



NUCLEAR ABOLITION, CLIMATE PROTECTION, AND OUR CITIES' FUTURE

A report on the conference held October 23, 2008
at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa

April 2009

Convened by: Mayors for Peace, Office of the Mayor of the City of Des Moines, and Drake University

Organized by: Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, Western States Legal Foundation, Global Action to Prevent War, in association with Progressive Coalition of Central Iowa and Mayors for Peace



NUCLEAR ABOLITION, CLIMATE PROTECTION, AND OUR CITIES' FUTURE

CONFERENCE REPORT

Thursday, October 23, 2008
Sheslow Hall, Drake University, Des Moines

Global Problems, Local Solutions

“Creativity and innovation more often than not start at the local level,” declared Wilson Riles, former city council member in Oakland, California. That spirit infused the conference, which examined how cities can help overcome the fundamental threats to our future posed by nuclear weapons and climate change.

Co-convened by Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, this conference is the first in a series of mayors forums on nuclear disarmament, climate protection and related priorities organized in association with Mayors for Peace. Mayors and city council members from several Iowa cities participated. Also present were representatives of important local and regional groups.

In focusing on cities and mayors, the aim is to leverage the power of an under-utilized group of local leaders who can bring together constituents and elected officials to help shape national policy. Mayors can serve as catalysts for local/regional education and advocacy aimed at affecting policy priorities of the Obama administration and Congress, while laying the groundwork for longer-term involvement in nuclear disarmament and related issues.

Summaries of presentations follow. Prepared remarks, transcripts and YouTube videos of conference presentations are also available at www.LCNP.org/DM.

The Importance of Cities and Mayors for Peace

The theme of the conference reflects a growing trend for cities to assume an active role in nuclear abolition and climate change initiatives. Over 900 mayors have signed the US Conference of Mayors *Climate Protection Agreement*, pledging to work to meet the Kyoto Protocol in their own communities. In 2008, the US Conference of Mayors unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Mayors for Peace entitled *Support for the Elimination of All Nuclear Weapons by the Year 2020*.



Mayors for Peace is a rapidly growing international network dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons. More than 130 US mayors, including Mayor Frank Cownie of Des Moines and Mayor Ed Malloy of Fairfield, have joined. Mayors for Peace is headed by Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba and Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue, and includes over 2750 cities from 134 countries and regions. Akron mayor Donald Plusquellic, past president of the US Conference of Mayors, is a vice president of Mayors for Peace.

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The Case for Peace and Sustainable Energy

Morning panelists examined the climactic effects that would result from the use of nuclear weapons, reported on existing international frameworks for cooperation on nuclear abolition and climate protection, and assessed the viability of diverse energy sources, in particular nuclear power.

Panel One: Nuclear Weapons, Climate Change and Positive Alternatives

Steven Starr, MT

Climactic Effects of Use of Nuclear Weapons

Steven Starr of Physicians for Social Responsibility (www.psr.org and www.nucleardarkness.org) observed that while “global warming” is widely understood to be a threat requiring collective action, there is a widespread lack of understanding regarding the immense destructive power of nuclear weapons and of the connection between the use of nuclear weapons and climate change.

The detonation of a nuclear weapon instantly creates temperatures hotter than those found at the center of the sun. An enormous fireball is formed whose heat will ignite fires for miles in all directions. An average strategic nuclear weapon, if exploded over a city, would create a fire zone covering a total area of 40 to 65 square miles. Within minutes, all the fires in the fire zone would join together to form a single mass fire, with hurricane force winds and air temperatures exceeding the boiling point of water. The heat from this fire would release 1000 times more energy than the nuclear explosion.

It is the smoke from these fires that causes climate change. As the smoke rises above cloud level, it enters into the stratosphere and begins to circle the globe, blocking sunlight and destroying the ozone. The smoke will linger in the atmosphere for years, with 40% remaining after a decade. Thus, Starr concludes that the most lethal effects of nuclear war will stem not from the immediate effects of the weapon, but from the resulting climate change.

“How dare you endanger all of history and all of the future? If a nuclear war will make the earth uninhabitable, then nuclear war is a form of global suicide. Ultimately, we need to tell our leaders that suicide is not a defense.” - Steven Starr

A recent study found that a nuclear war between India and Pakistan would destroy 25-40% of the ozone in the mid-latitudes and 50-70% in the northern latitudes, causing a major impact on terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Wheat production in Canada would be drastically reduced due to the drop in temperature and, as a consequence, between 800 million and 1 billion people (the already hungry) would likely starve. The climactic changes resulting from a global nuclear war would produce ice age conditions, collapse the food chain, and cause mass extinctions. All progress made toward combating global warming would be rendered meaningless by nuclear war.

