by some of our nation's most significant statesmen.

The new Two Futures Project, for example – a Christian movement for nuclear weapons abolition, led by naturally centrist younger evangelicals – seeks to endorse and build upon what Secretary Shultz and company have already begun, by galvanizing popular support for their proposals. Such efforts should appeal to conservative evangelicals who have high respect for these leaders and to progressive evangelicals who have always opposed nuclear weapons as a grave evil.

But there is one more step we must take. Ultimately, evangelicals need a much clearer theological-ethical vision for our public policy engagement on this issue. If we are to avoid being merely captives to the latest political winds, we need to drill down to the foundations of our Christian faith and anchor our politics there.

I think the concept of the sanctity of life provides one possible way forward. Currently I am working on a book in which I explore both the current use of “sanctity of life” and the term's intellectual origins. Though the phrase is of relatively recent provenance, the idea that each and every human life is of immeasurable value, of exalted, sacred worth, and

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**We created nuclear weapons. We must uncreate them. The most heavily armed nation in the world must take the lead.**

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must be viewed and treated accordingly, is a core aspect of Biblical revelation. It is in the Scriptures that we learn to see human beings, each and every one, as the majestic handiwork of God the Creator and the beloved object of God's redemptive efforts through history, culminating in Jesus Christ. To look in the face of a human being (each and all human beings) and see there a human being whom God loves infinitely cannot help but have a transformative effect on how we behave toward other people. It creates an obligation on the part of each of us to act so that this infinitely precious person not only lives but flourishes. It creates an obligation to engage public policy on a wide range of issues and to press policymakers to act in such a way that all such precious persons may live and flourish.

Picture one of your own particularly beloved persons in your mind's eye. Hold them there for just a moment. Now consider what would happen to them if a nuclear weapon were unleashed over their city.

Picture all people, so beloved in God's eyes. Picture all other creatures, and the creation, also beloved in God's eyes. Now consider what God thinks about human beings misusing their ingenuity to create and deploy thousands of weapons all around the world, holding hostage every one of those precious human beings whom God loves and for whom Christ lived and died, and threatening the survival of the creation itself.

**Getting Past Fear**

Many evangelicals have held back from supporting nuclear disarmament out of the reflexive fear, bred during the Cold War, that we need such weapons to protect ourselves. Perhaps we have also been tempted to believe that American virtue is sufficiently ironclad that our nation could be trusted never to use these terrible weapons wrongly. In response, consider this: first, when hard-headed security professionals like Henry Kissinger say they favor a move toward gradual nuclear disarmament, we can be sure that they have fully considered the security implications. As for the latter concern, surely it is clear in Christian terms that no nation should be viewed as somehow above the misuse of its military or political power. And an accidental nuclear weapons launch, the nightmare scenario during the Cold War, remains a terrible threat in its own right. Such a disaster would not require a lack of national virtue, but only a technical foul-up – of which any nation is capable.

Nuclear weapons threaten life's sanctity. Their very existence marks an absurd and terrifying negation of life. Thousands of them were left on the table when the Cold War ended, as if somehow they would dismantle themselves when everyone's attention turned to other issues.

They did not dismantle themselves. We human beings must do that. We created them, we must uncreate them. The most heavily armed nation in the world, the United States, must take the lead. The leading religious community in the United States, evangelicals, must help build the moral consensus required to move toward this goal. To do so, America's evangelicals must learn to see nuclear weapons as perhaps the ultimate sanctity of life issue, and respond accordingly.

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# God's Security Strategy: Reconciliation Up, Out, and Down

By Lisa Schirch

*As Washington tires of its faith in firepower, new possibilities arise for rethinking the relationship between religion and policymaking. Though the State should not enforce religion, the State would do well to reconnect basic and widely shared religious teachings about peace with security policymaking.*

All religions share a general concept of reconciliation and peace. The very word *religion* means to connect, just like its Latin root *lig*, the root of ligament, those strands of flesh that hold together muscle and bone. *Holy*, likewise, refers to the word *whole* – being reconciled together. The word *violence*, on the other hand, means to disconnect, to use force and power to divide, punish, and push away. *Sin*, likewise, has connotations of breaking or violating relationships.

