https://www.acdn.net/spip/spip.php?article458

Paris, 9 December 2008

100 personalities from around the world launch the "Global Zero" Campaign

Publication date: Wednesday 10 December 2008

Copyright © www.acdn.net - All rights reserved

From our special envoy Jean-Marie Matagne, President of ACDN

A hundred international personalities, political, military and civilian, from all countries and all political tendencies, have met recently in Paris. They include Jimmy Carter, ex-President of the USA, Queen Noor of Jordan, Margaret Beckett, formerly Foreign Secretary to Tony Blair and a member of Gordon Brown's current cabinet.

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard have endorsed the declaration but did not attend the meeting. Those present included the former Defense and Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Pakistan Ehsan Ul-Haq, and Brajesh Mishra, former Indian National Security Advisor.

They met on 8-9 December, in the Hotel Intercontinental near the Paris Opera, to launch together a long-term campaign aimed at completely eliminating all nuclear weapons by means of progressive reductions and verifications. They recognise that this is the only way to combat the threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.

This view is accepted and even desired today by leaders of major nuclear powers, such as Vladimir Putin* (Russia) Barack Obama** (USA) and Gordon Brown*** (UK).

The objective of nuclear weapons abolition will not be achieved overnight or without difficulties. The personalities who gathered in Paris under the aegis of "Global Zero" are aware of that. They have set a time-line of 25 years between the start and the completion of the process, and have discussed the "key steps":

- Massive reductions in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals, which represent 96% of the estimated 27 000 nuclear weapons of the entire world.

- Gradual reduction right down to zero of the nuclear arms of Russia and the US, to be joined by the other states possessing nuclear weapons.

- The establishment of systems for verification and international management of the nuclear fuel cycle so as to prevent any future development of nuclear weapons.

At the conclusion of the working sessions, a dozen personalities - including several from nations with nuclear weapons, whether members of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (USA, UK, Russia) or non-members (India, Pakistan) - held a press conference to launch officially, from Paris, the "Global Zero" Campaign. Richard Burt, the former U.S. Chief Negotiator in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) chaired the conference, in presence of Sir Richard Branson, who sponsored the meeting, and other prominent personalities.

During his campaign, US President-elect Barack Obama expressed his support for the goal of disarmament. This encouraged the view of Richard Burt, Queen Noor, Richard Branson and other panelists that "this is the moment to begin the work of seeking the peace of a world without nuclear weapons"

Mikhail Margelov, Chairman of the Russian Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, spoke of how, as a schoolboy, he had seriously feared a nuclear attack by the US on the USSR. He observed that the end of the Cold war has had positive consequences but also a negative one, since the problem of nuclear proliferation has been neglected.

Copyright © www.acdn.net

For South Asia, the retired Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shaharyar Khan insisted that recently "about ten days ago" President Zardari offered a no-first-strike agreement to India -that is, just before the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Shankar Bajpai, former Indian Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed India's posture for nuclear abolition for many decades. Neither one nor the other spoke about the recent US-India so-called "civilian" nuclear deal, which permits and encourages nuclear trade with India and recognises it as a *de facto* Nuclear Weapons State, without its signature on the Non Proliferation Treaty being required as a precondition.

Foreign journalists (from Jordan, Great Britain, Algeria, Japan...) and a few NGO representatives (from the International Peace Bureau, ACDN, World Without War, and the Global Security Institute) raised various questions. These concerned the case of Israeli nuclear weapons, the connection between "Global Zero" and other actors from civil society such as Abolition 2000 Network and Mayors for Peace, the ties between military and civilian nuclear, the timetable for disarmament (Vision 2020 or 2035?), the role of France, the UN draft Convention on Nuclear Disarmament, etc. Some answers were definite, others not, but fortunately one could get the impression that the future remains open and that common action is possible.

A delegation of Global Zero left straight afterwards to go to Moscow and Washington in order to submit the project to decision-makers there.

An international poll conducted for "Global Zero" in some twenty countries indicates clearly that a strong majority of public opinion is favourable to the abolition of nuclear weapons (76% on average). This percentage reportedly rises to 81% in Britain ... and to 86% in France (with 58% "very favourable"), which is the highest proportion in any nuclear-armed nation, despite the extreme reticence of the French political elite and the media to discuss this issue (which is actually taboo in our country).

That confirms that France absolutely needs the referendum which ACDN demanded on 18 June 1996 soon after its foundation. ACDN has continued to make this demand, notably from 18 June 2006 onwards:

- by putting to French citizens and their elected representatives the following question:

« Do you wish France to ask all the nuclear States, whether or not signatories of the NPT, to negotiate and adopt by 2010 at the latest a calendar for implementing the elimination of all nuclear arsenals under strict and effective international control, to suspend her programme for new nuclear arms up till and including 2010, and to divert these budgets to satisfying other needs - social, health, cultural, educational, environmental or humanitarian? »

- by proposing the organising of a referendum on that question;

- by asking all the candidates for the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections to initiate or support the organising of such a referendum within a year of being elected.

Now, it is time for President Sarkozy to give a positive answer to this request and to put the question of nuclear disarmament to the French people.