Starr argued that a key step toward eliminating nuclear weapons would be to eliminate the “Launch-on-Warning” policy, in which a retaliatory nuclear strike would be launched while the opponent’s nuclear-armed missiles were believed to be in flight but before the weapons detonate. The potential for accidental nuclear war is significant, as human or electronic error, or even terrorist tampering, could produce a false warning believed to be a real attack.

Dr. John Burroughs

International Frameworks for Cooperation on Nuclear Abolition and Climate Protection

John Burroughs, of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (www.lcnp.org), outlined the existing international frameworks for cooperation on both climate protection and nuclear abolition.

The 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer serves as an example of successful cooperation. In the agreement, countries made general commitments for action, and agreed to pursue further negotiation of specific actions. This in fact was done, and ozone depletion reversed.



John Burroughs

The 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) follows the same model, but has not achieved the same degree of success. Pursuant to the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997. Scientists warn that Kyoto-mandated reductions are inadequate, and yet governments are experiencing difficulty in achieving even these targets. The United States never ratified the Protocol and has failed to pursue alternative means of fulfilling its UNFCCC obligations.

Now there is a process to create a post-Kyoto agreement, still under the umbrella of the UNFCCC. The US signed on at the last moment to the 2007 Bali Plan of Action, which establishes a process expected to culminate in a new agreement in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) prohibits most countries from acquiring nuclear weapons and requires five states with nuclear weapons—the US, UK, France, China and Russia—to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the United States and other nuclear powers agreed to specific steps toward the “total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”; however, the US has failed to implement those measures and, in some cases, has gone backwards. Notably, the Bush administration abandoned verification of US-Russian nuclear arms reductions, rejected the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

“Successful international cooperation requires good faith: Keep your promises, and do so in a way true to their purposes.” - John Burroughs

Burroughs identified three basic ingredients which allow for successful international cooperation: respect for and effective use of international law and institutions; in the United States, an appreciation that under the US Constitution, treaties are part of the “supreme law of the land”; and acting in good faith. “Good faith” generally entails keeping promises and doing so in a manner that reflects their spirit. In the context of negotiation, good faith requires that parties work honestly and sincerely to achieve the objective of the negotiation. The US disregard for the NPT disarmament obligation and its failure to meet UNFCCC objectives represent a failure to act in good faith.

Support for the Elimination of All Nuclear Weapons by the Year 2020

At its June 2008 Annual Meeting in Miami, the US Conference of Mayors unanimously adopted a far-reaching resolution put forward by Mayors for Peace, entitled “Support for the Elimination of All Nuclear Weapons by the Year 2020.” The resolution recommends that the US government “urgently consider” a specific proposal—the “Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol”, a commitment to a process for elimination of nuclear weapons—as a means of “fulfilling the promise of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by the year 2020, thereby meeting the obligation found by the International Court of Justice in 1996 to ‘conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.’”

Panel Two: Nuclear Power and Energy Alternatives

Dr. Jürgen Scheffran

Climate Change and Protection: Sustainable Energy Paths

Jürgen Scheffran outlined the environmental risks and threats to human security likely to result from climate change, argued that current trends in energy usage cannot be maintained, and presented alternative energy paths. Scheffran is a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a member of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (www.inesap.org).

Scheffran offered a “World Map of Climate Risks”, among them collapse of the Amazon forest and harvest loss in North America; water scarcity in Central Asia and droughts and floods in Europe; loss of species and ecosystems in Australia, Africa, and Russia; and rising sea levels globally. The security risks associated with climate change include: degradation of freshwater resources; decline in food production; increase in storm and flood disasters; and migration. Such changes are likely to result in conflicts for control of resources and would certainly aggravate human insecurity in places such as Bangladesh which already suffer from severe flooding and cyclones. Water is likely to spark a transnational crisis in the Middle East, where the demand for water exceeds the available supply and the water and land disputes coincide.

“A study funded by the German Government in 2007 identified possible climate change ‘hot spots’, where water is affected; where food is affected; where possible disaster could strike and mass migrations could be expected as a result of climate change.” - Jürgen Scheffran

There were an estimated 25 million environmental migrants in the 1990s and that figure is expected to rise to 50 million by 2010 and 150 million by 2050. Such large-scale migrations exacerbate border tensions and contribute to the spread of disease. The actuality of and potential for conflict are illustrated by the fact that drought in the Sahara has caused nomadic groups to migrate into Darfur in search of more fertile land. In 2007, the UN Environmental Program found that Darfur is “a tragic example of the social unrest that can result from ecological collapse.”

