

Address by Ms. Socorro Gomes, chair of the World Peace Council, pronounced at Hiroshima on the occasion of the passage of the 65th anniversary of the nuclear bombings by the United States of America (USA) against the Japanese people.

Today, when 65 years separate us from an unforgettable landmark tragedy for humanity, some symbolic reminiscences sparkle in our memory under the skies of the city of Hiroshima. We are accompanied, in a circumstance both sonorous and solemn, by a musical piece by former Brazilian ambassador and poet Vinícius de Moraes, now deceased, together with a fellow countryman, Gerson Conrad, under the title, "Rose of Hiroshima":

*Think of the children, mute and telepathic
Think of the girls, blinded and wandering
Think of the women, courses changed
Think of the wounds as warm roses
But don't forget the rose, the rose
The rose of Hiroshima, the hereditary rose
Radioactive, stupid, crippled rose
Rose with cirrhosis, atomic anti-rose
No more color, smell, rose, nothing*

The dramatic appeal, which gains substance in the poet's verses, has become emblematic in innumerable countries. And has also offered its modest contribution, among the many manifestations of the human spirit offended by the atomic genocide, so that a universal consciousness could be created in opposition to the destructive use of nuclear energy and its monopoly by the armed powers, under the hegemony of the United States of America.

It was this rising universal consciousness that throughout decades led the struggle of the peoples for world peace as opposed to the imperialist wars promoted in every continent and moved mostly by the US hegemonic economic interests. This was remarkable in the second half of the last century and grew, rapidly, in the first decade of the current 21st century, particularly with the invasions of countries as Afghanistan and Iraq.

And in all these moments since the massive genocide attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear blackmail has played a role. In response to such arrogance, world clamor for nuclear disarmament also grew. The World Peace Council and
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all of its member associations join have actively joined in the clamor and struggle.

We have the conviction that it is possible to take concrete steps towards disarmament. Accordingly the WPC has organized important activities, and has participated in others organized by different movements, and in official events within the framework of the United Nations.

Our purpose, in promoting and participating in these activities, consists in broadening the discussion on the issue with society and win its support for the current and the future battles.

The Stockholm Appeal is still alive in our memory, when, 60 years ago, it was launched by the World Peace Council with an impressive mobilization of the peace movement and 600 million signatures collected. Today, we consider it unfeasible to have nonproliferation without disarmament, since the instruments are already in place for nonproliferation while disarmament measures are still lacking.

The USA, with the hegemonic pretention that consists in establishing Draconian rules only for the other countries of the planet, more and more become the biggest hurdle to disarmament. Even as it impedes other countries from having access to technological advances, it increases its military budget to retain and modernize its nuclear weapons.

Humanity will always carry the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as swords stabbed in our spirit and in the spine of the civilizational process, in the only attacks in which nuclear arms were used. The prevailing conscience is that, at that moment, the peoples were shaken by the unprecedented appearance of mass destruction. Historically, to our days, no other episode rivals so much terror. It is estimated that the mass execution outnumbers by far evaluations of 140,000 in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki — mostly civilians. These estimates are considerably higher when one computes the ensuing deaths and congenital malformations stemming from exposure to radiation.

Nonetheless, throughout the decades that separate us from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies, the USA has demonstrated — from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, among the countless more or less overt and devastating wars it engendered — that there has not been a more aggressive and inhumane nation throughout the historical development process. Its victims around the world can be counted by the millions. Also rising is its capacity to criminalize victimized nations, from the far-fetched and slanderous versions of “threats”

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inspired in its own State terrorism, an example of which is currently happening in relation to Iran.

Considering the need for developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, for the nonproliferation of nuclear arms and for disarmament, we share the opinion that the countries should not sign the Additional Protocol to the NPT.

The countries cannot submit to pressure, threats or blackmail hinting at the possibility of an atomic weapon being used against a non-signatory to the nonproliferation treaty based on its additional clause. Moreover, the countries must voice their criticism with regard to the announcement of the new US guideline on their nuclear policy. Within the NPT, disarmament is declaratory, whereas nonproliferation is mandatory, underscoring the imbalance regarding the interests of the whole of the 172 States Party.

The environment in which we live today makes it crystal clear that the nuclear powers are not devoted to protecting humanity but rather to defending their own interests when they announce — in the case of the United States and Russia — a deal to reduce nuclear arsenals. Moreover, there is rising evidence that nuclear arms treaties are just meant to reach an imbalance designed to preserve the positions of the possessors of powerful arsenals — with the USA at the head—, that can destroy humanity, while making life more vulnerable and the world more dangerous and unsafe.

