

NEWSLETTER

October 2015

The year in view

At the end of the conference season, it is perhaps appropriate to step back and look at mankind's achievements and failures during 2015, and to ponder what the realistic objectives of Pugwash should be for the future. Overall, it is hard to claim that its political leaders have made the human race happier than it was a year ago.

Millions of refugees from the war-torn Middle East and beyond are desperately seeking the comparative security of Western Europe, and (even more recently) 130 innocent civilians were killed in a hail of bullets in Paris. There has been no substantial progress in East-West nuclear disarmament negotiations, and little in the half-dozen regional negotiations which have been active.

A most welcome exception, for which Pugwash can claim some credit because of its engagement in relevant track II activity, has been the signature of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the 'P5+1' nations on 14 July. Its review by the US Congress was full of political drama, but in the end its opponents failed to block it. That will permit the agreed limitations on Iran's capability to manufacture nuclear weapons to be implemented, sanctions to be lifted, and the start of an (inevitably slow) revival of Iran's relations with the West.

Some key members of the Iranian negotiating team participated in the annual Pugwash conference in Nagasaki on 1-5 November, where 190 participants from 35 countries had opportunities to meet some of the remaining *hibakushi* (survivors) of the nuclear attack on 9 August 1945, and hear their personal experiences.

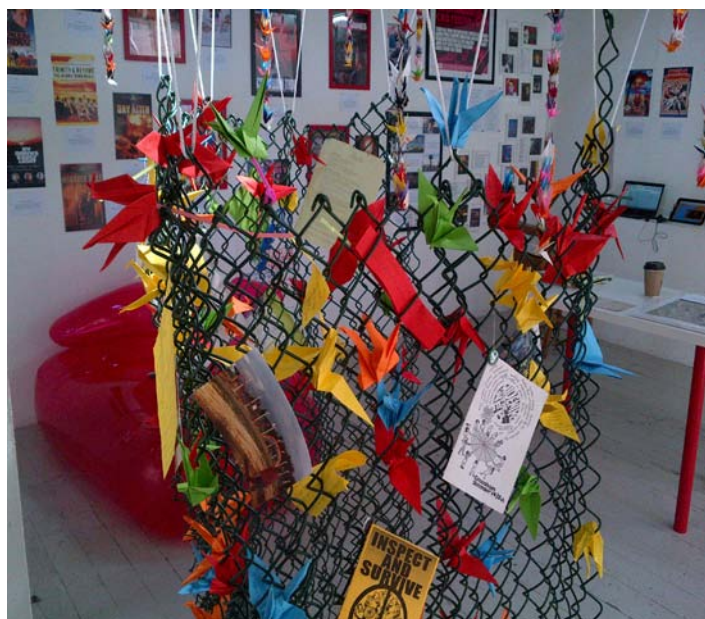
Meanwhile, British Pugwash has been collaborating with other European national Pugwash groups (most recently in a meeting in Berlin on 24-25 October) to promote a move towards a more 'Federal' structure for International Pugwash, in which different geographical regions can have greater independence in choosing their priorities for work and public discussions.

NUCLEAR ISSUES

WMDA Young Ambassadors programme

During this year, WMD Awareness' Young Ambassadors continued to promote #TalkingTrident, a national debate to raise awareness of the issues surrounding defence and Trident renewal ahead of the 2016 Main Gate decision. In March we launched the Talking Trident booklet, compiled from the views expressed by young people across the country, containing their charter for nuclear disarmament. We held four Talking Trident events with BASIC's 'Next Generation' project in different parts of the UK.

The culmination of the #TalkingTrident debate was a day of action on 7 March, in which our Ambassadors took to the streets armed with their manifesto, hearing and capturing the views of the general public. This film clip sums up the work.



'Popular Culture and the Bomb': WMDA at the Edinburgh Fringe

This interactive exhibition for the 70th Anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki included iconic pictures, music, films, books, anime, computer games and artefacts. The most popular artifact: the large piece of Greenham Common wire from the old nuclear base. This structure grew magnificently through the two weeks of the exhibition as people added their own stories and messages.

Coverage of the NPT Review Conference included the launch of two short film clips in which Indian and UK Youth shared their views on nuclear weapons, as well as a blog by intern Holly Lubran. General Election coverage featured a special temporary page on the WMDA website which served as a hub for our Ambassadors' blogs and also for information on each party's nuclear weapon policy (excluding UKIP).

We also finalised and published a short animated clip produced by the Ambassadors telling the story of Setsuko Thurlow in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima which she survived. With support from staff, the Ambassadors held two film screenings in London and one spoken word event, 'Start Words Not Wars', with a second such event planned for December. All were well attended with lots of people who were new to the issue.

