

September 22, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama
Cabinet Secretariat
2-3-1 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo, Japan 100-8968

Open Letter to President Obama and Prime Minister Hatoyama

On the occasion of your first meeting, we welcome your shared commitment to maintaining a strong alliance between the United States and Japan. Your public statements on nuclear weapons demonstrate that you both recognize that nuclear weapons are increasingly a liability in today's world. With your leadership, our nations can adopt forward-looking policies that de-emphasize the role of nuclear weapons in the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Accordingly, we urge both of you to confirm that the only purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter, and if necessary respond to, the use of nuclear weapons by other countries. We commend Prime Minister Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada for their public support for this position. This policy would be consistent with President Obama's statement in Prague that he will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy, and urge other countries to do the same.

Such a change in U.S. policy will also strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—a goal of both nations—by reinforcing the negative security assurances the nuclear weapons states have made not to use nuclear weapons against states without nuclear weapons. It will also reduce the incentive for more countries to acquire nuclear weapons.

Japan would continue to rely on the U.S. umbrella, but this new U.S. policy would be more consistent with Japan's own policy on nuclear weapons and with the view of the Japanese people. The Japanese public overwhelmingly supports Japan's Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Articulated by former Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Laureate Eisaku Sato and adopted by the Japanese Diet in 1971, they state that Japan shall not manufacture nuclear weapons, shall not possess them, and shall not permit them to enter the country.

The U.S. administration is currently conducting a comprehensive review of U.S. nuclear policy, and Japan's perspective on this issue has become an important factor. Some Japanese bureaucrats want to preserve the status quo, and argue that such a change in U.S. nuclear policy could undermine Japan's confidence in U.S. security guarantees. Some Americans also remain mired in Cold War thinking, and cite these Japanese concerns to argue against changing U.S. policy, which they contend could lead Japan to build its own nuclear weapons. These insiders' views should not stand in the way of a change that would make both nations, and the world, more secure.

We ask Prime Minister Hatoyama to reaffirm his support of a new U.S. policy that states that the only purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter the use of these weapons by other nations. We

ask President Obama to become personally engaged in his administration's nuclear policy review, and to make this position official U.S. policy.

Sincerely,

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Ambassador George Bunn
Former U.S. Ambassador to the International Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and former General Counsel to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

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