



Speech by NGO Representative

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Nuclear weapons are kept in silos. But those are not the nuclear weapons that have the greatest power.

Nuclear weapons are kept on bombers. But those are not the nuclear weapons that have the greatest power.

Nuclear weapons are kept in submarines. But those are not the nuclear weapons that have the greatest power.

The nuclear weapons that have the greatest power are the ones in our minds. Nuclear weapons have gotten into our heads. They expand there. They transform there. They loom over us. They hold us prisoner.

The first and most important step we have to take on our journey is to rethink nuclear weapons. See them clearly. Shrink them down. Get free from them.

Think about the Genie argument. People who want to keep nuclear weapons say, "You can't disinvent nuclear weapons." Or sometimes they say, "You can't stuff the nuclear genie back in the bottle." This argument has won debates for fifty years. Its power comes from the fact that it is absolutely true. It also happens to be absolutely irrelevant. No technology is ever *disinvented*.

Technology goes away; it just doesn't go away by being disinvented. It goes away one of two ways: 1) better technology comes along or 2) people realize it was dumb technology and they abandon it.

Consider the pennyfarthing. These nineteenth century bicycles were difficult to get up on and dangerous to fall off of. But nobody said, "You can't stuff the pennyfarthing genie back in the bottle." When better bicycles came along--with two wheels the same size--pennyfarthings simply went out of existence. The technology didn't have to be *disinvented*.

Or look at this pram from England. Mom is wearing a gas mask and junior is inside a hermetically sealed compartment with a little window so he can see the sky and he's got a gas mask chimney-thing so he can breathe. This technology didn't have to be disinvented. It was dumb technology--no one wanted to take junior for a walk in the middle of a chemical weapons attack.

Finally, there's the Hiller VZ-1. Invented in 1953 by the U.S. Army, it was an amazing engineering achievement. A small helicopter blade lifted a single soldier as much as 15 or 20 feet off the ground. Incredible. Of course, some people called it the "here-I-am, I'mdefenseless-

exposed-and-entirely-vulnerable-*Death-Platform*.” Technology goes away all the time. It just doesn’t go away by being disinvented.

The question is not whether nuclear weapons can or cannot be disinvented. The question is whether they’re smart military technology. On the face of it, this seems unlikely, since no one has found a situation in which they needed to use them in almost seventy years.

The genie argument got in our heads and confused us for fifty years. But we shouldn’t dismiss the genie argument. It tells us something important about the way people who want to keep nuclear weapons think. In their minds, nuclear weapons are the genie. They are *magic*. Rub the lamp, wave your nuclear weapon, and people will do whatever you say. . . .

But we all know there is no such thing as magic.

A powerful case can be made for banning nuclear weapons. Not because nuclear weapons are immoral, although they surely are. Not because nuclear weapons are dangerous, although that danger is certain beyond doubt. It is powerful because nuclear weapons are not just immoral and dangerous—they are immoral, dangerous, and *clumsy* weapons.

Nuclear weapons are messy. They leave a trail of poison downwind wherever you use them. Drop a nuclear weapon on your enemy’s troops and the radiation can blow back on your own troops.

This is the famous 1976 study by physicists Frank von Hippel and Sidney Drell in which they tried to design a surgical Soviet attack on the U.S., carefully limited to military targets: silos, airbases, submarine bases. The result? Twenty million people die. Even when you try to use nuclear weapons in a limited way, millions die.

If you want to destroy a building in a city you have to destroy three quarters of the city to do it. Nuclear weapons are weapons with severe limitations.

It shouldn’t surprise us that nuclear weapons have not been used for almost seventy years. The whole trend in warfare is away from big, blundering weapons. The trend is toward smaller, more intelligent, more precise weapons.

This is what the future looks like. This is a four inch drone called the Black Hornet Nano. Equipped with a tiny camera, it hovers over the battlefield and peaks behind obstacles. Increasingly, nuclear weapons look like dinosaurs out of the distant past.

If nuclear weapons are magic, then abolition is impossible and proliferation is inevitable. But if nuclear weapons are clumsy, blundering, overly large, muscle-bound, expensive, seventyyear- old technology, then who would want to keep them?

I love this small blue planet.

I love its children.

Its great mountains, . . .

. . . it's magnificent music, . . .

. . . and it's beautiful mornings.

Nuclear weapons could take all of that away.

Someone once said that, if they had to, the people of Pakistan would be willing to “eat grass” to get nuclear weapons. I would be willing to eat grass to prevent nuclear weapons from ever being used again. What would you be willing to do to save the things you love?

Thank you.