Scheffran proceeded to outline sustainable energy paths that would allow such a dismal future to be avoided. He presented the “wedge” strategy, an integrated approach to meeting emission reduction targets in the US with existing technologies. The wedge employs electricity end-use efficiency, passenger-vehicle efficiency, renewables, and carbon capture and storage.

Currently, non-hydropower renewable energy sources account for 2% of global electricity generation. Within that category, biomass is the most prevalent, with geothermal, wind and solar contributing to a lesser extent. Biomass presents certain concerns, however, including land use and the competition with food; cost of harvest and distribution; and fertilizer and chemical inputs. Wind and solar thus emerge as more promising renewable energy sources. The United States possesses 15.4% of the world’s wind power capacity and, as more wind farms are installed, the cost of wind power has been steadily declining. A similar trend can be observed with regards to solar power: as usage increases, the price of photovoltaics decreases.

Scheffran concluded that from both an environmental and human security standpoint, the challenge is to de-carbonize energy and the economy.

Karla Braig
Dubuque City Council Member





Presenters John Burroughs,
Brice Smith, and Steven Starr

Dr. Maureen McCue
Moderator for Panel Two

Maureen McCue, of Iowa Physicians for Social Responsibility, spoke about the intersections of global climate change, global health and indigenous peoples. She explained that indigenous peoples across the world live on land that is exploited to satisfy our current energy and military policies. Indigenous land is often the site of uranium mining and waste dumping; and conflicts have emerged over the use of uranium, petroleum, and coal found on this land.

McCue also outlined a potentially positive development. One of the greatest sources of wind energy in the United States is to be found on tribal lands; in fact, this wind could provide for up to one third of the US energy requirement. Tribal peoples are working to develop the necessary technologies to capture and distribute the wind energy, both for their own use and to sell to national grids. (A representative of Intertribal Council on Energy Policy was scheduled to speak, but had to cancel at the last moment.) McCue called on conference participants to advocate on behalf of the tribal peoples, to ensure that they have control over their own land and have the capacity to promote their own infrastructure.

Dr. Brice Smith
Nuclear Power: Risks and Alternatives

Brice Smith, a professor of physics at the State University of New York at Cortland, examined the closest connection between nuclear weapons and climate change: nuclear power. In order for nuclear power to be considered a viable part of the alternative energy equation, it would be necessary to have 1,000 nuclear reactors on line by 2050, over three times the current total US capacity. For nuclear power to assume a more substantial role, equivalent to coal today, 2,500 reactors would be needed. Smith analyzed the appropriateness of greater reliance on nuclear power in light of cost, proliferation risks, safety issues, and management of nuclear waste.

An increasing disparity between the best and worst performers has resulted in uncertainty as to the ultimate cost of a nuclear power plant. The default risk is 50% and investors are thus uninterested in funding nuclear power absent loan guarantees from the government. No new plant has been ordered in the US since 1973, prompting Smith to conclude that nuclear power is not “the wave of the future”, but rather an old technology.

Smith outlined several ways in which the spread of nuclear power could result in weapons proliferation. First, there is the possibility that a country could learn the technology and build a clandestine facility. Technological advances have made this a more pressing concern. The older technology for production of enriched uranium, gaseous diffusion, required large plants and considerable amounts of power and were thus easily detectible. The new gas centrifuge technologies, however, can be housed in small, underground facilities and do not require large amounts of power or cooling. These facilities are not only easier to hide, but are also cheaper to maintain. Second, a country could divert highly enriched uranium or plutonium from a declared civilian program. Finally, a declared civilian facility for production of fuel for nuclear power could be swiftly converted to produce weapons materials.

Smith did not offer an optimistic picture of the safety of nuclear power plants. Though somewhat improved, new reactors are vulnerable to precisely the same kind of accident as Three Mile Island in 1979. Smith noted that existing reactors are aging and that this poses a considerable concern, as the most dangerous time is when a reactor is turned on and at the end of its life.

“Nuclear waste is around for evolutionary timescales, on a completely different scale than human civilization.” - Brice Smith

Disposal of nuclear waste was long viewed as a problem that would eventually be solved, and thus efforts were mainly devoted to designing the reactors themselves and the issue of waste postponed. Smith noted that, since 1985, cities and states are responsible for disposing of their own waste and yet, more than 20 years later, only 11 states have disposal sites for Class B and C waste. Yucca Mountain, a proposed repository, is deemed by Smith to be “one of the worst sites geologically that has ever been selected for a repository.”



