



March 2018 Gandhi Alliance for Peace Newsletter

# PEACE ADVOCATE

## Nuclear Weapons: Our Crucial Challenge

**W**e were elated when the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. And we were deeply stirred by the acceptance speech by ICAN president Beatrice Fihn. Here are some excerpts:



*Beatrice Fihn of ICAN, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017.*

At dozens of locations around the world – in missile silos buried in our earth, on submarines navigating through our oceans, and aboard planes flying high in our sky – lie 15,000 objects of humankind's destruction.

Perhaps it is the enormity of this fact, perhaps it is the unimaginable scale of the consequences, that leads many to simply accept this grim reality. To go about our daily lives with no thought to the instruments of insanity all around us.

For it is insanity to allow ourselves to be ruled by these weapons. Many critics of this movement suggest that we are the irrational ones, the idealists with no grounding in reality. That nuclear-armed states will never give up their weapons.

But we represent the only rational choice. We represent those who refuse to accept nuclear weapons as a fixture in our world, those who refuse to have their fates bound up in a few lines of launch code.

Ours is the only reality that is possible. The alternative is unthinkable....

The risk for nuclear weapons use is even greater today than at the end

It would obliterate food crops, putting billions at risk of starvation. Yet we continue to live in denial of this existential threat....

[However], there are millions of people across the globe who have stood shoulder to shoulder ... to show hundreds of millions more that a different future is truly possible.

Those who say that future is not possible need to get out of the way of those making it a reality.

As the culmination of this grassroots effort, through the action of ordinary people, this year the hypothetical marched forward towards the actual as 122 nations negotiated and concluded a UN treaty to outlaw these weapons of mass destruction.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons provides the pathway forward at a moment of great global crisis. It is a light in a dark time....

To all citizens of the world: Stand with us and demand your government side with humanity and sign this treaty. We will not rest until all States have joined, on the side of reason.

of the Cold War. But unlike the Cold War, today we face many more nuclear armed states, terrorists, and cyber warfare. All of this makes us less safe.

Learning to live with these weapons in blind acceptance has been our next great mistake....

The threat is real. We have avoided nuclear war not through prudent leadership but good fortune. Sooner or later, if we fail to act, our luck will run out.

A moment of panic or carelessness, a misconstrued comment or bruised ego, could easily lead us unavoidably to the destruction of entire cities. A calculated military escalation could lead to the indiscriminate mass murder of civilians.

If only a small fraction of today's nuclear weapons were used, soot and smoke from the firestorms would loft high into the atmosphere – cooling, darkening and drying the Earth's surface for more than a decade.

*Note: There is also a Utah Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (UCAN), which can be reached on Facebook.*



# Gandhi Birthday Celebration - 2017

The day had been cloudy and showery. The cottonwoods and other trees of Tracy Aviary shone with a yellow light. As we took our seats to remember Gandhi and yearn for peace, the beautiful tones of an Indian flute floated across the October air. Deb Sawyer, who has shepherded the Gandhi Alliance for more than 20 years, stood and spoke of our commitment to refugees. She said, "We will not be silent as our government discriminates."

Imam Shuaib Din, introducing the Islamic call for prayer, said that the five daily prayers of faithful Muslims are to engender and show humility and love. "If we recognize God's compassion and mercy, we can show mercy to others," he said, and then he sang the beautiful call for prayer.

Vaughn Lovejoy, who coordinates our planting of a tree for peace



*We enjoyed peaceful flute and song by Shreyas Hoskere and Krithiga Mohan, an original setting of "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor," by Lorene and Mark de St. Aubin, and dancing by students of Divya Narayanan.*

and healing each year, spoke of the Tree of Life: The journey to the Tree of Life is where we find in our hearts that we're connected to everything," he said. "In that place... is where our heart becomes transformed."

Aden Batar, recipient of the 2017 Gandhi Peace Award, reminded us that the traditional Muslim greeting is "salaam" – or "peace," and he spoke of Gandhi's great example. Tragically, today the world now faces the worst refugee crises ever: more than 65 million persons have been displaced by wars, and 25 million live in refugee camps. And yet for the first time in U.S. history, the government has cut the number of refugees admitted in half. He urged us to let Congress know it is not acceptable to turn away refugees.

At the end, we planted a Cedar of Lebanon as a prayer for peace and for safety for refugees.

It was a beautiful, peaceful October gathering. We pray that the flow of peace from this gathering may spread!



## Join us! Nonviolence toward the earth

Internationally known activist and priest John Dear will be in Salt Lake City on May 23. He will speak on *They Will Inherit the Earth*, a new book that invites us to nonviolence toward each other, Mother Earth, and all her creatures.

John Dear has devoted his life to peace. When Desmond Tutu nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize, he wrote that Dear "has led by example through his actions and in his writings and in numerous sermons, speeches and demonstrations.

"He believes that peace is not something static, but rather to make peace is to be engaged, mind, body, and spirit. His teaching is to love yourself, your neighbor, your enemy, and the world and to understand your profound responsibility toward all of these. He is a man who has the

courage of his convictions and who speaks out and acts against war, the manufacture of weapons, and any situation where a human being might be at risk through violence. For evil to prevail requires only that good people sit on the sidelines and do nothing, so John Dear invites all of us to stand up and take responsibility for the suffering of humanity so often caused through selfishness and greed."

