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## EPILOGUE

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# EVERY INDIVIDUAL CAN TAKE ACTION... NOW



6.12

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*“When William Wilberforce began his famous campaign, the practice of one set of people enslaving another had existed for thousands of years. He had the courage to challenge that paradigm; and in so doing he helped to bring an end to the terrible evil of the transatlantic slave trade. Would he have achieved half as much, would he have inspired the same fervour in others if he had set out to ‘regulate’ or ‘reduce’ the slave trade rather than abolish it? I doubt it.” —Margaret Beckett, former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, United Kingdom*

The journey to elimination will not happen unless the public demand it. Every human everywhere has a vital role in making it happen. Every teacher should teach it. Every preacher should preach it. Every citizen should demand of every political candidate that he or she states clearly what they will do about the journey to zero nuclear weapons. No political candidate should be let off the hook of satisfactorily answering the question, "What are your plans for eliminating nuclear weapons?". No slippery evasiveness should be allowed. You all have a responsibility to protect your children from a hell on Earth infinitely worse than anything we can imagine.

It should be clear that nuclear weapons themselves constitute far more of a problem than any problem they address. As long as some countries have them and extol their value, others will seek and eventually obtain them, increasing daily the risk of proliferation. As long as they exist there is a risk that they will be used, either by design, accident, madness, or the actions of criminal or misguided individuals. The risk of nuclear use now, in ERA 3, are greater than any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis. Steps must be taken immediately to lower their political currency, stop their spread, reduce their numbers, reduce the risks of their use, and begin a legal, verifiable, universal process leading to their prompt elimination.

How many unlikely events happen every day? Think of the meltdown at Fukushima, or the unpredicted end of the USSR. The consequences of the unexpected assassination of the insignificant Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo that led so quickly to World War I. Within a little more than five weeks of the assassination, Europe found itself in a war that no country wanted.

We cannot be surprised today by any scenario. Thousands of weapons are still positioned in launch-on-warning mode, and known terrorists itch to take down the current social order directly or by precipitating a large conflict. Add to this the ongoing and increasing practices of cyber interference, religious fanaticism, sophisticated criminal organizations, civil wars, wars between developing countries and dangerous insecurities in the Middle East, and we cannot be surprised if any, some or all of these events conspire to produce a bloody, broad and

protracted war. But with nuclear weapons in the mix, there might not be any books written about it.

Are our animosities so vile that we would continue this Russian roulette with the future of humanity? Are we doomed to continue sleepwalking toward our collective hell?

You should ask, "What are the prospects for success? Is action quixotic, vain, and useless?" To answer this we should look at the actual commitments of the countries of the world, including those with nuclear weapons. If their commitments are a reasonable course going in the correct direction, it will be evidence that within the corridors of power there are reasonable people working to end the nuclear threat. However, enormous wealth, power, and political influence is wielded by militaries, corporations, laboratories and other institutions with vested interests. These institutional alliances exist in every country with nuclear weapons, and they spend exceedingly large amounts of money expanding or modernizing their arsenals. They help to generate numerous excuses why they cannot directly commence negotiations on elimination.

There is a critical need for a much wider public to understand the importance of the goal of elimination, the principles and policies that can take us there and can make us safer each step of the way. Many more people must understand that it is perilous negligence to continue the catatonic avoidance of this subject.

Every country in the world except India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea, are active members of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Here is a sampling of the official commitments that have been made by the now 190 States parties to the NPT. There are many places where formal promises of a similar kind can be found, including UN Security Council resolutions, speeches and declarations of heads of state and government, as well as numerous UN General Assembly resolutions.

Specifically, Article VI of the NPT commits its members to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to... nuclear disarmament." In addressing that duty it is worth noting what the

nuclear weapons states China, US, UK, Russia, and France committed to in 2000 at the NPT's Review Conference: "An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under Article VI."

