Efforts to Eliminate/Better Control Nuclear Weapons

The presentation on the above topic by the recently hired new Executive Director of Peace Action New York State went over extremely well with the audience at the event, held at Riverside Community Center located on the upper West Side of Manhattan this past December.

Alicia Godsberg provided background information on the origins and history of the Start Treaty, and discussed many interesting facts and anecdotes as regards the New Start Treaty, including its shortcomings, and other efforts to better regulate and/or eliminate nuclear weapons.

She spoke of the current situation regarding the nuclear weapons: a pile of 4,000 available for immediate use and another 4,000 in reserve; she also mentioned some of the embarrassing events as regards efforts to maintain security, and of problems experienced in efforts to reduce the numbers of weapons and to eliminate them entirely.

She identified conflict of interests among those wanting to reduce or eliminate the inclusion of a dependence upon nuclear weapons within the nation’s inventory of “defense” weapons, and those on the other side of the issue; she also provided, and sometimes dissected, the various rationales in support of various positions on the subject.

She identified various delivery systems by which the bombs can be released upon their targets and the variety of methods that have been used by which warheads have been counted in attempts by various nations to obfuscate the extent of their respective stockpiles of weapons. One example: Although one airplane or (other carrier) has been counted as one warhead; in fact each plane can carry multiple warheads, each of which can carry multiple deliverable bombs); under the new rules the actual number of warheads will be counted. Also discussed were on-going efforts to decrease delivery times (the time it takes to for a bomb (or equivalent) to be dropped upon its target after it has been released or fired.

Overall, Alicia’s interest, in depth background and wide knowledge of the subject was self-evident during her low key presentation - to which the audience responded with meaningful, enthusiastic questions and observations, and for which Alicia, where appropriate, provided helpful answers and response.

John MacDougall