Dear works with the organizations Pace e Bene and Campaign Nonviolence. You can read his writings and speeches on his website, johndear.org.

Dear's speech is free and open to all, but the Gandhi Alliance would love your help in supporting this event by contributing to Dear's travel expenses. Contact Cathy Kreuter if you are able to help -



*John Dear at the Vatican*

cathyanne.kreuter@gmail.com.

Hear John Dear speak on May 23, 7 p.m., St Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 1375 Spring Lane. (On 1300 East, around 5000 South—just north of where Van Winkle intersects with 13th East).

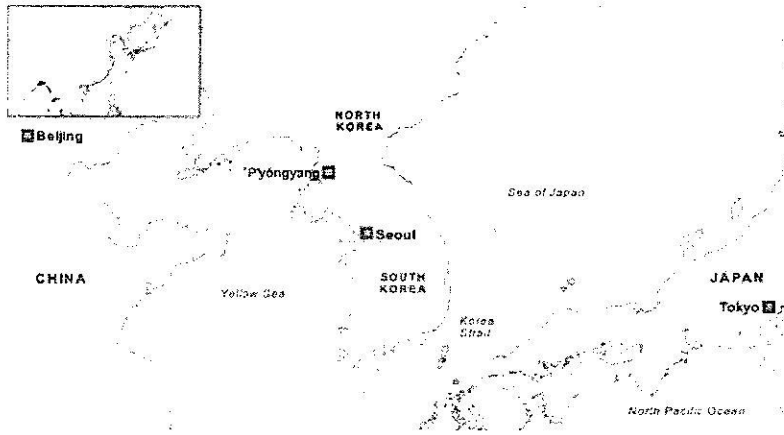


# Now more than ever: Respect and non-violence

The North and South cooperation for the PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games is the hottest news in Korea now. As we write (Jan 31), 45 South Korean athletes, coaches and support staff are in North Korea. During the day they had joint training sessions with North Korean athletes on a ski slope there. After the night's rest the South Koreans and 32 North Korean athletes and support staff will fly back to South Korea. They will visit sites for the Games and hold joint practices.

North and South Korean athletes will march together under a neutral flag at the opening ceremony. There will be even a combined women's ice hockey team competing in the games.

Even a month ago this kind of development was unthinkable, but I don't think many Koreans are surprised by this dizzying turn of events. We are used to the volatility and tenuousness of the relationship between the two Koreas. And we hope we are right that the possibility of an actual



full-scale war is very unlikely.

However, there are parties benefiting from this volatile situation whose priority is to maintain the status quo, not to achieve peace and reunification. These parties are inside the two Koreas as well as the geopolitical players surrounding them, mainly the United States, China, Japan, and Russia.

Unfortunately, it's ordinary people who suffer—including the American people, who are under the grip of the “military-industrial complex.”

Support peace and reunification in Korea. One critical step is to finally replace the cease-fire agreement, which “ended” the Korean conflict 65 years ago, with a genuine peace treaty.

Support the forces in South Korea, governmental and non-governmental, that work for peace and reconciliation. The current South Korean administration is doing its best playing the wise and patient big brother role in relation to the North. In our opinion, they are doing a

commendable job navigating U.S. policies, which are often at odds with a permanent peace in Korea.

And finally, work for peace, advocate for peace, and live a peaceable life where you are. There are plenty enough “realists” in the world whose sincerity I do not doubt. This world needs more pacifists and practitioners of nonviolence like you.

Your friend for Peace from Denver,  
Eun-sang Lee

*Methodist ministers Rev. Eun-sang Lee and Rev. Yvonne Lee send warm greetings to their many loved ones in Utah. Their move to Denver, Colorado, allowed them the joy of living nearer to family members.*



## Buzz from the board

The Gandhi Alliance for Peace is on the move! Not literally. But we have started some new projects.

We're excited to reconnect with the 11 elementary schools that we have given books about peace to in the past. We will be buying copies of *Her Right Foot*, by Dave Eggers, to give to each of these schools for their libraries. This wonderful book is about about how the Statue of Liberty is moving forward to welcome refugees. Read it! You'll love it! Thanks to Kings English for



selling us these books at a discount.

We are also partnering with the United Nations Association of Utah

to raise money for Adopt a Future.

What's that, you ask? Well, more than half of the world's 65.6 million refugees are children, and only 61 percent of these are attending primary school. This program, sponsored by the UN Refugee Agency and United Nations Association of the USA, helps give refugee children the education that every child deserves. This year, the program will be raising funds to support schools in two refugee camps in Kenya. (See

*continued on page 4*

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unusa.org/adopt-a-future for info.)

Our first awareness and fundraising event will be an evening of music. Look for this in November of this year. We're making plans even as we write this, and we'll keep you informed!

Finally, we want to express our sorrow at the recent killings and acknowledge the courage and determination of students who are peacefully working for a solution – finally – to gun violence. May we all join them.



*At right: Iraqi boys giving the peace sign. Photo by Christiaan Briggs, from Wikimedia Commons.*

*Imagine all the people living life in peace,  
You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one,  
I hope someday you will join us, And the world will live as one. (John Lennon)*



#### **GANDHI ALLIANCE FOR PEACE - MISSION STATEMENT**

To increase public awareness and understanding of Mahatma Gandhi—his unique role in world history and his commitment to truth, nonviolence, service and justice; and  
To encourage nonviolent resolutions of conflict among individuals, communities and nations.

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