

Below is Ms. Slater's speech delivered as a part of the workshop:
Why and How to Build a Carbon-Free, Nuclear-Free Energy System
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Shifting the Paradigm: Time to Replace Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty with Universal Membership in the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

by Alice Slater

While the world applauds the growing recognition that the abolition of nuclear weapons seems to be an idea whose time has finally come—from the calls by rusty cold warriors and former statesmen and generals to eliminate nuclear weapons—to the recent modest START negotiated by President Obama and Medvedev to cut nuclear arsenals under new verifications procedures, there are appalling countervailing forces, born from the old 20th century paradigm of war and terror, that undercut the growing positive pressures to end the nuclear scourge. In addition to the pushback from the military and the Republican party in the US Congress to hold the START agreement hostage to billions of new dollars for the weapons labs to build new plutonium cores for the atom bombs, continue sub-critical explosions of plutonium and chemicals at the Nevada test site, and erect new buildings in the weapons complex, as well as continued expansion of destabilizing missile “defenses” and space warfare programs, there is a growing global proliferation of so-called “peaceful” nuclear reactors, metastasizing around the planet and spreading their lethal technology as incipient bomb factories.

Ironically as new calls come from the nuclear sophisticated “haves” to control the nuclear fuel cycle, there has been an explosion of interest from nations that never sought “peaceful” nuclear power before to achieve the technical know-how that will allow them to play in the nuclear club with the big boys. Thus we see countries like El Salvador, Ghana, Burma and Indonesia declaring their intention to build nuclear power plants as well as hearing expressions of interest from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman Qatar, Saudi Arabia Sudan Syria Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen!¹

Fueled by commercial interests, the western patriarchal network of industrialized nations is now vigorously promoting a “nuclear renaissance” of civilian power. There has been an explosion of interests in licensing new uranium mines around the world, in Africa, Australia, Canada, Kazakhstan, India, the United States—even at the very the rim of the sacred land surrounding the awesome Grand Canyon, despite the known tragic

¹ http://blogs.nyu.edu/blogs/ah2007/kalamnamiddleeaststudies/2010/03/a_nuclear_middle_east.html

consequences of mining on the health of indigenous peoples who bear the brunt of the toxic activity with higher birth defects, cancer, leukemia and mutations in every community where uranium is mined.

The nuclear crisis we face today is a direct result of the export of peaceful nuclear technology to countries such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Indeed, every nuclear reactor enables a country to develop its own nuclear weapons, as we have seen in the case of India, Pakistan, and Israel, who never joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty and now North Korea, which exploited the fruits of “peaceful” technology and then quit to develop its own deterrent against US bullying. Under the guise of “peace”, other countries, such as South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, and Libya were also well on their way to developing nuclear bombs, which they later abandoned. Former IAEA Director, Mohammed ElBaradei stated “We just cannot continue business as usual that every country can build its own factories for separating plutonium or enriching uranium. Then we are really talking about 30, 40 countries sitting on the fence with a nuclear weapons capability that could be converted into a nuclear weapon in a matter of months.”

The signers of the CTB were well aware that by having a nuclear reactor, a nation had been given the keys to a bomb factory and would need to be included in any effort to ban nuclear tests, regardless of whether they proclaimed any intention to develop weapons. And former US CIA Director, George Tenet, said, “The difference between producing low-enriched uranium and weapons-capable high-enriched uranium is only a matter of time and intent, not technology.”

There are nearly 200 million kilograms of reactor wastes in the world—with only 5 kilograms needed to make one nuclear bomb. The US is planning to build 50 more reactors by 2020; China plans 30; with 31 more now under construction—to churn out more toxic poisons; on tap for bomb-making, with no known solution to safely containing the tons of nuclear waste that will be generated over the unimaginable 250,000 years it will continue to threaten life on earth.

Countless studies report higher incidences of birth defects, cancer, and genetic mutations in every situation where nuclear technology is employed—whether for war or for “peace.” A National Research Council 2005 study reported that exposure to X-rays and gamma rays, even at low-dose levels, can cause cancer. The committee defined “low-dose” as a range from near zero up to about... 10 times that from a CT scan. “There appears to be no threshold below which exposure can be viewed as harmless,” said one NRC panelist. Tens of thousands of tons of nuclear waste accumulate at civilian reactors with no solution for its storage, releasing toxic doses of radioactive waste into our air, water and soil and contaminating our planet and its inhabitants for hundreds of thousands of years.