Religious texts and rituals ranging from indigenous animism to Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all lay out ways for humans to be reconciled up (with God), out (with their global neighbors), and down (with the earth and the rest of creation). Reconciliation up, out, and down is God's security strategy.

### **3D: Diplomacy, Development, Defense**

U.S. security is bound up with the quality of our relationships both domestically and globally. As former President Bill Clinton has said, "If you live in a world where you cannot kill, occupy, or imprison all your actual or potential adversaries, you have to try to build a world with more friends and fewer terrorists."<sup>1</sup>

His Republican counterpart Newt Gingrich seems to agree, saying, "The real key is not how many enemy do I kill. The real key is how many allies do I grow."<sup>2</sup>

Building real security is a *religious* task of reconciling people who are divided by conflict. Though U.S. security has been almost synonymous with

military might in the past, the tools of diplomacy and development are gaining equal footing with defense in Washington's new security rhetoric. A "3D" approach to security uses diplomacy and development as a first resort, holding military defense as the last resort.

Development and diplomacy seek to make whole (or holy) that which humans have divided. Development and diplomacy reconcile the global haves with the have-nots, and build bridges between groups polarized by religion or ethnicity. Likewise, the emerging concept of Creation Care or environmental stewardship reminds us of our connection to creation as a whole. As a tiny planet, we live in a fragile corner of the universe where religions of all brands long for holiness, for wholeness, for relationship.

Americans have heard a lot about the environmental impacts of climate change, but few media outlets are discussing the impact that climate change will have on people's relationships with each other and on their sense of security. U.S. military experts identify climate change as a "threat multiplier" for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world, stating that climate change will expand the threat of terrorism. A rising sea level could dislocate millions of people. Though rich countries have historically been the chief consumers and polluters driving climate change, poor countries will suffer most from rising seas, increased droughts, floods, and extreme weather. Some African and Latin American leaders already call climate change "an act of aggression by the rich against the poor." As govern-

ments collapse when climate-induced chaos sets in, fears loom that violent conflict will increase.

Development that meets people's basic needs for a home, health care, education, and jobs is a cost-effective security measure. It translates into hope. It combats the key factors that drive people to terrorism: despair and humiliation. Faith-based and secular NGOs have a solid track record of doing sustainable development projects that work in partnership with local people to develop clean sources of water, schools, and health care centers.

The UN Millennium Development Project calls for all developed countries to give .7 percent of GNP as official development assistance to poorer nations. Along with other nations, the U.S. committed

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**Americans can be secure, or we can continue the hyper-consumeristic American Way of Life. We can't have both.**

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to the .7 percent on a specific timetable. It has not followed through. Development expert Jeffrey Sachs claims, "The greatest puzzle in economic development is not how to alleviate the suffering but how to get rich and poor countries to follow through on their repeated promises."<sup>3</sup>

When asked how much of the federal budget they think goes to foreign aid, Americans' median estimate is 25 percent of the budget, more than 25 times the actual level, according to World Public Opinion polls. When asked how much of the budget should go to foreign aid, the median response is 10 percent. This is the same rate many religious traditions ask followers to tithe to the poor.

Public sentiment supports higher levels of development aid. But the public still sees development as charity abroad, a moral good. Religious and political leaders need to act together to show that development is a security strategy.

**Gospel Strategy**

When Jesus tells his followers to turn the other cheek, love your enemies, do good to those who harm you, he gives both moral and strategic advice. Showering the world with food and education – even in regions where the U.S. is hated – would do more to build U.S. and global security than showering those same communities with bombs and guns.

The *Human Security Report*, a study produced by the University of British Columbia's Liu Institute for Global Issues, says a surge of new initiatives in peacebuilding through the UN, World Bank, and civil society has helped lead to a global decrease in

deaths from violent conflict, crises, wars, and genocides over the last twenty years. Such peacebuilding programs are cost-effective, locally owned security strategies based on sustainable development and diplomacy. Yet governments have barely begun investing in these efforts.