Social Change and the Role of Cities

The afternoon session was dedicated to issues of social change, among them conversion of the militarized economy, and steps Iowa cities have taken.

Panel Three: Social Change and Cities

Mary Beth Sullivan
Converting the Militarized Economy: A Fresh Look

Mary Beth Sullivan spoke in her capacity as the outreach coordinator for Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (www.space4peace.org), but also from her experience as a social worker. She has witnessed and worked with individuals who are marginalized by the current economic system and thus her call for a more equitable, sustainable system stem from very real concerns about the needs of American citizens.



Mary Beth Sullivan

Sullivan said: “We live in a country whose industrial base is sinking under the weight of a Permanent War Economy.” Industry in the United States now largely does not produce goods for consumer use or infrastructure. For example, in 2003, the New York City Transit Authority accepted bids for new subway cars. Not a single American company submitted a bid. It is estimated that such a contract, worth \$3 to \$4 billion, could have generated about 32,000 US jobs.

Instead, the United States produces more weapons than any other nation in the world and military operations represent the single, largest sustaining activity of the US government. The Pentagon enters into “cost-plus” contracts, which include no incentive for products to be made on time or within the allotted budget.

Sullivan quoted from letters to the Des Moines Register, in which Iowans demanded that investments be made and jobs created in renewable energy. Sullivan argued that the funding for such initiatives ought to come from the military budget.

To illustrate this point, Sullivan discussed the Bath Iron Works (BIW) factory in Maine. BIW formerly built commercial ships, but now exclusively produces naval destroyers, which each cost about \$1.1 billion to build. For many years, citizens have been protesting the use of BIW for military purposes and have urged the shipyard to instead produce equipment for harvesting sustainable resources.

“We have a vision for what we want and need to do to change our world and to build for the future. But we will never be able to pay for it unless we understand that we must rid this country of its economic dependence on endless war.” - Mary Beth Sullivan

These calls for “windmills not destroyers” are gradually gaining traction, as concerns about rising oil costs have prompted some, including a former governor of Maine, to pursue the idea of wind turbines off the shore of Maine. As it stands, BIW is the only facility capable of such production.

This conversion of the military economy makes sense from a cost-benefit perspective: a recent study concluded that spending \$1 billion at BIW to build warships generates 8,500 jobs, whereas building rail systems at BIW would create 20,000 jobs.

Citing Seymour Melman, an industrial engineering professor and the grandfather of the economic conversion movement, Sullivan warned against the dangers of an economy sustained by arms production and military operations: a “permanent war economy” necessitates war.

Andrew Lichterman

Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Power, Corporate Globalization, and the Role of Cities

Andrew Lichterman, of the Western States Legal Foundation (www.wsflweb.org), spoke of a looming “great crisis”, with the economy badly shaken and possibly on the verge of collapse and the ideology behind corporate globalization called into question. Though it is certainly a moment of danger and uncertainty, it ought to also be regarded as a moment of opportunity; a chance to make the global economy more fair, democratic and ecologically sustainable. This moment necessitates a new set of strategies for those advocating nuclear disarmament and sustainable energy policies, both because the global context has evolved and because previous efforts have not proved successful. “Making significant progress towards nuclear disarmament and ending reliance on nuclear power for energy likely will require deeper, broader social change.”

Lichterman assessed the recent US-India nuclear deal, calling attention to the linkages between this agreement and the global economic crisis. Nuclear power and other high-technology weapons are part of a system of global trade and investment that is designed to produce goods and services that only a fraction of the world’s population can afford to buy. Nuclear technology may prove profitable for elites, but has little or even negative value for most of the population. This dynamic relegates much of the world’s population towards the margins, and “the result is a world characterized by islands of great wealth in a deepening sea off poverty.”

“Both the economy and the ideology of the great wave of corporate globalization that has come to dominate most of the planet have been greatly shaken, and may be on the verge of collapse. This clearly is a moment of great danger.

It should be a moment of opportunity as well for people working for a global economy that is more fair, more democratic, and more ecologically sustainable.”

- Andrew Lichterman

Noting that nuclear power requires immense investments of time and money and presently only provides for 1% of India’s total energy use, Lichterman argued in favor of conservation measures and alternative energy sources, such as wind, solar and small-scale hydraulic power. These renewable energy technologies are more likely to benefit the hundreds of millions of people living in rural areas, not served by an electric power grid, and would do so without exacerbating global warming.

