

# Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons



## 2024 JOINT MEDIA PROJECT REPORT



## CREDITS

The news articles, analyses and opinions in this report were published between April 2023 and March 2024 on the project website <https://www.nuclear-abolition.com/> a joint media project of the non-profit International Press Syndicate Group with IDN as the Flagship Agency in partnership with INPS Japan and Soka Gakkai International in consultative status with ECOSOC.

Publishers: International Press Syndicate gGmbH (Non-profit)

Cornelius-Fredericks-Str. 26. D-13351 Berlin. Germany

Cover: [Sphere within Sphere bronze sculptures outside United Nations Headquarters in New York.](#)

Source: [Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan](#)

Global Coordinator | Editor-in-Chief: Ramesh Jaura

Project Director: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President

International Press Syndicate (INPS) Japan.

Ichimura bldg. 4F, 3-2 - Kanda Ogawa-cho, Tokyo, Japan 101-0052

Layout: Prakash Patodia.

All material in this compilation is licensed under Creative Commons, Attribution 4.0 international. Readers are welcome to share, remix, tweak, and build upon it non-commercially if they credit it to the author and INPS Japan/IDN-InDepth News and license their new creations under identical terms.



## CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	4
<i>Message</i>	5
<i>Foreword</i>	7
<i>“Oppenheimer” Brings the Harsh Reality of Nuclear Doomsday, Warns UN Chief</i>	9
<i>Is There a Way Out of Nuclear Stalemate?</i>	11
<i>Need to Invigorate the Nuclear Disarmament Process</i>	13
<i>Is Nuclear Outer Space a Possible Reality or an Empty Threat?</i>	16
<i>The Complexity of Nuclear Submarine Safeguards Impacts the Current Landscape</i>	18
<i>There Is a Way Out of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis</i>	23
<i>The Case for a New UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament</i>	25
<i>Nuclear Deterrence: An Unproven Gamble that Risks Humanity</i>	28
<i>Faith-based Organizations Warn Nuclear Arms as Worst of all Evils</i>	31
<i>The Voices of Victims of Nuclear Weapons Testing</i>	35
<i>Ukraine War: A Steppingstone to Something Worse and More All-embracing?</i>	36
<i>A Nuclear Attack by Design — or by Accident — Must Never Happen</i>	38
<i>Russia’s Decision to Revoke Ratification of CTBT Comes Under Fire</i>	42
<i>A Milestone in the History of Nuclear Diplomacy</i>	43
<i>Nuclear Annihilation: A Haunting Reality of the Future</i>	45
<i>Clarion Call for a World Free from Nuclear Weapons</i>	48
<i>Contentious Preparations for the 2026 NPT Review Conference</i>	51
<i>It’s Time for No-First Use as Doomsday Clock Moves Closer to Midnight</i>	54
<i>The Erosion of The International Arms Control Regimes</i>	58
<i>Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Bypasses Gender Parity</i>	61
<i>Will ‘Oppenheimer’ Movie Avert Nuclear Holocaust?</i>	63
<i>Kazakhstan Continues to Suffer Awful Impact of Nuclear Tests</i>	65
<i>AI ChatBot Warns of Nuclear Risks in a Militant Political Climate</i>	68
<i>Tactical Nuclear Arms in Belarus “a Disturbing Development”</i>	71
<i>Universalization of Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty Is Essential</i>	74
<i>Need To Undertake a Comprehensive Study of Nuke-free Zones</i>	76
<i>A Nuclear-Free World Begins with Young Leaders</i>	78
<i>G7 Leaders Falter Over Nuclear Disarmament in Hiroshima</i>	80
<i>A 21st Century Freeze on Nuclear Weapons: Will it be a Reality?</i>	84
<i>Should We Fear Nuclear Submarine Proliferation?</i>	87
<i>It’s High Time the US Signed a Peace Treaty with North Korea</i>	91
<i>Putin’s Nuclear Sabre-Rattling in Belarus Triggers a WW III Warning</i>	93
<i>Japan Urged to Push Nuclear Disarmament Principle at G7 Hiroshima Summit</i>	95

## **PREFACE**

By Ramesh Jaura

*Director-General of the Non-profit International Press Syndicate Group  
and Editor-in-Chief of its Flagship Agency IDN-InDepthNews*

We are delighted to present you with a compilation of project articles published from April 2023 to March 2024 as part of a Joint Media Project between INPS Japan and Soka Gakkai International in consultative status with ECOSOC. The Non-profit International Press Syndicate (INPS) Group with IDN as the Flagship Agency has participated in this media project as an overseas partner of INPS Japan.

The articles in this compilation appeared on the thematic website: <https://www.nuclear-abolition.com/> These can be accessed free of charge twenty-four hours a day--365 days a year.

2023-2024 is the seventh year of the INPS Group's media project with INPS Japan and SGI, a lay Buddhist organization with headquarters in Tokyo.

IDN has also been an overseas partner of INPS Japan in the previous joint projects with SGI first launched in 2009 in the wake of an agreement between the precursor of the International Press Syndicate (INPS) Japan and the SGI.

This compilation comprises 33 articles analysing the developments related to proliferation and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at multiple levels—governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental.

All articles have been translated into Japanese and several in other languages such as Arabic, Spanish, German, Turkish, Italian, Hindi, Norwegian, Portuguese, Swedish, Indonesian, Thai, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and French.

The backdrop to these articles is that nuclear weapon states have been fiercely opposing the Nuclear Ban Treaty (TPNW), which has meanwhile entered into force. The nuclear weapons states continue to argue that TPNW ignores the reality of vital security considerations. At the same time, a complete elimination of nuclear weapons is increasingly becoming a global collaborative effort calling for relentless commitment and robust solidarity between States, international organisations and the civil society.



We would like to avail of this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks in particular to Mr Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) as well as other colleagues with whom we have had the pleasure of working closely over the years.

Sincere thanks to Ms. Masako Toki, Senior Project Manager and Research Associate, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey for contributing a Foreword

We sincerely thank Mr Tomohiko Aishima, Executive Director of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), for his Message.

Our thanks also to INPS Japan President Mr. Katsuhiko Asagiri who has enabled IDN to contribute to this project as an overseas partner till March 2024. INPS Japan has been continuing this project in cooperation with other likeminded media partners starting April 2024. <>

*Photo credit: IDN*



## MESSAGE

By Tomohiko Aishima

*Executive Director of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI)*

The crisis that began with the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 shows no signs of ending, and the threat of nuclear war is no longer in the realm of the unimaginable. With conflicts intensifying in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere producing appalling humanitarian crises, humanity stands on a dangerous precipice. There has been no time since the end of the Cold War when the risk of nuclear weapons use has been as high and prolonged as it is now. Even as there is renewed focus on the catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, the discourse remains divided—whether to further escalate military confrontation or to return to multilateral negotiation and dialogue. Humanity confronts stark choices.

As SGI members actively engaged in civil society, we believe the following to be crucial and represent forms of action that can transform the direction of history in this crucial moment: To *inform* people of the inhumane realities of nuclear bombings; to *inherit* the vow from those who came before us to prevent such tragedies from recurring; and to *inspire* people deeply towards a more hopeful future.

History demonstrates that when people stand their ground and resist the overwhelming impulse to pessimism and resignation previously unthought-of developments and advances become possible. That is, the times that seem darkest and most desperate can hold opportunities to fundamentally reform human society.

Focusing on the role and leadership of youth, we will continue advocating the legacy of countless aspirations for peace on every level—toward a world free from nuclear weapons, a world without war. It is vital to amplify and spread these voices and here quality media has a critical role to play.

Drawing from our experiences of engagement at UN and grassroots levels for nuclear disarmament, we would like to highlight three points:

First, in order to *inform*, the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons need to be

brought home to even more people. This is crucial if we are to stave off catastrophe.

The weakening and erosion of norms against the use, proliferation and testing of nuclear weapons is a matter of deep concern; no successor framework to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which expires in February 2026, is in sight. A shared recognition of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons can serve as the basis for the kind of dialogue that is needed build trust and confidence.

There is much we can learn from the response to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the time when humanity came closest to the brink of nuclear war. The determination never to repeat that experience and to advance nuclear disarmament was a key motivation for the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. It is worth noting that US and the USSR announced their intention to hold the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks on the day of the signing ceremony for the NPT, negotiations that represented the first steps taken the two countries to slow the nuclear arms race and fulfill their commitment to nuclear disarmament made Article VI of the NPT.

Reflecting on that history, in January 2023 SGI President Daisaku Ikeda issued a proposal in which stressed the following:

Having experienced first-hand the terror of teetering on the brink of nuclear war, the people of that time brought forth historic powers of imagination and creativity. Now is the time for all countries and peoples to come together to once again unleash those creative powers and bring into being a new chapter in human history.

The spirit and sense of purpose that prevailed at the time of the birth of the NPT is resonant with and complementary to the ideals that motivated the drafting and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

I strongly call for all parties to explore and expand ways to link the efforts made on the basis of these two treaties, drawing forth their synergistic effects toward a world free from nuclear weapons.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

*Carrying forward the vision of President Ikeda, who passed away last November, members of the SGI are determined to generate momentum for a global course shift away from nuclear buildup premised on deterrence, toward nuclear disarmament that will avert catastrophe.*

Second, in order to *inherit*, we feel the need to listen closely to the voices of global hibakusha. The average age of surviving hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has exceeded 85. Additionally, there are many global hibakusha, people around the world who have been impacted by uranium mining, nuclear testing, and nuclear weapons production processes. Their realities have not been widely told. Their voices must be heard as they contain lessons we cannot afford to forget.

To this end, the SGI has produced a video of Hiroshima hibakusha Keiko Ogura's in-person testimony to leaders at the G7 Hiroshima Summit (link 1). This video was also screened at an NPT Preparatory Committee side event held on August 7, 2023, leaving a deep impression on participants, including many young people in attendance.

SGI also cooperated in the development of a documentary film "I Want To Live On: The Untold Stories of the Polygon" (link 2) produced by the NGO Center for International Security and Policy (CISP) in Kazakhstan that records the testimonies of nuclear test victims and was screened at a side event for the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW.

The spirit animating hibakusha in Japan and throughout the world to confront and recount their horrific experiences is the determination that no one else should endure what they have suffered. This open-hearted concern for others stands in stark contrast with the underlying logic of nuclear weapons—the readiness to annihilate others in pursuit of one's own interests and objectives. It is this readiness that marks nuclear weapons as an absolute evil.

Finally, we seek to *inspire* action by promoting awareness of the interlinkages between nuclear disarmament with global issues like climate change.

Even if the global Armageddon of full-scale nuclear war is avoided, scientists have reported

that a limited nuclear war could cause "nuclear winter," resulting in food shortages and famine that could potentially kill two billion people. Nuclear testing has inflicted immense damage on formerly colonized peoples and indigenous communities. Nuclear abolition is an intersectional issue spanning discrimination, human rights, climate justice, environment, gender, inclusion, humanitarianism and ethics, among others.

Aiming toward the UN Summit of the Future this September, this past March Japanese youth jointly organized the Future Action Festival that sought to raise awareness of these interconnections at a gathering of nearly 70,000 young participants.

As part of the second People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition campaign [link3], the SGI is striving to build renewed momentum for nuclear abolition toward 2027, focusing on peace and disarmament education.

It is increasingly crucial that people reach across their respective fields of action and policy positions to unite their voices for nuclear abolition, and, to this end, we also seek to strengthen interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

At the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, as one of 115 faith-based organizations expressing concern over nuclear weapons, an SGI representative read a Joint Interfaith Statement, a part of which I would like to quote in concluding this essay:

We recognize the urgency of this moment and what is at stake for all of us—the beloved natural world and the beloved community of humanity. Our fates are intertwined, and we cannot ignore the resounding threats that confront us... This fear is not unique to this moment in time. Let us draw courage from the audacity and vision of past struggles for justice, taking comfort in the wisdom that immense challenges always feel impossible until they are done.

Link 1: <https://sgi-peace.org/resources/hibakusha-testimony-from-hiroshima-keiko-ogura>

Link 2: <https://sgi-peace.org/resources/i-want-to-live-on-documentary-film>

Link 3: <https://sgi-peace.org/latest/the-continued-work-of-sgis-peoples-decade-campaign>

*Photo credit: Tomohiko Aishima*

## **FOREWORD**

### **Nuclear Disarmament Education: A Source of Hope**

By Masako Toki

*Senior Project Manager and Research Associate, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies,  
Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey*



When we look back at past year's global peace and security environments, especially with regard to progress in nuclear disarmament, it is hard to be hopeful. Nuclear dangers are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War. Regional tensions are intensifying. However, despite being an existential threat to humanity, nuclear weapons-related issues are rarely part of general conversations, especially amongst younger generations. This situation engenders this all-important question: How can we raise more awareness about this set of critical global challenges?

It is obvious that education is critical to resolving global problems, including nuclear issues. As late Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, astutely observed, "education is the most effective defense spending."

Moreover, the media play a crucial role in changing the nuclear disarmament discourse by shaping public opinion, raising awareness, and holding governments and organizations accountable for their actions related to nuclear issues. This endeavor will be more effective, however, when media organizations commit to partnering with educational institutes. Effective

partnerships between different stakeholders, such as academic institutes, disarmament activist groups, and the media will contribute to making progress toward nuclear disarmament.

In this context, this joint media project between SGI and INPS Japan and its likeminded media partners such as Inter Press Service and IDN-InDepthNews since 2009 has been vital. This Project brings a variety of perspectives on nuclear disarmament issues to the table, raising public awareness about them.

When we raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons, we should not ignore the voices of youth. It is essential to engage young people through creative and innovative ideas and approaches to address such challenges. Engaging and empowering young people brings hope and positivity. In today's challenging times, we must remain hopeful and positive when tackling one of the most critical global challenges.

Furthermore, while the global nuclear challenges are dire, there is a glimmer of hope in the sphere of multilateral diplomacy for nuclear disarmament. Since its conclusion, and subsequent entry into force, the Treaty on the

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is being joined by a growing number of states.

Additionally, the role of civil society, including youth-centered organizations, in making progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons, has become increasingly important and impactful. This is evidenced by the fact that 120 civil society organizations participated in the Second Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW, effectively working with likeminded States Parties to produce tangible results. In particular, issues related to the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons are gaining currency, thanks to various civil society initiatives that are running with the support of likeminded national governments.

Indeed, the increasing emphasis on discussions related to humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons use was one of the highlights of the TPNW Meeting. Such discussions were enriched by including scientists from the newly-established TPNW Scientific Advisory Group, and other relevant civil society members. Simultaneously, concerted support for nuclear weapons-affected communities has become more visible and powerful.

These affected communities were marginalized for far too long. Therefore, the past year's increasing effort to deliver nuclear justice is substantial and historic. As a result of the concerted efforts by the civil society and likeminded countries, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a Resolution entitled

“Addressing the Legacy of Nuclear Weapons: Providing Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation to States Affected by the Use or Testing of Nuclear Weapons” at the 78th UNGA session last year. This was spearheaded by the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kiribati as both countries have suffered because of numerous nuclear tests. Therefore, the adoption of this historic Resolution clearly proves that bringing human beings to the center of nuclear discussions, especially in the context of the TPNW, is becoming an absolute imperative.

So, there is hope even in the midst of an increasingly dire environment surrounding nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament advocates are well aware that this long journey is not easy, and the Treaty itself is just its beginning.

I would like to conclude with the words of wisdom by late SGI President, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, to urge everyone to remain hopeful, and never give up, especially at the time when the possibility seems to be almost none.

“Today, many people have given up on the possibility of nuclear abolition. But peace is always a competition between resignation and hope. Indifference and acquiescence in the face of the negative, destructive functions of life is, ultimately, to side with the forces of destruction.”

*Photo credit: Masako Toki*



## **“Oppenheimer” Brings the Harsh Reality of Nuclear Doomsday, Warns UN Chief**

By Thalif Deen



*UN Secretary-General António Guterres (centre right) attended a Security Council meeting on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on 18 March 2024. UN Photo/Evan Schneider*

UNITED NATIONS, 25 March 2024 (IDN)— The award-winning movie “Oppenheimer”, based on the life of Robert Oppenheimer, credited with having helped the creation of the atomic bomb, has once again turned the spotlight on the longstanding campaign for nuclear disarmament—and the deaths and devastation caused by one of the world’s most destructive weapons.

When the US dropped two bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the world had never experienced such a monumental human disaster. And it claimed the lives of an estimated 140,000-226,000 people.

After seeing the movie, Jonathan Granoff, a Trustee of the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS), and President of the Global Security Institute, told IDN the magnitude of devastation today’s thousands of nuclear weapons present dwarfs our powers of imagination.

“The film, by focusing on an individual human being’s agency in its creation, reminds us that just as it was in human hands to create these devices, it remains in our hands to eliminate them. It remains in our consciences whether we will ignore or take up the task,” he said.

Granoff’s comments echo the powerful warning from Albert Einstein: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.”

Thus, he, along with Bertrand Russell and nine other distinguished scientists in 1955, released a powerful manifesto that ended with a clear choice: “There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death because we cannot forget our quarrels?”

We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.”

### One of modernity's great heroes, Dr Joseph Rotblat

The film, Granoff pointed out, overlooks one of modernity's great heroes, Dr. Joseph Rotblat, a signatory to the Manifesto, who had walked off the Manhattan Project when it was clear that the Nazis could not build an atomic bomb. He told General Groves, the military leader of the Manhattan Project, of this fact, but discovered that the bomb was being built, not just to deter the Nazis but also to challenge the power of the Soviet Union.

Rotblatt saw the danger of an arms race if the US built and used the device, said Granoff. He helped found the Pugwash Conferences of scientists and received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1995.

Oppenheimer similarly saw the dangers of the arms race and argued against building the ultra-destructive hydrogen bomb and, instead, pursuing diplomacy, law, and cooperation at an international level to constrain the dangers of nuclear weapons.

He was persecuted and stripped of his security clearances because of his advocacy. The movie places a distorted emphasis on interpersonal animosity when principles were actually at issue, said Granoff.

### World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)

Oppenheimer, Rotblat and Russell ultimately helped form a prestigious organization, The World Academy of Art and Science, in 1960 to help rid the world of nuclear weapons threats and guide the modern venture and powers of science more broadly to be used to enhance rather than destroy life. WAAS continues this heritage to this day, working to achieve the promise of "continued progress" and, ultimately, human security.

Addressing the UN Security Council on March 18, Secretary-General António Guterres referred to the movie, which won seven Oscars at the Hollywood Academy Awards ceremony on March 10, including the four major awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor.

"The Doomsday Clock is ticking loudly enough for all to hear. From academics and civil society groups, calling for an end to the nuclear madness," he said.

"To Pope Francis, who calls the possession of nuclear arms 'immoral'. To young people across

the globe worried about their future, demanding change. To the Hibakusha, the brave survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—among our greatest living examples of speaking truth to power—delivering their timeless message of peace."

And to Hollywood, "where *Oppenheimer* brought the harsh reality of nuclear doomsday to vivid life for millions around the world," Guterres declared.

Dr M.V. Ramana, Professor and Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, told IDN that the movie *Oppenheimer* "reminds us of how much the world was changed by the invention and use of atomic weapons that were more destructive than any of the weapons seen until then."

### Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Since Oppenheimer oversaw the creation of the bombs that demolished Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the 1940s, the destructive power of nuclear weapons has grown immensely.

He said that ways of delivering these weapons on people and cities have grown enormously in range, sophistication, and numbers.

"Driven by endless competition for resources and power, countries that possess these nuclear weapons have routinely engaged in unilaterally using military force to attack other peoples."

Russia's attack on Ukraine and Israel's wholesale bombardment of Gaza, said Dr Ramana, are only the latest examples. The United States has led the world in military attacks on countries as far removed as Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, killing untold millions, he noted.

"As the climate crisis intensifies and blood and soil nationalist movements grow in multiple countries, the danger of armed confrontation is intensifying and the risk that nuclear weapons will be used somewhere or the other is escalating," said Dr Ramana.

"It is now more important than ever that we not only urgently eliminate nuclear weapons but that we also reconsider seriously another idea that animated people like Robert Oppenheimer and, especially, Albert Einstein: the idea that we have to get past the "outmoded concept of narrow nationalisms" (to use Einstein's evocative phrase) to move to "One World", declared Dr Ramana. [IDN-InDepthNews]

## **Is There a Way Out of Nuclear Stalemate?**

By Ramesh Jaura



*U.S. nuclear weapon test Ivy Mike, 31 Oct 1952, on Enewetak Atoll in the Pacific, the first test of a thermonuclear weapon (hydrogen bomb). Source: Wikipedia.*

BERLIN | 16 March 2024 (IDN) — Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has entered its third year. President Vladimir Putin has been threatening the use of nuclear weapons. Republican Presidential candidate, former President Donald Trump, doubled down his threat and appeared to invite Putin to invade any NATO member failing to meet the 2 per cent of GDP target for defence spending.

The real possibility of a nuclear war has crushed the decades-long nuclear taboo and greatly increased the risk of atomic conflict leading to a global catastrophe. At present, there are nine countries in the world that possess nuclear weapons. They are Russia, United States, China, France, United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, Israel, North Korea.

Together, they possess an estimated total of roughly 13,000 nuclear weapons, 9,400 of which are in active military stockpiles. While this is a significant decline from the approximately 70,000 warheads owned by the nuclear-armed states during the Cold War, nuclear arsenals are expected to grow over the coming decade and

today's forces are vastly more capable. Most are many times more powerful than the nuclear weapon dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August 1945.

Thirty-two other states are also part of the problem, with five nations hosting nuclear weapons, and a further 27 endorsing their use. A single nuclear warhead could kill hundreds of thousands of people, with lasting and devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences. Detonating just one nuclear weapon alone over New York would cause an estimated 583,160 fatalities.

Yet, the nuclear blackmail continues. What if "in the event that President Trump reiterates his doubts about NATO and the American nuclear umbrella or, for example, seeks an understanding with Russian President Vladimir Putin over our heads, to the detriment of Ukraine and European security," asks security expert and former German ambassador to Washington, Wolfgang Ischinger. "Despite many warnings, we Europeans still have no plan B," he adds.



### Deterrence

"NATO's nuclear deterrence must ... remain credible," maintains the German Foreign Office. "A world where the states challenging the international rules-based order are in possession of nuclear weapons, but NATO is not, is not a safe world. That is why the German Government decided to procure F-35s. These replacements for our current planes will be deployed within the context of NATO's nuclear sharing."

Unlike France and Britain—which possess 290 and 225 nuclear weapons respectively—Germany does not own atomic arsenal. But along with Turkey, Italy, Belgium and Netherlands—Germany hosts US nuclear weapons. The German air force is assigned approximately 15 B61 nuclear bombs, which are deployed at the Büchel air base in the German state of Rhineland-Westphalia.

"As long as the nuclear-armed states hang on to their arsenals and cling to the misguided doctrine of deterrence, we face the likelihood these weapons will be used sooner or later. Nuclear weapons should be abolished before it is too late," argues Melissa Parke, Executive Director of the 2017 Nobel Peace laureate ICAN.

She recalls that the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), on 27 November to 1 December 2023, at the UN Headquarters in New York agreed alongside scientists, the ICRC and ICAN on a declaration: "To challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence by highlighting and promoting new scientific evidence about the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons and juxtaposing this with the risks and assumptions that are inherent in nuclear deterrence".

The TPNW prohibits, among other things, the deployment, possession and transit, storage and stationing of nuclear weapons. "These extensive prohibitions create a conflict of interests between the TPNW and the obligations that the NATO allies have assumed, for instance as part of nuclear sharing. For this reason, neither Germany nor other NATO members have joined the TPNW," say the German Foreign Office.

ICAN pleads for all nuclear-armed states taking urgent steps to de-escalate tensions and to break free from the dangerous doctrine of nuclear deterrence. "Nuclear disarmament must be an essential element of a negotiated peace between Russia and Ukraine. Multilateral nuclear

disarmament is the only guarantee to prevent other nuclear-armed countries from following Russia's lead and using their nuclear weapons as a shield to commit war crimes and terrorize civilian populations. Joining the TPNW is a crucial step to delegitimize nuclear deterrence and eliminate nuclear weapons."

