



THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT,
Publishers of Pacific Ecologist
PO Box 12-125, Wellington, New Zealand.
Phone: +64 4 9394553 E-mail: pirmeditor@paradise.net.nz
www.pacificecologist.org ; www.pirm.org.nz

18 September 2014

Excellency, Marie C. Damour
Deputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of the United States of America
P.O. Box 1190,
Wellington.

UKRAINE CONFLICT, HUMANITARIAN CRISIS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS DANGERS

Dear Ms Damour

PIRM, the Pacific Institute of Resource Management Incorporated, established in 1984, is dedicated to sustainable use of the Earth's natural resources and equity and justice issues. Our objectives are to advocate respect for natural processes, conservation of physical resources, and integrity of life forms. We contribute to establishing Aotearoa/New Zealand as a strong, independent nation promoting a world conservation strategy. We publish the journal *Pacific Ecologist*, which facilitates a wide discussion on ecological issues. Enclosed is issue 22 of *Pacific Ecologist*, *Why it's Vital to Rid the World of Nuclear Weapons*.

We are very concerned about the unresolved conflict in the Ukraine, especially following other dangerous U.S. foreign policy incursions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. These incursions caused chaos, destroyed cultures, and provided the grounds for the growth of Islamic fundamentalist jihadists presently afflicting the world.

Avoidable suffering has again been inflicted on civilian populations, this time in the east and southern Ukraine, as a result of the coup d'état in Kiev on 22 February 2014, ousting a democratically elected, if unpopular government. The new regime set the stage for distrust and conflict by immediately downgrading the status of the Russian language. As a result, people in the largely Russian-speaking eastern and south regions understandably feared the suddenly imposed coup government as anti-Russian, semi-fascist or neo-Nazi-led. They protested against the new illegal government, and Russia, with support of a large majority of the people, annexed the Crimea, historically part of Russia, where it has a key naval military base. These are understandable responses to a sudden coup dividing a previously united region with much in common.

Evidence in February 2014 from Victoria Nuland,¹ US Assistant Secretary of State, for Europe and Eurasia, shows the U.S. spent \$US5 billion to subvert Ukraine over 20 years. Prominent businessmen and government officials, Nuland has said, supported the US project to shift Ukraine from its historic relationship with Russia and into the US sphere of influence, via Europe. Also, confidential correspondence² of 1st February 2008, from Mr Burns, US Ambassador to Moscow (Nov 2005 to May 2008), obtained by Wikileaks, confirmed in a detailed cable the dangers Russia perceived in US-EU-NATO meddling in Ukraine. This included Russia's concern about the expansion of NATO, into the Ukraine or Georgia. If Ukraine became a NATO member it could potentially split the country in two, leading to violence or civil war, which could force Russia to decide it must intervene. Russian experts also believed Ukrainian NATO membership would have a major impact on Russian-Ukrainian family connections, and bilateral relations generally. Russian experts did not agree that NATO was an appropriate mechanism to help strengthen democratic government.

It's unsurprising that Russia is wary of NATO. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was set-up as a military alliance in Western Europe in the Cold War after World War 2 to counter supposed threats from Russia. NATO members combined military spending is huge, over 70% of total military spending worldwide. Historically, why would Russia trust NATO? Why is the US-NATO alliance threatening Russia?

It was at least unwise for the US to conspire for years against Russia, a sovereign state, to undermine the balance of power in historic alliances in a region far away from the North Atlantic. The former democratically elected Ukraine president, Yanyukovich, at least sought to integrate with Europe in a balanced way including Russia, on different terms than offered by the EU. He also opposed the EU's austerity measures and the idea of Ukraine being associated with NATO.³ This made him unpopular with some, including the US and the EU-NATO alliance. The US-NATO plans for expansion in Ukraine thus aided the Opposition party in Kiev, which favoured the fully integrated EU alliance and aided the right-wing sector including nationalist xenophobia, which staged large-scale increasingly violent protests from November 2013 leading to the coup d'état in February 2014. By assisting the removal of Ukraine's democratically elected government, the US and NATO have breached international law and

terms than offered by the EU. He also opposed the EU's austerity measures and the idea of Ukraine being associated with NATO.³ This made him unpopular with some, including the US and the EU-NATO alliance. The US-NATO plans for expansion in Ukraine thus aided the Opposition party in Kiev, which favoured the fully integrated EU alliance and aided the right-wing sector including nationalist xenophobia, which staged large-scale increasingly violent protests from November 2013 leading to the coup d'état in February 2014. By assisting the removal of Ukraine's democratically elected government, the US and NATO have breached international law and the United States' espoused goal of promoting democracy internationally.

