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Escape the double-dealing of the NPT

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Submitted by Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN) to the UN Open Ended Working Group (OEWG), read by Jean-Marie Matagne, President of ACDN, at the plenary session of the OEWG, Geneva, 16 August 2016

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I. Introduction

The NPT is often blamed for not achieving its objectives, since Article Six is still not honoured 46 years after it came into force, 48 years after it was drafted. This view is very unjust. In reality the NPT has realised the intentions of its drafters perfectly. What did the US, and UK and the Soviet Union want in 1968? They wanted to shut the door of the « nuclear club » behind them, to prevent other states from getting atom bombs. And to keep their own.

That is exactly what has happened, year after year, for nearly half a century.

II. The NPT, a means of perpetuating the nuclear weapons of certain States and preserving their monopoly

In this bargain for dupes, they offered two things to the other states:

- First, a promise to give access to non-military nuclear technology. This could be very profitable to the nuclear states, and it helped people to forget that the only real motive for developing nuclear energy production is not for boiling water and making electricity: the original motive for them was and still remains to make bombs and to keep their monopoly.
- Second, a promise to disarm - a promise that did not cost them very much because they had no real intention of acting on it.

They kept the first promise very willingly, mainly because it enabled them to do good business selling their nuclear technology while making the client nations increasingly dependent on them, technically and politically. In return for this they have poisoned the planet: Mayak, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, Fukushima and tomorrow perhaps Fessenheim or Flamanville in France.

They failed to keep their second promise, and this was made easier by the other states, who wanted to believe in it but never dared to call the nuclear powers to account.

We are told that the NPT has three pillars.

1. the right of all states to have access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes;
2. a ban on non-nuclear states obtaining nuclear weapons;

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3. and a promise by states possessing them to eliminate their arsenals.
In short: promotion of nuclear power, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and disarmament.

But however much the non-nuclear states bend over backwards in attempts to maintain that pillar of disarmament, constantly threatening to topple, the nuclear states will only ever be interested in the other two pillars.

Nuclear arms and nuclear power generation go hand in glove. The civilian glove serves to hide the military fist underneath. That is why if you want to get rid of one you need to do away with the other too. What we ought to be wanting is a world freed from these nuclear weapons AND these power-plants. If the planet is not liberated from the one, it will never be free from the other. And humanity will end up disappearing, either gradually through the radioactivity dispersed by the reactors and their series of accidents, or suddenly in a military nuclear catastrophe. Or perhaps both at once, since power-plants, like cities, are very attractive military targets.

III. Conclusion

As long as the mankind doesn't free itself from the hypocrisy of the NPT, the survival of humanity will continue to be threatened. And the only way forward for the peoples of the world to exercise their right to survival (See A/AC286/NGO28, The UN should proclaim the Right of People to Survival) is to stop letting the abolition of nuclear weapons depend on the nuclear states having the good will to honour Article Six of the NPT. We must impose disarmament on them by making them pariahs of humanity, by means of a treaty expressly banning these criminal weapons.

What is needed is none other than a preventive and binding judicial instrument based on Resolution 1653 XVI of the UN General Assembly (A/RES/1653 (XVI), 24 November 1961): "Any State using nuclear and thermonuclear weapons is to be considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and committing a crime against mankind and civilization".

Action des Citoyens pour le
Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN)
31, Rue du Cormier - 17100 - SAINTES
Tel. +33 6 73 50 76 61
contact@acdn.net http://www.acdn.net

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