### TPNW growing in strength

The meeting further demonstrated that the TPNW is growing in strength. Several observing states announced their intention to join the treaty in the near term, which will bring the number of states that have either signed, ratified or acceded to the treaty to more than half of all 193 UN members.

Germany shares the concern of the States Parties to the TPNW about the stalemate in the area of nuclear disarmament. Like Australia, Belgium, and Norway, Germany therefore participated in the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW.

"The German Government intends to continue the dialogue with the States Parties to the TPNW on the question of how further progress on nuclear disarmament can be made in the current security environment," ensures the German Foreign Office.

Over the past two years, the States parties of the TPNW have been central in pushing back against any and all nuclear threats and challenging the false narrative of nuclear deterrence, Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) said in an IDN interview.

At the First Meeting of States Parties in 2021, they condemned unequivocally "*any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances*". At the second meeting in New York, they agreed "*to challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence by highlighting and promoting new scientific evidence about the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons and juxtaposing this with the risks and assumptions that are inherent in nuclear deterrence*".

Mr Terasaki added: "Faith-based organizations certainly can work together and play many roles at the UN, in the international community, and in grassroots awareness-raising in civil society: to find a way to put an end to the loss of civilian lives as soon as possible, to prevent catastrophic inhumane consequences in the name of humanity, to bring people together, understand

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

each other, be there for those who are suffering, and leave no one behind, and to create a world where everyone can shine as they are and all can enjoy diverse lives."

A new study by ICAN in partnership with PAX, the largest peace organisation in the Netherlands, underscores that it is important to disinvest in companies producing nuclear weapons. Conflict has accelerated the global nuclear arms race, with the nine nuclear-armed states increasing spending to \$82.9 billion in 2022. As a result, the nuclear weapons industry has profited shamelessly off the world's concerns over nuclear war. Since the conflict in Ukraine and the increased nuclear tensions that followed, profits for the companies that produce nuclear weapons drove up, with a \$15.7 billion increase in share

and bond holding and a \$57.1 billion increase in loans and underwriting.

The report's authors identified 287 financial institutions that had substantial financing or investment relationships with 24 companies involved in nuclear weapon production.

Of the 287 listed investors, only three are from countries whose governments have joined the TPNW. In at least one case, these investments, while attributed to the parent company in the report, were made from subsidiaries in jurisdictions outside the area currently covered by the nuclear ban treaty. \$477 billion was held in bonds and shares, and \$343 billion was provided in loans and underwriting. [IDN-InDepthNews]

### Need to Invigorate the Nuclear Disarmament Process

By Dr J. Enkhsaikhan, *Chairman Blue Banner NGO & Former Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations.*



Credit: UN Photo / Manuel Elias

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia | 28 February 2024 (IDN) — Despite or perhaps because of the increase in geopolitical tensions, conflicts and the rise in the risks of nuclear weapons use, it is high time to look at the state of nuclear disarmament and consider what needs to be done to practically

promote it. US-Russian talks on reduction of nuclear weapons are at a standstill. Some of the earlier agreements on reducing nuclear armaments have been abrogated or withdrawn by one side or the other. The New START treaty that calls for halving the number of strategic nuclear



missile launchers has been “suspended” and would expire in less than two years unless extended or replaced by a new treaty.

Due to the war in Ukraine US-Russian relations, that possess about 90 percent of nuclear weapons, have become openly antagonistic and there is little hope that their bilateral nuclear weapons reduction talks would resume in the near future. There is no prospect of multilateral talks of the five nuclear-weapon states (the P5) to reduce their nuclear weapons, to start soon.

On a broader scale, no agreements have been reached to implement the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The review conferences of 2015 and 2022 have ended without agreeing on final documents, while the substantive agreements reached at previous conferences have not been fully implemented.

In the increasingly inter-connected and globalized world, non-proliferation is not anymore, the concern of the P5 only but of the entire world. All states are, in fact, becoming joint custodians of the peaceful and stable world. Therefore, it is time that all states, beneficiaries of peace and stability, should also become contributors to it based on their comparative advantages.

### **A doctrinal change is needed**

The world is rapidly changing. However, the P5, mindful of their narrow interests, are reluctant to react to these changes and make the needed adjustments to their nuclear doctrines and policies. As former US Secretary of Defence William Perry had admitted in his 2020 book “The Button”, the US nuclear weapon policy had become obsolete and dangerous. Like horses with blinkers, the P5 do not see or want to see and react to the tremendous changes underway in technological developments that require appropriate adjustments to their security doctrines and policies. Instead of limiting the role of nuclear weapons in their policies, the P5 are even lowering the threshold of the uses of such weapons by increasing the list of their possible uses including in the cases conventional conflicts or even against non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWSs).

All these provokes nuclear arms race. With the introduction of the latest technologies the arms race might soon reach the outer space in violation of the 1967 treaty, the cyber or digital realms with the unpredictable for all devastating consequences. Therefore, what is needed now is

a doctrinal change in nuclear deterrence policy that logically leads to horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferations undermining thus the basis of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament when the issue of global survival is basically at stake.

Deterrence policy of strengthening own security at the expense of its proponent's provokes naturally the latter to take counter steps. In this nuclear deterrence is no exception. This security dilemma leads to the vicious circle that has brought the world to the verge of nuclear catastrophe. Therefore, the nuclear deterrence doctrine needs to be replaced by a non-provocative doctrine, i.e. by a common security doctrine that prohibits the threat or use of nuclear weapons. It promotes over-all security by taking into account the security needs of all nations and places emphasis on conflict resolution, negotiations and strengthening of international law.

In short it promotes non-nuclear security which in content coincides with the 2023 Bali Declaration of G20 leaders that includes leaders of the P5, that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was inadmissible.

### **Encouraging development**

Against the somewhat pessimistic background, a positive and inspiring development was a call by like-minded NNWSs to legally ban nuclear weapons and start a process of stigmatizing, delegitimizing and eliminating such weapons. Thus, based on the outcomes of three international conferences on catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons in 2013-2014, 125 states with the support and cooperation of ICAN and other international NGOs have called for banning nuclear weapons as a step to its final elimination.

Despite the reluctance and boycott of nuclear weapon states and their allies, the General Assembly of the United Nations for the first time has mandated and hosted a United Nations conference on prohibiting nuclear weapons that in 2017 has adopted the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW). The treaty that had elaborated a comprehensive set of prohibitions on nuclear weapon activities had entered into force in 2021. It complements the NPT by not only prohibiting proliferation of such weapons but also contributing to the goals of nuclear disarmament. As of this writing 70 states have ratified it and 93 states have signed it. This positive measure in

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

nuclear disarmament needs to be further supported and strengthened by NNWSs by making it near universal and contributing to nuclear disarmament.



By Dr J. Enkhsaikhan

Besides the TPNW “phenomenon” there are also other multilateral measures, though difficult and complex as they may be, that can and need to be undertaken. Thus, for example, the fourth special session of UNGA devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) needs to be convened in which not only the P5 and their allies but also the four other nuclear weapon states would participate as members of the United Nations.

The special session would need to seriously discuss the reasons for ineffectiveness of the international disarmament machinery, starting with the CD or bringing CTBT into force, recognize and support the role of international CSOs and their coalitions, role of like-minded states and civil society partnerships that had already lead to adoption of international norms banning land mines, cluster munitions and now nuclear weapons.

Since nuclear weapons are connected with global survival, perhaps interests of NNWSs and consultation with them should become a must at multilateral negotiation fora connected with nuclear weapons, like the international talks on trade and development issues expect to reflect the interests of developing states, including least developed, land-locked and island developing states. The issues of non-first use and sole purpose use need to be addressed without further delay.

### Other needed measure

The current difficulties in US-Russian disarmament talks should not impede or derail regional measures. Thus, for example, the establishment of regional NWFZs needs to be made inclusive. Otherwise, individual states that due to their geographical location or for valid legal or political reasons cannot be part of the regime since the current definition of NWFZs recognizes only those that are established “on the basis of the arrangements agreed upon by the states of the region concerned”.

However, there are nearly two dozen states, including small island or neutral states that due to the current definition of NWFZs cannot form part of such zones creating blind spots and grey areas and thus forming the Achilles heel of the nuclear-weapon-free world. As is well known a system is as strong as its weakest link(s). Recognition of the right of individual states would not only define and strengthen their status but also turn their territories into important building blocks of the NFWF.

Therefore, the General Assembly needs to undertake the second comprehensive study on NWFZs in all its aspects that would contribute to establishing new NWFZs and making the P5 security assurances ironclad and not as the Budapest memorandum that utterly failed Ukraine. [IDN-InDepthNews]

*The world is rapidly changing. However, the P5, mindful of their narrow interests, are reluctant to react to these changes and make the needed adjustments to their nuclear doctrines and policies. As former US Secretary of Defence William Perry had admitted in his 2020 book “The Button”, the US nuclear weapon policy had become obsolete and dangerous.- Excerpt from the above OpEd.*

## Is Nuclear Outer Space a Possible Reality or an Empty Threat?

By Thalif Deen



*Outer space from the International Space Station at 400 km (250 mi) altitude in low Earth orbit. In the background the Milky Way's interstellar space is visible, as well as in the foreground, above Earth, the airglow of the ionosphere just below and beyond the so-defined edge of space the Kármán line in the thermosphere. Credit: NASA/Scott Kelly*

UNITED NATIONS | 21 February 2024 (IDN) — The growing fear of a nuclear weapon in outer space was perhaps never anticipated 65 years ago when the UN General Assembly routinely created a Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) back in 1959.

The 102-member committee, described as one of the largest *ad hoc* committees at the United Nations, was set up to govern the exploration and use of space for the benefit of all humanity: “for peace, security and development”.

But the current widespread speculation of a proposed launching of a Russian space-based weapon has led to rising US concerns about the new development.

In a February 19 report, the New York Times quoted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as saying any nuclear detonation in space would take out not only American satellites but also those in Beijing and New Delhi.

Still, the US says it poses no real threat to humans.

John Kirby, US National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications, told reporters February 19: “We are not talking about a weapon that can be used to attack human beings or cause physical destruction on earth”.

Tariq Rauf, former Head of Verification and Security Policy at the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) told IDN the adage that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing can be applied to Mike Turner, who heads the US House intelligence committee, when he recently demanded that the President Biden’s administration declassify information on what he termed a “serious national security threat” said to involve plans to deploy anti-satellite nuclear weapons in space by Russia.

Fortunately, cooler heads have prevailed, and Mike Johnson, speaker of the US House of



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Representatives, has stated that there is no need for panic or for alarm.

Any nuclear detonation in space, Rauf pointed out, would damage and destroy satellites in Earth orbit affecting both military and civilian users.

“In the military domain, damaging or destroying satellites for reconnaissance, verification of arms control, early warning of missile launches, and battle management, would adversely affect both Russia and the US, effectively blinding them. Thus, deploying nuclear weapons in space makes no sense.”

At present, he said, there is no international regime prohibiting anti-satellite weapons (ASAT), and such weapons would not necessarily require a nuclear explosive device. While nuclear weapons on ballistic missiles would traverse through space when fired to targets on Earth, this would not be in violation of the Outer Space Treaty that prohibits testing and deployment of nuclear explosive devices in space.

The 1963 Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty prohibits nuclear detonations in space.

Nandasiri Jasentuliyana, former Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and President Emeritus, International Institute of Space Law & Policy, told IDN from a legal perspective, space law is based on deterrence.

Russian violation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty would be self-defeating and counterproductive. There are several countries with almost immediate retaliatory launch capability, he said.

“Destroying the communication resources of a military power leaves that military structure without control of its forces. Even in wartime, nations do not destroy other nations’ undersea cables and major communication systems.”

“That leaves a military victor without means of communicating with a conquered population and its military. In my opinion, the Russians have a great deal to lose and comparatively little to gain by violating the Outer Space Treaty, let alone nuclear weapons,” he argued.

Such an act may offer some short-term tactical advantage, but in my opinion, that is far outweighed by the unavoidable long-term consequences.

On a more strategic level, he said: “As I understand, much of the actual details are—for obvious reasons—shrouded, and this might well be a case where the reference to ‘nuclear’ may

get everyone up in arms without knowing exactly what is going on”.

As such, and maybe it is part of the classical Russian strategy to fuel all sorts of rumors and leave opponents in the dark, but there are serious doubts about the viability and military usefulness of nuclear weapons operating in outer space, given the absence of an atmosphere and the lack of discrimination by any blasts as between Russia’s space assets and those of others (as the US itself experienced with Starfish Prime back in the 60s).

“I would not exclude that what is going on would be regarding placing nuclear-fueled satellites with (an aggressive) military task in outer space, where its conformity with the Outer Space Treaty may be arguable but not unequivocal – yet posing a serious threat”, said Jasentuliyana, who was also a former Deputy Director General, United Nations.

Asked for a response, UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said he was aware of the media speculation. But “we don’t really have any substantive information on it”.

Obviously, as a matter of principle, the Secretary-General continues to call on all Member States to avoid an arms race in outer space, including the development of both legally binding and political measures.

“And then when it comes to nuclear weapons, Member States must abide by their treaty obligations and avoid any action that could lead to catastrophic miscalculation or escalation,” he added.

Elaborating further, Rauf said: “We might recall that in 1958 there was a short-lived US effort, Project A-119, to detonate a thermonuclear nuclear device on the surface of the Moon. The rationale was to produce a very large radioactive cloud and a brilliant super flash of light clearly visible from Earth, that would be an obvious show of strength to the Soviet Union. Fortunately, the project was cancelled, the Moon was spared and the “Moon Treaty” of 1979 prohibits all types of nuclear tests on the Moon and other celestial bodies”.

In July 1962, a US detonation in space of a 1.4 megaton nuclear explosive device, Starfish Prime, 500 times as powerful as the one that dropped on Hiroshima, disabled several satellites from its electro-magnetic pulse (EMP). The Earth’s magnetic field caught ionized radiation

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

from the detonation and created a radiation belt (Starfish belt) that lasted for a decade.

Both the USSR and the US previously have carried out several nuclear detonations in space in the early 1960s. Soviet Project K nuclear detonations were conducted from 1961 to 1962, while the US carried out 11 nuclear detonations in space. Efforts on preventing an arms race in space (PAROS), prohibiting ASAT weapons and other weapons in space have been deadlocked at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and at the UN in New York at the First Committee of the General Assembly, Rauf said.

He also pointed out that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in Vienna, set up by the General Assembly in 1959, has the mandate to promote international cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space, and govern the exploration and use of space for the benefit of all humanity for peace, security and development.

In general, the US and the EU States prefer a voluntary code of conduct and transparency regarding activities in space (International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities—ICoC), while China together with Russia and others favor legally binding measures regarding non-deployment of weapons in space (Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects—PPWT), declared Rauf.

Jasentuliyana said a nuclear weapon in outer space would bring into issue the Outer Space Treaty Arts II, III, IV, and IX, as well as the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the UN Charter. “The UN Charter is now customary international law, and I consider OST Articles II, III, and IV to be customary international law as well. Thus, Russia is not able to effectively denounce these treaty Instruments,” he noted. [IDN-DepthNews]

### The Complexity of Nuclear Submarine Safeguards Impacts the Current Landscape

By Leonam dos Santos Guimarães



*Photo: Royal Australian Navy submarine HMAS Rankin is seen during AUSINDEX 21, a biennial maritime exercise between the Royal Australian Navy and the Indian Navy in Darwin, Australia, 5 September 2021. Source: China Daily*

*The writer is a nuclear and naval engineer (PhD) and a member of the Brazilian National Academy of Engineering. CEO of Eletronuclear S.A. Coordinator, Brazilian Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program.*



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

RIO DE JANEIRO | 14 February 2024 (IDN) —

The topic of applying safeguards to nuclear submarine fuel, focusing on ensuring security and proliferation resistance, involves a complex interplay of international regulations, agreements, and technical considerations.

A pivotal aspect of this discussion centres on the application of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, particularly in the context of the military-to-military transfer of nuclear material for submarine programs. It has been argued that there should be no automatic exclusion from safeguards for nuclear material simply because it is used in military activities.

The emphasis is on ensuring that the non-application of safeguards is as limited as possible, encompassing all processes outside the actual use of relevant nuclear material in the submarine, such as enrichment, fuel fabrication, storage, transportation, reprocessing, and disposal.

### **AUKUS:**

The application of safeguards to the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States) Nuclear Submarine program is a complex and highly technical subject, requiring a nuanced understanding of international nuclear non-proliferation norms, the specific details of the AUKUS agreement, and the technical aspects of nuclear submarine technology. The AUKUS pact, a security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, announced in September 2021, involves the provision of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia. This arrangement has significant implications for nuclear non-proliferation and safeguards. The following points are pertinent AUKUS agreement:

**Nature of Nuclear Technology in Submarines:** The nuclear reactors used in submarines are designed for propulsion and not for producing nuclear weapons. However, they do use weapon grade HEU, which can be weaponized. This necessitates strict safeguards to ensure the HEU is not diverted for non-peaceful purposes.

**Australia's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Commitments:** Australia is a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As such, Australia is obliged to maintain a civilian nuclear program exclusively for peaceful purposes and under international safeguards. The acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines places Australia in

a unique position, as it will have to demonstrate that its new capabilities are not being used for prohibited military purposes, like nuclear weapons development.

**International Safeguards and Oversight:** The IAEA is crucial in implementing safeguards. Australia, the UK, and the US must work closely with the IAEA to develop a framework that ensures the submarine program adheres to Australia's non-proliferation commitments. This could involve regular inspections, monitoring, and verification mechanisms.

**Regional and Global Implications:** The deployment of nuclear-powered submarines by Australia could have significant implications for regional security dynamics, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. There is a need for transparency and dialogue to address any concerns neighbouring countries raise and prevent any escalation of regional arms races.

**Technological and Operational Safeguards:** Apart from international oversight, technical and operational safeguards are integral to the program. These include secure handling and accounting of nuclear materials, physical protection measures, and safety protocols to prevent accidents or unauthorized use.

**Legal and Policy Frameworks:** The AUKUS partners must develop robust legal and policy frameworks that align with international norms and bilateral agreements. This includes legislative and regulatory measures that govern nuclear materials and technology use, transfer, and disposal.

### **The application of safeguards**

The application of safeguards to the AUKUS Nuclear Submarine program is critical to its implementation. It requires a balanced approach addressing non-proliferation concerns while allowing Australia to enhance its defence capabilities. Ensuring the program's compliance with international nuclear non-proliferation norms and maintaining transparency will be essential in mitigating any regional tensions and in bolstering global nuclear security.

The status of the AUKUS Nuclear Submarine program is marked by significant advancements in the program's technical and strategic aspects, along with ongoing negotiations and engagement with the IAEA to ensure compliance with international nuclear non-proliferation standards. The program's progress is part of a broader

## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the military and technological capabilities of the AUKUS nations.

As of the latest information available, the negotiations between the AUKUS partners (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding the AUKUS Nuclear Submarine program were progressing, with a focus on ensuring compliance with nuclear non-proliferation standards.

**Progress on the Nuclear Submarine Program:** The AUKUS partners have made significant progress in developing and implementing the nuclear submarine program. This includes establishing education and training opportunities for Royal Australian Navy personnel, increased industry training, and preparations for the Submarine Rotational Force-West in Australia. The first sale of U.S. Virginia-class submarines to Australia is expected in the early 2030s, with the delivery of the first Australian-built SSN-AUKUS in the early 2040s.

**Commitment to Non-Proliferation Standards:** The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to upholding the highest standards for nuclear non-proliferation. This commitment is crucial as it involves the use of nuclear-powered submarines by a non-nuclear weapon state (Australia) under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

**Bilateral Negotiations with the IAEA:** Australia has commenced bilateral negotiations with the IAEA. These negotiations are focused on arranging safeguards under Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. The outcome of these negotiations will be pivotal in determining how the AUKUS program aligns with global non-proliferation norms.

**Focus on Safeguards and Oversight:** These discussions emphasise establishing a robust framework of safeguards and oversight. This is essential to ensure that the nuclear material and technology used in the submarines are not diverted for non-peaceful purposes.

**Legislative and Regulatory Frameworks:** The negotiations are conducted in the context of the partners' respective international legal obligations and commitments, emphasizing the legal and regulatory aspects of nuclear technology transfer and usage. Discussions are underway to secure legislative support across all three countries to

ensure the success of AUKUS. This includes the introduction of legislation to the Australian Parliament to establish a framework for nuclear safety, including an independent nuclear safety regulator.

**Technological Aspects:** The AUKUS submarines will incorporate U.S. propulsion technology, with reactors provided by Rolls Royce Submarine LTD. for both UK and Australian SSN-AUKUS submarines. The partners are also developing a joint combat system for these submarines.

**Broader Scope of AUKUS Agreement:** Beyond the submarine program, the AUKUS agreement also encompasses advancements in other technological areas, including cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and additional undersea capabilities. These aspects aim to enhance joint capabilities and interoperability among the AUKUS nations.

The negotiations between the AUKUS partners and the IAEA are a critical aspect of the submarine program, with a strong emphasis on adhering to international nuclear non-proliferation norms and establishing a transparent and effective safeguards system.

The outcome of these negotiations will have significant implications for the non-proliferation regime and the future operation of the AUKUS submarine program.

### **Brazil**

The application of safeguards to Brazil's indigenous nuclear submarine program involves a complex interplay of international non-proliferation norms, national security interests, and technological innovation.

This topic can be dissected into several key areas: the context of Brazil's nuclear program, the nature of international safeguards, and the specific challenges and considerations in applying these safeguards to a nuclear submarine program.

Brazil's pursuit of an indigenous nuclear submarine program is part of its broader nuclear technology development, which includes peaceful energy generation and national defence. As a signatory to the NPT and a member of the IAEA, Brazil has committed to using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. It is a unique case of a country proscribing non-peaceful nuclear applications through its Federal Constitution.

## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

Applying safeguards to Brazil's nuclear submarine program presents, therefore unique challenges:

**National Security Concerns:** Submarines often embody sensitive military technology. Like other countries with similar programs, Brazil may be reluctant to provide full access to its submarines due to security concerns.

**Dual-Use Technology:** Nuclear submarine technology can be dual-use, meaning it has civilian and military applications. Safeguarding such technology requires balancing non-proliferation objectives with the legitimate defence interests of the state.

**Technical Challenges:** Monitoring and verification in a submarine context pose technical challenges, as the operational use of submarines involves mobility and periods of inaccessibility.

**Legal and Diplomatic Negotiations:** Establishing a framework for safeguards on a military vessel involves intricate legal and diplomatic negotiations between Brazil, the IAEA, and potentially other international actors. This includes defining the extent of access for inspectors and the nature of oversight mechanisms.

The application of safeguards to Brazil's indigenous nuclear submarine program represents a nuanced area of international relations and nuclear technology. It necessitates a delicate balance between adhering to international non-proliferation norms and respecting national security and sovereignty. The success of these efforts depends on transparent, cooperative approaches that recognize the complexities of nuclear technology and the diverse interests of the global community in maintaining peace and security.

### **Multilayered**

The status of the application of safeguards to Brazil's indigenous nuclear submarine program is a multilayered and evolving issue, marked by Brazil's long-standing nuclear policies and recent developments in its negotiation with international bodies.

Brazil has been a key player in nuclear technology, developing capabilities encompassing the entire nuclear fuel cycle, including uranium mining, conversion, enrichment, and nuclear energy production. The country's nuclear program has civilian and military components, with the Brazilian Navy responsible for uranium

enrichment technologies. Brazil's pursuit of a nuclear-powered submarine dates back to 1979 and has been part of its broader goal to modernize its economy and increase its international influence. The Brazilian Navy has been working with the French company Naval Group to acquire technology for building conventional-powered submarines and non-nuclear systems design of nuclear-powered ones.

In terms of international commitments, Brazil is a signatory to several treaties and agreements emphasizing the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Quadripartite Agreement between Brazil, Argentina, the IAEA and ABACC (Argentine Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) outlines the application of comprehensive safeguards to nuclear materials and installations in both countries.