The U.S. spends more on its military than the rest of the world combined. Out of every tax dollar, more than 60 cents goes to the military. Only three or four cents goes to diplomacy. Less than half a penny goes to development aimed at poverty alleviation, global education, healthcare, and economic aid.

The Bush administration wrote in its 2006 National Security Strategy, "A world where some live in comfort and plenty, while half of the human race lives on less than \$2 a day, is neither just nor stable. ... Including all of the world's poor in an expanding circle of development – and opportunity – is a moral imperative and one of the top priorities of U.S. international policy." Despite this rhetoric, the gap between funding for the U.S. Defense Department and funding for the civilian agencies of the government doing development and diplomacy only widened during President Bush's eight years.

The Obama administration has promised to narrow the gap. Secretary of State Clinton, during her swearing-in ceremony, spoke of a foreign policy shift toward the "soft power" tools of development and diplomacy. Vice President Biden promised a more preventive approach to global conflicts, addressing root causes of turmoil through diplomacy and development before it spirals out of control. President Obama also promised to extend an "outstretched hand" to meet militancy of the "clenched fist." In his inauguration speech, he declared:

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to suffering outside our borders; nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect. For the world has changed, and we must change with it.

Security in today's world has little to do with nuclear weapons stockpiled as a deterrent against an attack. The billions of dollars spent to buy security via nuclear weapons are impotent against the threats of terrorism, disease, climate change, or the mass migrations that will ensue. The price tag of security strategies is no index or guarantee of their success. Indeed, the extravagant price of traditional

military security strategies has not yielded greater security. Rather, security effectiveness is tied to the quality and potency of relationships – relationships needed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, stop violent extremism, prepare for deadly diseases, and prevent conflicts.

Religious leaders should speak up in this era of new policy visions of security based on development and diplomacy. The moral guidance of the Koran, Torah, Bible, and other sacred texts and teachings are relevant to how policymakers address today's crises. Religious leaders should talk about how the relationship between people and the planet – for instance, American addiction to oil and overcon-

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### Choosing what we eat and wear are foreign policy decisions. Religion is about what we do with our lives all week long.

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sumption – has a crucial impact on security. Jesus co-opted “kingdom” language and reframed it. So too can religious leaders today redefine security language. Unlike traditional notions of security, which focus on defending borders from external military threats, the new concept of *human security* is concerned with the security of individuals and communities. Human security requires a toolkit laid out in ancient religious texts that tell humans how to relate to each other.

God's security strategy is about building better relationships with global neighbors, relationships between people of vastly different cultures and access to natural resources. Religious texts teach humans to care for the poor and do good to those who do wrong – teachings both moral and strategic.

God's security strategy works. Policymakers in Washington are turning away from purely technological solutions for today's security challenges. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and General David Petraeus testified to Congress that there are no military solutions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both point to diplomatic and economic development as the key to security in these regions. Religious leaders have an opportunity now to communicate the relevance of their teachings not just for inner peace or peace with God. Policymakers need to hear more spiritual wisdom to make smarter policies to promote peace and security for human beings and our environment.

#### The Politics of Daily Lifestyle

Religious leaders can do more to promote security from the ground up by empowering faith communities to be involved in reconciliation efforts. Religious

communities have on-the-ground networks around the world. Lifting the voices of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan into policymaking, for instance, is an important step in creating a more stable and democratic world.

People in the pews need to see how their lives relate directly to U.S. and global security. Churches reaching out to local mosques and temples for inter-religious dialogues are discovering these are practical ways to get involved in local diplomacy.

Equally important, places of worship should help participants understand how U.S. security and the quality of our relationships abroad are directly related to our everyday decisions about how we live. Americans can be secure, or we can continue the hyper-consumeristic American Way of Life. We can't have both in a world of haves and have-nots where U.S. companies have sold guns and bombs to the have-nots for decades. And climate change makes our lifestyle changes all the more urgent.