Though environmentally and economically sound alternatives are available, Lichterman posits that the US will instead pursue a path of “resurgent militarism”. Elites within the United States appear determined to exploit the aerospace-military-industrial complex to extend US dominance for as long as possible. For its part, the military-industrial complex itself is determined to “keep its disproportionate piece of the pie” even as the US economy declines.



Moderator Ben Manski and Presenter Andrew Lichterman

This path of economic development cannot be sustained in the long-term, for both ecological and political reasons. Lichterman encouraged mayors and citizens to undertake concrete actions aimed at challenging the existing, inequitable, unsustainable economic system. Lichterman identified cities as the most promising forum for the emergence of an alternative vision of development; it is at the local level that affected citizens can interact and generate solutions and it is at the local level that the resources to enact these changes will be found.

Panel Three (continued)

Wilson Riles

Cities: An Effective, Sane Voice for Peace

Based on his experience as a city council member in Oakland, California, Riles observed that local officials oftentimes suffer from an “inferiority complex” and do not consider themselves to be sufficiently important, influential or capable of grappling with issues that extend beyond the local community. Riles resists this attitude, arguing that the local level is in fact “ground zero” for issues ranging from militarism to climate change.

“For almost any issue, its impact is at the local level. Just ask the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki whether or not nuclear weapons are a local issue.”
- Wilson Riles

Riles noted that cities have long served as the cradle of democracy and must now be challenged to resume their position of power and influence for positive, sustainable change. This will require a rigorous and repetitive process of research, reflection and action, a process Riles has found to be a powerful means of making change.

To illustrate the local repercussions of global phenomena, Riles shared a few pointed examples from Oakland:



Wilson Riles

--Spent nuclear fuel rods travel through the port of Oakland and are then transported by truck through the city’s streets. Riles noted that were an accident or an earthquake to occur while one of these trucks was in transit, the *local* community would be endangered and the harm would be *local*.

--Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, located just outside Oakland, is tasked with maintaining the nation’s nuclear weapons stockpile. Riles and other activists travel to Livermore, bringing with them homeless from the city, to demonstrate how the military-industrial complex consumes resources that could otherwise be devoted to addressing problems in the city.

Riles applauded cities for developing and implementing innovative initiatives, such as: community policing, in which citizens assess the root causes of crime and work together to resolve these underlying problems; participatory democracy, in which citizens are engaged in the budgeting process and in deciding what changes are needed in their community; and local currencies, which allow communities to maximize the use of local resources and human resources in environmentally sustainable ways.

Ben Manski

Moderator for Panel Three

Ben Manski, of Liberty Tree Foundation (www.LibertyTreeFDR.org), posited that municipalities now have a more critical role to play in advancing social change than ever before. The federal government has been stepping back from its historical commitments in terms of welfare, funding for education, and in providing a basic social-safety net. In response, cities have acted to fill these gaps, passing legislation to ensure sick leave for workers and to establish a minimum wage at the municipal level for example. Such displays of municipal rule have met with resistance on the state and federal level and, indeed, preemptive legislation has been passed to prevent other cities from taking similar action.

Nevertheless, Manski has observed that city governments are emerging as powerful engines for social change: from the Nuclear Freeze movement to opposition to the Iraq War to cities committing themselves to the Kyoto Protocol, local people are recognizing that, though they may not have a voice at the federal level, they can act at the city level to move change forward.

Nuclear Weapons and Cities

We face grave challenges to our ability to give all of our people lives that are healthy, safe and secure. Spending tens of billions of dollars to build weapons of mass destruction and the laboratories and factories to maintain them does nothing to solve the real problems we face. All the elements of the dilemma are brought together in our cities. Large-scale attacks on cities are the marker of total war, of the near complete breakdown of civilization itself. The nature of modern cities also makes manifest our interdependence, and the complexity of bringing real change to even a single large city—in how we provide millions of inhabitants with even the basics of food, energy, transportation, housing, and meaningful work—illuminates the true magnitude of the challenges we face. If we can come to understand fully the effects on our cities of a half-century of arms racing, of its climate of fear, diversion of resources, and erosion of democracy, we will have made a start towards choosing another path.

Message to the Des Moines Conference from Mayor Akiba

Tadatoshi Akiba
Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan
President, Mayors for Peace (www.mayorsforpeace.org)



[excerpts; full text at www.LCNP.org/DM]

We must stop releasing into the atmosphere carbon now safely sequestered by the forces of nature in underground deposits. We must free ourselves of this profligate hydrocarbon dependency. I'm proud that Mayors around the world have awakened to this challenge and are working with concerned citizens to rethink how cities consume energy and generate wastes.