An April, 2010 study released by the New York Academy of Sciences, authored by noted Russian scientists, concludes that based on records now available, some 985,000 people died of cancer caused between 1986 by the Chernobyl accident through 2004.² The

² <http://counterpunch.org/grossman04232010.html>

industry-dominated IAEA, has been instrumental in covering up the disastrous health effects of the Chernobyl tragedy, understating the number of deaths by attributing only 50 deaths directly to the accident. This cover-up was no doubt due to the collusive agreement between the IAEA and the World Health Organization, which under its terms provides that if either of the organizations initiates any program or activity in which the other has or may have a substantial interest, the first party shall consult with the other with a view to adjusting the matter by mutual agreement. Thus our scientists and researchers at the WHO are required to have their work vetted by the industry's champion for "peaceful" nuclear technology, the IAEA.

The industrialized nations have the hubris to think they can manage a whole new regime of nuclear apartheid, despite their recent and most welcome acknowledgement by their leadership of the breakdown of the nuclear weapons arms control regime. They're planning a top-down, hierarchical, central control of the nuclear fuel cycle, in a mad plan to reprocess the irradiated fuel rods in the "nuclear have" countries, such as the US, Russia, China, UK, France, Japan and India, who are to be members of a new Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. The Partnership will ship toxic bomb-ready materials to the four corners of the world and back, in a nightmare scenario of plutonium in constant transit, subject to terrorist theft and negligent accidents on land and on sea, while creating a whole new class of nuclear "have nots" who can't be trusted not to turn their "peaceful" nuclear reactors into bomb factories. *It's just so 20th century!* Time for a paradigm shift to safe, sustainable energy.

Every 30 minutes, enough of the sun's energy reaches the earth's surface to meet global energy demand for an entire year. Wind can satisfy the world's electricity needs 40 times over, and meet all global energy demands five times over. The geothermal energy stored in the top six miles of the earth's crust contains 50,000 times the energy of the world's known oil and gas resources. Tidal, wave and small hydropower, can also provide vast stores of energy everywhere on earth, abundant and free for every person on our planet, rich and poor alike. We can store hydrogen fuel in cells, made from safe, clean energy sources, to be used when the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow. When hydrogen fuel is burned, it produces water vapor, pure enough to drink, with no contamination added to the planet.³

Last year the governments of Germany, Spain and Denmark launched the International Renewable Energy Agency, IRENA, which would empower developing countries with the ability to access the free energy of the sun, wind, marine, and geothermal sources, would train, educate, and disseminate information about implementing sustainable energy programs, organize and enable the transfer of science and know-how of renewable energy technologies, and generally be responsible for helping the world make the critical transition to a sustainable energy future. IRENE is the Greek word for peace, so this new initiative is especially well named.

While the NPT purports to guarantee to States who agree to abide by its terms an inalienable right to so-called peaceful nuclear technology, it is highly questionable

³ See generally, <http://www.abolition2000.org/a2000-files/sustainable-now.pdf>

whether such a right can ever be appropriately conferred on a State. Inalienable rights are generally distinguished from legal rights established by a State because they are moral or natural rights, inherent in the very essence of an individual. The notion of inalienable rights appeared in Islamic law and jurisprudence which denied a ruler “the right to take away from his subjects certain rights which inhere in his or her person as a human being” and “become Rights by reason of the fact that they are given to a subject by a law and from a source which no ruler can question or alter”. John Locke, the great Enlightenment thinker was thought to be influenced in his concept of inalienable rights by his attendance at lectures on Arabic studies.⁴

During the Age of Enlightenment natural law theory challenged the divine right of kings. The US Declaration of Independence spoke of “self-evident truth” that all men are “endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ...life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Where does “peaceful nuclear technology” fit in this picture? Just as the Comprehensive Test Ban cancelled the right to peaceful nuclear explosions in Article V of the NPT, a protocol to the NPT mandating participation in IRENA would supercede the Article IV right to “peaceful” nuclear technology. There are now 144 nations participating in IRENA. www.irena.org We urge you to insure that your nation joins as well.

⁴ Judge Weeramantry, Christopher G. (1997) *Justice Without Frontiers*, pp. 8, 132, 135,