This only comes to underscore the destructive tendency that predominates in the history of the great empires, undisguisedly more menacing in defense of their hegemony, especially in moments of greater hardships and crises, when they become more hostile and belligerent.

Maintaining grandiose nuclear arsenals equally represents huge expenses on miniaturization, high precision and the production of a variety of charges for these weapons to make them operational in local wars — the only type of imaginable war since the perverse destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The countries — the overwhelming majority of the UN States Party — hampered by the excluding action of the imperialist hegemony, should seek to broaden the space of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes at the negotiation tables, duly informed that this position goes against the armed countries, which refuse to share decisions when it comes to security.

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For we know that in the backstage of these negotiations prevail formidable and mighty economic interests hiding under the theme of nonproliferation of nuclear weapons to bar new pretenders from achieving protagonism in the international economic arena.

The 8th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) revealed that there is much resistance against the agenda of the powers armed against humanity, yet NATO's nuclear member- states (the USA, the United Kingdom and France), with the occasional support of Russia, quite arrogantly reaffirmed that nuclear dissuasion persists as the great powers' key defense strategy.

Notwithstanding the reaffirmation of the hegemonic policy at the 8th NPT Review Conference, we highlight four sensitive aspects for the world resistance among the Conference's decisions, which, however minute, require greater attention:

1 -The nuclear disarmament debate will proceed, on account of the already-designed correlation, in the UN Disarmament Committee.

2 -The formulation, still prospective, of a legally-binding instrument that ensures the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against countries lacking these weapons.

3 - A resolution calling for the holding of a conference, adjourned to 2012, to debate the implementation of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East.

4 - A, as yet, timid and insufficient demand that Israel — the greatest obstacle to peace-building in the region, a country that even sold nuclear weapons to South Africa's apartheid regime — join the NPT and place its arsenals under IAEA surveillance.

In this concert of world resistance, we thus consider it that the struggle should proceed for the inalienable right of each State Party to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and in defense of the complete elimination of all nuclear arsenals.

Sisters and brothers, ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world mired in deep economic and social crises, which generate great conflicts. Interimperialist and class contradictions may lead to more tension and armed conflicts. The US imperialism and its NATO allies frantically prepare intervention plans and wars in every region of the world, with potentially tragic effects to national sovereignties and the rights of the peoples that threaten the very survival of

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humanity.

The new sanctions on Iran approved by the UN Security Council, and the additional unilateral sanctions imposed by the USA and the European Union, aim to maintain the current world power system, characterized by the US hegemon.

The US military and national security strategies maintain their aggressive character and belie the cooperation and multilateralism rhetoric. These strategies consist in plans to impose, mainly by force and if necessary by war, the hegemonic interests of the United States. According to these new strategies, the USA, claiming a priority for nuclear proliferation prevention, authorizes itself, in the name of its “vital interests” or its allies’, like Israel, to carry out an attack with nuclear weapons, in “extreme” conditions, against any country. Actually, it is the continuation of George Bush’s “preemptive war” and “infinite war”. In other words, withhold the US power by military force, whatever the cost for humanity.

In 2011 the USA will invest US\$ 780 billion in its army, a record budget since the end of the Second World War which is 49% higher than the 2000 budget and larger than the military expenditures of all the rest of the countries of the world added together. The USA insists on keeping bases all over the globe, in every sea and ocean. Lately it has intensified the installation of military bases in Latin America, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and in Central Asia.

The USA and NATO build their capabilities for what they call “Conventional Prompt Global Strike”. With this new strategy NATO will begin to operate in every continent and sea, and even the Malvinas Islands and other territories close to South America might become actual or potential military bases for the aggressive alliance. US special forces, specialized in covert war operations and intelligence, subversion and “destabilization” missions, are already operating in 75 countries, up from 60 countries only one year ago. “The world is the battlefield”, said a high-ranking officer of the US special forces.

Preparations for the aggression against Iran are underway. For imperialism it is necessary to contain Iran, to reinforce Israel’s power to avoid compromising its control in the Middle East and Central Asia. The USA and Israel are making preparations for a possible military intervention, redeploying navy forces through the Suez Canal toward the Persian Gulf, close to the Iranian sea coast.

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Meanwhile, the US negotiates with Saudi Arabia the use of air space in potential bombings.