### **Low-enriched uranium**

Brazil's approach to its nuclear submarine program involves using low-enriched uranium (LEU), which is not suitable for weapons development. However, due to Brazil's indigenous military nuclear fuel cycle, including enrichment facilities, there are concerns about proliferation risks. The Brazilian government has initiated consultations with the IAEA to apply special procedures to ensure the non-diversion of nuclear materials used for naval propulsion. This consultation process is significant as it may lead to the conclusion of complementary technical arrangements with the IAEA, which would mark a significant development in international nuclear safeguards.

The negotiations between Brazil and the IAEA could have significant implications for the ABACC safeguards regime and for international non-proliferation efforts more broadly. The outcome of these talks could influence the global nuclear order, potentially leading to innovative safeguards agreements that balance the peaceful use of nuclear technology with non-proliferation concerns.

The application of safeguards to Brazil's nuclear submarine program is in the active negotiation and development phase. The country's history of nuclear technology development, strategic goals, and international obligations make this an

## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

intricate issue at the intersection of national security, technological innovation, and global non-proliferation efforts.

As of the latest information available, the status of the negotiations between Brazil and the IAEA regarding the safeguards application to Brazil's nuclear submarine program is marked by ongoing discussions and complexities inherent in the unique nature of Brazil's program.

Brazil's initiative to develop a nuclear-powered submarine, part of its broader strategic military objectives, has necessitated negotiations with the IAEA to ensure the program aligns with international non-proliferation standards. The main aspects of these negotiations include:

**Special Procedures for Safeguards:** Brazil has initiated consultations with the IAEA to apply special procedures to ensure the non-diversion of nuclear materials intended for naval propulsion. This step is critical as it involves establishing a framework that aligns with Brazil's obligations under international treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and regional agreements. These special procedures would provide the IAEA with more comprehensive inspection authority, enhancing transparency and confidence in Brazil's nuclear program.

**Concerns Over Indigenous Nuclear Fuel Cycle:** Brazil's possession of an indigenous military nuclear fuel cycle, including uranium conversion and enrichment facilities, adds complexity to the negotiations. The country plans to use low-enriched uranium (LEU) in its submarines, which is not typically suitable for weapons development. However, the existence of these facilities raises

proliferation concerns, necessitating stringent safeguards.

**Role of ABACC:** The Argentine Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) also plays a role in the safeguarding process due to the Quadripartite Agreement between Brazil, Argentina, the IAEA, and ABACC. The outcome of Brazil's negotiations with the IAEA could influence the ABACC safeguards regime.

**Global Implications:** The negotiations and their outcomes are closely watched as they have broader implications for the global nuclear order.

They could lead to the development of innovative safeguards agreements that address non-proliferation challenges in the context of military use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

**Unique Nature of Brazil's Program:** Unlike other countries, such as Australia, under the AUKUS agreement, Brazil is pursuing an entirely indigenous path for its nuclear submarine program, which includes the development of both civilian and military nuclear fuel cycles. This unique aspect adds another layer of complexity to the negotiations.

These negotiations represent a significant moment in international nuclear relations, highlighting the balance between national security, technological advancement, and adherence to global non-proliferation standards.

The outcome of these discussions will likely set precedents for future agreements and policies related to nuclear-powered submarines in non-nuclear-armed states. [IDN-InDepthNews]



## There Is a Way Out of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis

By Jonathan Power



*US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in October 2000. Credit: Dog-Min Chung,*

LUND, Sweden | 26 January 2024 (IDN) — Last November the dangerous arms race between North Korea and South Korea in what is in effect a civil war was wound up a few more notches. South Korea said it was going to scrap a security pact made with North Korea in 2018. The pact halted all military exercises along their common border. The South made this move in retaliation for the North's decision to launch a military reconnaissance satellite, violating UN Security Council resolutions banning the use of ballistic missile technology. This month the war of words has escalated further. North Korea tore down an impressive monument symbolizing union with the South, according to reports on January 23.

Peacemaking initiatives have come and gone. Both the Biden Administration and its partner (erstwhile?) in this endeavour, the Chinese government, appear to be treading water.

When, soon after the election, President Barack Obama invited Donald Trump to the White House we didn't learn much about their conversation. But we were briefed on one thing: Obama had told Trump that North Korea would be the most pressing and difficult issue on his agenda. It remains so. Trump arranged a festive meeting in Singapore with North Korea's Kim Jong Un in

2018. It was showbiz and came to naught. President Joe Biden has not even attempted to get to grips with the issue.

The Americans have seemingly missed the boat. It's as simple as that. What's done is done. While Washington has dithered and dithered through five successive presidencies, missing opportunity after opportunity, North Korea has gone from zero nuclear weapons to an arsenal of at least 40 to 50. North Korea now has a few intercontinental ballistic missiles said to be capable of striking the US. Experts believe it has miniaturised a nuclear warhead that can be fitted into the cone of these rockets.

**One thing is certain, albeit many Western politicians will dispute this: North Korea would never have become a nuclear-bomb-possessing nation if the US had honoured its early agreements.**

The Clinton Administration negotiated what it called an "Agreed Framework". The US started to build in the North nuclear light-water reactors that could only manufacture electricity. For a time, North Korea was the major receiver of American economic aid in Asia. Clinton sent his secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, to Pyongyang where



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

she was received with honours. North Korea softened its attitude.

Just before he left office President Bill Clinton believed he was on the cusp of a deal. But then right at the end of his presidency Clinton got diverted by crucial Arab/Israeli negotiations that seemed like they would bring peace to Palestine. (In the event, needless to say, it did not happen.) At the same time Republicans in Congress never stopped drilling holes into what had been already agreed with North Korea. Promises made by the US government to the North Koreans were sabotaged and undermined by the Republicans.

### **Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, kicked Clinton's good work aside**

The stand-off between the US and North Korea is a precarious one. The American military knew that if the US fired its weapons North Korea would aim south its arsenal of conventionally armed rockets and destroy Seoul, only a couple of minutes of flying time away.

For its part, the North Korean military knows that a (thin) majority of American public opinion, according to polls, would back a large-scale retaliatory nuclear attack if the North Koreans launched towards the US even one rocket armed with a nuclear warhead.

Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, kicked Clinton's good work aside, despite the views of his secretary of state and former military chief, Colin Powell and most of the academic political science and international relations community, who thought this was a worse mistake than going to war with Iraq. North Korea then decided, and only then, to complete its work on building a nuclear bomb.

We can't wind the clock back to Clinton's "Agreed Framework", but we can create another- slowly. But first the North has to be "warmed up"- with some of the same techniques that in the end helped undermine the Soviet

Union—cultural, educational and sporting exchanges—regular visits of US soccer, baseball teams and symphony orchestras, the New York City Ballet and Opera, Broadway musicals, pop musicians and building branch campuses of major US universities that teach, besides arts and sciences, human rights (which has been done by Western universities' outreach programs in some Chinese universities).

Then the US must agree to two things Pyongyang really wants: to open talks on a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War which terminated with only an armistice in 1953. Second, to limit American military exercises around the Korean peninsula.

We need no more bluster. The US needs to get on with searching for a peaceful solution. Being positive is not easy but in the end, after tortuous years of progress followed by retrenchment, it's informed optimism that counts. Where there's a will surely there's a way. And now after many missteps we do know the way to go, if we want to. Unfortunately, to be realistic, it will not happen until the Republicans are in a minority in both the House and the Senate. Otherwise, they will sabotage any president-led agreement.



*\*Jonathan Power has been an international foreign affairs columnist for over 40 years. For 17 years he was a columnist and commentator for the International Herald Tribune (now the New York Times). He has interviewed over 70 of the world's most famous and influential presidents, prime ministers, and political and literary icons. Jonathan has also been a frequent guest columnist for the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post. He has written eight books on foreign affairs and, in his early*

*days as a journalist, made films for the BBC, one of which won the Silver Medal at the Venice Film Festival. [IDN-InDepthNews]*

*Photo credit: Jonathan Power*

## The End of An Era?

### The Case for a New UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament

By Sergio Duarte



*A meeting of the Conference on Disarmament in 1979 in the Council Chamber of the Palace of Nations, Geneva, which was established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I). Credit: UNIDIR.*

*The writer is an Ambassador, a former High Representative of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs., and President of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.*

BELO HORIZONTE, Brazil | 7 December 2023 (IDN) — Seventy-eight years ago, when World War II was about to end, the fear of an armed clash between the main powers that emerged as leaders of a significant part of the international community began to grow as the two rivals developed nuclear capabilities.

As we know, what happened instead was a protracted political and ideological confrontation without direct military conflict between them that came to be known as the “Cold War”. In some parts of the globe, however, their struggle for political influence gave rise to several local conventional wars with many casualties and high economic and social costs.

The main victors of World War II managed to establish norms and institutions that made possible to keep under control the uneasy relationship among themselves. Agreement on the composition and powers of the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace and security, the United Nations Security Council, was fundamental in that regard. Each of those five nations was assigned a permanent seat together with the ability to prevent any decision contrary to its interests.

Any change in that structure became dependent on the agreement of all five, thus setting in stone their privileged status. In order to participate in the construction of “a world free of the scourge of war”, the remaining members of the international community agreed to accept the asymmetric division of rights and responsibilities and the primacy of those powers in the conduct of the relationship among nations.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

The very first Session of General Assembly of the United Nations in January 1946 had the chance to arrive at a decision that could have drastically changed international relations and open a new age of peaceful nuclear cooperation for the benefit of mankind as a whole. Still under the impact of the horror of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Assembly adopted unanimously Resolution no. 1 that set forth a Commission charged, *inter alia*, with making proposals for the elimination of atomic weapons.

However, the mistrust and animosity between the United States and the Soviet Union prevented the progress of the initiative and the Commission was finally dissolved in 1948 without fulfilling its mandate. The international organization turned instead to debating partial measures of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. The original objective of “elimination” became ever more distant since then.

### **The world has until now survived the nuclear threat**

Nevertheless, the world has until now survived the nuclear threat, perhaps by a combination of skill, luck and divine intervention. Even in moments of very serious crises a nuclear exchange between the major players has been averted—up to now. Over time, the rivals managed to arrive at agreements between themselves aimed at enhancing their own security and inspired the adoption of a number of instruments to regulate the world balance of power. Despite their deep mistrust, channels of communication between themselves were kept open and were instrumental in facilitating the conclusion of understandings to avoid actual military confrontation.

Among the agreements concluded in the first few decades of the *Atomic Age* are the several instruments that defined in different moments the size and location of military forces and established mechanisms for building and strengthening confidence.

Most relevant are the ones that derive from the 1975 Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, especially those known by the acronym CSCE, as well as the agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union (later Russia) such as the SALT, SORT and START series on nuclear arms, the INF treaty on intermediate range nuclear missiles, the ABM treaty on anti-missile defense systems and the “Open Skies” treaty on mutual observation.

Worth mentioning in this context is the understanding stemming from the solution of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, which resulted in the pioneer establishment of a direct communication system between the Kremlin and the White House that became known as “the red phone”.

Except for the 2010 New START treaty, none of the agreements mentioned above are in force today. The U.S. and Russia are known to have been reducing their nuclear forces to agreed limits and in 2021 their presidents jointly announced the decision to extend that treaty to 2026 and “embark together on an integrated bilateral strategic stability dialogue in the near future” through which they “seek to lay the groundwork for future arms control and risk reduction measures”. The two leaders also reaffirmed the Reagan-Gorbachov 1967 mantra that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”. Since then, meaningful communication and constructive official dialogue between the major powers seems to have all but ceased.

Until now there has been no practical follow-up to those stated intentions. The war in Ukraine, in which four nuclear weapon states are involved, does not bode well for progress in the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, all nine possessors of nuclear weapons have been dedicating ample technological and financial resources to the further development of their arsenals.

### **NPT is still in force**

In the multilateral field, the most important instrument concluded during the Cold War that remains in force is the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), promoted by the nuclear weapon states with the objective of preventing other nations from developing such arms and at the same time reserve for themselves their exclusive possession. The remainder of the international community—except for four states—agreed to renounce the nuclear weapon option in exchange for the promise of progress toward the end of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

Other multilateral instruments still in force adopted in that period deal basically with non-proliferation by banning nuclear weapons in locations and environments where they did not exist, such as the Antarctic (1961), outer space (1967), and the ocean floor and its subsoil (1972). In 1963 Russia and the United States negotiated and signed a treaty prohibiting nuclear test explosions in the atmosphere and underwater (PTBT)

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

complemented thirty-three years later by the Comprehensive Test-ban Treaty (CTBT), which outlawed all test explosions in all environments.

Despite widespread adhesion this latter treaty did not yet enter into force for lack of signature and ratification by certain states nominally mentioned in its Article XIV. Russia has recently revoked its ratification of the CTBT, citing reports that the United States and China—which have not ratified it—are contemplating resuming underground tests.

Progress in achieving significant results in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament has been slow and uneven. No nuclear weapon has ever been destroyed or dismantled by virtue of a multilateral instrument. Parties to established nuclear weapon free zones encompassing 114 countries have unsuccessfully demanded that the five nuclear weapon states that signed the protocols annexed to the relevant treaties withdraw their interpretations on the introduction of nuclear weapons in the those areas. Many parties to the NPT consider that the nuclear states are not fulfilling their commitments under that treaty.

The growing difficulty in arriving at meaningful consensus in the periodic NPT review conferences contributes to the lack of confidence in the efficacy of that instrument. This situation, together with a sharper awareness of the catastrophic effects of any nuclear detonation, gave rise to the negotiation of a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their elimination.

Adopted in 2017 and known by its English acronym TPNW, this new instrument has been already signed by 98 states, 29 of which still have to complete their internal requirements for ratification. The TPNW entered into force in 2021 and since its inception became the subject of a fierce opposition campaign by the states possessing nuclear weapons and some of their allies, which deem it “counterproductive” and affirm their intention to keep their nuclear arsenals for as long as they see fit. The developments described in the paragraphs above indicate that the construction of agreements and rules in the

nuclear sphere has become increasingly controversial. At the same time, confidence in the institutions and instruments elaborated throughout the past few decades has declined. There is a widespread perception by the majority of the international community that obligations assumed by the main powers in international treaties are not being observed. The overall size of inventories has been sharply reduced but new stealthier, faster and more dangerous weapons are being developed and added to the existing arsenals, in what amounts to a veritable technological proliferation.

Cold War reminiscent hostility reappears with more complex and alarming features. Unmet promises, thwarted aspirations, perpetuation of inequalities and conflicting priorities lead to a struggle for influence and hegemony among the main poles of power, side by side with lesser players whose divergences may also drag humankind to a conflict capable of triggering its own extinction.

The awareness of the looming nuclear risks of current times should reinvigorate the resolve to open a new era of forward-looking understandings on nuclear disarmament. Resumption of contacts between the major powers in several levels is essential, as well as ensuring the widest participation in future arrangements relevant to the security of all states.

In this regard, the need for convening of a new Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament is increasingly evident. In 1978, the first event of this kind (SSOD-I) adopted a balanced document on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, with important diagnoses and recommendations. SSOD-I also reorganized the structure of the mechanism of the United Nations in those fields.

A new Special Session on Disarmament would be decisive to update those findings and institutions and contribute to the revitalization of the multilateral treatment of issues of vital interest to the international community as a whole. [IDN-InDepthNews]

## Nuclear Deterrence: An Unproven Gamble that Risks Humanity

By Thalif Deen



A view of the 2nd meeting States Parties to the TPMW. Photo credit: ICAN | Darren Ornitz.

UNITED NATIONS | 3 December 2023 (IDN) — Is it justifiable for a country to go nuclear—on the grounds that it is doing so to protect itself from nuclear attacks?

The argument is based on the concept of “nuclear deterrence”: a widely-challenged theory that *nuclear weapons are intended to deter nuclear attacks prompting the question: would the Russians have invaded Ukraine if it was a nuclear power?*

The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the ouster of Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi, were perhaps facilitated by one fact: none of these countries either had nuclear weapons or had given up developing them (as in the case of Libya).

“And that is why we will never give up ours,” a North Korean diplomat was quoted as saying, while pointing out that the invasions by the US and Western nations would not have taken place if those countries were armed with nuclear weapons.

But the 2017 Nobel Peace laureate, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a coalition of non-governmental organizations in over 100 countries, says “deterrence is an unproven gamble—a theory on which the future of humanity is being risked—that is based on the implicit threat to use nuclear weapons that has brought the world close to nuclear war on a number of occasions.”

The weeklong UN meeting of members of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which concluded December 1, called out the doctrine of nuclear deterrence adhered to by the nuclear-armed states and their allies as a threat to human security and an obstacle to nuclear disarmament, according to ICAN.

The Executive Director of ICAN, Melissa Parke, said: “The condemnation of nuclear deterrence doctrine by the members of the TPNW at their meeting at the UN in New York is a highly significant move”.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Never before has a UN treaty laid out the threat that nuclear deterrence poses to the future of life on our planet. Deterrence is unacceptable. It is based on the threat to wage nuclear war, which would kill millions outright and lead to a nuclear winter and mass starvation that recent research shows would kill billions of people, she declared.

Tariq Rauf, former Head of Verification and Security Policy at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), (and who provided inputs during the drafting of the TPNW in 2017 on verification and other matters), told IDN the second session of TPNW meeting of states parties (MSP2) was noteworthy in that there was a thematic discussion on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, consideration of the status and operation of the Treaty.

This included victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance, complementarity with the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and a report of a scientific advisory group (SAG) on verification of nuclear disarmament. The political declaration adopted at MSP2 was heavy on rhetorical and hortatory statements but light on concrete calls for action, he argued.

TPNW States agreed to set up intersessional working groups in the lead up to MSP3 in 2025, and to consider modalities for an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation, as well as a consultative process on security concerns of TPNW States. As regards the international trust fund, he said, “I am concerned that some ardent TPNW opponent States, such as Canada, Germany and Norway, may try to “whitewash” their credentials by offering funds for victim assistance but still resolutely continue to oppose and undermine the TPNW.”

### **A scientific advisory group set up**

One important outcome of MSP1 was the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). It submitted a useful report to MSP2 on the status and developments regarding nuclear weapons, nuclear weapon risks, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament and related issues.

This report using available open source information provided a compilation of data on the status of nuclear forces based on the data and reports published by the Federation American Scientists and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists on the inventories of nuclear warheads and related nuclear materials, Rauf pointed out.

This is the second time that a scientific advisory group has been set up in support of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The first time such a scientific advisory group was set up was in 1976 with the establishment of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to conceptualize a verification and international seismic data-exchange system for a nuclear test-ban treaty.

Rauf said existing nuclear disarmament verification exercises such as the US-led International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) and the QUAD basically have replicated existing IAEA practices and procedures on verification of the nuclear fuel cycle.

“There is, as yet, no agreement among States on any feasible or practical measures for verification of dismantlement of nuclear warheads. Indeed, the US is on record that it shall never allow any international oversight of nuclear warhead dismantlement,” he pointed out.

As such, for practical reasons, whether it should not be the focus on a variation of TPNW Article 4 (1), pursuant to which a nuclear-armed State divests itself of nuclear weapons and related infrastructure and accedes to the Treaty even though this would now occur after the TPNW entered into force in January 2021? he asked

And further to that, the verification effort be on the nuclear material from the dismantled warheads utilizing attribution verification with information barrier (AVIB). Also, understand that it will not be possible to get an accurate, complete and reliable accounting of weapon-usable nuclear material produced since 1945, he noted.

### **UN chief lauds successful conclusion of the second TPNW meeting**

In a statement released on 1 December, UN Secretary-General António Guterres congratulated States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on the successful conclusion of their Second Meeting.

The Secretary-General said he is “encouraged by the work done by States Parties in collaboration with other stakeholders, which showcases what is possible within multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and bolsters the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture”. He welcomed the adoption of the political declaration, “contributing toward our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons”.

Meanwhile, at the meeting, about 700 individuals, representing over 100 nongovernmental

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

organizations (NGOs) took part in an interactive process with the member states. And in what could be viewed as a much broader, week-long nuclear disarmament conference, more than 65 side events, including panel discussions, art exhibitions, concerts, and awards ceremonies were held inside the UN and around New York City. Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation, told IDN compared to the rancorous August meeting of the States Parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which could not even agree on a Chair's factual summary report, the TPNW meeting manifested a unified and unambiguous recognition that growing threats of nuclear war are intolerable and that the only solution is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

"It is evident that even though the TPNW cannot achieve nuclear disarmament without the participation of the nuclear-armed states, its members are energetically using it as a platform to develop and disseminate information and analysis that is valuable in the broader global context" she pointed out.

Examples of this were the report on gender impacts, including the disproportionate effects of radiation on women and girls' health, and the first report of the Scientific Advisory Group on developments regarding nuclear weapons, nuclear weapon risks, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, and related issues.

The Scientific Advisory Group also called for a new UN study on the consequences of nuclear war, given the last comprehensive studies were done in the late 1980s.

"In an important development", Cabasso said, "States parties, for the first time, mandated member states, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), ICAN and other stakeholders and experts, to engage in consultations to *"challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence by highlighting and promoting new scientific evidence about the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons and juxtaposing this with the risks and assumptions that are inherent in nuclear deterrence,"* and to present their findings at the third meeting of States parties in March 2025."

### **Nuclear deterrence is the Gordian knot**

Over half the world's population live in countries whose national security postures explicitly depend on nuclear weapons and the doctrine of "nuclear

deterrence"- "In my view", she said, nuclear deterrence is the Gordian knot blocking the path to nuclear disarmament.

The Latin root of the word deterrence means to "frighten away, fill with fear". In other words, to threaten. Deterrence undergirds entire military-industrial establishments and the national security states and elites they serve, she said.

It is an ideology which has outlived its Cold War origins and is used by nuclear-armed states to justify the perpetual possession and threatened use—including first use—of nuclear weapons.

The hard truth is that neither the NPT nor the TPNW can achieve disarmament until the nuclear-armed states are willing to reimagine a global system that puts universal human security above the narrow interests of "national security" enforced by nuclear coercion — euphemistically called deterrence, declared Cabasso.

Elaborating further, Rauf said: "In my view, chasing modalities for verification of nuclear warhead dismantlement is going down an endless rabbit hole".

"The uncomfortable truth is that we cannot achieve 100% nuclear warhead dismantlement verification, we can do so for missiles, submarines, and bombers but not for the warheads—period!" While this might be an interesting intellectual challenge for scientists and universities, it is not a practical option.

Recall, that at the height of the Cold War it was estimated that the global number of deployed nuclear warheads peaked in 1986 at an estimated 70,374. In all, it is estimated that more than 125,000 nuclear warheads were built since 1945.

Today, he said, there are about 12,500. What happened to the difference of nearly 58,000 warheads between 70,374 and 12,500; and the 112,500 from the 125,000? All were unceremoniously dismantled unilaterally, without direct verification! "I would recommend that TPNW States set up an International Panel of Scientific and Technical Experts (IPSTE) to advise the SAG on practical relevant aspects of nuclear disarmament verification comprised of experts with nuclear weapons and verification expertise — that is retired weaponeers and inspectors dealing with nuclear weapons matters," declared Rauf.

Meanwhile, according to ICAN, the meeting also demonstrated that the TPNW is growing in strength. Several observing states announced their intention to join the treaty in the near term,

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

bringing the number of states that have either signed, ratified or acceded to the treaty to more than half of all UN members. Indonesia announced that its parliament recently approved ratification of the treaty and Brazil, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique and Nepal

announced their intent to ratify soon. The meeting was also attended by several NATO states and countries that rely on American nuclear weapons in their defence, including Australia, Belgium, Germany and Norway. [IDN-InDepthNews]

## Faith-based Organizations Warn Nuclear Arms as Worst of all Evils

By Razeena Raheem



*Anna Ikeda of SGI delivered a joint statement endorsed by 115 inter-faith and civil society organizations (CSOs) on 29 November. Photo Credit: SGI.*

UNITED NATIONS | 1 December 2023 (IDN) — As the weeklong Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons concluded on December 1, a joint statement by a coalition of 115 faith-based and civil society organizations warned of the double violence of climate catastrophe and rampant militarism.

“Nuclear weapons represent the worst of both of those threats—an evil unleashed upon this beloved planet with the power to wipe out everything that we hold most dear—our water, our air, our land, and each other,” the organizations said.

The text of the November 29 statement reads: “We gather as people of faith—religious leaders, practitioners, believers of many different traditions—to affirm with one voice our opposition to nuclear weapons and our absolute belief that a world without nuclear weapons is not only possible but that a nuclear-free future is already being made.