Mayors for Peace aims to awaken citizens and governments to another "human" activity with terrible climate-changing potential. Some countries have armed themselves with weapons that could, within one hour of any given moment, plunge the world into ten years of diminished sunlight, worldwide crop failures, and starvation on a scale never witnessed before. The ill will generated by threats of mutual annihilation greatly hampers cooperation among nations.

The one-time cost of nuclear disarmament would be far less than the cost of perpetually maintaining nuclear forces. The resources wasted on nuclear weapons – both financial and human – are desperately needed by cities and other sectors of society to address global warming. It "just makes sense" to eliminate the threat of nuclear winter and get on with combating global warming with more resources and a better political climate.

That is why Mayors for Peace offers its "2020 Vision." Experts have advised us that, using existing technologies and facilities, all nuclear weapons and the fissile material that goes into making them could be eliminated or safely sequestered by the year 2020. We have challenged governments not to lose another day in meeting this goal; talks should begin immediately.

Of all the serious global problems facing the human family, from climate change to the end of cheap oil, the threat from nuclear weapons is the easiest to solve and a prerequisite to solving the rest. Our assertion that "Cities Are Not Targets!" has been endorsed by municipal associations around the world representing more than half the world's population. We have broad support in the international community. We have a powerful tool in the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol, and I urge all mayors and other local elected officials to sign the Cities Appeal in support of this common-sense disarmament framework.

Panel Four: The Role of Cities



Mayors Frank Cownie and Ed Malloy

Mayor Frank Cownie: Des Moines

Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie commended conference participants, presenters and attendees alike, for coming together to discuss solutions to the environmental and security threats our communities face. Mayor Cownie then challenged us to move from conversation to concrete action.

The recently published “Report Card for America’s Infrastructure” assessed a range of public goods from roads and schools to parks and bridges and determined that the average grade for America’s infrastructure is a “D”. Mayor Cownie said that such a finding is indicative of the priorities of the federal government and serves as evidence that the ingenuity and the momentum for change will need to come from the local level.

“It is incumbent on us as human beings and residents not only of Iowa but of planet earth to do everything that we can to make sure this planet is livable, not only for our children but our grandchildren, great grandchildren and, as the Native Americans would say, the Seventh Generation.”
– Mayor Frank Cownie

Mayor Cownie highlighted a series of initiatives the city of Des Moines has undertaken to reduce energy consumption. They include: replacing the incandescent bulbs at light signals with LED lights; converting the city’s park and police vehicles to hybrid models, while also reducing the size of the fleet and the miles traveled; and allowing native grasses to grow in parks, which both conserves money and energy and helps to combat erosion. The city is also capturing methane from waste water and a regional landfill, which is then run through a generator and used to supply electricity. Other local initiatives include installing a green roof on the library; partnering with neighborhood organizations to plant more trees; expanding bus service regionally; and considering a possible return to the trolley system.

Mayor Cownie serves on the Iowa Climate Change Advisory Council. It operates on a state-wide scale to improve energy efficiency, explore clean and renewable sources of energy, and reduce energy usage in an effort to achieve the targets outlined in the Kyoto Protocol. Mayor Cownie emphasized that cities are assuming a leadership role in the broader movement within Iowa and across the country.

Mayor Jerry Kelley: Indianola

Mayor Kelley of Indianola emphasized the imperative of an ethic of sustainability and the need to implement policies which reflect such a forward-looking perspective. He posited that the quest for a secure future is the ultimate basis for most conflicts. Accordingly, to promote and develop sustainable economic, energy, and environmental policies is to create a more peaceful world.

Mayor Kelley advocated for a “declaration of interdependence”, stemming from his observation that a sustainable future will require communities to work together, to share both physical and human resources. Indianola, for instance, could not survive without Des Moines’ economic center and is enriched by Fairfield’s cultural center. Mayor Kelley stressed that locally elected officials are in a unique position to effect change: whereas the politics of Washington, or even state capitals, may seem like an abstraction, mayors are both visible and accessible and thus accountable to their constituents.

Mayor Ed Malloy: Fairfield

Mayor Malloy of Fairfield expressed his appreciation for the conference's focus on cities, noting that though cities are the smallest unit of government, they can be powerful in the collective.

The city of Fairfield is currently engaged in a Community Vision and Strategic Planning Process. The three main goals are: to create and maintain a sustainability culture; to create jobs, wealth and investment in sustainable development; and to achieve a sustainable design of all community policy and infrastructure. The aim is to empower all actors within the community to assume responsibility for some facet of the plan. Each of the specific 39 objectives is linked to a particular community organization and includes an educational component.