People of faith could place more emphasis on simple living as a vital element of global security. We need community programs that help us live more simply and in greater harmony with the rest of the world. We can experiment in building peace and increasing security by buying fair-trade products or those made close to home, or renewing a passion for living more with less. Personal decisions we make about what to eat, drink, drive, or wear have impact on society and the environment. Greater awareness of how our consumption patterns profoundly affect others – particularly in an age of climate change – can bring us into redemptive relationships with God, the earth, and our global neighbors. Choosing what we eat and wear are foreign policy decisions. Religion, at its core, is about what we do with our lives all week long. It's about being mindful of the many ways our daily choices affect the destinies of others around the world, and, ultimately, our own security.

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*Lisa Schirch is director of the 3D Security Initiative and a professor of peacebuilding at the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, VA.*

#### Notes

- 1 Roger Segelken. “Make Friends, Not Terrorists, Clinton Tells Cornell Graduates.” *Cornell University News*, 2004, 1.
- 2 Joseph Nye. *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), ix.
- 3 Jeffrey D. Sachs and Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, “If We Cared to, We Could Defeat World Poverty.” *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 2003, B-13.



# Moral Leadership in a Dangerous World

By Sergio Duarte

*“Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics,” Nobel peace laureate Jane Addams once said. This is a good introduction to our subject, for it is in the realm of actions and results that the UN’s real contributions to humanity are made. I say this recognizing that our member states bear the heaviest responsibilities for action, and that their own citizens are ultimately responsible for ensuring lasting progress.*

Many people might not know that disarmament is one of the UN’s longest-standing goals. When Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld referred in 1955 to disarmament as a “hardy perennial,” it was already a decade old, appearing twice in the UN Charter.

The Charter, however, was negotiated before any nuclear weapon had even been tested, so it fell to the General Assembly to clarify early on the meaning of this noble but often misunderstood term, “disarmament.” The General Assembly’s first resolution, adopted in January 1946, identified the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons and all other “weapons adaptable to mass destruction.” In 1959, the General Assembly put “general and complete disarmament under effective international control” on its agenda – an aim that encompasses the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and the limitation of conventional arms to purposes of self-defense and peacekeeping. The Final Document of the General Assembly’s first special session on disarmament in 1978 referred to general and complete disarmament as the “ultimate objective” of the United Nations in this field, a goal that remains today.

## **Fusion of Idealism and Realism**

Various institutions that comprise the “UN disarmament machinery” perform, in effect, as a kind of assembly line for the creation and maintenance of

global norms in these fields of disarmament and multilateral treaties. The Disarmament Commission, for example, meets once a year to deliberate two agenda items, customarily nuclear and conventional weapons, and to develop voluntary guidelines at the end of a three-year cycle of such meetings. Meanwhile, the General Assembly’s First Committee considers resolutions, which, though non-binding, carry political weight. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has the job of negotiating the relevant multilateral treaties.

My own Office for Disarmament Affairs advises the Secretary-General and undertakes numerous activities to promote disarmament. These include our assistance to member states in pursuing their own disarmament-related activities, our administrative contributions at gatherings of states that are parties to multilateral treaties, our educational programs and publications, and our relations with non-governmental groups.

Thus, our goals are global in scope, and the norms we seek have been deliberated by all our member states and have been converted into commitments accepted by all. We are not in the business of promoting discriminatory norms. We are not seeking to outlaw certain weapons only in some countries, while certifying their legitimacy elsewhere.



The drama of history reveals the range of choices nations make to advance their security interests – the resort to military pre-emption, balance of power, ever-expanding military expenditures, arms exports. In terms of weapons of mass destruction, however, disarmament has two advantages over these other options. First, it conforms to the ideals of a universal, non-discriminatory standard and to the longstanding international desire to eliminate certain types of horrific, indiscriminate weapons. And second, it happens to be the most effective practical way to ensure against any future use of such weapons.

