

The Vision of Reykjavik: Steps Toward A World Free of Nuclear Weapons

Richard Duda and Ray Schuster

Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto, CA

Four Tuesdays in April: April 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2011, 7 PM to 9 PM

We have lived under the threat of nuclear weapons for 65 years. In 1986, Reagan and Gorbachev met at Reykjavik and came close to agreeing to eliminate all nuclear weapons. But starting in the mid 1990's, a decade of serious decline set in, as first India, then Pakistan, and then North Korea went nuclear. Recently we have enjoyed new hope, with Obama's commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons, the Senate's ratification of the New START treaty, and conservative politicians now calling for reviving the vision of Reykjavik. There are now good reasons to be optimistic again.

The purpose of this seminar is to refresh our understanding of nuclear weapons, to bring us up to date on how nuclear proliferation and the emergence of terrorist groups are changing the equation, and to address the following commonly voiced objections to moving toward a nuclear-free world:

1. Nuclear weapons have prevented World War III for over 60 years and continue to prevent war.
(If it ain't broke, don't fix it.)
2. Getting rid of all nukes is impossible, so the goal is counterproductive.
(Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.)
3. Even if all nukes were eliminated, the knowledge of how to build the bomb will always be with us.
(You can't put the genie back in the bottle.)
4. Small countries have no choice – it is their only defense against more powerful neighbors.
5. Our allies depend on our “nuclear umbrella.” If we disarm, they will just build their own nukes.
6. The problem is so large and complicated, there isn't anything that most people can do about it.

These questions will be addressed in four meetings. Participants will be expected to read short background papers before each meeting. Each meeting will include an introductory presentation, the showing of an excerpt from a relevant DVD, a discussion of the background papers, and free time for an open discussion. For those who are interested, things that one can do to help reduce the nuclear risk will be suggested, but the thrust will be to provide information for thinking and talking about the issue.

Meeting 1– April 5

Where are we and how did we get here

DVD: *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*

Meeting 2– April 12

Is a world free of nuclear weapons desirable?

DVD: *The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence*

Meeting 3– April 19

Is a world free of nuclear weapons possible?

DVD: *Nuclear Tipping Point, Part 1*

Meeting 4– April 26

How we might revitalize the Vision of Reykjavik

DVD: *Nuclear Tipping Point, Part 2*



PLEASE REGISTER: 650-494-0541 or eventsignup@uucpa.org
Childcare available with two weeks notice: childcare@uucpa.org

Reading List

You will be expected to come prepared to each meeting by reading the background material. Paper copies will not be provided, but all of the papers are available on the web. CD-ROMs containing all of the papers, plus additional resources, will be distributed at the first meeting, and, if desired, can be obtained in advance from Dick Duda (d_duda@uucpa.org).

Readings before Meeting 1

Martin Taggart, "Do nuclear weapons still have a role in international relations in the post-Cold War era?" *International Relations*, May 10, 2008. (4 pages)
<http://www.e-ir.info/?p=461>

Philip Taubman, "The trouble with zero," *New York Times*, May 9, 2009. (4 pages)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/weekinreview/10taubman.html>

Jonathan Schell, "Reaching zero," *The Nation*, April 19, 2010. (9 pages)
<http://www.thenation.com/article/reaching-zero>

Readings before Meeting 2

George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn, "A world free of nuclear weapons," *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 4, 2007. (4 pages)
http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/pages/113/Kissinger_Schultz_Perry__Nunn_call_for_A_World_Free_of_Nuclear_Weapons

Harold Brown and John Deutch, "The nuclear disarmament fantasy," *Wall Street Journal*, 11/19/2007. (5 pages)
http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2007/11/26_brown_article_responses.php

Readings before Meeting 3

Bruno Tertrais, "The illogic of zero," *The Washington Quarterly*, v.33, n.2, Apr 2010. (14 pages)
http://www.twq.com/10april/docs/10apr_Tertrais.pdf

Barry M. Blechman, "Why we need to eliminate nuclear weapons—and how to do it," *Elements of a Nuclear Disarmament Treaty: Unblocking the Road to Zero*, The Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, D.C., 2010. (26 pages – read 8 to 18)
<http://www.comw.org/qdr/fulltext/10Blechman.pdf>

Readings before Meeting 4

Anon., "Talking about nuclear weapons with the persuadable middle," Stanley Foundation, U.S. in the World Initiative, Nov. 2009. (24 pages – read 1 to 15)
http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/Talking_About_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Final_Report.pdf

Nathan Pyles, "Building political will: Branding the nuclear-free-world argument," *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, , pp. 441-458, Nov., 2008. (18 pages)
http://cns.miis.edu/npr/pdfs/153_pyles.pdf