Mayor Malloy considers Fairfield to be particularly well-suited for pursuing such an initiative. With a quintessential town square, a diverse population, a reputation of entrepreneurship, and a thriving cultural component, the city boasts the needed infrastructure to explore and implement new ideas. The city further benefits from its relationship with the Maharishi University of Management, which offers a sustainable living major; its proximity to an ecovillage, which is in the process of building a sustainability learning center; and community organizations such as Sustainable Living Coalition and Sustainable Cities Solutions.

"We must show leadership; and I believe that the mayors of towns large and small can play a huge role, by engaging their communities. We must own this opportunity."
- Mayor Ed Malloy

Echoing the sentiments of Mayor Cownie, Mayor Malloy observed that systematic change will only be realized if action is first taken at the grassroots level. Emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and the need to confront problems locally, Mayor Malloy suggested that mayors and cities can exhibit leadership in working towards a sustainable future.



Local Organizer Chet Guinn,
Progressive Coalition of
Central Iowa

Obama Administration

The election of Barack Obama as president changes the political calculus for US mayors and our work.

Significantly more resources will be devoted to urban infrastructure, renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, reduction of violence, and other urban priorities.

On nuclear arms control and disarmament, during the campaign Obama stated that: "I will make the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide a central element of US nuclear policy." Since the election, his administration has announced that it will once again pursue longstanding goals like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a verified Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty, and verified reductions of nuclear arms with Russia. As of March 2009, there is no public sign of implementation of another Obama promise: "I will initiate a high-level dialogue among all the declared nuclear-weapon states on how to make their nuclear capabilities more transparent, create greater confidence, and move toward meaningful reductions and the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons."

Bearing in mind the economic crisis, we need to pursue: 1) further activating mayors to support Obama's agenda with respect to nuclear weapons and to enlarge it to include a global agreement on abolition; and 2) widening the discussion about devoting resources to cities to raise questions about the opportunity cost of federal budgetary outlays on nuclear weapons and the military more generally.



Nuclear Abolition and Climate Protection: Whys and Ways

In the evening program, Arjun Makhijani and Jacqueline Cabasso proposed strategies for the way forward, highlighting the importance of engagement and action at the local level.

Jacqueline Cabasso Nuclear Abolition: Whys and Ways

Jacqueline Cabasso, the North American Coordinator of Mayors for Peace (www.2020visioncampaign.org) and the Executive Director of Western States Legal Foundation (www.wsflweb.org), argued for a revised definition of security which would place human security and sustainable environmental policies at the center.

Cabasso said that the United States is characterized by militarism. The military legacy of the conclusion of WWII persists to this day. The allocation of resources is particularly illustrative of the pervasive military culture, with the US spending an estimated spend \$711 billion on its military in 2008. Nuclear weapons states, and in particular the US, U.K. and France, are pursuing a policy of “fewer but newer” weapons and are working to modernize and qualitatively improve both warheads and delivery systems. Cabasso warned that meaningful disarmament cannot simply be equated with a reduction in the number of weapons.

“The Encarta Encyclopedia describes militarism as ‘advocacy of an ever stronger military as a primary goal of society, even at the cost of other social priorities and liberties.’ As disquieting as it may be, this definition accurately describes the reality of current US national security policy, as well as the policies of a growing number of countries” - Jacqueline Cabasso

In the context of exorbitant military expenditures and a persistent military-industrial complex, the need to fundamentally redefine security is apparent. Cabasso advocated for “security and sustainability education”, to be conducted in schools, universities and town halls, with the aim of promulgating a paradigm shift in the way security is commonly understood. Security and sustainability education would: promote the values embodied in the UN Charter of multilateralism, cooperation and diplomacy; stress the importance of good faith adherence to international law; promote proactive conflict prevention; encourage a culture of peace; and promote the redirection of resources to meet human needs and ensure ecological sustainability.

“Nuclear disarmament should serve as the leading edge of a global trend towards demilitarization and redirection of military expenditures to meet human and environmental needs.” - Jacqueline Cabasso

While remaining realistic about the prospects of drastically altering entrenched US military policies, Cabasso suggested that the election of Barack Obama would represent an important opportunity to pressure the US government for new

policies. She reiterated that this pressure will need to come from the bottom up, from grassroots organizations both within and outside the US.