The following is a list of some explicit promises that should give any citizen sufficient confidence that advocating the elimination of nuclear weapons is both practical and patriotic. These are taken from the Final Document adopted by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties of the NPT <sup>246</sup>:

- Action 1: All States parties commit to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.
- Action 2: All States parties commit to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their treaty obligations.
- Action 3: In implementing the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the nuclear weapon States commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures.
- Action 4: The Russian Federation and the United States of America commit to seek the early entry into force and full implementation of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and are encouraged to continue discussions on follow-on measures in order to achieve deeper reductions in their nuclear arsenals.
- Action 5: The nuclear-weapon States commit to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament... in a way that promotes international stability, peace and undiminished and increased security. To that end, they are called upon to promptly engage with a view to, inter alia:

- (a) Rapidly moving towards an overall reduction in the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons, as identified in action 3;
- (b) Address the question of all nuclear weapons regardless of their type or their location as an integral part of the general nuclear disarmament process;
- (c) To further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies;
- (d) Discuss policies that could prevent the use of nuclear weapons and eventually lead to their elimination, lessen the danger of nuclear war and contribute to the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons;
- (e) Consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security;
- (f) Reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons; and
- (g) Further enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence.

The 190 NPT States also committed “with all expediency” to work to make universal and bring into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty banning nuclear test explosions forever, and to maintain the existing moratorium on testing; commence negotiations on a treaty banning further production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons and a variety of measures to improve the fissile materials safeguarding capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency, improve verification capabilities related to nuclear disarmament, and, as a confidence-building measure, improve and standardize reporting by nuclear weapons states.

Their Statement commits states “to undertake concrete disarmament efforts...” in fact “special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.” It highlights that this is a matter that requires our highest attention by

saying “there is an urgent, concrete and unequivocal need”. These are strong words requiring the strong actions.

These are not promises done in jest and should not be ignored. But they are not enough. That is why the Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, has emphasized the need for a treaty or framework of instruments to eliminate nuclear weapons. His proposal brings the much needed element of clarity and unity of purpose to the path, and makes the process universal. It is significant that China, Pakistan, and India joined 122 other States in December 2006 at the UN General Assembly in calling for “commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.”

This call is consistent with the unanimous ruling of the International Court of Justice which stated: “There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”

The commitments have been made, the legal duty is clear, and the moral imperative to act has been stated unambiguously by UN General Assembly Resolution 1653 which declared the use of nuclear weapons “would exceed the scope of war and cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction to mankind,” be a violation of the rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and constitute an act “contrary to the laws of humanity” and be “a crime against mankind and civilization.” This resolution has been endorsed by 29 subsequent resolutions.

All NPT States acknowledged the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed” that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) must be applied to these weapons. Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, who sat as President of the 2010 NPT Review Conference has said, “nuclear weapons are strictly prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. No amount of legal hairsplitting or operational obfuscation can change the fact that of all the weapons ever conceived by the mind of man, nuclear weapons are inherently

indiscriminate, far beyond proportionality, cause unimaginable unnecessary suffering, and are inescapably harmful to the environment. It is a weapon where the notion of control is meaningless and the idea of military necessity is absurd. Nuclear weapons are the apex of man's genius at finding ways to destroy his fellow human beings."

Only a process to achieve a universal non-discriminatory treaty or legal framework can work. Imagine if the universal ban on biological weapons contained in the Biological Weapons Convention said that no country can use small pox or polio as a weapon but nine states could use the plague to ensure international peace. Would that be practical? Of course not. We realize its incoherence would breed instability. Moreover, we recognize that the plague is abhorrent as a weapon, regardless of the quality of the possessor. Nuclear weapons are infinitely worse than the plague. Neither is a legitimate method of pursuing national or international security.

In the United States, the current partisanship on this issue is absurd. Leaders of both parties have historically, vocally, adamantly supported steps towards a nuclear weapons-free world. President Reagan said that nuclear weapons are "totally irrational, totally inhumane, good for nothing but killing, possibly destructive of life on earth and civilization." In his memoirs, he stated: "For the eight years I was president I never let my dream of a nuclear-weapons-free world fade from my mind." Ex-President Gorbachev made similar comments. President Obama in his historic Prague speech said, "I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." Achieving this goal has been characterized by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as "a global public good of the highest order." The goal and the route to get there stretch far beyond mere national self-interest. In fact, they are existential for ourselves and future generations.