Disarmament, in short, represents the fusion of idealism and realism – it is the right thing to do, and it works. The UN is not merely seeking a world in which nuclear weapons reside in fewer hands, but a world in which no such weapons exist. We are not

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**Moral leadership requires a troubled conscience, a dissatisfaction with the status quo, and a profound sense of repugnance for these weapons of mass slaughter.**

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seeking only to reduce the risk that nuclear weapons will be used but to eliminate both the possibility and the motivations for any such use. We are not seeking only to limit the damages from a future nuclear war, but truly to achieve a world in which such a war *cannot* occur. And we are sure that this is what the world community wants us to do.

In my work as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and in my earlier efforts in other disarmament-related arenas, I have consistently been impressed by the diversity of groups that support this great goal. Though arms races and unfettered military competition may produce material benefits for certain constituencies in society, disarmament produces benefits that cut across all sectors of society. All the great goals of the United Nations – literally all of them – tacitly assume the non-existence of a nuclear war. In a very real sense, the constituency of disarmament includes not just all of humanity but also future generations.

**Religions Step Up**

It is small wonder that religious groups have consistently supported progress in this field. I note in particular the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, which the UN hosted in September 2000. The Summit's joint statement underscored that humanity stands at a

critical juncture in history – “one that calls for strong moral and spiritual leadership to help set a new direction for society.”<sup>1</sup> This statement acknowledges that violence and war “are sometimes perpetrated in the name of religion,” yet also points to numerous ways that the world's religions can work constructively together for the well-being of the human family and peace on earth.

The participants, for example, agreed “to join with the United Nations in the call for all nation-states to work for the universal abolition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction for the safety and security of life on this planet.” I have seen similar calls issued by religious leaders across the globe.

Now, in surveying this brief history of disarmament efforts at the UN, one can easily see signs of leadership. Sometimes the agent of this leadership has been a Secretary-General, sometimes it comes from our member states, sometimes from coalitions of states, and sometimes it emerges from individuals or groups in civil society.

Leadership is essentially the quality to inspire, direct, and sustain collective action. It can be instinctive. It can also be learned. Yet it is difficult to teach. It can be performed by individuals with great charisma, by people performing official responsibilities, or by people who inspire others to act by appealing to custom. A leader can lead by reason, emotional appeals, or strength of character.

As I've used the term, leadership applies to a capability rather than a noble end. One can quite effectively “lead” others to oblivion. Moral leadership, on the other hand, insists on the issue of legitimate ends – goals that are both fair and adopted through an open process of voluntary consent. The individuals I would regard as true leaders are not simply those who prevail in conflicts, but those who inspire hard work for a noble goal. Moral leadership involves much more than seeking to deter aggression. It involves inspiring the mighty to pursue righteous ends.

With respect to the actions of public officials, moral leadership is not limited to any specific level of government. It can be exercised by mayors, governors, national legislators, civil servants, leaders of intergovernmental organizations, or by ordinary citizens. I have seen many examples of such leadership in dealing with nuclear weapons issues. The persistent and enlightened efforts of the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for global nuclear disarmament deserve special recognition: few can speak with greater moral authority of the devastating ef-



fects of nuclear weapons than the people who live in the cities that were attacked by such weapons. These mayors have spearheaded the “Mayors for Peace” initiative, which has now gained the support of leaders from more than 2,700 cities in 134 countries – a demonstration of moral leadership of the highest order.<sup>2</sup>

I have seen moral leadership among our own member states, not just in articulate statements and resolutions, but also in the formation of broad-based coalitions of states that share the common desire to free this world from nuclear threats. Indeed, moral leadership is limited neither geographically nor by a country’s wealth, which helps account for the dedicated efforts of developing countries over several decades to seek the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The difficulty of achieving a world without nuclear weapons goes without question. Yet by far the greater challenge is the attempt to explain how the continued – indeed indefinite – possession of such weapons by some countries will guarantee against the use of such weapons in the future. Such possession will surely not guarantee against either the future spread of such weapons or against the improvement or expansion of existing arsenals. It didn’t do so yesterday and won’t tomorrow.

I do believe that disarmament – with its safeguards and guarantees – does offer a brighter future for humanity than the perpetuation of a world whose security is based on the threat of mutual destruction.