To deter protests in the east and south, the new regime used fighter jets and attack helicopters as well as tanks to launch bombs and missiles on its own people.⁴ There is now a humanitarian crisis in the east.⁵ Over 3000 people have been killed according to the UN, many thousands are injured, nearly four million people are affected by the conflict, including 156,000 internally displaced people, many lacking access to healthcare, tens of thousands have fled to Russia. Other reports speak of a developing humanitarian crisis in East Ukraine, with 230,000 people internally displaced due to the conflict.⁶

There has been large scale damage to essential infrastructure in the civil war. With the rigours of winter approaching, people will be challenged, trying to survive, picking up the pieces of shattered homes and lives without essential water and power amenities.

We call on the US government to stop supporting the Ukraine coup government with arms to kill its own citizens, and instead to moderate the aggressive rhetoric towards Russia, support the cease-fire promoted by President Putin, and support the special status with self rule of south-East Ukraine, approved by Ukraine's parliament (16/9/2014). We call on the US to seek ways to contribute to rebuilding the damaged east and south Ukraine infrastructure.

From a global perspective it is the US and NATO, not Russia, who have been expanding military bases worldwide⁷,^{8,9} and to East Europe. For a diplomatic solution to the crisis, we call on the US government to stop sanctions against Russia, which are harming all economies in Europe in an era of austerity. Instead of escalating tensions by sending a "rapid reaction force" to east Europe, compensation should be offered to South and East Ukraine to alleviate the human misery inflicted there and to restore damaged infrastructure in the region.

Devastating Nuclear dangers: Ukraine conflict

Ukraine must be highly commended for being one of the few states that has peacefully given up its nuclear weapons. Its people and Russia should not have to fear nuclear weapons ravaging their country, and this was agreed between US President Reagan and former USSR President, M. Gorbachev. Sadly that era of good sense has changed and the US has been expanding its military bases around the world in recent years in its pivot policy to Asia and the Pacific.^{7,8,9} The US plans to install military bases in east Europe, even Ukraine, or Georgia as noted earlier. **The US foreign policy of increasing military bases worldwide is provoking a nuclear arms race which greatly reduces security worldwide**, (see pages 7-11 of enclosed *Pacific Ecologist* issue 22).¹⁰ The North Atlantic is a very long way from the Black and Caspian Seas and Ukraine and Georgia. Why would Georgia become a NATO member except to give Washington a military base close to Russia?⁷

The continued provocation the US has engaged in with Russia during the Ukraine crisis, sends wrong messages that could lead to terrible consequences for the entire world. An outstanding danger in the Ukraine crisis exists because the US, and its affiliate NATO are heavily armed with nuclear weapons, as is Russia. Many of these nuclear weapons are on high alert, so there is very little time to reverse a strike if a mistake occurs. Conflict involving nuclear armed states or alliances could quite easily escalate uncontrollably in unintended, unforeseeable ways. Release of nuclear weapons can occur by accident, under conflict pressures, through misunderstandings, errors of judgement, equipment failure, unstable staff, or a pre-emptive strike which is likely to be rewarded with a retaliatory return strike, thus bringing a nuclear holocaust affecting the entire world for thousands of years. There is no adequate humanitarian response possible after use of nuclear weapons, as the International Red Cross and Green Crescent movement have reported,¹¹(see pages 38-40 of enclosed issue).

We call urgently on the US-NATO alliance and all countries involved in the Ukraine crisis to work for a negotiated solution that respects the rights of all the people in Ukraine to be safe from armed and nuclear conflict and their right to participate in decisions affecting their future.

Nuclear weapons are the greatest immediate threat to all life on Earth, because their pervasive, very long-term effects, make them annihilatory in Nature.¹² Besides the immediate horrifying, incineratory effects, research shows that even a "regional" war with release of 100 nuclear weapons can spread radioactive pollution across the world, bringing wide-spread famine via nuclear winter blocking the sun, causing dry, cold conditions worldwide for over a decade, (see pages 15-19, and pages 38-44 of enclosed issue). Whatever food is grown is likely to be toxic to people's health, as has been shown in experiments with nuclear weapons on the Marshall Islands. Sixty years after the tests, soil is still contaminated with cesium, so it cannot produce healthy food,¹³(see pages 21-25 of enclosed issue).

Urgency for nuclear disarmament

For real security on Earth, nuclear weapons must be eliminated as they threaten all life on Earth. We urge the United States to immediately join international disarmament efforts and take up UN Secretary-General

issue).