The programme of capacity building continued with Ambassadors attending the conference in Vienna on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and participating in a strategy day, training in filming, running events and in using social media. More at: wmdawareness.org.uk/talking-trident

Jon Snow at the Hay Festival 2015

The 11th annual Rotblat Lecture at the Hay Festival was given this year on 30 May by the distinguished journalist and broadcaster Jon Snow, who asked 'What happened to Trident?' He described the atmosphere and the excitement of witnessing history in the making as Reagan and Gorbachev worked out the way forward to a world without nuclear weapons. Fast forward to Friday 22nd May 2015 when, in Jon's words, 'the latest Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty conference collapsed in ignominy in New York'. He speculated that Joseph Rotblat would have been both angered and unsurprised. Since those heady days with Reagan and Gorbachev, he concluded, the issue of nuclear disarmament has never been seriously discussed.

SCIENCE AND ETHICS

The ethics of modern robotics

John Finney has continued to support Pugwash President Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala as a member of the Steering Group of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and as the Pugwash representative on the UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST).

Autonomous weapons

Discussions within the UN system have been one focus of the work to prevent the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems. After a first informal meeting of experts in May 2014, states agreed by consensus at the annual meeting of the convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in November

2014 to continue the CCW work on these potential systems by holding another five-day meeting in April 2015.

That meeting brought together representatives from 90 countries and from UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. There was also a delegation of 50 campaigners from a dozen members of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, including Nobel Peace Laureates, roboticists, scientists, academics, lawyers, military veterans, and industry representatives. This strong and diverse participation resulted in one of the richest and most in-depth deliberations held to date on this issue, with an encouragingly high level of engagement and interest by an even larger number of states than at the first meeting.

Thematic sessions were held on technical, legal, and overarching issues including ethics, human rights and general security aspects. Much attention was given to the need for meaningful, effective and adequate human control. States returned to this notion throughout the week, indicating its central relevance as a 'touchstone' for addressing fully autonomous weapons. The deliberations showed that this concept is not understood by all in the same way, but it has emerged as a point of convergence for many, helping to set a clear direction for future discussions.

A report on the deliberations was delivered to the annual CCW meeting on 13 November 2015, when nations agreed by consensus to hold another week-long diplomatic meeting on 11-15 April 2016 to continue their deliberations on questions relating to lethal autonomous weapons systems. The new mandate is essentially the same as for the last two years. The only new aspect in the 2016 mandate is a statement that the April meeting 'may agree by consensus on recommendations for further work for consideration by the 2016 Fifth Review Conference'. This is an improvement, as it implies that the experts group is working toward a concrete outcome, and that work will continue after the Review Conference. More information at: <http://www.stopkillerrobots.org>



Changes at British Pugwash

- In September British Pugwash welcomed a new member to its Executive Committee - Ian Stewart, who already has a role in the BRINDI working group and has been very helpful in seeking potential funders.
- Robert Hinde's resignation from the Executive Committee was accepted and he was welcomed as an Honorary Member. The Committee expressed its gratitude for his many years of service to British Pugwash.
- We also welcomed our new Student/Youth Pugwash Coordinator, Alexandra Tsamados, a SOAS graduate, who joined us in May.

COMEST

Since John Finney raised the issue of the ethics of modern robotics at the 2012 meeting of COMEST, the Commission ran a joint workshop with Pugwash on the issue at its 2013 meeting. A presentation at the 2014 meeting followed up on how COMEST might include discussion of the issue in its forward workplan (see the British Pugwash 2014 *Annual Report*).

We are particularly pleased that the September 2015 meeting formally agreed to set up a working group on the ethics of robotics, which will build on COMEST's previous reflection on the ethics of converging technologies. This group, of which John Finney is a member, has now begun its work which will be progressed at a workshop in Paris in May 2016.

ENERGY POLICY

Global Energy Planning – an introduction to the DECC 'Global Calculator'

Readers of our 2013 newsletter will remember that we published a British Pugwash report entitled *Pathways to 2050: three possible UK energy strategies* in February of that year.

That report was based on a piece of software published by the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) which enabled the user to design a 'pathway to 2050' for the UK by setting values for 43 parameters which defined the energy inputs and outputs for that pathway. The software then checked whether the chosen pathway met the UK commitment to reduce its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050, and estimated the cost of the whole system up to that date. Our report presented three alternative pathways, named 'High Nuclear', 'High Renewables' and 'Intermediate', which all met the requirement, and had essentially identical overall costs.

