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From: John Burroughs, Executive Director, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Transition at LCNP

Peter Weiss retires, Guy Quinlan assumes presidency

This year, **Peter Weiss** retired as LCNP president, having served in that role since he co-founded our organization in 1981. He remains on the Board and active in LCNP affairs. Peter's contributions to nuclear disarmament and the international rule of law have been extraordinary. Please join us in honoring Peter and raising funds for LCNP's future work at a forum and reception on April 2, 2014, "[Law's Imperative: A World Free of Nuclear Weapons.](#)" You can [register online](#) for yourself and your spouse/partner, or you can make a donation if you can't attend.Â Â



Peter Weiss

The forum will feature UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs **Angela Kane**, former UN Legal Counsel **Hans Corell**, LCNP Vice President **Elizabeth Shafer** who has written about [good faith](#), and Consultative Council member Professor **Roger Clark**, who addressed application of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to nuclear weapons at an [October UN seminar](#). You can read Roger's remarks in the [November IALANA Newsletter](#).

Our new president, [Guy Quinlan](#), is knowledgeable, dedicated, and well-connected in disarmament networks. Guy has initiated efforts this year to move the Obama administration to come to grips with new data on the climate consequences of nuclear war, to reduce the risks - heightened by cyber capabilities - of maintaining nuclear forces in a launch-ready posture, and to refrain from nuclear warhead modification.

Diplomacy in Action

Syria, the Middle East, and a global prohibition regime for nuclear weapons

This fall has been marked by striking diplomatic initiatives, on chemical weapons in Syria and nuclear non-proliferation in Iran. In a stunning turnaround, US military strikes as a projected response to use of chemical weapons in Syria gave way to a Russia-US coordinated plan for the dismantlement of Syria's chemical arsenal. Suddenly prominent in the news were the Chemical Weapons Convention and its implementing agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

All to the good, though there is still the urgent need to bring to an end the war in Syria and the suffering it causes. Both initiatives are at least tentative steps toward a Middle East free of WMD. There are positive stirrings in Israel as well, illustrated by [an October conference](#) in Jerusalem at which Peter Weiss spoke.



*If there can be a global regime for the prohibition and verified elimination of chemical weapons, why not one for nuclear weapons?*Â LCNP has been raising that question since 1997. That's when, working with the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation, we released a [Model Nuclear Weapons Convention](#), with its own

agency to oversee nuclear disarmament. For more on the model convention, see Peter Weiss's [article](#) in the *Austrian Review of International and European Law*.

The need to establish a regime for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons was front and center at the first-ever UN High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, held September 26 at UN headquarters in New York (see my [report](#)). *Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Viola Onwuliri, said that the "zero tolerance" for biological and chemical weapons should apply to nuclear weapons as well.*

President Hassan Rouhani of Iran has been much in the news in connection with the encouraging interim agreement to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. But there was no mainstream coverage of the fact that at the High-Level Meeting, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, he called for commencement of negotiations on a convention prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons. The General Assembly subsequently included that call in [a resolution](#) following up on the High-Level Meeting.

Most of the 75 governments represented at the meeting emphasized the imperative of urgent action on complete nuclear disarmament. LCNP made a timely effort to persuade the Obama administration to join that large majority. *In June, I worked with American Friends Service Committee and Peace Action to create a campaign - including [a letter signed by 24 groups](#) and [a petition](#) with about 25,000 signatures - to urge the administration to take a more constructive attitude in multilateral forums.*

However, while the actions of the Obama administration on Syria and Iran have been praiseworthy, its position at the High-Level Meeting was not. *The US, UK and France made a [joint statement](#) rejecting initiatives to create openings for multilateral negotiations and a Nuclear Weapons Convention, even stating that they regret the energy being put into the High-Level Meeting itself!*

Over the summer the Permanent Five stayed away from the UN Open-Ended Working Group on developing proposals for multilateral negotiations on achieving and sustaining a nuclear weapons free world. LCNP International Coordinator (among other hats!) **Alyn Ware**, now at the [Basel Peace Office](#), worked hard at facilitating civil society input into the working group. The General Assembly this fall did not extend the working group in 2014, but its renewal remains a possibility a year from now.

New Developments

On Law and Nuclear Weapons

In June the Pentagon released [a little-noticed report](#) to Congress on "Nuclear Employment Strategy". It says: "The new guidance makes clear that all plans must also be consistent with the fundamental principles of the Law of Armed Conflict [a.k.a. international humanitarian law - IHL]. Accordingly, plans will, for example, apply the principles of distinction and proportionality and seek to minimize collateral damage to civilian populations and civilian objects. The United States will not intentionally target civilian populations or civilian objects."



To our knowledge, this is the first time the US has stated in a public, top-level policy document that its nuclear plans must comply with the law. There's only one problem. *Due to their devastating and uncontrollable effects, the use of nuclear weapons cannot be made compatible with law protecting civilians against the ravages of war.* See Peter Weiss's [commentary](#).

That has been a central LCNP message since its founding in 1981, one that we have pushed with renewed vigor since the 2010 NPT Review Conference affirmed that nuclear weapons are subject to IHL. This year I contributed a chapter on IHL to Reaching Critical Will's excellent book, [Unspeakable Suffering](#), released at the March conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear explosions hosted by the government of Norway in Oslo. And in April, LCNP organized a side-event, "[Beyond International Humanitarian Law](#)," at the NPT PrepCom (presentations are online at [www.lcnp.org](#)).

100th Anniversary of World War I

2014 Conference on the Lessons of "The Great War"

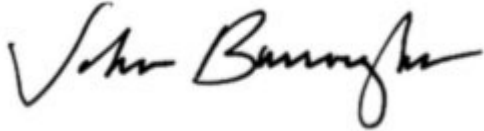
With our IALANA colleagues in Germany, Western States Legal Foundation, and American Friends Service Committee, we are holding a conference, open to the public, on the lessons of WWI during the NPT PrepCom in New York (April 28-May 9). *The history of that war teaches that we must not ignore the potential for great*



power conflict, however unlikely it may seem at a given moment. For information on related activities in Europe and illuminating articles by Peter Weiss and others, see [this newsletter](#).

To help make it possible for LCNP to carry on our work, please consider making a donation or attending our April 2 [fundraiser](#). With a donation of \$100 or more, you can receive the second issue of [Nuclear Abolition Forum](#), "Moving Beyond Nuclear Deterrence to a Nuclear Weapons Free World." Donate online by clicking on the image above, or send us a check to our mailing address, noted below.

Best wishes for happy holidays and a peaceful new year,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Burroughs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Burroughs".

John Burroughs, Executive Director

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