

Jaipur Declaration - The Second National Convention of Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (26-28 November, 2004)

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Free South Asia Of Nuclear Danger! Abolish Nuclear Weapons Worldwide Now!

The Second National Convention of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), India is held from 26th to 28th November 2004 at Jaipur, which has a glorious tradition of mobilising for peace and had hosted numerous events including the 1956 Afro-Asian Conference. It is held four years after the founding convention of the CNDP in Delhi and about six and a half years after India and Pakistan declaring themselves as nuclear weapons states following nuclear explosions in Pokhran, in India, and Chagai, in Pakistan. It may be recalled that the era of nuclear threat began with the mindless atomic bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA on 6th and 9th August 1945.

We, the assembled delegates at the Convention representing the peace movements in India and coming from various corners of the country, most emphatically reaffirm our firm conviction in reiteration of our Charter 2000: "Nuclear weapons are means of mass destruction regardless of who wields them. They are weapons of genocide. They can impose horrendous suffering on victims across generations. They destroy the ecosystem. The damage they do is lasting and incurable. The sheer scale and character of the devastation they can cause makes them a profound and distinctive evil. For this and other reasons, the possession, use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons is absolutely immoral." We also with equal emphasis reaffirm "that the use, threat of use, or possession of, and even preparation for making, nuclear weapons is immoral, illegal, and politically unacceptable under"any circumstances"." Not only that, "nuclear deterrence" is absolutely "abhorrent to human sentiment since it implies that a state if required to defend its own existence will act with pitiless disregard for the consequences to its own and its adversary's people."

We note with great concern the profoundly destabilising effects of the nuclear blasts in May 98. These have been most graphically and irrefutably demonstrated through an extremely dangerous (undeclared) border war in less than a year followed by a ten month long eyeball to eyeball massive confrontation all along the international border and the LoC. These confrontations were laden with the very real threats of nuclear exchange. The rulers of these two resource-starved countries remain unwaveringly stuck with their pernicious nuclear weapons programmes, which are a tragic diversion from addressing vital social needs. Though there have been no further blasts since 1998, in the teeth of massive waves of international censure – the race for developing nuclear warhead carrying missiles goes on unabated. And the possession of nuclear weapons is given a formal status through issuance of highly deplorable nuclear doctrines – based on the spurious and extremely dangerous theory of 'nuclear deterrence'.

We also note that both West Asia and Northeast Asia have emerged as the two other nuclear

hotspots. The danger of unchecked spread of nuclear weapons to sundry state, and also perhaps non-state, actors through black market transfers of nuclear technology and fissile materials has exponentially escalated over the recent years. This has only brought dangerously closer the prospects of a nuclear holocaust.

Most disturbing of all, the US, the original sinner, has aggressively taken to vertical proliferation, contemptuously throwing aside all international norms. They have, on the one hand embarked upon developing mini-nukes for actual use in the battlefield and, on the other, are going full steam ahead with Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programmes – unilaterally abrogating international treaty obligations. The other nuclear weapons states have also done nothing to denuclearise.

We, therefore, clearly recognise the need to rededicate ourselves to the tasks of ridding South Asia and the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons. Towards that end, we *the peace activists from India, call for at the global, and also national, level synergetic cooperation with the worldwide anti-war campaigns asking for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the US-led occupying forces from the soil of Iraq.* We do recognise the pivotal role of Iraqi resistance at this point of time, in undermining the US neo-con project for unfettered global domination, euphemistically labelled as the 'Project for the New American Century' (PNAC). Hence we undertake to carry out the most vigorous campaign against the US occupation of Iraq, to conscientise the Indian public and pressurise the national government, as any success of the so-called PNAC would turn the trigger happy new imperialists even more reckless and consequently have a serious negative impact on the prospects of global peace and disarmament. *The Convention also extends its fullest support to the Palestinian people's struggle for a secure and independent state of their own – free from Israeli aggression and occupation, which is backed by its mentor, the US.*

We are also resolutely with the worldwide struggles for effective and total elimination of biological, chemical and radiological weapons, which threaten our gene pool. We further demand the universal banning of anti-personnel land mines and the 'civilian' use of nuclear energy be made far more transparent, accountable and hazards free – in terms of both radiation exposure and safekeeping of fissile materials and to keep it clearly delinked from any weaponisation programme.

We do specifically recognise that especially in the Indian, and South Asian, context the ideology and politics of paranoia and hatred against the 'other' – internal and external, acts as the major driver for 'nuclear nationalism'. Hence, we decide to make common cause with the myriad ongoing struggles against the forces of irrational, mindless, hateful and oppressive violence and towards more harmonious and inclusive social orders in order to reinforce the struggle for peace and nuclear disarmament.

We also take special note of the importance of fighting the ideology of aggression and violence being continually disseminated in the fields of education and popular culture and the need to counter in a forceful and innovative manner.

At the specifically national and regional levels, we pledge our full support to the popular initiatives for better understanding and friendship between India and Pakistan. We call upon both the governments to pay serious heed to the popular urgings to reduce and eliminate the risks of nuclear confrontation – accidental or intentional. In fact, even the 2000 Charter had made detailed and specific demands asking for immediate halt and eventual reversal of nuclear weaponisation programmes in the region, which, sadly enough, have as yet gone unheeded. The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan have just met. We call upon both the governments to engage seriously in meaningful dialogue to bring about peace and amity, and also address themselves to the problems of all of Jammu & Kashmir taking into account the authentic desires of all sections of the people of that region.

We, similarly, pledge our full support to any and every effort to bring about better and improved relations among the peoples and the governments of the region, particularly the SAARC countries. We call for a yearly 10% reduction in defence expenditure by India and Pakistan and urge the countries and peoples of South Asia to move towards the elimination of war.

At the global level, we decide, and call upon all peace activists, to join forces with the reinvigorated global campaign for total and complete abolition of all nuclear weapons. The May 2005 NPT Review Conference is the immediate focus of intervention. The Mayors for Peace are spearheading the global effort to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2020. They have a membership of over six hundred cities spread over more than a hundred countries and are carrying out the campaign in collaboration with peace groups and networks all the world over and with endorsement from the European Union Parliament and also backing from some other state actors including the constituents of the seven member New Agenda Coalition and also the NAM - currently chaired by Malaysia. The year 2005, it is further noted, is profoundly significant being the 60th year of the tragic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and also the 50th year of the Bandung Conference establishing the Non-Aligned Movement calling for global disarmament.

We pledge to carry forward the campaign for freeing South Asia from the scourge of nuclear threats, as an inalienable and critical component of the global struggle for nuclear weapons free world, in the most vigorous manner. Towards this end, at the national level, we commit ourselves to launching a massive campaign in various forms to educate the people about the dire threat posed by nuclear weapons and rivalry in South Asia.