

# the world is waking up

There is an increasing awareness of the impact of the nuclear industry on indigenous communities, on women, on workers, and on the health of all people. Scientists and military personnel are beginning to speak out about their role in the development of threat of the use of nuclear weapons. After many decades of fear and protest, the world is finally waking up to the promise of disarmament and peace and beginning to question whether the nuclear industry has any real benefits to society. In the following pages we have collected quotes from a diverse range of people highlighting the growing calls for disarmament and an examination of the role of nukes in their lives...

## scientists

Scientists around the world are re-evaluating the role they play or are expected to play within the nuclear industry.

M.V. Ramana, Research Associate from the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies, Princeton University, explained his commitment to working for disarmament and peace:

*"I obtained my Ph.D. in Physics. As a scientist, I was interested in the ways science influences and is influenced by society at large. Nuclear weapons are among the most devastating and the most dramatic of such influences and impacts. The history of the nuclear arms race over the past half-century bears testimony to the pressure from scientists to build the bomb and the authority they wielded. But there is another possibility. Scientists have opposed these developments in the past and I would like to be part of such a movement, not just as a scientist but as a human being."*

**M.V. Ramana**

source: News In Review Edition 5, 1 May 2000

## health

Doctors and other health professionals are faced with the very real frustration of knowing that nuclear war is still one of the greatest threats to public health in the world today.

Co-President of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Dr Mary-Wynne Ashford, explained what would happen if a nuclear bomb was dropped on her city in the West Coast of Canada and the impossibility of caring for the victims of such an attack.

*"It is estimated that each doctor surviving a nuclear attack on a city would have 1800 severely injured and burned patients to see. If I saw one for ten minutes and worked 20 hours a day it would take two weeks to see each person for the first time – without being able to do anything for them. That would be assuming that I did not succumb to radiation sickness."*

**Dr Mary-Wynne Ashford**

source: News In Review Edition 17, 17 May 2000

## survivors

Many thousands of civilians were killed in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Thousands more have since died of radiation related illnesses. Survivors like Setsuko Thurlow, a young girl when the nuclear attack on Hiroshima occurred, are still active in trying to teach the world about the horrendous impact of these weapons.

*"I must say I feel outraged at the small group of nuclear weapon decision makers who keep us, the people of the world, hostage to live in fear of possible nuclear holocaust...[This] mindset reflects no humanity, no morality, but self interest, power and domination."*

**Setsuko Thurlow**

Hiroshima survivor  
speaking at the Nuclear Truth Commission in New York,  
May 2000

## military officials

In recent years an increasing number of high level military strategists have gone public with their concerns about nuclear weapons.

. As he puts it, if the President of the United States had ever picked up the phone to order the launch of nuclear weapons, "that call would have come to me."

General Butler is one of the most high profile US military commanders to break ranks and speak out about his concerns regarding nuclear weapons and the hold they have over world politics. He explained his decision to speak out:

*"... decades of thinking about and commanding US nuclear forces led me to the conclusion that nuclear weapons should be abolished. The reasons are many and complex, but simply stated: nuclear weapons provide no security; worse, they erode the very values we hold dear. How can democratic societies possibly reconcile with their democratic or moral principles the threat to incinerate tens or hundreds of millions of people?"*

### **General Butler**

source: IPPNW publication ‘

*Is everything safe? Myths and Realities of Nuclear Disarmament.*’

Similarly, Commander Rob Green of the British Royal Navy (retired) was a British naval commander who spoke out against nuclear weapons publicly after many years in the military.

*"There definitely is a way back from the abyss towards which nuclear deterrence dogma is driving us. The key is to see nuclear disarmament as part of a process of building confidence and security, where nuclear weapons are a liability and a security problem."*

### **Commander Rob Green (rtd)**

source: ‘The Naked Emperor: Debunking Nuclear Deterrence’, by Commander Rob Green

Colin Powell, formerly the General who commanded the US forces in the Gulf War in the early 1990’s, is now the US Secretary of State in the George W. Bush administration. Despite his strong advocacy for the controversial National Missile Defence system, Colin Powell has spoken out strongly in the past against the use of nuclear weapons. In his book ‘ASoldiers Way’ Powell recounts incidents during the Gulf War which influenced these convictions;

*“ ‘Let's not even think about nukes,’ I said. ‘You know we're not going to let that genie loose.’ ‘Of course not,’ Cheney said. ‘But take a look to be thorough and just out of curiosity.’*

*I told Tom Kelly to gather a handful of people [including General Lee Butler] in the most secure cell in the building to work out nuclear strike options. The results unnerved me. To do serious damage to just one armoured division dispersed in the desert would require a considerable number of small tactical nuclear weapons. I showed his analysis to Cheney and then had it destroyed. If I had had any doubts before about the practicality of nukes in the field of battle, this report clinched them."*

### **General Colin Powell**

source: A Soldiers Way – by Colin Powell (Hutchinson, London, 1995)

## peace education

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, emphasizes the importance of educating young people about nuclear disarmament and the possibilities for peace.

*"Let us at least make sure that the next generation understands, better than ours has done, or at least mine has done, that human security is as much about governance, human rights, and social justice, as it is about arsenals. Let us make sure that they grasp the fundamental interdependence of a globalized world, and its implications for national politics. Let us help them find new and more productive uses for our wondrous human ingenuity...We cannot and should not shield them from the dark vision of a world in perpetual and universal terror. But we must offer them an effective, more hopeful vision – a vision of a world without weapons of mass destruction."*

**Kofi Annan**

Secretary General of the United Nations  
address to the conference "The Second Nuclear Age  
and the Academy"  
John Jay College, City College of  
New York.