Urgency for nuclear disarmament

For real security on Earth, nuclear weapons must be eliminated as they threaten all life on Earth. We urge the United States to immediately join international disarmament efforts and take up UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's five-point nuclear disarmament proposal of 2008 and provide information to the UN of the US' nuclear disarmament activities,¹⁴ (see pages 31-37 of enclosed issue). As Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon has said: there is a "legal and moral obligation to rid the world of nuclear weapons because the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled with the laws of war and basic morality. There are no right hands for wrong weapons."

At least \$100 billion is spent annually on nuclear weapons (10 times more than is spent helping humanity). This \$100 billion should be diverted to the UN Millennium Development goals, as suggested in a resolution¹⁵ of the Bangladesh Parliament on nuclear disarmament in 2010 (see page35-37 of enclosed issue).The world has huge problems of poverty and inequity, and the ongoing damage and dangers of global warming. The United States could be a constructive world leader by co-operating for a nuclear-weapons-free world, and sustainable societies, by redirecting its nuclear weapons budget and other weapons of war budgets to help solve poverty issues by supporting appropriate renewable energy and global co-operation to reduce warming emissions, (see pages 35-37 of enclosed issue). However, when countries threaten others with nuclear weapons, global co-operation is very difficult to achieve.

We urge the US government to attend the next International Conference on Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons to be held in Vienna in December 2014. It's disturbing that nuclear-weapons-holding countries have avoided attending these meetings. Nations supporting a ban on nuclear weapons comprise around 81% of the world's population – (see icanw Jan 2012 and page 56 of enclosed issue). If the great majority of the world's people want a world free of nuclear weapons, the US and other nuclear weapons countries should attend these meetings. Otherwise, the US is flouting its core democratic values and is not part of the world community, and the will of the people for the people to be free of this existential danger to life on Earth. By not supporting measures to ensure the world is safe from nuclear holocaust, either by accident or design, the US presents a destructive, death dealing image of itself to the world.

We call on the US government to transform its foreign and domestic policies away from endless wars, to cultivate real security worldwide, addressing inequity/ injustice concerns and the increasing problems of global warming which worsen yearly, even as military budgets increase. A new culture of co-operation around peaceful initiatives to build security for all is urgently needed.

Yours sincerely

Kay Weir, editor *Pacific Ecologist*
The Pacific Institute of Resource Management, Wellington. New Zealand

References

1. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/american-conquest-by-subversion-victoria-nulands-admits-washington-has-spent-5-billion-to-subvert-ukraine/5367782> 7/2/2014 by Diana Johnstone
2. Ukraine: US Ambassador to Moscow's 2008 Cable "Nyet, Means Nyet: Russia's NATO Engagement's Red Line" By Felicity Arbuthnot\ Global Research, May 09, 2014, released to wikileaks Sept 2011
3. *The US /NATO Escalates War crisis with Russia in Ukraine*, by Brian Becker, Press TV. The 4th Media, 11/8/2014
4. *UN, humanitarian partners launch health plan in crisis-torn eastern Ukraine*, 16/8/2014
5. *Eastern Ukraine Faces Humanitarian Crisis as Kiev Steps Up Attack* By Julie Hyland, Global Research 4/8/2014
6. *Kiev military op: Ukrainian army tanks, APCs, troops attack Slavyansk*, RT, 24 April 2014
7. *The American Obsession with Surrounding Russia*, by Paul Craig Roberts in Human Wrongs Watch, 8/7/2012
8. *Reinforcing Washington's Asia-Pacific Hegemony* by Joseph Gerson in Foreign Policy in Focus 13/9/2012
9. *Partners in Global Warfare: NATO reinforces Pentagon's Shift to the Asia-Pacific region* by Rick Rostoff in Global Research 25/9/2012
10. *US Plans for global dominance: Effects on Asia-Pacific region*, by Bruce Gagnon, *Pacific Ecologist*, summer 2013..
11. *A treaty to ban nuclear weapons*, Stuart Peters, in *Pacific Ecologist*, issue 22 summer 2013.
12. *Effects of using Nuclear weapons "quite simply unthinkable"* by Dr George Preddey, *Pacific Ecologist*, summer 2013
13. *Nuclear contamination of food in the Pacific: Lifting the veil of secrecy*, Dr Nancy Pollock, *Pacific Ecologist* Summer 2013.
14. *The United Nations & nuclear disarmament*, by Angela Kane, *Pacific Ecologist*, summer 2013, issue 22.
15. *The Climate-Nuclear Nexus*, by Alyn Ware & Rob Van Riet, *Pacific Ecologist*, summer 2013. issue 22.