We take great joy in the existence of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and take this occasion of the Second Meeting of States Parties to celebrate how the TPNW and its supporters worldwide have found the courage, determination and imagination to work for a world

## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

of justice and equality. We live on a beautiful planet with the splendor of forests, mountains, rivers and oceans that we share with other creatures.

Yet this planet and all who dwell here are threatened by the terror of nuclear weapons. It is our responsibility as people of faith to redirect the moral outrage of the world towards the re-making of that which is good. In this light, we celebrate the recognition of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by the UN General Assembly last year, and send our prayers for successful outcomes of COP28, which also starts during the same week as this meeting.

### **The landmark piece of international law**

We honor the ancestors who have gone before us—the global hibakusha who suffered the horrors of nuclear weapons testing and use as well as the generations of diplomats, religious leaders, activists, researchers, artists and advocates—who dedicated their lives to making the world a safer place.

Being together in this moment, with this landmark piece of international law and with the determination to universalize it, we know that this is only possible because of the work that went before us.

At the same time, we are encouraged by the surge in a new generation of young leaders who have the courage, brilliance and hope to carry this work forward into the future. We work with integrity and unfailing determination because we owe so much to both the past and the future.

Our religious traditions are vast and represent many millions of people, each trying to pursue lives of meaning and goodness in a world that has never felt more threatened with catastrophe.

Our faith that humanity is meant for peace, wellness, joy and love remains unwavering even as we see with clarity the devastation of the planet and our fellow human beings who are threatened globally by the double violence of climate catastrophe and rampant militarism.

Nuclear weapons represent the worst of both of those threats—an evil unleashed upon this beloved planet with the power to wipe out everything that we hold most dear—our water, our air, our land, and each other.

Even as we call on all States to join the TPNW, we take seriously our role as faith communities to denounce nuclear deterrence as a false ideology

which violates our most sacred commitments. We not only decry any use of nuclear weapons, we oppose wholeheartedly the preparations for and threats to use nuclear weapons as immoral.

### **Move forward**

We urge States Parties at this meeting to move forward with practical commitments to provide victim assistance and environmental remediation under Articles 6 and 7 of the treaty. We commit to doing our part to care for those members of our community who have suffered the direct impacts of nuclear weapons and to act as good stewards to remediate the land and waters which have been harmed.

We celebrate the inclusivity of the TPNW with its attention towards the intersectional harms of nuclear weapons. Our faith communities take seriously our unique commitments to the Indigenous peoples who have been most affected by these weapons of utter destruction.

As our faiths direct us to exercise special love and care for the people who are most marginalized, we recognize in the treaty a meaningful avenue to addressing the violence of the past and committing to a more just future.

As diplomats, policy makers, advocates and activists gather in New York City this week, we know their work is supported by a much larger circle of people around the world who believe that another world without nuclear weapons is possible and who will continue to work, write, march, pray, chant, meditate and speak that new world into being. Nuclear weapons can never provide nourishment for our bodies, courage for our hearts, creativity for our minds or inspiration for our souls.

Nuclear weapons can only annihilate, threaten and destroy everything that gives our lives meaning. Nuclear weapons drain financial resources away from addressing poverty, racism, illness and premature death. And yet, we remain resilient and vibrant in the face of their obliteration, refusing to let nuclear ideology also steal our hope, our vision and our boldness in demanding justice and a right to live in peace for all people. There is so much work to be done.

We commit, as people of faith, to working to address the roots of violence in our own religious traditions that have justified nuclear violence or that have chosen to ignore the greed and aggression that undergirds nuclear ideology. We can and will weave together a deepening of inner



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

contemplation and reckoning that strengthens us to confront and survive threats to our collective security.

We know that there is no true safety, security and peace for any of us until there is safety, security and peace for all of us. We recognize the urgency of this moment and what is at stake for all of us—the beloved natural world and the beloved community of humanity.

Our fates are intertwined and we cannot ignore the resounding threats that confront us. We feel acute fear and anxiety as an ever-present menace as we contemplate our shared future.

This fear is not unique to this moment in time. Let us draw courage from the audacity and vision of past struggles for justice, taking comfort in the wisdom that immense challenges always feel impossible until they are done,” the statement concluded.

The following organizations endorsed the statement:

### **The following organizations endorsed the statement:**

Acción Ciudadana Frente a Pobreza  
American Friends Service Committee  
Anglican Pacifist Fellowship  
Association Modeste et Innocent (AMI)  
Association of Pittsburgh Priests  
Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII  
beHuman  
Brudershof  
Casa Generalizia della Società del Sacro Cuore  
Center for Peace Education  
Centro de Estudios Ecueménicos-México  
Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament  
Christian Council of Norway  
Christians for Peace  
Church and Peace – Ecumenical peace church network in Europe  
CIDSE – International family of Catholic social justice organisations  
Comisión General Justicia y Paz de España  
Community of Christ

Community of Christ (British Isles)

Congregation Notre Dame de Sion Curia Generalizia Agostiniana

Democracy Works

Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa

Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC  
Dubuque

Franciscan Leadership Team

Fellowship of Reconciliation (England and Scotland)

Franciscan Peace Center, Clinton, Iowa

Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary -USA Region

General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church

Hale Ho'onani – AME Fellowship

Heiwa Peace and Reconciliation Foundation of New York

Iglesia Bautista Shalom de la ciudad de México.

Institut Notre-Dame du Bon-Conseil de Montréal

Institute of Common Sense

Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate

Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada

International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation (IFCSN)

International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)

InterReligious Task Force on Central America

Islamic Society of Western Mass

Just Peace Council of Seattle

Mennonite Church Justice and Peace Scotland

Loretto / BVM at the UN

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc.

Methodist Church in Britain

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Australia Justice and Peace Centre

Multifaith Association of South Australia

## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

National Council of Churches NDS Australia	School Sisters of Notre Dame
Nevada Desert Experience	Sel et Lumière Togo
North Pacific Yearly Meeting (Quakers)	SF Friends Meeting Peace and Social Concerns
Northern Friends Peace Board	Shepparton Interfaith Network
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity/Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth	Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Justice Team
Pastoral Social, Iglesia Anglicana de México	Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand	Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Pax Christi Australia	Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA
Pax Christi England and Wales	Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, MA
Pax Christi France	Sisters of the Precious Blood – Dayton, Ohio
Pax Christi Greensburg	Soka Gakkai International
Pax Christi International	South Salish Friends Worship Group
Pax Christi Ireland	St. Mary Magdalene Parish
Pax Christi Long Island	Social Justice and Peace Committee, Pittsburgh, PA Committee St.
Pax Christi Massachusetts	Susanna Parish Pax Christi, Dedham, MA
Pax Christi New York State	St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai
Pax Christi Pacific Northwest	Tirunelveli, India
Pax Christi Philippines	The Church of the Lord (TCL) Worldwide
Pax Christi QLD Pax Christi Scotland	The Presbyterian Church in Canada
Pax Christi Uvira asbl	TRUST Climate Action Strategists
Peace Movement Aotearoa	Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
People for Peace in Africa	United Reformed Church (UK)
Peoples Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP)	United Religions Initiative Vision GRAM-International
Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi	Voices for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons (United Religions Initiative)
Plum Village Practice Centre, France	Wellspring Community Australia
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Quakers Australia	Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation
Quakers in Britain	Wings for Amazon
Raleigh Friends Meeting (Quaker)	World Council of Churches World
Religions for Peace	Yoga Community
Australia Rotary	[IDN-InDepthNews]
Salesian Missions	
Saltwater Climate Action Network	

## The Voices of Victims of Nuclear Weapons Testing

By Thalif Deen



*A side event that included discussions on a documentary film premier titled "I Want to Live On: The Untold Stories of the Polygon". Credit: Katsuhiko Asagiri, Multimedia Director of INPS Japan. (The documentary I Want to Live On is available on YouTube)*

UNITED NATIONS, 30 November 2023 (IDN) — Speaking at a side event during a weeklong meeting of States Parties on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), warned that the past two months have seen the outbreak of wide-scale violence between Israel and the Gaza Strip—and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine—both of which continue to heighten the “risk that nuclear weapons could actually be used.”

Despite these conditions, the NPT Review Conference failed to adopt a final statement, and the first PrepCom for the 2026 Review Conference did not produce a Chair’s Summary for the first time.

Then, in November, the government of Russia announced its decision to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a serious setback for the cause of nuclear disarmament, he pointed out.

These realities make convening the current Second Meeting of States Parties of the TPNW, which concludes December 1, all the more important and a crucial opportunity to revive momentum for nuclear disarmament and abolition.

The Preamble of the TPNW declares: “Mindful of the unacceptable suffering of and harm caused to the victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons...” The discussions included a follow-up to a documentary film premier titled “I want to Live On” organized by the Center for International Security and Policy (CISP: Kazakhstan), Soka Gakkai International (SGI: Japan), the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the UN and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

The documentary highlighted the testimony of Algerim Yelgeldy, a third-generation survivor of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site. The speakers included Alimzhan Akhmetov of CISP and a government representative of Kazakhstan, Arman Baissuanov. In his vote of thanks, Terasaki said: “I would especially like to recognize and thank the government representative of Kazakhstan, Arman Baissuanov”.

“Once again, following the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference, we have enjoyed the support of the Kazakhstan Government and the Center for International Security and Policy (CISP) in organizing a side event focused on the victims of



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

nuclear weapons testing. I wish to express my sincere thanks to all those involved.”

He also pointed out that “today is the first public showing of the documentary “I Want to Live On: The Untold Stories of the Polygon,” created by CISP, with the support of the SGI. It records the voices of victims of nuclear weapons testing, powerfully and effectively communicating the inhumanity and folly of nuclear weapons.

“I remember looking over the desolate vastness of the nuclear test site formerly known as Semipalatinsk. The shock of witnessing firsthand the terrible damage inflicted there is something I will never forget,” Terasaki said.

The debate about nuclear weapons tends to revolve around deterrence theory and other questions of an abstract, political nature. “Against that backdrop, I think this documentary, which conveys the threat posed by nuclear weapons and the reality of the damage, can help bring the focus back to lived realities and experiences of people.

As such, I am confident that it will prove to be a valuable educational tool.”

It is just because the path to a world without nuclear weapons is strewn with difficulties that it is vital that people everywhere raise their voices to challenge current assumptions—that nuclear weapons are somehow necessary for human society, or that they can be the basis for building safe and secure societies, he argued. The Soka Gakkai International (SGI) will continue to educate the public about the suffering of global hibakusha, and to promote victim assistance and environmental remediation as called for in Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW. The voices of real people shared in today’s presentation will be invaluable in that effort, he declared.

“I would like to conclude by calling on all present today to continue to inform the public about the threat of nuclear weapons and the inhuman harm they cause, and to shift the global tide toward nuclear disarmament.” [IDN-InDepthNews]

## Ukraine War: A Steppingstone to Something Worse and More All-embracing?

By Jonathan Power\*



*The spectre of war between Europe and Russia looms large. Source: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies.*

LUND, Sweden | 29 November 2023 (IDN) — Trotsky, the one-time close comrade of Lenin, reportedly said, “You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you”. In a time when there is talk of using nuclear weapons, we should pause

to think about this. This is how it seems to be with President Joseph Biden when it comes to his policy towards Russia and Ukraine. It is in danger of directly challenging Russia itself. Some of us hoped that after the aggressive pushing forward of



## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

NATO's frontier during the time of presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, that Biden, with his accumulated wisdom on foreign policy, might have put a stop to it.

This broadening of the number of countries inside NATO has led to a level of hostility between Russia and the US and Europe that most thought had evaporated once the Cold War ended in 1991.

Now, instead of a lifetime of peace and cooperation ahead of us, as was widely thought possible, we have Russia engaged in nuclear sabre-rattling and the US working to expand the frontier of NATO even further right up to Russia's border and putting the heat on over Russia's involvement in the upheavals in Ukraine, using economic sanctions and sending supplies to Ukraine's war machine.

Some observers talk about a coming war between the West and Russia. Could Trotsky be right? Although this probably could not happen as long as France remains French and is there to veto any NATO military action, it may be a "damned close-run thing" (as the Duke of Wellington was supposed to have said after victory over Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo).

Putin, I believe, is not interested in territorial aggrandisement but he is interested in Russia not being threatened.

### **How the US duped Russia**

It goes back to the time of President Boris Yeltsin, the first elected president of Russia, who was taken advantage of time and time again by Clinton, who often drove hard bargains late in the evening when Yeltsin, not always very well, was tired and had drunk too much vodka.

The Soviet Union's President Mikhail Gorbachev who had been a partner of the West in ending the Cold War believed he had an understanding with President H.W. Bush and the German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher that in return for allowing Germany to be reunited and for a united Germany to be a NATO member there would never be any further expansion of NATO.

Indeed, there was serious talk of Russia becoming a NATO member itself and Russia joining the "European House", as Gorbachev expressed it, as did Putin. The hard hitters in US foreign policy, Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and George Kennan all warned not to push Russia too hard by expanding NATO too far and too quickly.

No less than Clinton's Secretary of Defence, William Perry, argued at a conference organised by the British newspaper, the Guardian, that the gains between Russia and the US had been "squandered" more as a result of US than Russian actions. "In the last few years most of the blame can be pointed at the actions that Putin has taken. But in the early years I have to say that the US deserves much of the blame. Our first action that really set us off in a bad direction was when NATO started to expand, bringing in the eastern European nations." He went on to say the decision reflected a contemptuous attitude among American officials towards the troubled former superpower.

The second major misstep, he said, was the Bush administration's decision to deploy a ballistic missile system in Eastern Europe in the face of a determined opposition from Moscow. "We rationalised the system as being able to defend against an Iranian nuclear missile- but they don't have any of this range, powerful enough to carry nuclear weapons. The Russians said, 'Wait a bit, this weakens our deterrence'. The issue again wasn't discussed on the basis of its merits- it was just 'who cares about what Russia thinks?'"

### **Support for the revolution in Ukraine**

The Obama administration later modified the missile system based in Eastern Europe, replacing long-range with medium-range interceptor missiles. Russia welcomed this but pointed out rightly that the missiles could still be turned towards Russia and wanted assurances and guarantees that the missiles would not be pointed at Russia.

Later came the US and EU decision to support the revolution in Ukraine, even though there was no good reason for it since an election was in the offering which would probably have thrown out a government sympathetic to Russia. Also, a Western policy meant tolerating militants who were members of organisations with a fascist pedigree.

Instead of intervening in the political whirlwind of a very corrupt state, Obama and his successors should have concentrated their energies on a reduction of nuclear arsenals held by the US and Russia. (Obama was the last president to make a nuclear arms reduction agreement, although it was rather limited and didn't compensate for nuclear disarmament treaties that had been abrogated by the US.) [IDN-InDepthNews]

## A Nuclear Attack by Design — or by Accident — Must Never Happen

By Thalif Deen



*Hirotugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI).*

*Credit: Seikyo Shimbun*

UNITED NATIONS | 27 November 2023 (IDN) — As two of the world's nuclear powers—Russia and Israel—are engaged in two devastating conflicts, a lingering question remains: could the military tension looming over both countries trigger a nuclear attack either by design or by accident?

“That is one scenario that must never happen”, warns Hirotugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), which represents a diverse Buddhist community of over 12 million people that promotes peace, culture and education, and is an NGO in consultative status with the United Nations. In an interview with IDN, he said, much effort has been made and must continue to be made to ensure that this will never become a reality by all concerned—the United Nations, international organizations, and civil society.

“Needless to say, the background and circumstances of the two crises are different and should be discussed separately, and any discourse on nuclear weapons should be cautious and restrained,” he pointed out.

### **Excerpts from the interview:**

Israel is considered to be a de facto nuclear weapon state, although it has never confirmed or denied possessing nuclear weapons. It has been reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reprimanded a cabinet member for suggesting a nuclear weapons option and suspended him from cabinet meetings until further notice because his remarks were “disconnected from reality”.

The armed conflict in the Gaza Strip has already caused too many civilian casualties and destroyed neighbourhoods and livelihoods. Hate is causing more hatred, deepening division, and I am deeply concerned day after day. To prevent further tragedy, we strongly call for a humanitarian ceasefire and humanitarian aid to save lives.

In the Ukraine crisis, repeated threats to use nuclear weapons have been made. Prior to the G7 Hiroshima Summit held in May 2023, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda urged the nuclear weapon states to make pledges of “No First Use”

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

of nuclear weapons to reduce risk, which would serve as the basis on which states could together transform the challenging security environments.

The SGI, co-sponsored with other NGOs, a side event on this theme at the 2023 NPT Preparatory Committee in August. Unfortunately, international norms for nuclear disarmament have since been further disrupted.

Humanity is now staring into the abyss of annihilation. Therefore, we must take the right steps toward a future that we choose and build a sustainable world. We should deal with the crises, constantly reminding ourselves of the true horrors of the atomic bombings, bearing in mind the voices of the global hibakusha, and facing up to inhumane and catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons.

Let us take this opportunity to once again take to heart the Russell-Einstein Manifesto: “We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.”

*Q: The United Nations, as you know, has failed to bring about a settlement of both disputes primarily because of a new Cold War between China and Russia on one side and Western powers such as the US, UK and France on the other. As a result, both the UN and the Security Council have remained paralyzed? Do you still have hopes for the UN as a peacemaker?*

A: I understand your perspective on and your concerns about the current situation. The way I see it is that, rather than a dichotomy like the Cold War between the East and West, we live in a multipolar world today, and each country has different agendas and positions.

In “Our Common Agenda” released two years ago, UN Secretary-General António Guterres discusses the revitalization of multilateralism, emphasizing the rebuilding of global solidarity and collaboration between governments and civil society. In his remarks to the General Assembly consultation on Our Common Agenda on October 4, he said, “despite deep divisions, we have made progress,” and that he would step up efforts in preparation for the Summit of the Future scheduled for 2024.

With serious confrontations among major powers and the presence of the Global South and emerging economies growing stronger, it is

imperative to establish secure channels of multilateral dialogue. At the same time, more attention needs to be paid to indigenous peoples, vulnerable groups, marginalized persons, refugees and displaced persons.

In short, the UN must be strengthened and revitalized as a forum for building multilateral consensus. Increasing the involvement of women, youth, and civil society in the decision-making process so that the UN heeds the voices of civil society and is supported by civil society will generate the impetus for change.

It is true that the UN has longstanding problems, such as the dysfunction of the Security Council, and constant reform efforts are necessary. But as long as there are people in the world whose lives are threatened, the lofty mission of the UN will remain unchanged: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.” (Preamble of the UN Charter).

Other than the UN, the most universal organization with 193 member states, it would be virtually impossible to find another entity that could serve as a basis of international cooperation and give legitimacy to its activities.

### Impact of the Cold War

*Q: Will the new Cold War also have a negative impact, sooner or later, on the UN’s primary role in its longstanding campaign for nuclear disarmament?*

A: Aside from whether or not to define the current global confrontations as the “new Cold War,” there is no doubt that the increasingly chaotic situation is having a significant impact on the UN’s efforts to promote nuclear disarmament.

The NPT Review Conference last year failed to adopt a final document. The First session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference held in July/August was unable to adopt the chair’s summary as an official UN document, which is unusual. In addition, Russia’s decision at the beginning of November to rescind its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) runs counter to nuclear disarmament.

Therefore, the current second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which is taking place, from November 27 through December 1, is an extremely important opportunity to strengthen the trend toward nuclear disarmament.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

We can also say, from a reverse perspective, that it is precisely because the crisis in which the threat of nuclear weapons and of their use is looming large has been more prolonged than ever before, we must make this a turning point in history toward nuclear abolition by turning the tide of nuclear arms proliferation back toward nuclear disarmament.

The preamble of TPNW clearly states, “Mindful of the unacceptable suffering of and harm caused to the victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons.” This year, the SGI recorded the testimony in English of Keiko Ogura, who directly told the leaders of the G7 Hiroshima Summit her firsthand experience of the atomic bombing, and made it available to the young generation and the world.

Her experience conveyed a powerful message, “Under the mushroom cloud, nobody could live.” We are also going to launch “I want to live on,” a video testimony of victims of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan at a side event at the upcoming second Meeting of State Parties to TPNW.

We are determined to strengthen our efforts for nuclear disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons especially for the sake of future generations, as the preamble of TPNW states: “Cognizant that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations, and have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionizing radiation.”

*Q.: The 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan has been one of the worst human disasters not only in the world but also in Asia. But today four of the world's nine nuclear powers are from Asia—China, India, Pakistan and North Korea. Isn't this a strange coincidence? And could the longstanding territorial and political disputes between India and Pakistan, and between India and China, result in a nuclear war in the future?*

A: According to the most recent data, about 90% of the estimated 12,500 nuclear warheads in the world are held by the U.S. and Russia. On the other hand, it is estimated that China has increased its arsenal by 160 warheads, India by 64, Pakistan by 60, and North Korea by at least 30

over the past decade (according to RECNA, Nagasaki University Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition).

China is a nuclear weapon state (NWS) signatory to the NPT, but India and Pakistan are not NPT signatories, and North Korea has unilaterally declared its withdrawal from the NPT. Recently, North Korea has warned of the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear strike, which has been condemned by the international community. China and India maintain a no first use policy. Some studies suggest that if Pakistan joined them to establish a no first use principle, it would contribute to stability in South Asia.

In reality, the likelihood of nuclear war is low. But it is essential to build greater strategic stability and promote confidence building in order to avoid accidental crises. We believe that multifaceted exchange and awareness-raising initiatives in civil society will serve as the foundation for such efforts.

The nuclear trilemma of China, India, and Pakistan and the need for risk reduction measures are addressed in a series of policy recommendations that the Toda Peace Institute published jointly with other research institutions. Among these, Manpreet Sethi's policy brief recommends several policies, including initiating bilateral or multilateral strategic dialogue, formalizing low alert levels, conducting studies on deterrence breakdown, and raising public awareness about the dangers of nuclear use.

### The Role of faith-based organizations

*Q: What role can anti-nuclear activists and faith-based organizations like SGI play in the current state of affairs to promote nuclear disarmament and prevent any nuclear attacks in war zones?*

A: Over the past year, I have participated as a representative of Buddhism in the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Kazakhstan (September 2022) and the Bahrain Dialogue Forum (November 2022), where religious leaders openly exchanged ideas and shared wisdom on global problems. The experience gave me a sense of hope for the future.

In the document on human fraternity for world peace and living together issued in 2019, in the names of Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayeb, a preeminent Sunni Muslim religious leader, who were present at both of these events, they state:

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

“...we resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women in order to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion. This is done for the purpose of achieving objectives that are political, economic, worldly and short-sighted.”

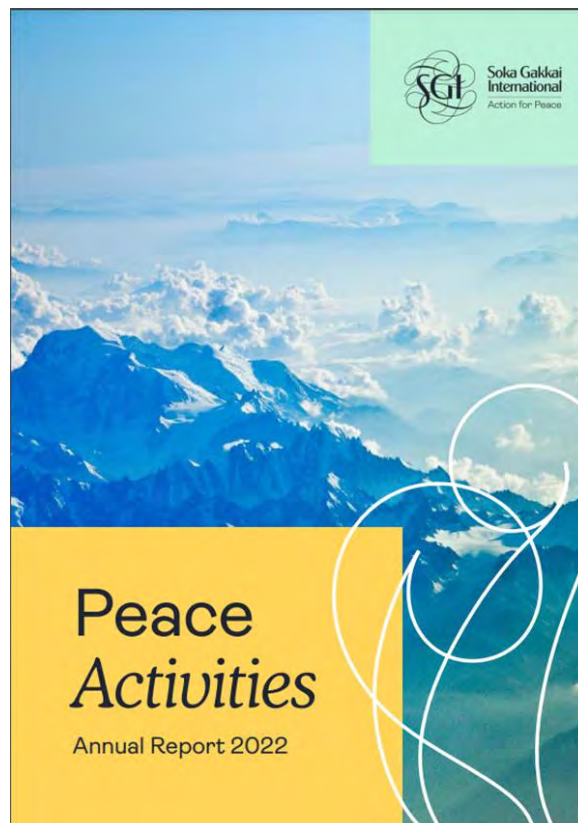
The crises confronting humanity today cannot be solved by a handful of people. I am deeply convinced that the key to breaking through the situation, whether it is issues involving nuclear weapons or climate justice initiatives, lies in working together as fellow human beings, transcending boundaries and differences.