### **Waiting for Gandhi?**

Disarmament, however, will not spontaneously appear in this world without hard work. Quite the contrary: it will occur only as a result of willful action by national leaders and their respective citizens. I do not believe disarmament must await the achievement of world peace, or the halt of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, or the elimination of all conventional weapons, or the perfection of missile defenses, or a fundamental change of human nature, or the inauguration of world government.

It can instead be achieved as a result of leadership that rests on the pursuit of a legitimate goal – disarmament as a common good, by legitimate means – a process that allows for universal participation. This type of leadership is as much moral as it is utilitarian: it serves both the ideals and interests of humanity. As I said, disarmament is the right thing to do, and it works.

Such leadership is quite rare, though I doubt it will take the appearance of a new Gandhi. No one

can predict who will rise to this leadership challenge, or when, but it is useful to consider the sort of environment that may be conducive to the rise of such leaders and the success of their work.

Nuclear disarmament will certainly require considerable leadership from inside the group of states that possess nuclear weapons, especially those with the largest stockpiles – the United States and the Russian Federation. Yet it will also require understanding, support, and leadership by and within all other countries. I believe the foundation for moral leadership lies in a political culture that has its roots in the family and schools, for they play an invaluable role in helping us all see and understand our world. Spiritual and religious convictions can powerfully reinforce the foundations for such leadership. This is one reason why supporters of disarmament among UN member states and the UN secretariat itself have been so interested in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education in recent years. And this is also why we in the secretariat have actively reached out to religious groups for their support in this great cause.

Moral leadership in eliminating nuclear weapons requires a troubled conscience, a dissatisfaction with the status quo, and a profound sense of repugnance for these weapons of mass slaughter – but it also requires the hopeful vision of a better world, an awareness of the concrete and spiritual benefits of achieving a world free of such weapons, and an appreciation that we will together leave for future generations a world that is safer and more peaceful than the imperfect one we share today. This a solid foundation indeed upon which to build.

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*Brazilian-born Sergio Duarte spent nearly 50 years in Brazil’s foreign service before he was appointed High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for the United Nations in 2007. Long involved in disarmament issues, Duarte chaired the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1999-2000 and was president of the 2005 conference of the states that are parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.*

### **Notes**

- 1 The full text is available at <http://www.millenniumpeacesummit.com/resources/mwps/Commitment%20to%20Global%20Peace.pdf>.
- 2 For further details, see <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html>.

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Foreword by Miroslav Volf

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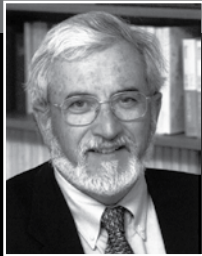


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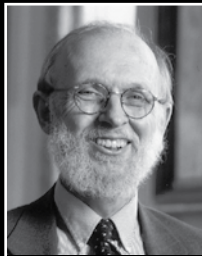
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# From the Editor: Hidden Things

By Ray Waddle



Paul Shambroom already had experience photographing the hidden places of American power – corporate offices, police stations, factories – when he took on a new challenge, the nuclear arsenal.

He knew it would be no easy thing getting photo access to air force bases, nuclear submarines and missile silos – the strategic triad of U.S. nuclear-arms readiness. In fact it took years of polite requests and patience with the mysteries of military procedure – with visits to 25 weapon and command sites – in order to produce his visual chronicle.

His timing was good: it was the 1990s, a period of relaxed nuclear secrecy between the end of the Cold War and the morning of September 11, 2001.

“I wanted to take ordinary photos of extraordinary things,” he says. His intention was neither to criticize nor glorify but to help citizens see “beyond the abstract haze of policy debate” and register the actual existence and potency of our nuclear stockpile, which still flourishes two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

“Over the course of ten years I learned a great deal and was forced to re-evaluate some previously held notions,” he writes. “But my basic convictions about the monumental folly of nuclear arms were strengthened and confirmed.”

He persisted with his project for personal reasons too. Born during the Cold War, Shambroom has been preoccupied with the bomb since childhood. He feels a living connection. His life was perhaps made possible by the atomic bombs against Japan, since they made a U.S. invasion unnecessary. His father, serving in the Navy, would have been part of the invasion wave, but Japan surrendered shortly after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, possibly sparing his life.

