

**2023 World Conference against A and H Bombs
International Meeting -- Session 3**

**Kate Hudson
Secretary General
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

**A nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world –
Solidarity and actions of civil society**

Greetings from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to this International Meeting of the World Conference against A and H Bombs. We stand together in our common struggle to eradicate all nuclear weapons, and we send our deepest respects to the Hibaksha at this most significant of times.

Today the world stands at the edge of a precipice – one miss-step and we are into the abyss of nuclear catastrophe. Yet there is also the possibility of significant change for good, for a transformation of global relations, but this requires broad alliances, hard talking – and sticking to the principles of peace that underpin our movement. There have been opportunities for significant change before that have been missed and which have actually helped lead to the disastrous war in Ukraine that brings nuclear war so close. I am talking about the opportunity to put peace in Europe on a stable footing at the end of the Cold War. When the Warsaw Pact was wound up in 1991, there were hopes that NATO would be dissolved too and international relations would be founded on a new basis, putting the principles of the UN Charter into force. It was also hoped there would be a peace dividend, with vast sums going from military into social spending.

This did not happen. Instead, the US devised a new strategy – the Wolfowitz Doctrine of 1992. This stated that the US was the world's only remaining superpower and proclaimed its main objective was to retain that status. That approach has determined US actions ever since – and NATO, which was then redundant in terms of its initial mission statement as a cold war alliance, was repurposed to support the US in that objective, expanding its remit and its territory. Europe has been caught up in that process ever since. But that US goal ignores how the world has changed: that we now live in a multi-polar world, and trying to force it to remain uni-polar will just lead to more wars. We recognise and pay tribute to the role of the global south in seeking a peaceful settlement in Ukraine, and its leadership role in the Treaty on the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The economic success of the BRICS countries, now superseding the G7 economies, indicates a shift in the global balance. We should not be the US's ally in its goal of global domination any longer – to remain so makes Europe a likely battleground and one – as the war in Ukraine makes very clear – that is increasingly likely to be a nuclear war.

Significant concern has been expressed about the increased risk of nuclear war and although a no-fly zone has been avoided – which would be a fast track to WW3 – there have been some incremental developments going in a bad direction. And governments are exacerbating the situation especially my own.

- Talk of 'tactical' or 'battlefield' nuclear weapons as if they can be contained. This normalizes the idea of nuclear use.
- Putin's rhetoric about nuclear use, and NATO reiterating its first use policy.
- Russia is bringing nuclear weapons to Belarus, likening it to so-called 'nuclear-sharing' by NATO. This refers to US tactical nuclear weapons in a number of countries across Europe including Britain back on the list. Also in process of bringing new upgraded B62-12 warheads to these countries. These new bombs can either function as gravity bombs or as guided drop bombs. This means they can be targeted with GPS and satellite, can be accurately steered and can be used as attack weapons.
- The deployment of the B61-12s is being accelerated to bases across Europe. At the same time, new US-built F35a fighter jets are coming to Europe. Taking the jets and the bombs together, this represents a significant enhancement of US nuclear capability in Europe. But the key point here is that neither US nor Russian nukes in Europe are legal.
- Having US nuclear bombs in Europe conflicts with the legal obligations of the signatories to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Article I of the NPT forbids the transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear weapon states and Article II imposes a complementary requirement on non-nuclear weapons states not to 'receive the transfer' of nuclear weapons.
- NATO nuclear sharing breaches these obligations as it is intended to allow the transfer of US nuclear weapons to non-nuclear allies to deliver in time of war. NATO asserts that NATO's nuclear sharing agreement predates the NPT and claims that it doesn't involve the transfer of nuclear weapons or control over them unless NATO has gone to war, in which case the treaty would no longer apply.

But in 1985, the NPT Review Conference agreed that the Treaty remains in force 'under any circumstances', thus negating the argument that war would invalidate Articles I and II.

The truth is that these weapons put us all on the front line and we must get rid of them. The same goes for foreign military bases and foreign troops present in Europe – there are over 63,000 US troops stationed here, over half of those in Germany, for many decades.

I would like to conclude with a brief mention of the climate impact of the Ukraine war and militarisation more widely, not least because this is the campaigning area that generally seizes the younger generation more powerfully than the question of nuclear weapons.

War is a big polluter and the war in Ukraine is no exception – military emissions are sky-high.

According to calculations by the Dutch climate researcher Lennard de Klerk, the war in Ukraine caused 120 million tonnes of CO-2 emissions in its first year, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of a country the size of Belgium¹.

But it's an ongoing problem. NATO organises regular massive exercises over and across Europe which contribute to this footprint. The recent Air Defender 23 was the largest

¹ zdf: Klimaforscher berechnen Emissionen Diese Folgen hat der Krieg (7.6.2023)
<https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/panorama/klima-fussabdruck-ukraine-krieg-russland-100.html>

deployment exercise of air forces in NATO's history. It involved 10,000 participants from 25 countries with 250 aircraft. The CO-2 emissions of this exercise amount to 220,000 tonnes, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of a city of 30,000 inhabitants.

Now more than ever we need to adopt a broad concept of security, which addresses the two existential threats that we face – climate change and nuclear war. And we need policies and actions which will reduce and eventually remove those threats. Our concept of security is of common security, of genuine human security, not of killing and increased militarisation, or the further expansion of military blocs, but of compliance with international law, human rights, respect and dignity for all, and the meeting of people's needs.

At the heart of this drive for peace – and global transformation – is the absolute need for nuclear disarmament. We pledge to work together to this goal. Ultimately, we will prevail.