Faith-based organizations certainly can work together and play many roles at the UN, in the

international community, and in grassroots awareness-raising in civil society: to find a way to put an end to the loss of civilian lives as soon as possible, to prevent catastrophic inhumane consequences in the name of humanity, to bring people together, understand each other, be there for those who are suffering, and leave no one behind, and to create a world where everyone can shine as they are and all can enjoy diverse lives.

*SGI President Ikeda, who passed away on November 15 at the age of 95, stated in his last proposal addressed to the G7 Hiroshima Summit:*

*“It is said that the darker the night, the closer the dawn, and the end of the Cold War demonstrated the scale of energy unleashed when people who refuse to be defeated unite in solidarity...Let us once again change the course of history through the power of people, paving a path toward a world free from nuclear weapons, a world free from war.”* With these words in our hearts, we will continue on the path of cooperation, upholding *the courage to never give up*. [IDN-InDepthNews]



(p43) 2022 SGI Annual Report — Peace Activities [https://cdn2.assets-servd.host/un-sgi/production/assets/downloads/SGI\\_Peace\\_Activity\\_Report\\_2022\\_12.10.23.pdf](https://cdn2.assets-servd.host/un-sgi/production/assets/downloads/SGI_Peace_Activity_Report_2022_12.10.23.pdf)

## Russia's Decision to Revoke Ratification of CTBT Comes Under Fire

By Thalif Deen



*At the 13th Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference) at the United Nations in New York on 22 September 2023 global leaders reaffirmed their commitment to making the CTBT legally binding on an international scale and bringing an end to nuclear testing once and for all.*

*Credit: CTBTO*

UNITED NATIONS | 1 November 2023 (IDN) — A decision by the Russian parliament to pass a bill on 18 October to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has come under heavy fire.

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says he was “dismayed” by the Duma’s decision to revoke ratification of the CTBT.

*“This will further undermine the international arms control architecture and risks fracturing the global taboo against nuclear testing,” he said in a statement released on October 18, immediately following the decision by the Russian parliament.*

*“As the former Chair of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Preparatory Organization, I urge Russia and the other six nuclear-armed states who are not a party to the CTBT to refrain from taking any steps towards resuming nuclear testing”.*

*“At a time of growing international tensions and heightened threat of nuclear conflict, all leaders of nuclear-armed states must pursue dialogue and engagement.”*

*This is the only way to effectively manage nuclear risks and prevent the further erosion of global norms., said Ban, who is currently deputy chair of The Elders, a group of independent global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights, and a sustainable planet, founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.*

Deploing the decision of the Russian parliament, he urged all nuclear states to pursue dialogue and engagement at a time of heightened international tensions.

The international wire service *Reuters* reported on 6 October that Russia indicated that it was moving swiftly towards revoking its ratification of the CTBT after President Vladimir Putin held out the possibility of resuming nuclear testing.

Putin was quoted as saying that Russia’s nuclear doctrine—which sets out the conditions under which he would press the nuclear button—did not need updating, but was not yet ready to say whether or not Moscow needed to resume nuclear tests.

He said Russia could look at revoking ratification of the CTBT as the United States had signed but not ratified it.

According to a report in the *New York Times* on October 8, Putin was quoted as saying Russia had successfully tested a nuclear-powered cruise missile but “dangled the prospect that Russia may revoke its ratification of the CTBT”.

Meanwhile, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) said the Russian parliament’s bill to revoke its ratification of the CTBT, retains its cooperation with the treaty’s verification system and implementing organisation.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

The law strikes Article 1 (on ratification) of the 2000 law, which Russia passed to ratify the treaty and outline its cooperation with the International Monitoring System and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization.

The CTBT, adopted in 1996, is the first international treaty to ban all nuclear tests. It has 187 states which have signed, and 178 which have ratified, but has not entered into force yet because of the failure of eight states, upon whose ratification the entry into force of the treaty depends: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States.

ICAN Executive Director Melissa Parke condemned the move, saying: "Russia must reverse this irresponsible decision immediately. International treaties, including the CTBT and the TPNW, are critical to making sure nuclear testing, which has harmed people's health and spread lasting radioactive contamination, is not resumed. Russia must remain fully committed to the CTBT and all countries that have not joined the CTBT and the TPNW should do so as a matter of urgency."

### Mirroring the "manner of the United States

ICAN said the move by the Russian Duma came after explicit calls from Russian President Vladimir

Putin to withdraw from the treaty. On Friday, 6 October, President Putin stated that, in regards to the CTBT, he sees it fit to "mirror the manner of the United States," which has signed but not ratified the treaty, and revoke Russia's ratification.

He added that "this is a question for the State Duma [lower house of the Federal Assembly of Russia] deputies. In theory, this ratification could be revoked."

On 9 October, the Duma's Committee on International Affairs was instructed to contact the Russian Foreign Ministry to look into the issue of withdrawing the ratification of the CTBT.

As a signatory to the Treaty, Russia still retains the responsibility not to engage in any behaviour that would defeat the Treaty's object and purpose, according to Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, said ICAN.

Nuclear testing has had devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences around the world. The former Soviet Union's hundreds of nuclear tests in the Arctic and across Eastern Europe and Asia left a legacy of medical, psychological and socio-economic trauma, displacement of Indigenous peoples and contaminated the environment with radiation for generations to come, according to ICAN. [IDN- InDepthNews – 01 November 2023]

## A Milestone in the History of Nuclear Diplomacy

### 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of President Eisenhower's Speech On "Atoms For Peace"\*

By Leonam dos Santos Guimarães



*Dwight D. Eisenhower delivering the famous Atoms for Peace speech at the UN General Assembly on 8 December 1953. Credit: UN/IAEA -*

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

*The writer is a Nuclear and naval engineer (PhD) member of the Brazilian National Academy of Engineering. CEO of Eletronuclear S.A. Coordinator, Brazilian Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program.*

RIO DE JANEIRO | 23 October 2023 (IDN) — On 8 December 1953, the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, delivered a speech before the United Nations General Assembly that would echo through the pages of history.

This speech, “Atoms for Peace,” marked a crucial shift in how the world viewed nuclear energy and its applications. In this speech, Eisenhower outlined his vision for the peaceful use of atomic energy and the promotion of international cooperation in nuclear energy. In 2023, we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of this emblematic speech that highlighted the need to use nuclear science’s power to benefit humanity.

The historical context of this speech was crucial since the US had dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II, marking the beginning of the nuclear age. The world was keenly aware of the dangers associated with nuclear energy, and the Cold War was at its height. Nuclear weapons have become a symbol of power and a threat to the survival of humanity. Eisenhower, a decorated World War II general who commanded Allied troops in the recapture of Europe, understood the destructive potential of nuclear energy, but he also envisioned its potential for civilian uses. The speech was an attempt to change the course of history by emphasizing the commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The central concept of the “Atoms for Peace” speech was sharing nuclear knowledge and technology with other nations, as long as it was for non-explosive purposes. Eisenhower recognized the potential of nuclear energy not just as a threat but as an opportunity for global benefit.

In his speech, Eisenhower expressed his vision of a world where nuclear energy could be a force for good. He proposed the creation of an international agency that would oversee the peaceful use of nuclear technology and promote global collaboration. The President of the United States emphasized that nuclear knowledge should be shared to promote nations’ economic development and well-being, bringing progress to all humanity.

Eisenhower’s speech also highlighted the importance of nuclear disarmament and the need

to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He urged other nations to join in the effort to ensure that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes, which led in just over a decade to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Eisenhower’s speech led to the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1957, an organization dedicated to promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and monitoring its use to ensure it is not diverted for explosive purposes. The IAEA has since played a crucial role in supervising and regulating nuclear activities around the world, contributing to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons by verifying the commitments made by NPT member states.

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the “Atoms for Peace” speech, it is important to highlight the significant advances in the peaceful application of nuclear energy over seven decades. Its concept brought to light the idea of using nuclear energy for the benefit of medicine, industry, agriculture, and generation of clean electrical energy, without emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere, and heat for use in various production processes, such as desalination and hydrogen currently called “blue”, so crucial for the current energy transition and climate change mitigation.

Nuclear applications have since led to the development of advanced medical technologies, such as radiotherapy for the treatment of cancer, and enabled the production of radioactive isotopes for diagnosis and therapy of broad spectrum diseases.

Food irradiation techniques significantly reduce losses in the logistics distribution chain. These techniques are also applied to the sterilization of medical and surgical material and even in the preservation of works of art.

Furthermore, nuclear energy has become an important source of electricity supply in many countries, exceeding 50% of generation in some such as France, Slovakia and Ukraine, thus contributing to the diversification of sources and energy security.

Small modular nuclear reactors (SMR) open up broad prospects for cogeneration for non-electrical uses with direct use of the heat generated for industries such as steel, aluminum, cement and the production of synthetic fuels, as well as generation units in remote locations such as the oceans, whether fixed on the seabed or

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

floating, and in space, whether for rocket launcher propulsion or for electrical generation—internal to space vehicles and even fixed to celestial bodies closer to Earth, such as the Moon and Mars. Add to this the accelerated development of digitalization and artificial intelligence that requires data centers with increasingly greater decarbonized generation powers, with extremely high reliability and continuous availability, without interruptions or intermittency.

Today, as we celebrate the anniversary of Eisenhower's speech, it is important to reflect on his legacy and the progress that has been made since then. The IAEA continues to play a crucial role in overseeing nuclear activities around the world, promoting nuclear safety and international cooperation. The peaceful applications of nuclear energy continue to benefit humanity by improving the quality of life and driving scientific advances.

However, it is crucial to remember that challenges associated with nuclear energy also persist. Nuclear safety, radioactive waste management and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons remain global concerns. It is a constant reminder of the need for international cooperation and the responsible application of nuclear technology.

President Eisenhower's 1953 speech remains a powerful warning of the potential of science and technology to shape our future. He urged us to use nuclear energy responsibly and to seek peace in a world marked by the threat of nuclear weapons. Today, we honor that vision and reaffirm our commitment to promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of all humanity.

As we celebrate this anniversary, we must reflect on the legacy of the "Atoms for Peace" speech and reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Eisenhower's speech remains an inspiration for promoting peace, security, and cooperation in a world where nuclear energy plays a significant and potentially growing role in the energy transition.

Ultimately, Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" is a reminder that science and technology can be used for the good of humanity, provided there is a continued commitment to responsibility and international cooperation. It continues to be an important milestone in the history of nuclear diplomacy, highlighting the importance of using nuclear knowledge for peace and development to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs). [IDN-InDepthNews]

## Nuclear Annihilation: A Haunting Reality of the Future

By Thalif Deen



*Image source: UNFOLD ZERO*



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

UNITED NATIONS. 26 September 2023 (IDN) — When the United Nations commemorated the 10th anniversary of International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the President of the General Assembly, Dennis Francis, was dead on target when he warned that the risk of nuclear annihilation “is not a chapter from our past; it is a haunting reality of our present”.

“There is only one path to avoid nuclear Armageddon: the complete and absolute elimination of nuclear weapons,” he told delegates on September 26.

According to the UN, the world has over 12,500 nuclear weapons—and rising.

In an interview with IDN, Joseph Gerson, an American peace activist and president of the Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security, said the establishment of the International Day for the Complete Elimination of Nuclear Weapons reflects humanity’s recognition of the continuing existential threat to human survival and civilization posed by nuclear weapons.

As the Hibakusha, Japanese A- and H-Bomb survivors, teach us from their terrorized and excruciating experiences, “human beings and nuclear weapons cannot coexist”.

It is also true that given the dictates of nuclear command and control, nuclear weapons and democracy cannot coexist, he said.

“Today, the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and continuing popular demands for nuclear disarmament serve as the most forceful but insufficient counterweight to continuing preparations by all nine nuclear weapons states to wage apocalyptic nuclear war,” said Gerson, a former vice-president of the International Peace Bureau.

In fact, “as we see with the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists’ Doomsday Clock set at 90 seconds to midnight, the danger of nuclear war is far greater today than in 2013 when the International Day was established”.

*“As I write, I have just heard a member of Russia’s national security elite state that this is the most dangerous moment in international relations since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, when President Kennedy’s advisors thought the chances of nuclear war were between a third and a half.”*

“That we are alive today is a function of luck and inspired diplomacy, the latter of which is dangerously absent today,” he declared.

Addressing delegates on September 26, Secretary-General António Guterres said: This is a matter of urgency. A worrisome new arms race is brewing. The number of nuclear weapons could rise for the first time in decades. He pointed out that hard-won norms to prevent their use, spread and testing are being undermined. The global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is eroding. Nuclear arsenals are being modernized to make these weapons faster, more accurate and stealthier. Nuclear sabers are again being rattled.

“This is madness. We must reverse course,” he said.

First—nuclear-weapon States must lead the way. “I call on them to meet their disarmament obligations and commit to never use nuclear weapons under any circumstances”.

Second—“we need to reinforce and re-commit to the nuclear-disarmament-and-non-proliferation regime built over the decades”. This includes the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

It also includes the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Though not yet in force, the Treaty remains a powerful testament of humanity’s will to lift the shadow of nuclear annihilation from our world once and for all.

“In the name of all victims of nuclear testing, I call on all countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so without delay, and for those States that possess nuclear weapons to ensure a moratorium on all nuclear testing.”

And third—“we must redeploy the timeless tools of dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation to ease tensions and end the nuclear threat. This dialogue must extend to all categories of nuclear weapons, and it must address the increasing interplay between strategic and conventional weapons and the nexus between nuclear weapons and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence”.

Humans must always be in control of and responsible for any decision to use nuclear weapons, Guterres declared.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Elaborating further, Gerson told IDN following a tradition practised by almost every U.S. president, Russian President Putin and his most senior advisors have threatened the first use of nuclear weapons, this time especially if Moscow's control of Crimea is threatened.

Amidst the Ukraine War and growing tensions between the West and Russia, in violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a new generation of U.S. nuclear weapons are being deployed to NATO allies while Russia is in the process of deploying nuclear weapons to Belarus.

In East Asia, the U.S. is again deploying nuclear armed ships to South Korean waters and ports, and tensions over Taiwan were a primary factor in the Biden Administration's refusal to adopt either

a sole use or no first use nuclear doctrine in its National Security Strategy. He said planning for use of tactical nuclear weapons in a war for Taiwan is now common in policy circles in Washington, D.C. And the absence of strategic stability and arms control diplomacy between the U.S. and Russia and the U.S. and China greatly increase the dangers that an accident, incident, or miscalculation could trigger disastrous escalation to nuclear war.

"All of the nuclear powers are either expanding or "modernizing" their nuclear arsenals. Iran and Japan are near nuclear powers, and South Korea and Saudi Arabia face both domestic and international pressures to equalize what they perceive to be unjust imbalances of nuclear terror," he noted.



*Sculpture depicting St. George slaying the dragon, which symbolises Soviet SS-20 and United States Pershing nuclear missiles. UN Photo | Milton Grant*

"The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons provides us with an opportunity to raise the alarm, to emphasize the centrality of Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty which calls for good faith negotiations for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

"And most importantly, the Day encourages us to increase our commitments, organizing. and advocacy for the nuclear weapons-free world that we and future generations deserve," Gerson declared.

Meanwhile, UNFOLD ZERO, a coalition of anti-nuclear activists, issued a Global Appeal to end the nuclear threat, abolish nuclear weapons and shift the weapons budgets and investments to support public health, COVID-19 recovery, the climate and sustainable development. "The nuclear weapons possessed by nine countries threaten us all. Any use of these weapons by accident, miscalculation or malicious intent, would have catastrophic human, economic and environmental consequences." The use of just a small fraction of the 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world's stockpiles could end civilization as we know it. In addition, the \$100 billion spent annually

on nuclear weapons is sorely needed for environmental, economic and human needs, including addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the climate and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

"We, the undersigned, call on our cities, parliaments and governments to:

1. Affirm that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and therefore the nuclear armed States should stand down their nuclear forces and affirm policies never to initiate a nuclear war (no-first-use policies).
2. Commit to the elimination of nuclear weapons by 2045, the 100th anniversary of the United Nations.
3. Cut nuclear weapons budgets (if they are a nuclear-weapon State), end investments in the nuclear weapons industry (all governments) and redirect these investments and budgets to support the United Nations, COVID-19 management and recovery, drastic reductions in carbon emissions to protect the climate, and financing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals". [IDN-InDepthNews]

## Clarion Call for a World Free from Nuclear Weapons

By Ramesh Jaura



*Chair (on podium), four panellists and a section of the audience of the Forum on "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons is Possible" on 11 September 2023 in Berlin held as part of the International Meeting "The Audacity of Peace" hosted by the lay Catholic Association Community of Sant'Egidio. The Forum was co-organized by Soka Gakkai and others. Credit: Sant'Egidio.*

BERLIN. 19 September 2023 (IDN) — Mark\* is 28 years. Like him, those in their twenties believed that atomic bombs, which the United States dropped over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, belonged to a remote past. However, since Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened to deploy nuclear weapons in the Ukraine war, they ponder why Germany—united since the Berlin Wall crumbled in 1989—"should not make nuclear weapons."

Mark (not his real name) conveyed this thought at the Forum in the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities—the largest non-university research institute for the humanities—of more than 300 years of chequered history. The walls of the Academy's auditorium show deep marks of bullets fired in the Second World War.

Mark's comment from the floor—apparently based on the widespread misconception that the more nuclear weapons, the less the danger of a nuclear war—reflected the concerns of the four-person panel conversing the Forum's theme "A World

Free from Nuclear Weapons is Possible". The panelists were fully aware that the Ukraine War is detrimental to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peril arising from the ongoing modernization of the atomic arsenal.

The Nuclear Weapons Forum on 11 September was one of the twenty sessions of the International Meeting "The Audacity of Peace" on 10-12 September in Berlin, hosted by the lay Catholic association Community of Sant'Egidio, co-organized by Soka Gakkai International (SGI)—a global community-based Buddhist organization with 12 million members around the world and others.

Mr. Hirotsugu Terasaki, Vice President of Soka Gakkai, led the delegation to the Meeting. He met with various dignitaries, including the President of the Community of Sant'Egidio, Marco Impagliazzo, and the President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons



The picture shows eminent participants in the International Interfaith Meeting in Germany, with Mr Hirotsugu Terasaki, second from left in the first row. Credit: Seikyo Shimbun

Mr. Andrea Bartoli, chair of the Forum on *A World Free of Nuclear Weapons is Possible*, explained the importance of cooperation with Soka Gakkai and its international organization (SGI). He is the current President of the New York-based *Sant'Egidio Foundation for Peace and Dialogue*, a member of the steering group of Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC), and executive advisor of the Soka Institute for Global Solutions (SIGS) of Soka University of America.

Aware of the concern of youth in their twenties, born after the Cold War ended in 1991 after the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union dissolved, SGI Europe Co-Chair Robert Harrap assured that though there is a lot to be done, thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, backed by civil society organizations, two international treaties which concern nuclear weapons have entered into force.

### NPT and Nuclear Abolition Treaties

One of these is the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which serves as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and is vital in promoting international peace and security. The other is the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which, since its entry into force in January 2021, reinforces, complements, and builds on the NPT.

Mr. Peter Prove, Director of International Affairs of the World Council of Churches (WCC), agreed, adding that the Council “was naturally a strong supporter of the ‘humanitarian pledge initiative’ and of the advocacy which led ultimately to the drafting and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”.

He added: “Of course, many will say that unless and until nuclear-armed States join the TPNW—which is not likely to happen any time soon—the treaty is effectively meaningless”. But Mr. Prove does not concur. “The TPNW...has already succeeded in creating a new normative principle in international law that challenges the ‘normalization’ of the continued possession of such weapons by established nuclear-armed States, to which we have hitherto collectively acquiesced. And the salience of that new normative principle will only grow with each new signature and ratification of the TPNW, especially as we approach the threshold of a majority of UN member States joining the Treaty,” prognosticates Mr. Prove.

### A world free of nuclear weapons

Tracing commitment of Soka Gakkai and SGI to a world free of nuclear weapons, Mr. Harrap pointed out that sixty-six years ago, in September 1957, Josei Toda, the second president of the Soka Gakkai, made a declaration that informed SG activities for peace ever since. The nuclear arms

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

race accelerated then, and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) were tested successfully.

Recently, SGI and its international campaign, has taken steps to raise awareness of the nuclear weapons issue, including traveling exhibitions created together with the Nobel Peace laureate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), “Everything You Treasure—For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons.

Soka Gakkai bases its activities on the Buddhist principle of respect for the dignity of life. Its objective is to nurture the culture of peace through grassroots initiatives, public awareness and educational campaigns, and advocacy at different levels, not least at the United Nations.

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International, has for over 40 years written and published an annual “Peace Proposal” which have consistently focussed, among others, on the United Nations and abolition of nuclear weapons.

*Mr Prove maintained that a world free from nuclear weapons is not only possible; “a world free from nuclear weapons is necessary if we are to avoid one of the greatest man-made threats to the human community and the environment—to God’s unique living Creation on this planet”.*

“Nuclear weapons are undoubtedly undesirable, and yet here we are in our current state of affairs burdened with collective threats of nuclear weapons proliferation and horrors of a potential nuclear war,” declared Ms. Liberata Mulamula, a Tanzanian parliamentarian, and the East African country’s veteran diplomat.

She pointed out that Tanzania, under the leadership of the first President and the country’s Founding Father, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere played a prominent role in the *Non-Aligned Movement* to advocate a world without the threat of nuclear weapons.

Tanzania joined the Six-Nation Five-Continent Peace and Disarmament Initiative to support the

pressing need of a nuclear-free world. The leaders of the six countries, Greece, Sweden, Argentina, India, and Tanzania, in their appeal on 22 May 1984, said, “...the prevention of nuclear is not an issue that concerns only superpowers. It is of direct concern to all of us since it threatens our lives”.

Against this backdrop, The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the “Pelindaba Treaty”, established the nuclear-weapon-free zone on the African continent. It opened for signature on 12 April 1996 in Cairo, Egypt, and entered into force on 15 July 2009.

Multilateralism has been the centerpiece that keeps any threats to global peace and prosperity at bay. Now more than ever, we need to revive and trust in our age-old mechanism of collective resolution—multilateralism. Ms. Mulamula said.

Joining the call for a world free of nuclear weapons, Mr. Yoshinori Shinohara, Secretary-General of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace, RKK, explained that one of the main reasons for the organization’s founding was the abolition of nuclear weapons.

“The world’s religious leaders, who feared the imminent destruction of humanity due to the extraordinary nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1960 to 1970, stood up for the prevention of nuclear war and the abolition of atomic weapons, advocating love for humanity and brotherhood”.

Fifty-three years have passed since then, but nuclear weapons have not disappeared, and the threat of nuclear war has increased in recent years.

“The Doomsday Clock of the American Scientific Journal shows this year’s worst time, implying that we are living amid a great crisis.” One of the main reasons for this, stated Mr Shinohara, is the growing risk of nuclear use in Ukraine. [IDN- InDepthNews]

## Contentious Preparations for the 2026 NPT Review Conference

By Sergio Duarte



*The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which met from 31 July–11 August 2023 at the Vienna International Centre in Vienna, Austria. Credit: Dean Calma / IAEA*

*The writer is an Ambassador, a former High Representative of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs., and President of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.*

NEW YORK. 7 September 2023 (IDN) — The preparatory cycle for each Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was established at the Review and Extension Conference as one of the elements that made possible agreement on the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

It consists of three yearly Sessions of a Preparatory Committee in each of the three years prior to the Review Conferences and was supposed to allow for structured procedural and substantive discussions aimed at facilitating agreement at the following Review Conference.

Unfortunately, the results of the Review Conferences held since have been less than satisfactory: those in 2005, 2015 and 2022 were unable to reach consensus on a substantive Final Document, while most of the actual progress achieved by the 2000 and 2010 has been largely disavowed and practically forgotten.

The First Session of the 2023 Preparatory Committee for the XI Review Conference of the NPT concluded its proceedings last August in Vienna with another disappointing outcome that calls into question the authority and relevance of that important instrument.