So Shambroom ponders the paradoxes of nuclear weapons – their heinous capacity to destroy civilization, yet their power in the Cold War to deter another global war.

Another paradox: their domination of contemporary times, yet their hiddenness. They are quietly nestled in underground complexes, packed aboard sky-high aircraft, and poised inside deep-sea submarines. That hiddenness is demystified by Sham-

broom’s remarkable collection of photos in *Face to Face with the Bomb: Nuclear Reality after the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); some of them are featured in this *Reflections*. They give a rare glimpse of the fearsome hardware that embodies what we blandly call the nuclear age.

Nuclear weapons are hidden elsewhere too – in our psyches. As Shambroom puts it, they take up emotional space, much of it unnamed, unsaid. For more than half a century, we have struggled to find the right response to their destructive scale, their mystique, their mythic size. With the first atomic test blasts in the American desert, Bulfinch’s *Mythology* was eclipsed. Prometheus gave way to all-too-real conjurers of fire. No wonder the arsenal’s components brandish names like Titan, Nike, Trident, and Poseidon, as if their human designers were registering a world-metaphysical shift, and our god-like powers were now official.

They haunt the spiritual imagination as well. It is no stretch to argue that the sudden claims of UFOs after 1945, and the post-war surges in end-time Biblical prophecy, were giddy responses to the new, inescapable nuclear fact – anxious exit strategies, emotional rescue plans to escape earth and its looming nuclear holocaust.

Otherwise, an aura of helplessness settled on society, its citizens and churchgoers. Nuclear politics seemed too technical to discuss, too burdensome. The customary American spirit of problem-solving – resilient discussion, pragmatic action, and vigorous skepticism about government aims – so often failed to surface. We turned debate over to the nuclear experts, who spun strategies and spent money – \$5 trillion since 1945 – with few questions asked.

At the height of the Cold War arms race, as Richard Rhodes reminds us in his introduction to Shambroom’s book, the world’s stockpile of nuclear firepower equaled two tons of TNT for every person on earth. No rational strategy can justify such overkill. It flowed from all-too-human impulses, Rhodes notes – economic pressures, intramural military competition, sheer hubris. Public outrage seldom broke the government monopoly on nuclear thinking.

The writers and activists contributing to this *Reflections* insist the debate cannot be left to the experts, the politicians, or the silence of inertia. Writers here speak for and from moral perspectives that must be brought to bear if humanity will summon the courage and imagination to shape a



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future free of nuclear fears, a destiny free of nuclear weapons.

For American Christians this means joining voices that question publicly and repeatedly the perpetual motion machine of nuclear arms upgrades and spending. It means sorting through deeply conflicted feelings about nationalism and peacemaking. It means facing our ambivalence about international courts and cooperation, those essential protocols for controlling the world's nuclear stockpiles and keeping them out of dangerous hands.

Only by overcoming the hidden power of nuclear arms – their mystique, their false guarantees of national security and pride – will we move closer to a braver new world, a world someday, somehow rid of nuclear weapons.

## ARTWORK

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## POETRY

**Mary Crescenzo** is a poet, playwright, and artistic director of the Peekskill Performing Arts Collective, located in New York's Hudson Valley. She is also the singer with the band Jazz'd.

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**Roger Greenwald**, a poet from New York, lives in Toronto. His books include *Connecting Flight* (poems) and *North in the World: Selected Poems of Rolf Jacobsen* (translations), winner of the Lewis Galantière Award.

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**Dorianne Laux**, born in Maine, teaches creative writing at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. Her books of verse include *Facts about the Moon*, *What We Carry*, and *Smoke*.

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"A Vigil at a Missile Silo" is reprinted by permission of the poet.

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**Editor's note:** the poems by Greenwald, Laux, Nye, and Sanders also appeared in the 1994 anthology, *Atomic Ghost: Poets Respond to the Nuclear Age* (Coffee House Press), edited by John Bradley.



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