Since then, DECC has assembled an international team to design a similar piece of software, now called 'Global Calculator', which enables the user to specify an energy strategy for the whole globe. Unlike the earlier software, this also calculates the total global GHG

emissions up to 2100, and estimates the global average surface temperature rise resulting from those emissions. Pathways which result in a rise in excess of 2°C are regarded as non-compliant. DECC also published 25 pathways, designed by reputable NGOs and others, enabling the user to assess the credibility of their chosen parameters. Most of these are formally 'non-compliant' – in one case by a large margin.

A British Pugwash team has selected three of these as representing the 'High Nuclear', 'High Renewables' and 'Intermediate' options, and found that they give temperature rises of between 2.1 and 2.45°C. As in the earlier report for the UK alone, each of these pathways has potential show-stoppers, so the team recommends governments to pursue all three in parallel until the uncertainties have been resolved. Our findings were presented at a recent EPS conference in Rome and a summary will appear on the British Pugwash website in early 2016.

MEETINGS

BPG discussion meetings

The use of chemical weapons in Syria: misleading narratives and ongoing consequences

Members of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in front of the last ISO container, just prior to loading onto the Ark Futura ©OPCW



On 1 July 2015, Richard Guthrie and Dr Caitriona MacLeish explored the highly contradictory themes of narratives developed about the Syrian chemical weapons programme and the international responses to it. These events have had many ongoing consequences, not least the continuing use of chlorine in barrel bombs which could weaken the taboo against the use of poisons as weapons.

Read more at <http://wp.me/p6lGki-Of>

Western responses to Russian activities in Ukraine

Events in Ukraine have contributed to the gravest crisis in Russia-West relations since the end of the Cold War. On 16 April, Dr Ian Kearns, Director of the European Leadership Network, explored what has gone wrong, how the West has responded and what it should do next to both resist Russian behaviour and set relations on a more positive footing.

Read more at <http://wp.me/p6lGki-M3>

STUDENT/YOUNG PUGWASH (SYP)

The work is progressing well with the number of active SYP groups already increased from one to three (SOAS, Kings College London and University of Warwick). SYP coordinator Alexandra Tsamados, who began work in May 2015, expects that a fourth group will be established at UCL early next year. She is also building contact with the SYP group in Oxford. Alexandra attended the International SYP conference in Pugwash Nova Scotia in July and the International Pugwash conference in November in Nagasaki.

She reports: 'Slowly but steadily, the number of Student/Young Pugwash members is growing. Following Student Fairs at SOAS University of London and Warwick University, 65 and 80 students respectively have joined the societies. Each society will host events (conferences, lunch discussions and round-table debates) over the next few months and we are planning to host a National British Student Pugwash event in March 2016.'

'To promote our work and attract the younger generation, we have created a British Student Pugwash Facebook page where we will be posting relevant articles as well as events we will be hosting. We have also added a link on the British Pugwash website, where students and young researchers can sign the Student Pugwash Oath. This oath originates from the Student Pugwash Movement in the US and promotes the ethical and responsible behaviour of the younger generation. The link allows individuals to sign the oath giving their name and email address. The number of signatories would be visible on the website.'

PEACEJAM UK

PeaceJam UK is an educational programme which empowers young people, inspiring them through the example of Nobel Laureates who work with the programme. We held our annual youth conference for the first time at the University of Winchester on 7/8 March. Our Laureate was Jody Williams, who won the Peace Prize in 1997 for her work as founding coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. She was only the tenth woman in its almost 100-year history to receive the prize. She could not have been more of an inspiration and it was an excellent conference with groups from around the country and

Jody Williams
with Fort Hill
students



beyond, including groups from Jersey and Greece. The university has agreed to host the conference for a further two years with a review at the end of that period.

In keeping with our policy of encouraging youth-led activities as far as possible, we have trained university student mentors to facilitate youth groups at our larger meetings. Since the conference, students from the University of Winchester have been delivering workshops to local schools and youth groups both locally and in the North.

This year we are thrilled to report that we gained our first 'School of Excellence': Barr's Hill School and Community College in Coventry. These are schools which adopt an innovative cross-curricular approach to skills-based and global learning; embed the PeaceJam curriculum throughout the school; become a regional training centre for other schools and provide opportunities for students to participate in PeaceJam activities including the 1 Billion Acts of Peace Project.

PUGWASH HISTORY

The Pugwash photo archive based at British Pugwash, continues to develop, in collaboration with Sandra Ionno Butcher, Director of the Pugwash History Project. We aim to organise, index and digitise the collection and eventually make it available to Pugwash members and the public through a searchable database. In spring 2015, interns Harriet Hall, Samantha Lao and Andrew Yap, all from UCL, completed their six-month internships, having made great strides in cataloguing and researching the photographs; and in October we welcomed Andreas Tsamados, a new intern from King's College, London to continue the work.

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