Contrasting positions already seen at the previous Review Conference in 2022 reemerged *with* precipitating exchanges. The longstanding disagreement between nuclear and non-nuclear states on progress in nuclear disarmament remains the main point of contention, while new tensions directly involving nuclear-weapon states themselves have come to the fore.

The current preparatory cycle is taking place at a time of an ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, with the involvement of NATO. This is the most dangerous crisis between the possessors of the largest nuclear arsenals since the Cuban missile confrontation in 1962 and carries the risk of actual use of nuclear weapons.

Other grave problems of the current international security panorama are the development of new



## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

and more deadly weapons by all nuclear states, the lack of meaningful communication between Moscow and Washington, the evolving security architecture of the Indo-Pacific region and the possibility of use of nuclear weapons in combat.

At the same time, the existing international instruments for the control and elimination of the other two categories of weapons of mass destruction also face difficult challenges. The recent Review Conference of the Convention on Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons (BWC) failed to adopt the substantive part of its Final Document. At the same time, the V Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) ended last May with similarly disquieting outcomes.

Finally, the United Nations Security Council is all but impotent to fulfil its role as the international organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace and security.

### **Concern with nuclear proliferation**

Concern with the proliferation of nuclear weapons started seventy-eight years ago with the first experimental detonation of an atomic explosive device in 1945. Six months later the General Assembly of the United Nations created a Commission charged with making proposals for the elimination of atomic weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The Commission was disbanded in 1948 without having achieved progress toward that end. Bacteriological and chemical weapons have been banned by international instruments but the threat of nuclear weapons continues to haunt mankind.

In 1965 General Assembly Resolution 2028 (XX) called for the negotiation at the Eighteen-nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) of a treaty to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, based on a set of five main agreed principles. According to the first two of those principles, the treaty should a) “be void of loopholes that might permit nuclear or non-nuclear Powers to proliferate, directly or indirectly, nuclear weapons in any form”, and b) should embody a mutually acceptable balance of responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear powers”.

In spite of the lack of agreement at the end of the debates on a draft treaty at the Eighteen-nation Disarmament Committee in 1965-68, the NPT was adopted by the General Assembly in 1968 and is considered the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Its

central bargain promised early and effective steps toward nuclear disarmament in exchange for renunciation of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by those that do not possess them. The NPT also recognizes the inalienable right of all its parties to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with its Articles I and II.

Much of the nonconformity and disagreement that have plagued the ten Review Conferences held so far stem from the realization that many parties to the Treaty finally adopted did not faithfully follow those different yet carefully balanced obligations, both in letter and in spirit. Over time, the NPT in fact, consolidated two watertight categories of nations with different and grossly unbalanced rights and obligations.

For instance, elaborate and compulsory procedures have been put in place to verify the fulfillment of the commitments of non-nuclear parties, but no similar provisions apply to the nuclear ones. The perceived lack of political will on the part of the nuclear weapon states to even begin to fulfill their nuclear disarmament treaty obligations is seen as the main cause of the difficulties faced by the NPT review process. The nuclear weapon states do not deny their commitment to nuclear disarmament but have argued for decades that their nuclear weapons are vital to protect their security and that current security conditions do not permit the adoption of measures that would impose specific, legally binding and time-bound obligations to progressively reduce their arsenals to zero.

For its part, the wide majority of nations is convinced that nuclear disarmament would enhance the security of the international community as a whole, including the present nuclear states and their populations, and that the human and environmental risks associated with nuclear weapons far outweigh whatever positive features such arms are purported to have.

### **53 years after NPT entered into force**

Fifty-three years after the entry into force of the NPT there remains considerable doubt on whether the Treaty has actually advanced the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons. It is true that their total numbers have been drastically reduced after having reached the staggering amount of 70,000 at the height of the Cold War, but these weapons today are speedily proliferating in numbers, stealth and destructive power. Their existence threatens mankind as a whole, since the effects of their use

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

would not be confined to the belligerents. Human life on the planet could be extinguished as a result of a nuclear exchange.

The task of the first two sessions of the Preparatory Committee for NPT Review Conferences is to review principles and objectives, as well as specific issues with a view to promoting the full implementation and universality of the Treaty, while the third Session is required to formulate consensual recommendations to the Review Conference itself, both on substance and procedure, taking into account the results of the two preceding sessions.

The X Review Conference in 2022 established a Working Group on the further reinforcement of the review process of the Treaty. This group met prior to the First Session but was unable to agree on a report. Likewise, the first session of the PrepCom ended without adopting a substantive consensual report.

Dissension has always plagued preparations for NPT Review Conferences, but the positions taken by different countries and groups in recent occasions have been markedly less flexible than in previous instances.

With the objective of making effective and verifiable the commitment accepted by the nuclear weapon states under Actions 20 and 21 of the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference, the Chair of the above-mentioned Working Group introduced, under his personal authority, a working paper containing 26 recommendations to the Preparatory Committee, including on the transparency of the national reports presented by the parties to the Treaty on their action toward nuclear disarmament.

### Critical examination

A critical examination of such reports was suggested, as well as the adoption of a standard model to improve accountability on modernization plans, containing number, types and status (deployed or non-deployed) of nuclear warheads and their vectors; measures adopted to reduce the risk of accidental or involuntary use and the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and doctrines; measures adopted to reduce the operational alert of weapons systems; number and types of disassembled weapons and finally the quantities of fissionable material available for

weapons purposes. Subsequently, at the close of the work of the Preparatory Committee, its President introduced a Draft Factual Summary under his responsibility. However, there was opposition to even including it as a working document, forcing the President to convert it into a set of his own “recommendations”.

The lack of constructiveness of the procedural discussion was unprecedented even by the dismal standards of past sessions of Preparatory Committees.

It is worth noting that for the first time, the risks and the humanitarian impact of nuclear deterrence were raised. The question of whether nuclear sharing is compatible with Article I of the NPT was brought up by some delegations in view of the Russian decision to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus and of the presence of NATO nuclear weapons in some European countries. Some others proposed the gradual abandonment of nuclear power plants on account of their alleged dangers for populations and the environment.

Two other preparatory Sessions are scheduled for 2024 and 2025, before the XI Review Conference itself in 2026. The only positive conclusion to take from the session just ended is that all parties to the NPT seem to remain committed to its objectives, even if they disagree on their relative value.

After the disappointing results of two NPT Review Conferences in a row, states party would do well to reexamine their attitudes and positions for the continuation of the current review cycle in order to permit a meaningful exchange that leads to the strengthening of the Treaty instead of perpetuating disagreement.

There is a real risk that the current international structure of agreements on weapons of mass destruction become irrelevant or obsolete.

Despite the perceived shortcomings and differing views about its implementation, the NPT still commands the support of the overwhelming majority of the international community and is the only international instrument that legally commits its parties to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. The current disarray in the preparations for the forthcoming Review Conference is highly detrimental to its continued validity. It is urgent to prevent further deterioration of the Treaty's authority and relevance. [IDN-InDepthNews]

.

## It's Time for No-First Use as Doomsday Clock Moves Closer to Midnight

By Aurora Weiss



Photo from L to R: Ivana Nikolic Hughes (NAPF), Nikolai Sokov (VCDNP), Christine Muttonen (PNND), Chie Sunada (SGI). Credit: Katsuhiko Asagiri, Multimedia Director of IDN-INPS.

VIENNA. 11 August 2023 (IDN) — At the two-week-long Preparatory Committee meeting here for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai International (SGI)—in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)—and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation organized a side event. Experts explored on 3 August how such policies may foster nuclear risk reduction while also advancing nuclear disarmament within the Treaty on the NPT framework. Doyens were Ms. Ivana Nikolić Hughes, President of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation; Ms Christine Muttonen, Co-President of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND); and Mr. Nikolai Sokov, Senior Fellow from Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP). Ms. Chie Sunada, SGI's Director of Peace and Human Rights, moderated the event.

**SGI launched in 2007, the fiftieth anniversary of Josei Toda's Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, the People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition and, while collaborating with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was initiated around the same time, has**

**worked for the realization of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.**

The desire and determination of civil society, represented by the victims of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (*The "hibakusha"*), that the tragedy of nuclear weapons use never be experienced by the people of any country was crystallized in 2017, when the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted, entering into force in 2021. The TPNW comprehensively bans all aspects of nuclear weapons, not limited to their use or threat of use but including their development and possession.

### **SGI President's statement**

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda in his Statement on the Ukraine Crisis and No-First Use of Nuclear Weapons on 11 January 2023, said: "Along with reducing tensions with the goal of resolving the Ukraine crisis, I feel it is of paramount importance that the nuclear-weapon states initiate action to reduce nuclear risks as a means of ensuring that situations do not arise—either now or in the future—in which the possibility of nuclear weapons use looms. It was with this in mind that in July last year, I issued a statement to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in which I urged the five nuclear-weapon states to make prompt and unambiguous



## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

pledges that they would never be the first to launch a nuclear strike—the principle of No-First Use”.

Risk reduction is not a new topic in the NPT review process. Action 5(d) of the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference called on the nuclear powers to “discuss policies that could prevent the use of nuclear weapons and eventually lead to their elimination, lessen the danger of nuclear war and contribute to the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons”.

The principle of NFU was, for the first time, included in drafts of the final statement for last year’s NPT Review Conference. In the end, the final statement was not agreed upon, although reference to NFU was removed. The nuclear powers being willing to discuss the adoption of NFU is a rare glimmer of hope.

Progress made within the NPT on furthering a commitment to the principle of NFU could de-escalate current tensions, not only providing direct risk reduction effects by increased strategic response time but conceivably also opening new pathways to disarmament.

### **China declared No-First Use in 1964**

It was first publicly made by China in 1964 referring to any authoritative statement by a nuclear weapon state, never to be the first to use these weapons under any circumstances, whether as a pre-emptive attack, first strike, or in response to a non-nuclear attack.

China is the only nuclear-armed country to have an unconditional NFU policy. India maintains a policy of NFU with exceptions for a response to chemical or biological attacks. France, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States maintain policies that permit the first use of nuclear weapons in a conflict. Israel does not acknowledge the existence of its nuclear arsenal, so it has no publicly known position.

“We all know about these threats, and many attempts exist to reduce, ban, prohibit, and eliminate nuclear weapons or even ban their testing. But at the same time, we experience an ongoing nuclear arms race,” said PNND Co-President Muttonen.

She added: “Countries are modernizing their arsenals, boosting the construction of these lethal weapons. Though there is a lot of research on the dreadful humanitarian consequences of nuclear detonations and the risks of human and technical errors or accidents. The experts even come to the

conclusion that the consequences of a nuclear conflict are much graver than estimated”.

### **90 seconds left to midnight**

The Atomic scientists call it “a time of unprecedented danger: there are only 90 seconds left to midnight”. They moved the hands of the ‘Doomsday Clock’ forward because of increased nuclear danger, which at the same time undermines the global efforts to combat climate change, the second big threat.

Co-President of PNND, a global network of over 700 parliamentarians from more than 75 countries working to prevent nuclear proliferation, explained that in this time of mistrust and aggression, it is difficult to find ways of nuclear disarmament. What could be done easily, unilaterally, or collectively, without further institution or another mechanism, is to guarantee a No-First Use policy. A guarantee is urgently needed, especially as many treaties, mutual assurances, and technical mechanisms for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament have eroded or not progressed in the last years.

“Nuclear-armed states have to agree on policies never to use nuclear weapons first,” said Muttonen stressing that No-First Use policies are also important steps toward nuclear disarmament. It is no surprise, therefore, that nuclear-armed states like China and India, which have No-First Use policies, support the proposal to eliminate nuclear weapons.

### **Group of 20 and G7**

When the Group of 20 leaders met in Bali in November 2022, they proclaimed in their statement, which was included in the Bali declaration, “the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.” However, this strong statement was not reaffirmed, and no new measures or steps to reduce nuclear threats were announced at the G7 meeting in Hiroshima on 19-23 May 2023. As Ms. Muttonen warns, the G7 statement walks back significantly. You can see a disconnect between the policy of nuclear deterrence and what the majority of non-nuclear states want: categorically condemn nuclear weapons, she said. “But there is still the chance and hope that the Bali statement is reaffirmed in the NPT process, at the UN General Assembly, and at the G20 summit in India.”

“To make progress possible, we have to engage with nuclear powers. We have to talk. We have to have diplomacy being back again. The most important issue now is to reduce the chance of

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

nuclear weapons being used. For our common, collective safety. Therefore: No-First Use policies should be implemented by all nuclear-armed and allied states,” added Muttonen.

### Parliamentarians’ crucial role

Parliamentarians make laws, and therein lies the role of PNND. Parliamentarians play an important role, for example, when it comes to the budget. They decide on foreign policy, diplomacy, non-proliferation, and disarmament or even on more money for weapons of mass destruction. They decide on national policy development and are the direct link to civil society. Civil society and parliamentarians are interlinked like communicating vessels. They both influence each other.

Parliamentarians can pressure governments, and civil society can support them; they can inform their constituencies and the media. Thus, again influencing public perception and political priorities. Parliamentarians are very active in advancing No-First Use policies in national legislatures and inter-parliamentary bodies such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly or the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) through the leadership of PNND members. They have to get the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to adopt paragraphs on nuclear risk reduction, No-First-Use and comprehensive nuclear disarmament in the final declarations of the OSCE PA annual meetings.

“A world in which nuclear weapons are abolished; a world where all may flourish” is the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF) objective. Its mission is to “educate, advocate, and inspire action for a just and peaceful world, free of nuclear weapons.” Founded in 1982, NAPF is composed of individuals and organizations from all over the world, keeping the consultative status to the United Nations ECOSOC and is recognized by the UN as a Peace Messenger Organization.

### The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

In 2014, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation consulted with the Marshall Islands when it filed cases against the nine nuclear-armed countries (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea) in the International Court of Justice and U.S. Federal District Court. The lawsuits make the central claim that these nations have failed to comply with their obligations under international law to pursue

negotiations to eliminate their nuclear weapons completely.

“Soviets did it in the steppes of Kazakhstan; to this day, children are born with defects caused by exposure to radiation; the British did it on Christmas Island, which is now part of the Republic of Kiribati, and in Australia among the indigenous population. The French did this in the Algerian desert, where they buried radioactive equipment in the sand, and in French Polynesia, where recent research has shown that the radiation is much higher than the French government claimed,” stressed Ivana Nikolić Hughes, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

Ms. Hughes referred to Daniel Ellsberg and his book “The Doomsday Machine”. The legendary whistle-blower who revealed the first insider exposé of the dangers of America’s hidden, seventy-year-long nuclear policy. When Ellsberg, a former presidential advisor, took the Pentagon Papers, he also took a cache of top-secret documents related to the United States’ nuclear program in the 1960s. The Doomsday Machine is Ellsberg’s account of the most dangerous arms build-up in the history of civilization, the legacy of which threatens the very survival of humanity.

In the words of Daniel Ellsberg, who passed away in June 2023: “What is missing—what is foregone—in the typical discussion and analysis of historical or current nuclear policies is the recognition that what is being discussed is dizzyingly insane and immoral: in its almost-incalculable and inconceivable destructiveness and deliberate murderousness, its disproportionality of risked and planned destructiveness to either declared or unacknowledged objectives, the infeasibility of its secretly pursued aims (damage limitation to the United States and allies, ‘victory’ in two-sided nuclear war), its criminality (to the degree that explodes ordinary visions of law, justice, crime), its lack of wisdom or compassion, its sinfulness, and evil.”

“US nuclear policies are sheer madness and must be completely reconsidered!” stressed Ms Hughes. She recalled how all the government’s secret papers revealed something in common: the desire to activate nuclear weapons.

### Nixon and Bush

Drunken Richard Nixon wanted to do the same, but they stopped him. The question is how many presidents who came after him can be considered accountable?” asked Hughes.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

According to newly revealed government documents, Nixon is even believed to have ordered nuclear bombers to be put on standby for an atomic strike against North Korea in 1969 following the shooting down of a US spy plane. The president contacted the Joint Chiefs of Staff and ordered plans for a tactical nuclear strike and target recommendations. Henry Kissinger, national security adviser for Nixon at the time, also got on the phone with the Joint Chiefs and got them to agree to stand down on that order until Nixon woke up sober the next morning.

It's worth speculating that Nixon wanted the Communists to believe he considered a nuclear strike. In the coming years, the president would even send nuclear-armed bombers toward the Soviet Union while spreading the rumour that he was so insane he might really trigger World War III. Of course, he wasn't insane. And thanks to a 2000 book by Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan, we know he was just drunk. Not with power, but with booze, noted the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation president.

Current U.S. policy does not restrict the president's ability to order a nuclear strike for any reason. The military may reject an order that is perceived to violate laws of war, and there are legal concerns about the role of Congress authorizing the use of force. Still, as a matter of broad understanding, the president can launch nuclear weapons when and if he chooses.

Adopting an NFU policy would reaffirm Congress's constitutional authority to declare war. The

Constitution makes clear that no president can start a war by his/herself, so it makes sense that a president should not be able to start a nuclear war alone.

### The nuclear risk persists

Nikolai Sokov, Senior Fellow at Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, offered a view of the history of Soviet and Russian policy on nuclear weapons modernization. He charted the future evolution of the Russian strategic arsenal—now they are moving it to Belarus. In this climate, any provocation has the potential to trigger direct military action between Russian and NATO forces.

Mr. Sokov also pointed out that Russia's references to nuclear weapons early in the war seemed irrational. Threatening nuclear escalation was not a credible measure to stop the West from assisting Ukraine. Instead, this threat likely reflected the insecurity felt by Russian leadership about invading Ukraine.

Experts agreed that using nuclear weapons—whether by accident or intent—would cause unacceptable consequences. Adopting No-First Use policies, and ending the current threats for such use, would lower the risks of a nuclear catastrophe. Another arguably more ambitious approach is the total abolition and elimination of nuclear weapons through the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As the UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed: "Let's eliminate these weapons before they eliminate us." [IDN-InDepthNews]

*"Along with reducing tensions with the goal of resolving the Ukraine crisis, I feel it is of paramount importance that the nuclear-weapon states initiate action to reduce nuclear risks as a means of ensuring that situations do not arise—either now or in the future—in which the possibility of nuclear weapons use looms. It was with this in mind that in July last year, I issued a statement to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in which I urged the five nuclear-weapon states to make prompt and unambiguous pledges that they would never be the first to launch a nuclear strike the principle of No-First Use". — SGI President Daisaku Ikeda in his Statement on the Ukraine Crisis and No-First Use of Nuclear Weapons on 11 January 2023,*

## The Erosion of The International Arms Control Regimes

By Sergio Duarte



*Photo: Arms Control and Nonproliferation. Credit: United States Department of State.*

*The writer is an Ambassador, former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and President of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.*

NEW YORK. 9 August 2023 (IDN) — Nuclear weapons burst into the international scenario 21 days after the signature of the Charter of the United Nations. For that chronological reason, the Charter does not mention nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, the worldwide shock and horror following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki led the General Assembly (GA) to adopt its very first resolution in January 1946, establishing a Commission charged with presenting proposals for eliminating atomic weapons from national arsenals. Later in the same year the same Session of the GA recognized the urgency of the need to prohibit and eliminate atomic and all other major weapons adapted to mass destruction.

This was seventy-eight years ago. The Commission created by Resolution no. 1 was soon disbanded and attention shifted from elimination to “partial measures” in the nuclear field that were supposed to provide a basis for further progress. Over the following decades, a number of multilateral agreements aiming at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons were adopted and some limitation measures were reached.

Two categories of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and bacteriological, have been banned

by multilateral conventions. Nuclear weapons, however, still haunt humankind. Indeed, the nine countries possessing them are busy improving their arsenals by incorporating new technologies that enhance their speed, range and destructive power, in what can be described as “technological proliferation”.

Unilateral decisions or bilateral agreements succeeded in reducing the staggering amount of atomic weapons that existed at the height of the Cold War. Despite such reductions, an estimated 13.000-plus such weapons still exist today. At present, most of the arms limitation agreements between the United States and Russia have elapsed or been abandoned. The only one remaining is the New START Treaty, concluded in 2010, which has been unilaterally suspended by Russia.

### **No agreed limitations**

Currently, no agreed limitations are in force for those two states or any other nuclear power, for that matter. The elimination of nuclear weapons and means of their delivery remains at best a distant objective for those that possess them.

Resolution 1887 of the Security Council of the United Nations, adopted in 2008 reaffirmed that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security. No one disputes this statement, but most would agree that the very *existence* of nuclear weapons is what poses a major threat to world security.



## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

No nuclear weapon has ever been destroyed or dismantled by virtue of a multilateral treaty. In contrast, the Antarctic Treaty (1961), the Outer Space Treaty (1967) and the Seabed Treaty (1972) banned such weapons where they did not yet exist. Latin American and Caribbean countries succeeded in negotiating a treaty to prohibit such weapons in their territories, a pioneer initiative later emulated by 113 States in four other similar zones as well as by Mongolia.

### **Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee**

In the 1960's the two major powers negotiated between themselves the main features of a draft treaty and presented it to the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC). The final text failed to achieve consensus in the Committee but was adopted by General Assembly and became the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in 1970.

During the following 20 years or so many States gradually dropped their initial reservations and by the end of the 1990's the overwhelming majority had acceded to it. The NPT is considered "the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime". Only four states are not Parties to the NPT; all of them acquired nuclear weapons.

The NPT has been instrumental in preventing non-nuclear States from acquiring nuclear weapons or developing nuclear explosive devices. Episodes of actual or alleged lack of compliance by a few non-nuclear states with their obligations have been to a large extent resolved by a combination of political and economic pressure, including sanctions by the United Nations Security Council, coupled with diplomatic means.

### **Deep differences**

However, deep differences of view among the parties of the NPT remain. Many non-nuclear Parties see lack of interest on the part of the nuclear-armed ones to act decisively towards eliminating their arsenals in fulfilment of Article VI of the instrument. Dissatisfaction has flared up on many occasions, at times threatening to unravel the non-proliferation and arms control architecture.

Six out of the ten Review Conferences convened so far ended without agreeing on a final document, including the last two, in 2015 and 2022. This state of affairs is detrimental to the authority and credibility of the non-proliferation regime and does not bode well for the upcoming Review Conference set for 2026.

A number of disquieting factors add to this somber picture. The Comprehensive Test-ban Treaty (CTBT), which prohibits nuclear test explosions in all environments is not yet in force due to the lack of the necessary signature and/or ratification of eight of the 44 States specifically mentioned in its Article 14. The continuing absence of action by those eight States to start and/or complete internal requirements for signature and ratification reduces confidence in the effectiveness of the universal prohibition it intended to institute.

Another disturbing factor is the continuing inability of the multilateral machinery created by the I Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD I) to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to it. Since the mid 1990's no meaningful consensus on matters of substance has been reached in the deliberative multilateral instances at the United Nations, the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the First Committee of the General Assembly. Moreover, since the 1990's the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has been unable to agree even on a program of work.

The international security system based on the Charter of the United Nations and developed over the past 78 years failed to prevent conflict in many parts of the world. Episodes of aggression and breaches of the peace continue to provoke death and destruction, particularly in developing areas, causing huge humanitarian crises and massive population movements that fuel xenophobic reactions in developed States and increase inequalities.

### **Recurring tensions**

The Security Council, primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has been incapable of acting in situations of special interest to any of its permanent members, thus effectively shielding such states from any measure they do not agree with. In fact, the composition of the Council no longer reflects the geopolitical reality of today's world and the changes in security perceptions since 1945. Its reform is long overdue.

Recurring tensions between major nuclear powers as well between regional rivals threaten stability and the maintenance of international peace and security. Nuclear armed States adhere to military doctrines that contemplate the use of atomic armament in the circumstances that they consider necessary. Until recently, these states used to argue that the existence of nuclear weapons was

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

responsible for the absence of a war in Europe since the end of World War II.

That argument can hardly be sustained in the face of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Two European countries—one of which possesses nuclear weapons—are actually at war and three other nuclear states are involved, plus NATO, a nuclear alliance. Threats of use of these weapons have been made more or less stridently since the beginning of the hostilities and should not be played down.

If a nuclear conflict erupts, the whole architecture of international instruments on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament may not survive and the order established by the Charter of the United Nations may itself be endangered.