We note that his recent and very opportune letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon fails to say anything about the commitment of France to eliminate her own nuclear weapons or to involve herself in a process of global nuclear disarmament.****

Quotations and references:

Copyright © www.acdn.net

*** Vladimir Putin,** Prime Minister of Russia, September 11, 2008, meeting with the Valdai Debating Club:

"Had I been told just two or three years ago, I wouldn't believe that it would be possible but I believe it is now (...) quite possible to liberate humanity from nuclear weapons... Why should we be keeping the world constantly in apprehension of some nuclear disaster? Especially when thgere are so many aspirations on behalf of other states to acquire nuclear weapons. We believe that we should better close this Pandora's box."

**** Barack Obama** on Arms Control

Barack Obama undertakes to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons

***** Gordon Brown:** Speech at the Chamber of Commerce in Delhi

Gordon Brown: London is ready to work for total nuclear disarmament

Open Letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown

******Nicolas Sarkozy**

For more information on nuclear policies of President Sarkozy, look at:

- the letters he wrote to ACDN during the French presidential election in 2007, considering the future role of nuclear weapons in our system of defense

And

- Sarkozy's Mediterranean Dream : a nuclear nightmare

- ACDN endorsed the declaration below and invites you to join citizens and leaders around the world who have endorsed the goal of "Global Zero":

"We, the undersigned, believe that to protect our children, our grandchildren and our civilization from the threat of nuclear catastrophe, we must eliminate all nuclear weapons globally. We therefore commit to working for a legally binding verifiable agreement, including all nations, to eliminate nuclear weapons by a date certain."

- By the way, we invite you also to endorse the **http:/acdn.france.free.fr/spip/article.php3?id_article=407&lang=en' class='spip_out'>Appeal for a Nuclear-free Europe** - free from nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants.

List of Signatories

Sign the Global Zero Declaration!

Sign the Appeal for a Nuclear-free Europe!

Copyright © www.acdn.net

PS:

Global Zero Declaration

Full List of Signatories

Lloyd Axworthy;
K. Shankar Bajpaihttp;
Kanti Bajpai;
Margaret Beckett;
Lawrence Bender;
Sandy Berger;
Alexander Bessmertnykh;
Ela Bhatt;
Carl Bildt;
Robert Blackwill;
Bruce Blair;
Barry Blechman;
Lincoln Bloomfield, Jr.;
Naila Bolus;
Lakhdar Brahimi;
Richard Branson;
Matt Brown;
Gro Harlem Brundtland;
Zbigniew Brzezinkski;
William F. Burns;
Richard Burt;
Richard Butler;
Fernando Henrique Cardoso;
Frank Carlucci;
Jimmy Carter;
Naresh Chandra;
KunMo Chung;
Joseph Cirincione;
Richard Cizik;
Philip Coyle;
Liru Cui;
Ivo Daalder;
Romeo Dallaire;
Tarun Das;
Jayantha Dhanapala;
Anatoli Diakov;
Michael Douglas;
Lawrence Eagleburger;
Rolf Ekéus;
Tetsuya Endo;
Gareth Evans;
Lawrence Freedman;
Hans-Dietrich Genscher;
Bates Gill;
Mikhail Gorbachev;
Thomas Graham, Jr.;
Chuck Hagel;
Lee Hamilton;
David Hannay;
Frank Von Hippel;
Stanley Hoffmann;
Pervez Hoodbhoy;
Charles Horner;
Liming Hua;
Douglas Hurd;
Lynne Hybels;
Wolfgang Ischinger;
Takahiko Ito;
Igor Ivanov;

Copyright © www.acdn.net

Max Kampelman;
Sergei Karaganov;
Jehangir Karamat;
Yoriko Kawaguchi;
Peter B. Kellner;
Don Kendall;
Bob Kerrey;
Shaharyar Khan;
Alan Khazei;
Steve Killelea;
Verghese Koithara;
Lawrence Korb;
Konstantin Kosachev;
Roland Lajoie;
Anthony Lake;
Jan Lodal;
Mikhail V. Margelov;
Evgeny Maslin;
Talat Masood;
Jack F. Matlock, Jr.;
Robert McFarlane;
Robert McNamara;
Merrill A. McPeak;
Brajesh Mishra;
C. Raja Mohan;
Amr Moussa;
Rolf Mützenich;
Her Majesty Queen Noor;
Mabel van Oranje;
Vladimir Orlov;
David Owen;
Zhenqiang Pan;
G. Parthasarathy;
Guangqian Peng;
George Perkovich;
Thomas Pickering;
William Potter;
Vasantha R. Raghavan;
Fidel Ramos;
Malcolm Rifkind;
Mary Robinson;
Michel Rocard;
Douglas Roche;
Sergei Rogov;
Adam Daniel Rotfeld;
Roald Sagdeev;
Henrik Salander;
Yukio Satoh;
Jonathan Schell;
Jack Sheehan;
Martin Sherwin;
Jennifer Allen Simons;
Jaswant Singh;
Jeffrey Skoll;
Mário Soares;
Tyler Wigg Stevenson;
K. Subrahmanyam;
Toshiyuki Takano;
Strobe Talbott;
Horst M. Teltschik;
John L. Thornton;
Desmond Tutu;
Shashindra Pal Tyagi;
Ehsan ul-Haq;
Evgeny Velikhov;

Copyright © www.acdn.net

Fred Whitridge;
Jianmin Wu;
Xuetong Yan;
Jiemian Yang;
Muhammad Yunus;
Uta Zapf;
Philip Zelikow;
Anthony Zinni.

Copyright © www.acdn.net