Cabasso concluded: “We need to build a broader and deeper international movement which recognizes the fundamentally difficult realities of the military-industrial complexes, and which links issues of peace, justice and ecological sustainability.”



Arjun Makhijani and Jacqueline Cabasso

Dr. Arjun Makhijani
Climate Protection: Whys and Ways

Arjun Makhijani, of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (www.ieer.org) characterized the planet as “in intensive care” and asserted that the reality of climate change is actually much worse than the models would suggest. Still, Makhijani has determined that with renewable and efficient energy sources alone it is possible to fulfill our energy requirements.

“The models are wrong. But not in the way the climate deniers think. The reality is much worse.”
- Arjun Makhijani

The fact that Wall Street has refused to invest in nuclear power plants is indicative of the risk involved in such a venture. Gregory Jaczko of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission estimated that \$500 billion of loan guarantees from the government would be needed to deliver a nuclear power renaissance. Makhijani argued that this money can be better invested and that it would be “pure economic folly” to seriously consider funding a nuclear power program.

Makhijani dispelled the claim that nuclear energy is “clean” and offered the French nuclear power program as an example. Though the French claim to have instituted a recycling component, Makhijani calculates that only one half of 1% of spent fuel is in fact recycled. Because of disputes over where to house a nuclear waste repository, plutonium and uranium continue to pile up. Other European governments have called on France to desist from pumping radioactive waste into the English Channel, a practice it nevertheless continues.

Makhijani then identified several promising alternatives to nuclear power. The wind energy available in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states alone is equivalent to all the oil production of all the OPEC states combined. In addition, a site off

“We can eliminate 85% of the energy footprint of homes with sensible building.” - Arjun Makhijani

the shore of Delaware has just been authorized and there are plans to explore the wind energy potential of the Great Lakes. Solar power is even more plentiful than wind: a stretch of land 100 miles by 100 miles in the Southwest could produce sufficient electricity for the entire United States. The technological capability to convert to a “Smart Grid” exists, and yet not a single thorough technological study has been conducted to assess solar and wind data together. Makhijani deems this a “pathetic commentary on the state of energy policy.”

The problem of how to store and then transport the wind and solar energy will require creative technologies. For now, Makhijani favors local efforts to explore alternative energy sources. Makhijani, like many of the speakers, concluded by noting that the leadership for “Smart Grid” initiatives will come from cities and states; the genius for change is to be found at the local level, and not only for issues of energy but education, health care, pollution and environment as well.

Prepared Remarks and Transcripts Available at www.LCNP.org/DM

- John Burroughs: *International Frameworks for Cooperation on Nuclear Abolition and Climate Protection*
- Jacqueline Cabasso: *Nuclear Abolition: Whys and Ways*
- Andrew Lichterman: *Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Power, Corporate Globalization and the Role of Cities*
- Wilson Riles: *Cities—an Effective, Sane Voice for Peace*
- Jürgen Scheffran (presentation slides): *Climate Change and Protection: Sustainable Energy Paths*
- Mary Beth Sullivan: *Converting the Militarized Economy*

YouTube Videos of All Presenters are Also Available

Lessons Learned

It can be very fruitful to link nuclear disarmament, climate protection and cities. Nuclear weapons and climate change both pose threats to the future of the human and other species. They both are global problems requiring global solutions, including implementation of existing international agreements and negotiation of new ones. Yet solutions also require local and popular participation to affect national policy, and for climate protection, adoption of climate friendly practices at the local, indeed the household, level.

How You Can Work with Your Mayor

Persuade your mayor to:

- *Join Mayors for Peace.* Information on how to join can be found on the Mayors for Peace website at www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/outlines/join.html
- *Sign the Cities Appeal in Support of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol.* The Protocol sets out steps to negotiate the elimination of nuclear arsenals by the year 2020. (www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/citiesappearl.pdf)
- *Plan to be part of the Mayors for Peace delegation* at the NPT Prep-Com, May 2009, and the NPT Review Conference, May 2010, both in New York.
- *Put a Button on your City's Website.* Link to the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign website. (www.2020visioncampaign.org)
- *Host a Hiroshima-Nagasaki photo exhibit in your City Hall.* The Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation will provide a set of 30 educational posters with supplemental material, at no cost. (www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/images_e/poster/us07.html)
- *Help peace and disarmament groups and the public in your community better understand municipal budgets and priorities,* with the goal of highlighting the local and regional impacts of large military budgets and continued high-tech arms and associated investment patterns as compared with alternative forms of public and private spending and investment
- *Host or participate in a Mayors for Peace Forum,* like the one that took place in Des Moines.

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