One important development since the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT was the promotion by many countries of the need for serious reflection upon the catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear explosives. Three international conferences in 2012 and 2014 debated the humanitarian emergency and the risks associated with nuclear weapons and concluded that no nation or group of nations would be able to deal effectively with the humanitarian impact of their use.

These conferences found that such risks are far higher and more widespread than previously assumed, and that countering them should thus be at the center of global efforts related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Up to now, the most important result of those initiatives has been the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It derives directly from the

provision contained in Article VI of the NPT that call on each state party to pursue negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament.

This is precisely what has been done. The Treaty is the first piece of legally binding international law aimed at banning nuclear weapons on a global scale. Besides prohibiting the use or threat of use of such weapons, the TPNW proscribes their development, production, transfer, possession and stockpiling as well as their stationing in third countries.

It also establishes obligations of assistance to the victims of the use or tests as well as measures of remediation of environmental damage in areas contaminated in consequence of such activities. It is imperative that a large majority of non-nuclear states, ideally all of them, demonstrate clearly their rejection of nuclear weapons by adhering to the TPNW. So far the Treaty has 95 signatories, 68 of which have already ratified it.

The crisis of the international framework of institutions and agreements on nuclear disarmament makes clear that treaties are effective and durable as long as they are perceived to be in the interest of all parties. Confidence and credibility are essential ingredients of successful pacts between nations or groups of nations.

Further erosion of the disarmament architecture threatens the security of all States and must be prevented through cooperation and negotiation, taking into account the legitimate interests of the international community as a whole. Real security cannot be based on the threat of destruction of human civilization. [IDN-InDepthNews]

***The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). is the first piece of legally binding international law aimed at banning nuclear weapons on a global scale. Besides prohibiting the use or threat of use of such weapons, the TPNW proscribes their development, production, transfer, possession and stockpiling as well as their stationing in third countries. It also establishes obligations of assistance to the victims of the use or tests as well as measures of remediation of environmental damage in areas contaminated in consequence of such activities.***

## Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Bypasses Gender Parity

By Thalif Deen



*Vanessa Lanteigne, Program Officer at Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), presenting proposals on Gender Inclusivity at the NPT Working Group at the UN on 23 July.*

UNITED NATIONS. 9 August 2023 (IDN) — The United Nations has been a vociferous and longstanding advocate of gender empowerment in its political, social and economic agenda characterized by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty and hunger eradication, quality education, human rights and climate change.

But it has remained relatively silent on the yawning gender disparity on the campaign for nuclear disarmament, which has been overwhelmingly dominated by men.

In her 23 July presentation, titled Gender inclusivity and approaches to enhance the NPT Review Process, Vanessa Lanteigne, a Rotary Peace Fellow and representative of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), pointed out that in 2019, 76% of heads of delegations to the NPT were men, and that since 2000, all of the Presidents/Chairs of the NPT Prep-Coms have been male and only one President of an NPT Review Conference has been a woman.

She proposed that NPT institute targets for gender inclusion in State Parties' delegations, with sanctions for imbalanced delegations similar to those applied by Inter-Parliamentary Union for its assemblies.

Lanteigne also noted that a *fully-realized gender equality requires that issues, views, and approaches relating to characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity are both fully represented in security frameworks.*

*She cited the assessment by Ireland in its working paper Gender in the Non-Proliferation Treaty that the NPT Review process has traditionally taken a 'one -dimensional security approach to addressing nuclear weapons, in terms of the issues which are prioritised'.*

She proposed that the NPT establish a subsidiary body to explore nuclear non-proliferation, risk-reduction and disarmament issues in a broader security framework of common and human security incorporating gender, peace, diplomacy, conflict resolution and international law.

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director at Western States Legal Foundation, told IDN it is completely obvious that women and gender non-conforming people are grossly under-represented in the NPT process.

*"And it's a matter of common sense that people of all genders should be equal partners in making decisions as consequential as the future of nuclear weapons", she said.*



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

It is also possible that establishing policies like the Inter-Parliamentary Union's targets for gender balance in States Parties' delegations to the NPT—enforced, if necessary, by voting sanctions, could help lead the way to improvements in gender equity in delegations' home countries, said Cabasso, who co-founded the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons.

However, when talking about how to challenge the seemingly intractable centrality of nuclear threats as an instrument of global domination, she argued, having equal participation in the discussion by all genders will not solve the problem.

***“What is needed is a fundamental transformation in the mindset, values, and practices of the institutions that continue to place the construct of “national security” above the increasingly pressing need for universal “human security,” declared Cabasso.***

Shampa Biswas, Judge & Mrs. Timothy A. Paul Chair of Political Science and Professor of Politics at Whitman College, Washington told IDN “It is appalling that we are still talking about gender parity in 2023!”.

“If there is one takeaway from Christopher Nolan’s recent film “Oppenheimer,” it is that the nuclear field has been male-dominated from the very start,” she pointed out.

However, although many fields have made great strides toward gender inclusivity, the nuclear policy-making field still remains woefully behind, said Biswas, is an international relations theorist specializing in postcolonial theory and nuclear politics.

“If we are serious about nuclear disarmament, it is imperative that we diversify the field in substantial ways to include voices that can draw attention to the dangers of nuclear weapons from a variety of perspectives and help redefine the meaning of security away from its masculinist, militarist connotations”.

Women’s voices, she said, are critical to that endeavor.

“I support the idea of instituting targets for more gender-inclusive delegations but wish there was a way to do this via incentives rather than penalties,” declared Biswas.

In her 23 July presentation on further strengthening the review process of the Non-

Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Lanteigne said the NPT Review process would be enriched, strengthened and made more effective by elevating gender inclusivity and approaches because we could then access a full range of security approaches to our global challenges.

Gender inclusivity and approaches mean firstly that different sexes (male, female and nondeterminate) are included equitably in decision-making processes and leadership positions within the security sector.

And secondly, that diverse gender perspectives, issues and approaches to peace and security are meaningfully incorporated in order to utilize a more diverse, comprehensive and holistic security framework. Integrating these two principles that will support Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which, “stressed the importance of ‘equal participation and full involvement’ of women and the need to increase [women’s] role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution”.

Meanwhile, Sustainable Development Goal 5 focuses on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

There are indicators that state parties are not only aware and willing to work towards gender equity and inclusion but are actively referencing and promoting it on their own.

At the 2019 PrepCom more than 20 statements were made on behalf of over 60 State Parties addressing the importance of gender perspectives to the NPT, Lanteigne said.

Three papers were submitted directly related to nuclear issues and gender, and eight working papers included references to the links.

Reviewing policies to support equal access to participation is important because it is correlated with improved organizational efficiency and innovative capacity by including more diverse expertise resulting in creative solutions and sustainable developments.

But a gender-inclusive approach should be supplemented by gender-diverse analyses as well. Gender equality requires that issues, views, and approaches relating to characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity are both fully represented in security frameworks.

Research reports that participants in nuclear negotiations perceive that the field has rewarded characteristics, expertise and experiences that are

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

more commonly associated with men, such as toughness, seriousness, risk-taking and military-training.

Such negotiations would be enhanced, and have more possibility for success, if they broadened the 'diplomatic tool-box' to also include 'feminine' approaches of flexibility, compromise, multi-faceted problem solving, compassion and human interaction (focusing on the people involved and not just the topics), she argued.

An example of a gender-inclusive approach which could hold lessons for the NPT Review Process comes from the Inter-Parliamentary Union Gender Partnership Group which was instituted to ensure that gender-diverse perspectives were incorporated and that the inclusion of women was not just a numerical representation but holistic in terms of representing security approaches more often associated with women.

Other examples of gender-inclusive principles and approaches can be found in the feminist foreign

policies adopted by Canada, Germany, Ireland and Sweden among others.

These political steps forward, though, remain at risk of being rolled back like in the case of Sweden by succeeding governments highlighting the need to institutionalize the importance of gender in international organizations and procedures.

"We propose that the NPT establishes a subsidiary body to explore nuclear non-proliferation, risk reduction and disarmament issues in a broader security framework of common and human security incorporating gender, peace, diplomacy, conflict resolution and international law."

"This broader framework of common and human security will be beneficial to giving gender-diverse perspectives opportunities to participate in conflict resolution and security fields to ensure that inclusivity is fully and substantively implemented and symbolic tokenism is avoided." [IDN-InDepthNews]

## Will 'Oppenheimer' Movie Avert Nuclear Holocaust?

By Ramesh Jaura



*Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds," Oppenheimer quoted a line from Bhagawad Gita, when the nuclear blast took place. Source: The Wire*

BERLIN. 4 August 2023 (IDN) — The release of Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* sparked a media frenzy just weeks before the first session of

the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in Vienna.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

It is a biopic about the “father” of the atomic bomb, which wiped out the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945, killing between 129,000 and 226,000 people.

In Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Magritte Gordaneer writes that eight days after the atomic bombings, J. Robert Oppenheimer, the chief scientist over the nuclear bomb’s development at the Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico, sent a letter to the secretary of war doubting the possibility of peace through continued development of nuclear arsenals.

Magritte Gordaneer, a policy and research intern with the 2017 Nobel Peace laureate ICAN, writes in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists that eight days following the atomic bombings, J. Robert Oppenheimer, the chief scientist over the atomic bomb’s development at the Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico, sent a letter to the secretary of war doubting the possibility of peace through continued development of nuclear arsenals.

Eight years later, he warned “about the potential for this new weapon to provoke an arms race fuelled by profiteering, the instability of the myth of nuclear peace, and the constant overwhelming threat these weapons pose to civilization”.

“70 years later, Oppenheimer’s post-war concerns appear amply justified. And those of us who have only known the atomic age Oppenheimer initiated have had enough of this risk”, Gordaneer explains.

Council on Strategic Risks’ communications director Andrew Facini praised Nolan’s article in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists for “showing the speed and tenacity with which power brokers took over the nuclear weapons enterprise once weapons were developed”.

**“Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”**

According to Facini, when only an “essentially defeated” Japan was left to target, Oppenheimer became more concerned about starting an arms race with the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, his commitment to arms control—and willingness to speak out for it—was incompatible with those who drew power from the bomb, and they systematically and deliberately destroyed him.

He is said to have later recalled: “We knew the world would not remain the same... A few people

laughed, a few people cried, and most people remained silent.” Oppenheimer quotes a line from the *Bhagavad Gita* in the film: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” The *Bhagavad Gita* is a 700-verse Hindu scripture.

Despite the dangers of nuclear weapons, the Oppenheimer movie provides an opportunity to educate the public and encourage participation in the movement to eliminate them, according to the 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate ICAN. Raising awareness of these risks can spread a message of optimism and opposition that is crucial.

While *Oppenheimer* delves into the origins of nuclear weapons, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) “signifies our path towards their abolition,” says ICAN.

It was adopted on 7 July 2017, opened for signature on 20 September 2017, and entered into force on 22 January 2021. It is the first legally binding international agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons comprehensively.

Nuclear non-proliferation was addressed in UN negotiations as early as 1957 and gained significant momentum in the 1960s.

The structure of a treaty to uphold nuclear non-proliferation as a norm of international behaviour had become apparent by the mid-1960s. An agreement on a treaty had been reached by 1968 that prohibited nuclear weapons proliferation, enabled cooperation for the peaceful use of atomic energy, and helped advance the goal of nuclear disarmament.

According to Article X of the Treaty, a conference will be held in 25 years following its entry into force to decide whether it should continue in force indefinitely or be extended for an additional fixed period or periods.

At the NPT Review and Extension Conference in May 1995, States parties to the Treaty agreed—without a vote—that the Treaty should be extended indefinitely. Before the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons from 31 July to 11 August 2023 in Vienna, the Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons, Abolition 2000 warned that nuclear war is increasingly likely to occur by accident, miscalculation, crisis escalation, or intentionality.

In a working paper, Abolition 2000 underscores the importance of the gathering in light of the Russian aggression on Ukraine, in which

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

President Putin has threatened to use nuclear weapons, emphasizing the urgency of disarmament. According to the report, Russians' willingness to use nuclear weapons is demonstrated by their public tests of nuclear-capable missiles and forward deployments of atomic weapons to their neighbours (Belarus).

According to Abolition 2000, the Ukraine war has demonstrated the dangers of 21st-century warfare as well, with its mix of missiles, missile defences, aircraft, unpiloted vehicles, increasingly complex sensing and communication technologies, disruptive electronic warfare, and cyberwarfare pushing war to the limit of human comprehension.

A broad-spectrum multipolar arms race is accelerating due to increasing antagonisms among nuclear-armed governments, of which the

Ukrainian war is just one manifestation, according to the Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons. Fast-developing technologies create non-nuclear capabilities of strategic significance and are incorporated into new or modernized systems for delivering nuclear weapons and defending against them.

Among a more general high-stakes AI technology competition, this has also led to the temptations and perils of applying artificial intelligence to weapons systems.

Furthermore, the European theatre is not the only region experiencing increased tensions among nuclear-armed states. These also occur in North-East Asia, the South China Sea, South Asia and the Middle East. [IDN-InDepthNews]

### Kazakhstan Continues to Suffer Awful Impact of Nuclear Tests

By Aurora Weiss



*Photo Credit: Katsuhiko Asagiri, Multimedia Director of IDN-INPS. (From L to R): Alicia Sanders-Zakre, Policy and Research Coordinator at International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Alimzhan Akhmetov, the Founder-Director of the Center for International Security and Policy, Kazakhstan, Dmitriy Vesselov a third generation Semipalatinsk nuclear-testing survivor, Arman Baissuanov, Director of International Security at the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), Sanya Rajpal (SGI-UK).*

VIENNA. 4 August 2023 (IDN) — The Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan, along with Japan and other Pacific Island states, is one of the most challenging in terms of the consequences of testing or use of nuclear weapons. Being a young state, Kazakhstan is facing a very heavy heritage and its difficult legacy.

Generations of many people are suffering from various diseases caused by nuclear testing. Even carrying the popular name "nuclear shield of

Russia" it appears that the neighbouring land has forgotten nuclear testing victims, the people who paid the price of the shield in the Soviet era.

Sharing the same past, but also the problems they face in the present and future, the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), and Center for International Security and Policy organized the side event *"The Catastrophic Consequences of Atom Bomb Testing—A First Person's Testimony"*. It is a part of the program



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

during the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that is taking place here from 31 July to 11 August at the United Nations in Vienna.

Arman Baissuanov, Director of International Security at the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, Alimzhan Akhmetov, the Founder-Director of the Center for International Security and Policy, Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International, Dmitriy Vesselov a third generation Semipalatinsk nuclear-testing survivor, Alicia Sanders-Zakre, Policy and Research Coordinator at International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) took the stage, and Sanya Rajpal (SGI-UK) held the rudder moderating the event.

Kazakh government representative Arman Baissuanov opened the conference, highlighting TPNW articles 6 and 7. The victims' assistance should be crucial, the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of all victims and also financial compensation. The Trust fund, inside the TPNW Framework, is also of great importance for victim assistance and environmental remediation.

In the Vienna Action Plan adopted at the First Meeting of States Parties, states agreed to discuss the "feasibility of and propose possible guidelines for" establishing an international trust fund that could provide financial support to victim assistance and environmental remediation activities (action 29).

During November this year, the 2nd meeting of state parties of TPNW will take place in New York, with Mexico serving as President. Kazakhstan has already announced that they will chair the third meeting of the state parties to the TPNW in 2024.

"I hope that all state, and international organizations, civil society groups, and survivors can suggest guiding points to move forward," told Baissuanov, the government representative of the state where, decades ago, Soviet military scientists detonated 456 nuclear bombs, exposing the high doses of radiation more than one million of people.

Deep pain seeing the countless people who suffered, and continue to suffer, the effects of the nuclear radiation as a result of nuclear tests conducted in the former Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site area was something that stayed embedded in the memory of Hirotsugu Terasaki (SGI International) until today.

He visited that area for the first time in 2019, through the arrangements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. SGI Director General of Peace and Global Issues has seen the same destiny that Japan shared with Kazakhstan regarding the suffering of victims of nuclear radiation.

"As you know, the voices of the hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki played a pivotal role in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. However, the plight of the "global hibakusha"—the numerous individuals who have been exposed to radiation through nuclear testing and uranium mining—their plight has not received sufficient recognition", stressed Terasaki.

He said, we must keep at the forefront of our minds the terrible anguish of all those who lost their lives, were injured, or otherwise suffered the effects of nuclear weapons. Their cries continue to echo across the globe, and it needs to be ensured that these individual tragedies are never forgotten. That's why the SGI has worked together with ICAN to carry out grassroots awareness-raising activities on the humanitarian impact and risks of nuclear weapons.

"So long as the risk of nuclear weapon use persists, we must never lose consciousness of the violent threat and affront to our humanity that these weapons pose. Together, let us send a resolute message to the world that we will not tolerate the existence of nuclear weapons, and let us continue to forge a path toward their abolition", concluded Terasaki.

The first-hand story of the victim of nuclear testing touched all the present government representatives as well as the academic community and NGOs.

Dmitriy Vesselov was born in the Kazakh Soviet Republic in 1976, in Semipalatinsk, a place just 100 kilometres from the former nuclear test site. He is the third-generation survivor of nuclear tests and suffers from a genetic disease that prevents him from living a full life—and will be passed down from generation to generation. He has acromioclavicular dysostosis which is characterized by the fact that a person has no clavicles. His hands are held only by muscles and ligaments, and he also has anomalies in the development of the bones and skull, as well as susceptibility to diseases of the broncho-pulmonary system and arthrosis.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

In 2015 Dmitry was recognized as a victim of exposure to ionizing radiation. The problem is that he doesn't have any benefits and that he must pay for medical insurance and treatment. Significant benefits that his health condition requires are provided only to disable people, and he was denied a disability group. Also, a special state monthly allowance is only for those people who are recognized as disabled, or to one of the family members of a victim who dies from diseases caused by ionizing radiation.

"Victims of nuclear testing are left alone in Kazakhstan," Vesselov pointed out. He hopes that his story serves as a reminder of the tragic consequences of using nuclear weapons.

Between 1945 and 2017, more than two thousand nuclear test explosions were conducted around the world, resulting in epidemics of cancers and other chronic illnesses. The victims of these experiments must not be forgotten and their demands for justice and assistance must be met.

"The international community should first help the victims and then chase the perpetrators," stressed Alicia Sanders-Zakre, Policy and Research Coordinator at ICAN. She regretted the current situation in which the primary focus is on the victims.

"Imagine you see someone shooting someone on the road in front of you. You will certainly not start running after the perpetrator to catch him. First, you will run to help the victim," explained Sanders-Zakre. Considering that the nuclear arsenal on a global level is increasing, not decreasing, she said, it is necessary for states that own nuclear

weapons to be faced with the human element when we talk about the consequences.

Not only have nuclear weapons been deployed twice in war, but they have also been tested in 15 countries. The very production of these weapons has a humanitarian impact. Testing at just one location in the USA has spread to 48 states as well as neighbouring countries.

As part of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, a coalition of non-governmental organizations in one hundred countries promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in 2022 they launched a new website.

It offers an overview of all the tests, details of who produced them and in which year, as well as stories from victims seeking justice.

Nuclear weapons are the most inhumane and indiscriminate weapons ever created. They violate international law, cause environmental damage, undermine national and global security, and divert vast public resources away from meeting human needs.

In this crucial global moment when the risk of nuclear weapons use is higher than at any time since the Cold War, it is necessary to heed what UN Secretary-General António Guterres says, "Let's eliminate these weapons before they eliminate us", and campaign for action because "disarmament is everybody's business because life itself is everybody's business". [IDN-InDepthNews]



Source: Soka Gakkai Malaysia

## AI ChatBot Warns of Nuclear Risks in a Militant Political Climate

By Thalif Deen



*Collage with images from Internet by IDN-INPS.*

UNITED NATIONS. 9 July 2023 (IDN) — The AI Chatbot GPT—described as a computer-generated program that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to understand questions and automate responses—was reportedly downloaded more than one million times within its first five days last month, according to OpenAI, ChatGPT's maker.

And although criticized for its inability to distinguish between fact and fiction, Chatbot's access to basic knowledge is a steady source of information for writers, journalists, academics and other professionals.

The headline in a *New York Times* article June 18—and titled "Danger! Danger! Are these Warnings for AI or Nuclear Weapons?"—sounded ominous.

The comparisons between AI and nuclear weapons "seems to be everywhere", the Times said.

"It's like nuclear weapons", a pioneering AI researcher was quoted as saying, while top AI executives have warned that AI technology "could pose an existential threat to humanity on par with nuclear war".

Sam Altman, chief executive of OpenAI, which developed Chatbot GPT, told the US Congress last month that AI pioneers are worried about its

potential dangers and want the federal government to regulate it.

Bearing in mind AI's vast storage of knowledge, culled mostly from the internet, we posed a series of questions focusing primarily on nuclear threats. The responses were instantaneous—and arrived with lightning speed.

### **Excerpts from the Q&A:**

IDN: With nuclear threats from Russia and sabre-rattling by North Korea, is there a possibility of a nuclear war?

AI CHATBOT GPT: As an AI language model, I don't have access to real-time information or the ability to predict specific future events. However, I can provide you with some general insights.

Nuclear threats and tensions between countries are undoubtedly serious issues that require close attention. While it's important to take such threats seriously, it's equally important to recognize that the majority of nations understand the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war and have a vested interest in avoiding it.

International diplomacy, treaties, and agreements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), are in place to prevent the use of nuclear weapons and encourage disarmament. These efforts aim to reduce the

## **Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons**

likelihood of a nuclear conflict and promote peaceful resolutions to conflicts.

While regional tensions can escalate at times, it is crucial to remember that engaging in a full-scale nuclear war would be highly detrimental for all parties involved. The international community generally works to prevent such conflicts through negotiations, economic sanctions, and diplomatic channels.

It is important for nations to maintain open lines of communication, engage in diplomatic dialogue, and pursue peaceful resolutions to conflicts. Additionally, efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain crucial for global stability and security.

However, it is essential to stay informed about global events through reliable news sources and pay attention to the assessments of experts in the field of international relations and security.

IDN: If there is a nuclear war, how disastrous would that be for humanity?

CHATBOT GPT: A nuclear war would be an extremely catastrophic event for humanity, leading to immense destruction and loss of life. The consequences of a nuclear war can be summarized as follows:

### **Immediate Casualties:**

The initial detonation of nuclear weapons would cause immediate and massive casualties in the targeted areas. The blast, heat, and radiation would result in the deaths of millions of people within moments.

### **Long-Term Health Effects:**

Survivors of the initial blasts would suffer from severe radiation sickness, leading to long-term health issues such as cancer, genetic mutations, and birth defects. The impact on future generations could be profound.

### **Infrastructure Destruction:**

Nuclear explosions would cause widespread destruction of infrastructure, including residential areas, hospitals, transportation systems, and communication networks. Essential services such as electricity, water supply, and sanitation would be severely disrupted, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

### **Environmental Devastation:**

Nuclear war would release enormous amounts of radioactive materials into the atmosphere,

contaminating the air, soil, and water. This contamination would persist for years, affecting ecosystems, agriculture, and the food chain. It could lead to long-term environmental damage, making certain areas uninhabitable.

### **Global Nuclear Winter:**

The smoke and dust generated from the nuclear explosions would ascend into the atmosphere, blocking sunlight and causing a drop in temperature. This phenomenon, known as nuclear winter, could significantly reduce agricultural productivity and result in widespread famine, affecting not only the warring nations but also regions far from the conflict.

### **Societal Collapse:**

The consequences of a nuclear war would likely lead to social and economic collapse. Governments, institutions, and essential services would struggle to function, resulting in lawlessness, mass migrations, and humanitarian crises. The loss of infrastructure, resources, and skilled personnel would hinder any recovery efforts.

### **Escalation and Nuclear Fallout:**

In the event of a large-scale nuclear conflict, there is a risk of further escalation as more nations get involved. This could lead to a spiraling global catastrophe with exponentially higher casualties and destruction.

It is essential to note that the above scenario assumes a full-scale nuclear war involving multiple nations. The actual outcome would depend on various factors, such as the number of weapons used, their yield, the targets chosen, and the prevailing geopolitical circumstances.

Given the immense risks and devastating consequences, it is crucial to continue pursuing diplomatic efforts, arms control treaties, and nonproliferation agreements to prevent nuclear conflict and promote global peace and security.