## nobel peace prize winners

*"Nuclear weapons are against international law and they have to be abolished."*

**DrAlbert Schweitzer**  
Nobel Peace Laureate  
1958, 1962

## testing

The former US President, Bill Clinton spoke out against nuclear proliferation in response to the announcement of nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, May 1998.

*"I cannot believe that we are about to start the 21st century by having the Indian sub-continent repeat the mistakes of the 20th century, when we know it is not necessary to peace, to security, to prosperity, to national greatness, or to personal fulfillment."*

**former US President  
Bill Clinton**

## women

In all countries, you will see women taking an active role in disarmament work. At the NPT RevCon, a letter was presented to the Chair of the Conference, Ambassador Baali, which was signed by over 350 women and women's organizations from over 50 countries around the world asking for the conference to take their role seriously in disarming nuclear weapons and promoting peace.

*"The survival of this planet and all life on it requires a fundamental shift in the concept of peace and security. As we women pull up our chairs to finally sit at the international table, we will create such momentous change. Nuclear weapons and power through military force must no longer be at the head of the international table... The danger is that our generation of leaders will be remembered as the ones who could have, but didn't, resolve the Cold War and learn its lessons, redefine human security, and put the nuclear threat behind us."*

**'We, the Women of the World...'letter to NPT  
RevCon President**

Source: News In Review 15 May 2000

## legal professionals

In a speech to the 2000 NPT RevCon, Peter Weiss, President of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, stated,

*"During the period of the cold war, when the two superpowers threatened each other with total elimination on a daily basis, one might – although one should not have – forgiven their leaders for not wishing to be bothered with legal considerations. But in today's entirely different context, it is difficult to understand why the rule of law should not be taken seriously, particularly by those countries which never tire of proclaiming it."*

Peter Weiss  
NGO Presentations to the NPT RevCon, 3 May  
2000

## politicians

Many high level government officials and key politicians from countries around the world speak clearly in favour of nuclear disarmament through forums such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conferences.

*"What we are addressing here are the thousands of nuclear weapons that threaten an Armageddon, intentionally or by accident...The time to proceed, with serious intent, to rid the world of these weapons is now."*

Mr. Brian Cowen  
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ireland  
2000 NPT RevCon

## indigenous people

From the mining of nuclear materials, to the testing of weapons and the dumping of the waste produced throughout the nuclear cycle, indigenous people are arguably the primary victims of the nuclear age.

*"Indigenous peoples have borne the brunt of nuclearism through the nuclear fuel cycle. This begins with uranium mining on their own lands, often doing the mining themselves with little or no protection, to having nuclear tests carried out on their lands, and culminating in their lands being used as radioactive nuclear waste dumps. We recognize that we are not the only ones who have been affected by this process. Nevertheless, with 70 percent of the world's uranium resources located on the lands inhabited by Indigenous Peoples in Africa, Asia, Australia and North and South America, and a vast network of mining extraction of these uranium resources, fraught with racism and irresponsible environmental practices, the net result is a toxic legacy to indigenous communities of genocidal proportions."*

Richard Salvador  
Pacific Islands Association of NGOs  
from Indigenous Perspectives section of the NGO Presentations  
to the NPT PrepCom 1999

## mining

Jacqui Katona, an Aboriginal woman working in Australia to protect indigenous rights, has actively protested the nuclear industry and the Australian governments' plans for a new uranium mine on her family's traditional land. She addressed the NPT RevCon in 2000:

*"We want to see some reality injected into the debate for the NPT to ensure that people really understand that there is a starting point and there is an end point – between is disarmament – but there are lives of people who are affected at the point of extraction and production of uranium, right through to the storage of toxic waste."*

**Jacqui Katona**

Executive Officer, Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation, Australia

source: extract from speech at the NGO launch of the NPT RevCon 25 April 2000

## waste dumping

As the World Uranium Hearing held in Salzburg, Austria, in September 1992 concluded, "The territories of Indigenous peoples, impoverished developing countries, and the global commons are frequently targeted for storage or dumping of waste, thus compounding international injustice"

*"For each ton of uranium oxide, several thousand tons of 'tailings' remain behind as low level radioactive waste; ... Wind and rain spread the carcinogenic dust to the surrounding water, air and soil, thus contaminating agricultural and animal meat by-products and foods for human consumption.*

*This legacy of environmental contamination has exposed hundreds of indigenous communities to serious environmental and human health hazards."*

Richard Salvador

Pacific Islands Association of NGOs

from Indigenous Perspectives section of the  
NGO Presentations to the NPT  
PrepCom 1999

## nuclear energy

*"Industrialized countries are all phasing out nuclear energy facilities or planning to do so, due to well informed community opposition in the north. The energy assistance offered to the global south by industrialized countries, under the pretext of honoring inalienable rights, is actually debt producing, and has the function of maintaining the wealth of large corporations from the north who have not converted their priorities or technology when faced with the hard economic facts of their industry."*

**Felicity Hill**

WILPF

from speech given at the NGO  
Presentations to the NPT PrepCom  
1999

*"The  
poison the Government is talking  
about will poison the land.*

*We say "NO radioactive dump in our ngura - in our  
country." It's strictly poison – we don't want it.*

the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta

Declaration in 2001 from the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, Australian  
Aboriginal women elders fighting against proposed national and  
international nuclear waste dumps on their land.