The US script is similar to that of the war against Iraq, with diplomatic pressure, restraining measures at the UN, media campaign based of slander, alleged noncompliance with sanctions, and the launching of a plan for a military intervention either directly or through Israel. Many political leaders, intellectuals and specialists in military issues, including in the USA, raise the possibility that the war against Iran will be “Obama’s war”, just as the war in Afghanistan and Iraq were Bush’s wars, which are now continued by Obama.

In Central Asia and in the Middle East, a strategic region for global imperialist domination, the USA and its NATO allies surge their troops in Afghanistan, prolong the war and the military occupation of Iraq and adopt measures to set up military bases in Central Asia.

The USA and Israel threaten Syria and the patriotic forces in Lebanon, back the occupation in Palestine and the criminal blockade against the Gaza Strip, even as the humanitarian flotilla, cowardly attacked by Israeli military, accurately denounced.

In East Asia the USA recently held large-scale joint military maneuvers with South Korea in the Korean Peninsula. Next, the two countries accused the North-Korean government of sinking a South-Korean warship while strong suspicions arose that US own military and intelligence forces had put a mine in the vessel to artificially create tension with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and try to isolate the country internationally. Two weeks ago, US hostile actions in the region escalated with further military maneuvers in the Peninsula and the adoption of yet more sanctions against North Korea.

In addition to these objectives the US, after much pressure, succeeded in maintaining its military bases on Japanese territory, in particular the Okinawa base.

A deal between the governments of India and the United States to, in their words, “contain terrorism” was signed on July 23, in New Delhi.

According to the deal, the security and intelligence services of both countries

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will be shared in areas such as maritime security, great events and “to fight together on a global basis against a common enemy, against terrorism”. This is yet another demonstration of US interventionism and preparations of anti-democratic measures in the name of the “fight against terrorism”.

In Latin America pressure intensifies against the Cuban Revolution, the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and the democratic, people’s and anti-imperialist processes across the region. After the 4th Fleet was reactivated, the United States set up new military bases, as in Honduras, which helped a coup d’état to be staged. Under the pretext of humanitarian aid to Haiti in the wake of the earthquake that shook that country early this year, 15,000-strong US military forces disembarked in the country.

In the past days more than seven thousand US soldiers, 46 warships, aircraft-carriers, submarines and helicopters set up camp in Costa Rica, purportedly to fight drug trafficking. The Colombian government signed a military agreement with the United States whereby seven US military bases will remain in Colombian territory, thus following the plan made by the USA of transforming the country into an Israel of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The resistance of the oppressed peoples and countries has imposed defeats on imperialism, in the Middle East, in Central Asia and in other corners of the world. In Latin America, the people’s democratic and anti-imperialist forces continue to flourish.

The recent provocations of the Colombian government against Venezuela obey a cunning and sinister plan masterminded by Washington. The United States is interested in the war and seeks to create the conditions for warfare in the region.

The world, Latin America in particular, is undergoing a moment of transition and change. In Latin America several progressive governments were elected that, however different the levels, contest the US hegemony and seek to open way to sovereign development and the region’s political and economic integration.

With the economy in shambles and in a historical process of decadence, the United States resorts to military power — a terrain in which its superiority is indisputable — as a last resort to maintain world domination. War is, today, imperialism’s main tool. This explains a military budget that corresponds to half of the military expenditure of the rest of the world and which, in spite of the

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crisis, was stepped up (further worsening the imperial government's financial imbalances and deficit), as well as rising aggressiveness against the peoples.

We must not underestimate what is happening in Latin America and in the world. Peace is indeed seriously threatened.

At the same time there is reason for historical optimism. Everywhere the peoples are moving and struggling and opposing the tendencies to throw over the shoulders of the workers the effects of the crisis, resisting coups and threats of war, rejecting imperialism's interventionist policies and in many cases advancing toward securing democratic and patriotic accomplishments. The conviction is spreading that it is necessary to fight for a new political and economic world order. Increasingly the zeitgeist is one of anti-imperialist struggle and union of broad pro-democracy, progress, national independence, and peace forces.

The fraternal presence of the WPC in Japan, on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the nuclear bombings, is a manifestation of solidarity to the Japanese people and of the unity of the peace movement in the world. It is a fitting occasion to reflect and to organize the anti-imperialist and peace struggle. We renew our hope that we shall accomplish in the present a future of peace, harmony and social prosperity in Japan and worldwide.

World peace, national sovereignty and social progress have never been more necessary for humanity.

Thank you very much.

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President of the World Peace Council

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