Many of the necessary incremental steps to progress to achieve a nuclear weapons free world have already been promised as policies to be achieved, but this incremental approach is proving far too slow. Proliferation fears generate a crisis de jour mentality that shadows domestic politics, distorts rational debate, and burdens international

negotiations. Thus, such obviously needed steps as taking the weapons of Russia and the US off of alert status, stopping the production of any further nuclear grade materials, strengthening IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards, and so many other simple safety enhancing steps toward disarmament, are not being achieved at any reasonable rate.

The speed of progress is far too slow. Policies arise that become new hurdles to progress such as cyber warfare, space weaponization, and missile defense systems. Weapons become modernized and military planners look for new missions. Proliferation pressures continue to grow and fear overcomes rational debate. Symptoms of an insufficiently coherent regime such as Iran or North Korea become distractions from achieving a universal norm against the weapon. These countries would undoubtedly be easily brought into compliance with a disarmament regime, along with the verification and enforcement mechanisms that would be an integral part, if Russia and the US led the way.

What is needed is clarity of common purpose and the political support to move forward. The clarity of purpose has been provided by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon who has advocated, along with over 140 nations, the need for a treaty or framework of instruments banning nuclear weapons. It is high time that states began a multilateral process of negotiating a comprehensive treaty or framework of legal instruments that would end the production and deployment of nuclear weapons, bolster the verification of non-proliferation, ensure the secure and verified dismantlement and elimination of existing arsenals and disposition of weapons-usable materials. Beginning that process now would entail a great deal of preliminary work to create the framework for such negotiations. The very process would immediately lower the political currency of the weapons and make so many necessary, threat-reducing steps so much easier to realize.

There already is a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention as a point of reference that the Secretary-General has circulated to all countries. While it is a comprehensive and valuable guide, using or not using that particular instrument is not the point. What is needed is a



concerted effort to achieve the specific goal of negotiating a legally-binding elimination treaty or framework.

Here are some examples of issues that such efforts must include:

1. Making all activities relating to nuclear bomb making an international crime within the jurisdiction of both national forums and the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

2. Creation of international whistle blower protections for citizens challenging their own state's practices.

3. Highest levels of international safeguards on existing stockpiles of fissile materials and elimination of all fissile materials from which a bomb could be created.

4. Transparency in all facilities capable of producing enriched uranium or plutonium.

Many top ranking military officers agree with the need to eliminate nuclear weapons, especially in the America where the only threat that could actually destroy America is nuclear, but they cannot speak out while in uniform. It would be very valuable if a formal statement could be made by retired military leaders of all States with nuclear weapons, which expresses their belief about the uselessness of such weapons. They should indicate their commitment to advocate the road to zero, consistently, with the public.

Religious leaders ranging from the Pope to the Grand Ayatollah have made statements condemning nuclear weapons, but have not followed through with the basic actions necessary. Religious leaders must make the issue of nuclear elimination a top moral imperative in their respective communities at a local and personal level. The public should challenge the silence of their church or temple on this subject.

An international project to safeguard civilization's knowledge base should be created to ensure that if the worst happens before we are able to eliminate the weapons as much as possible could be saved. All of humanity's culture that can be represented digitally, everywhere in the world, should be collected in massive data warehouses. There should be many copies of these data in geographically dispersed locations where they are most likely to survive. Different types of the securest

possible storage technology should be used, some of which will last for millions of years. We must answer the question as to whether preparations should be made to save as many people as possible if the worst happens? Can this be done in a manner which will not create the illusion that a nuclear exchange could be tolerable?

There are hundreds of organizations around the world supporting political leaders who advance nuclear weapons elimination. But, unlike the production of weapons there is no profit to be made in disarmament efforts and most of these organizations are not sufficiently well funded to be well known, even some with Nobel Peace prizes. There is a critical need for economically successful people to attend to this issue. It has no immediate constituency in the way an animal shelter or an organization designed to clean a local river might. Pictures cannot come near to capturing the scope of the danger. It is not pleasant to address. It appears too large for individuals to make a mark. The task is indeed daunting. Every person is threatened; every person has a moral sense; and, every person has a right to demand this threat be ended.

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