IDN: Can the UN help prevent a future nuclear war?

CHATBOT GPT: The United Nations plays a crucial role in promoting global peace and security, and one of its primary objectives is to prevent conflicts, including nuclear war. While the UN alone cannot prevent a future nuclear war, it has several mechanisms and initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of such a catastrophic event. Here are some ways in which the UN contributes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament:



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

### **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):**

The UN oversees the NPT, which is an international treaty designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament. It encourages countries to work towards complete disarmament while granting access to peaceful nuclear technology for energy and other peaceful purposes.

### **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):**

The IAEA is an independent agency within the UN system responsible for monitoring and verifying the peaceful use of nuclear energy and ensuring compliance with safeguards agreements. It plays a crucial role in detecting and deterring the diversion of nuclear materials for weapons purposes.

### **Security Council Resolutions:**

The UN Security Council has issued numerous resolutions related to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. These resolutions often impose sanctions or other measures to discourage states from pursuing nuclear weapons programs or violating existing agreements.

### **Disarmament Forums and Conferences:**

The UN organizes various disarmament forums and conferences where member states can discuss and negotiate arms control and disarmament measures. These platforms provide an opportunity for dialogue, building trust, and advancing disarmament initiatives.

### **Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution:**

Through its peacekeeping operations and diplomatic efforts, the UN works to resolve conflicts and prevent escalations that could potentially lead to nuclear war. By facilitating negotiations and promoting peaceful settlements, the UN contributes to reducing the risk of armed conflicts, including those involving nuclear-armed states.

### **Public Awareness and Advocacy:**

The UN raises awareness about the dangers of nuclear weapons and advocates for their elimination. It educates the public, supports civil society organizations, and promotes initiatives such as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons to generate momentum for disarmament efforts.

While the UN's efforts are significant, preventing a future nuclear war requires the collective commitment of nations, adherence to international

treaties and agreements, effective diplomacy, and the cooperation of nuclear-armed states. It is a complex challenge that requires sustained multilateral efforts beyond the UN alone.

IDN: Will the US and Western powers succeed in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons?

AICHATBOT GPT: As an AI language model, I cannot predict the future with certainty. However, I can provide some information based on the current situation.

The question of whether the US and Western powers will succeed in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons is complex and depends on various factors, including political, diplomatic, and strategic developments.

As of my knowledge cutoff in September 2021, the US and other Western powers, along with other international actors, were engaged in negotiations with Iran to address concerns about its nuclear program.

In 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was reached between Iran and a group of world powers (known as the P5+1: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China), which aimed to restrict Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

However, in 2018, the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Iran. In response, Iran began to gradually reduce its compliance with certain nuclear restrictions outlined in the agreement. Negotiations have been ongoing since then to revive the JCPOA or reach a new agreement.

It's important to note that international relations and negotiations are subject to change, and new developments may have occurred since my knowledge cutoff. The success of preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons will depend on various factors, including the outcome of ongoing negotiations, the willingness of all parties to reach a mutually acceptable agreement, and the broader geopolitical dynamics in the region.

It's advisable to stay updated on current news and diplomatic developments to understand the most recent information and trends regarding this issue.

IDN: A group of over 350 AI industry leaders warned last month that artificial intelligence (AI) poses a growing new danger to humanity –and should be considered a “societal risk on a par with pandemics and nuclear wars” according to a

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

report from the Center for AI Safety. How credible is this threat?

AICHATBO GOT: As an AI language model, I don't have access to real-time news or specific reports published after my knowledge cutoff in September 2021. Therefore, I cannot provide information about the specific report from the Center for AI Safety that you mentioned.

However, it is worth noting that concerns about the potential risks associated with artificial intelligence have been a topic of discussion in various AI communities. Ethical considerations, safety precautions, and the impact of AI on society are important subjects that researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders have been addressing. While AI has the potential to bring

significant benefits and advancements, there are valid concerns about its misuse or un-

intended consequences. Discussions around the risks of AI often include topics such as job displacement, biased decision-making algorithms, privacy concerns, and the potential for autonomous weapons, among others.

It is not uncommon for experts and industry leaders to raise warnings and emphasize the importance of addressing the societal impact and potential risks of AI.

However, it's essential to examine the specific arguments and evidence presented in the report you mentioned to gain a comprehensive understanding of their perspective. [IDN-InDepthNews]

### Tactical Nuclear Arms in Belarus "a Disturbing Development"

By Thalif Deen



*Nuclear weapons sent by Russia to Belarus will target Europe. Source: YouTube Kanal 13 Global*

UNITED NATIONS 5 July 2023 (IDN) — Russian President Vladimir Putin's claim that he has moved his first batch of nuclear tactical weapons into Belarus last month, has led to widespread speculation as to its implications and consequences. But how credible is this claim? Or is this the continued nuclear saber-rattling by Putin?

In a bygone era, Belarus has had a nuclear track record of 81 single warhead missiles stationed on its territory after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. In May 1992, Belarus acceded to the

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), while the weapons were all transferred to post-Cold War Russia by 1996.

Ariana N. Smith, Executive Director, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy and Director, UN Office of IALANA, told IDN Russia's stationing of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus "is a disturbing development in the ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine".

"Nuclear sharing" agreements, which generally involve the deployment of a nuclear-armed state's

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

weaponry in a non-nuclear weapon state with procedures for delivery of the weapons by the non-nuclear state in a time of war, are incompatible with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, she pointed out.

"The Russia-Belarus arrangement dangerously escalates an already violent, illegal war rife with nuclear risk, placing the world in peril."

Both Russia and Belarus are parties to the NPT—as a nuclear weapon state (NWS) and non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS), respectively—bound by its provisions.

Article I obligates the treaty-recognized NWS "not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons ... or *control* over such weapons directly, or indirectly".

It further requires the nuclear-armed states "not *in any way* to *assist*, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to ... acquire nuclear weapons ... or *control* over such weapons".

And Article II places a parallel obligation on NNWS, prohibiting them from receiving any such transfer or assistance.

Here, Russia's stationing weapons in Belarus, and Belarus's accepting them, violates international law, said Smith.

"It also presents an unacceptable threat to the already weakened state of global arms control and further increases the risk of nuclear weapons use in the conflict", she declared.

Smith said Russia and the United States/NATO are all attempting to use "deterrence" to strengthen their own positions, misguidedly claiming that it may *prevent* the use of weapons of mass destruction.

For example, Belarusian President Lukashenko explicitly referred to Russian tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory as a "deterrent against a potential aggressor", using similar language that Russia has used in this context.

Alyn Ware, co-Founder and International Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) told IDN: "Since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, President Putin has used a variety of nuclear threats to try to coerce Europe and the US into accepting the illegal invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Ukrainian territory".

To date, he argued, President Putin has failed in this coercion. "The West has remained strong has

remained strong and united against Russia's aggression and against Russia's commission of war crimes in Ukraine."

President Putin's deployment of nuclear weapons in Belarus will not succeed in coercing the West to stop their support for Ukraine, he said.

"Although it appears that Putin's actions are coercive and not an indication of an intent to actually use nuclear weapons in the war, the threatening statements and actions elevate the risk of nuclear weapons being used through further conflict escalation, miscalculation, misunderstanding or accident," he warned.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in August 2022 that "We have been extraordinarily lucky so far. But luck is not a strategy. Nor is it a shield from geopolitical tensions boiling over into nuclear conflict".

Today, said Guterres, humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation." (See Nuclear risks extreme says UN Secretary-General to NPT Review Conference <<https://www.unfoldzero.org/nuclear-risks-extreme-says-un-secretary-general-to-npt-review-conference/>>).

According to a June 16 report in *The Hill*, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Biden administration is closely monitoring Russia's claims that it's stored a tactical nuclear weapon in Belarus, but Washington has "no reason to adjust" its own nuclear posture.

Blinken was reacting to Putin's statement that Moscow has sent the first of several nuclear weapons to its ally Belarus, with the rest to be delivered by the end of summer.

Putin, who in March first announced the plan to deploy nuclear bombs in the country bordering Ukraine, said the move is meant as a "deterrence measure".

Responding to questions after a speech at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, the BBC reported June 17 that, Putin said the move was about "containment" and to remind anyone "thinking of inflicting a strategic defeat on us".

When asked about the possibility of using those weapons, he replied: "Why should we threaten the whole world? I have already said that the use of extreme measures is possible in case there is a danger to Russian statehood."

Tactical nuclear weapons are small nuclear warheads and delivery systems intended for use

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

on the battlefield, or for a limited strike. They are designed to destroy enemy targets in a specific area without causing widespread radioactive fallout.

The smallest tactical nuclear weapons can be one kiloton or less (producing the equivalent to a thousand tonnes of the explosive TNT). The largest ones can be as big as 100 kilotons. By comparison, the atomic bomb the US dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 was 15 kilotons, according to the BBC report.

Ware also referred to the G20 Leaders who at the Bali Summit in November 2022 agreed that “A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” (See Breakthrough at the G20 Summit: Leaders of nuclear weapon and allied states affirm the inadmissibility of nuclear weapons threat or use

<<https://nofirstuse.global/2022/12/12/breakthrough-at-the-g20-summit-leaders-of-nuclear-weapon-and-allied-states-affirm-the-inadmissibility-of-nuclear-weapons-threat-or-use/>> ).

“However, this agreement is shaky, as we saw at the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, where the leaders backtracked from the Bali Declaration (See G7 Hiroshima Summit backtracks on norm against nuclear weapons

<<https://nofirstuse.global/2023/05/23/g7-hiroshima-summit-backtracks-on-norm-against-nuclear-weapons/>>”), he said.

This is why it is so important to consolidate the norm against nuclear weapons threat or use and turn it into accepted international law. NoFirstUse Global is pressing for this with Nuclear Taboo: From Norm to Law, A Declaration of Public Conscience

<<https://nofirstuse.global/2023/04/11/launch-of-nuclear-taboo-from-norm-to-law/>> which was launched in April and presented to the G7 Summit <<https://nofirstuse.global/2023/05/18/g7-hiroshima-summit-should-reaffirm-the-nuclear-taboo/>> in May.

It will also be presented to the NPT Prep Com in August, G20 Summit in India in September and to the UN General Assembly in October. The Declaration of Public Conscience was the brainchild of Aaron Tovish. John Hallam will be presenting it to the NPT Prep Com in August.

Elaborating further, Ariana Smith said Senators Graham and Blumenthal recently introduced a resolution that would deem a nuclear detonation by Russia in Ukraine an attack on NATO, invoking war with the US, and threatened “total obliteration” of Russian forces should Russia use a nuclear weapon or cause a nuclear disaster at Zaporizhia.

“The language of deterrence and accompanying action, though, amounts to an existentially threatening game of chicken. All of this heightens the risk of not only an intentional nuclear attack, but also nuclear weapon use due to miscalculation or misinterpretation,” she argued.

Part of the stated Russian defense of its arrangement with Belarus points to the alleged precedent set by the United States’ nuclear sharing agreements with certain NATO states.

While the status of US sharing with NATO states predates the entry into force of the NPT, both US-NATO and Russia-Belarus nuclear sharing threatens further proliferation and should be ended as soon as practicable, declared Smith.

Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) meeting in Vancouver July 4 adopted the following text on nuclear risk reduction and disarmament, which will be included in the Vancouver Declaration.

“The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly calls for the immediate end of nuclear threat escalation fueled by the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine and encourages all participating states to redouble international efforts to achieve the global elimination of nuclear weapons within a timebound framework, including by negotiating a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention or framework of agreements as recommended in the final document of the eight Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or by signing and ratifying the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.”

The participants included over 200 parliamentarians from North America, Europe and Central Asia, including a number of members from Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). [IDN-InDepthNews]



## Universalization of Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty Is Essential

By Ramesh Jaura



*Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International (Right) at a one-day international conference titled 'Advancing Security and Sustainability at the G7 Hiroshima Summit' held at the University on March 29, 2023. Credit: SGI*

BERLIN | TOKYO, 11 June 2023 (IDN) — Peacebuilder and Buddhist leader Daisaku Ikeda, who is president of the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), issued a statement ahead of the meeting of the Group of 7 (G7) countries in Hiroshima May 19-21, calling on the G7 leaders to take bold steps toward resolving the conflict in Ukraine and guarantee the security of all humanity by taking the lead in discussions on pledges of No First Use of nuclear weapons.

The venue of the summit of seven leaders—from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus the European Union (EU)—was symbolically stark because the US atomic bombings in 1945 killed over 226,000 people in the twin Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with the heaviest toll in Hiroshima.

But did the seven leaders manage to take bold steps in respect of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and committing to 'No First Use' of nuclear weapons?

IDN interviewed Mr Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International. Following is the complete text of the interview:

**Q:** What does the SG think of the outcome of the Hiroshima Summit, which ended May 21 with Ukraine in focus and both Russia and China criticizing the G7?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki (HT):** Hiroshima, where the first atomic bomb in human history was dropped, is the starting point of peace, and a summit meeting for the total abolition of nuclear weapons should be held there—the this is something SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has repeatedly called for since 1975.

Although it is difficult to say that this summit meeting made concrete progress toward nuclear disarmament, I think it is still significant that the G7 leaders met in Hiroshima, a place that symbolizes the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons, and that these leaders directly listened to the experiences of hibakusha and felt first-hand the reality of the atomic bombing.

The leaders issued a communiqué, but what truly matters is proactive steps to tackle the current global crisis. I strongly hope that each country will promote open dialogue for a peaceful world, transcending barriers of ideology and interest.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

**Q:** What has the Hiroshima Summit, in the view of SG, achieved in regard to a cessation of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine? Have they developed concrete plans for negotiations?

**HT:** Above all, the prevention of catastrophic consequences is the ultimate wish of the world's people and the responsibility of national leaders.

Unfortunately, I do not think that the Summit fully developed concrete plans for negotiations toward a ceasefire, while it expressed support for Ukraine and condemnation of and strengthening of sanctions against Russia. However, I do welcome the strengthening of cooperation with the Global South.

We will continue to call for all concerned parties to create space for deliberations toward full cessation of hostilities to prevent more suffering as a result of the conflict.

**Q:** Have the G7 committed at the Hiroshima Summit—as Dr Ikeda urged—to taking the lead in discussions on pledges of No First Use of nuclear weapon, which is a “prescription for hope” and can serve as the axle connecting the twin wheels of the NPT and TPNW, speeding realization of a world free from nuclear weapons.

**HT:** No tangible results have been seen. But I would like to believe that seeds have been planted. We should take a realistic step forward so that future generations will look at this moment and say it was a turning point of the times.

The NPT and the TPNW have a common goal of realizing a world without nuclear weapons. With

the risk of the use of nuclear weapons being unprecedentedly high and protracted, a commitment to No First Use by the nuclear weapon-states is the foundation for preventing their use. It could serve as a common basis linking the NPT and the TPNW, and we will continue to urge the G7 nations to take the lead in discussions on pledges of No First Use of nuclear weapons.

**Q:** Have the G7 countries succeeded in communicating powerfully to the world from Hiroshima “the animating spirit of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)”, reflected in G20 member countries’ officially expressed recognition that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is “inadmissible”.

**HT:** It is noteworthy that the G7 leaders issued the Hiroshima Vision for Nuclear Disarmament and confirmed the G20 Bali Declaration.

Humanity will continue to stand on a precipitous ledge that could collapse at any moment, unless we change the approach of nuclear deterrence based on the premise that other countries’ nuclear weapons are dangerous, while one’s own are the foundation of security. This keen sense of crisis led to the adoption of TPNW, with the support of A-bomb survivors and civil society. Its universalization is increasingly essential.

We will continue to expand awareness of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons at the grassroots throughout the world so that negotiations to overcome the current reality can move forward based on pledges of No First Use. [IDN-InDepthNews]



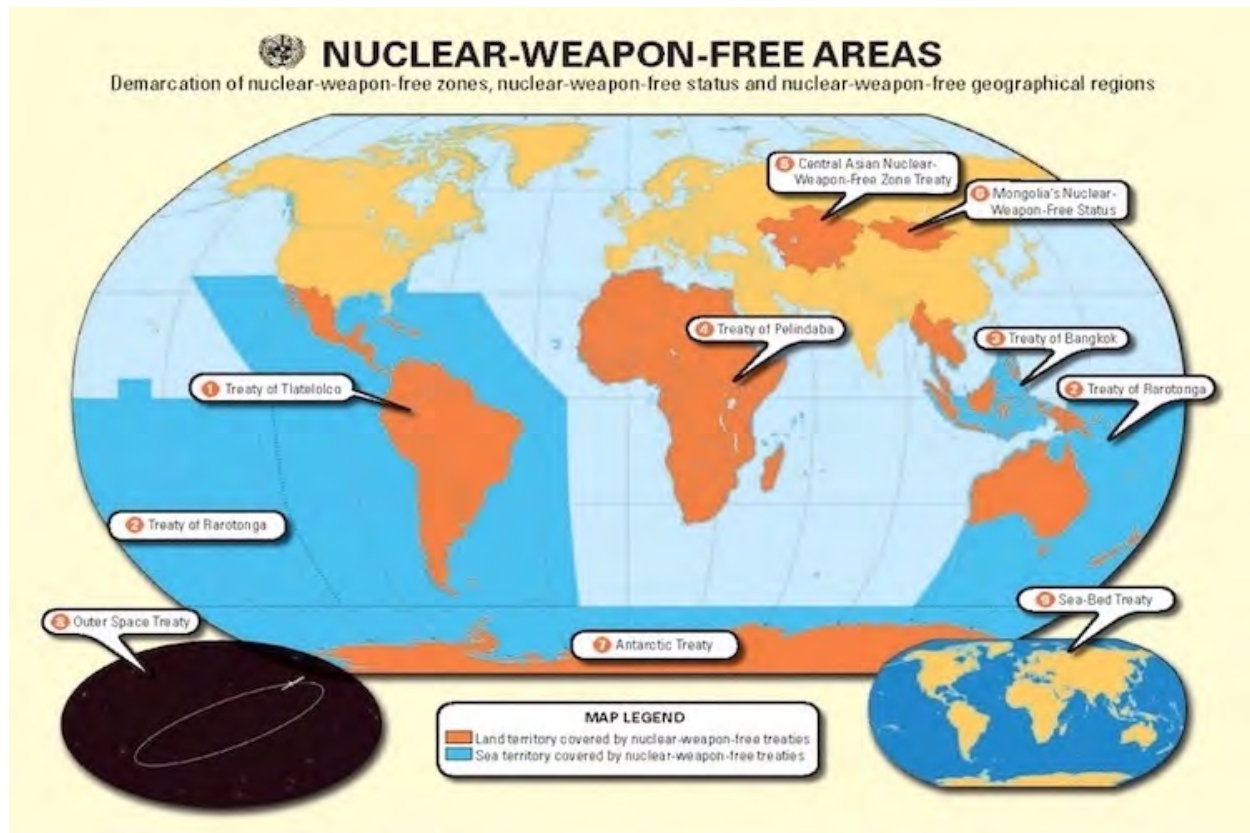
*Photo: Wreath-Laying at the Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims by G7 leaders—Italy's PM Meloni, PM Trudeau of Canada, President Macron of France, Summit host Fumio Kishida, US President Biden, and Chancellor Scholz—flanked by European Commission president von der Leyen (right) and European Council president Michel (left).*

*Credit: Govt. of Japan.*



## Need To Undertake a Comprehensive Study of Nuke-free Zones

By Dr J. Enkhsaikhan



Visual illustration of the nuclear-weapon-free zones. Source: UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

*The writer is Chairman of Blue Banner NGO and Former Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations*

ULAANBAATAR, 5 June 2023 (IDN) — Nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) are important and practical regional measures of non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWSs) in promoting the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and strengthening confidence among states.

At present there are five NWFZs in inhabited areas: in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, the entire African continent and Central Asia. They include nearly 120 states that make up 60% of the membership of the United Nations. Establishment of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East is currently under discussion, as well as informal discussions are underway to establish NWFZs in Northeast Asia and the Arctic. Such zones are based on the concept of group state zones, meaning that only groups of states can establish such zones, which is known as traditional zones.

However, individual states that due to their geographical location or for some valid political or legal reasons cannot be part of traditional zones, if left excluded from the NWFZ regime could become the Achilles's heel of the regime by creating blind spots and grey areas in the nuclear-weapon-free world (NFWF) that we are all trying to establish ever since almost the time of establishment of the United Nations. Progress is slow yet being made as evidenced by the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

### Protect the nuclear Achilles' heel of the NFWF

A weak NWFZ system is in one's interest, while a viable system would surely strengthen the non-proliferation regime. A robust NWFZ regime would be only as strong as its weakest links. Therefore, making NWFZs inclusive of individual states by recognizing the role and status of single-State zones would not only safeguard their interests but also serve as an additional political tool to furthering the objective of the NFWF

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons



*Dr. J. Enkhsaikhan*

Blue Banner's<sup>[1]</sup> recent study has revealed that even with the establishment of additional traditional zones mentioned above, territorial coverage of NWFZs will not be all-embracing due to the missing links of individual states and territories they cover that far exceed for example Central Asian or Southeast Asian zones. The reason is that the current zones are established "on the basis of the arrangements agreed upon by the states of the region concerned".<sup>[2]</sup> In today's interconnected world the role of individual states should not be underestimated either way.

Thus, disregarding the security interests of individual states, especially when great power rivalry is again on the rise, including in the Western Pacific, and the resulting rising pressures to use such states as pawns or their location in their rivalry would surely affect strategic stability.

On the other hand, if single-State zones are recognized and protected by international law they could serve as indispensable building blocks in establishing the NFWF. The study showed that there are nearly two dozen states, including neutral states and some non-self-governing territories that cannot be part of traditional zones.

From international legal standpoint excluding knowingly some NNWSs from the emerging NWFZ regime would be a violation of the spirit of the UN Charter, principles of sovereign equality of states, equal and legitimate security for all, right of states to individual or collective self-defense, etc.

International law needs to regulate their status and protect them like the traditional zones. In all fairness it should be pointed out that it is up to every individual state, based on its sovereign decision to decide whether to make use of such political or legal protection or find other ways to promote its security interests.

Today when time, space and technology are becoming major geopolitical factors and the nuclear arms race is on the rise again this time taking ominous technological dimensions, nuclear weapon states should not use their weapons beyond their declared nuclear deterrence policies as political instruments of intimidation and blackmail even against NNWSs.

Therefore, the states that cannot be part of traditional zones need to adopt national legislations outlawing stationing of nuclear weapons or hosting nuclear weapons use support facilities on their territory and in return acquire appropriate security assurances from the P5. 'Appropriate' means an assurance against possible credible threats to the security interests of that particular individual state. The assurance does not necessarily have to be legally binding on non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them as have been the cases with traditional zones during and after the past cold war period.

The P5 assurance should be against pressuring to accept nuclear weapons or hosting nuclear weapons use support facilities for more effective use of such weapons and respect their statuses as reflected in their legislation and not to contribute to any act that would violate the status.

Compared to traditional assurance this would be somewhat softer one known in literature as security assurances lite. A system of verification can be developed with the assistance of the IAEA, lessons learned when establishing traditional zones or by establishing mutually agreed verification mechanism based on the latest technological achievements in the field.

The above stated leads to conclude that the second comprehensive study of NWFZs in all their aspects needs to be undertaken with the participation of all states, and not just some



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

designated ones as it was the case with the first study in 1975.

The study, proposed by Mongolia ten years ago at the United Nations High—Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, should make use of the nearly half a century of the rich international experience of establishing NWFZs as well as the changing international political environment. Such a study would be useful in establishing the second generation<sup>[3]</sup> traditional zones in the Middle East, Northeast Asia or the Arctic.

The study should also address and recognize single-State zones by broadening the concept and definition of NWFZs as well as agreeing on the content and form of assurances to be provided to single-State zones. The content of P5 security assurances provided to traditional zones needs to reflect the originally intended goal, without distorting it by making reservations or unilateral interpretative statements that in fact serve as indirect indication on the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Sensitive political issues and taboos such as existing double standards, the role of umbrella states, the status of nuclear armed states and their possible role, if any, in the regions concerned should also be addressed. In short un-tapping of the full potential of NWFZs and protecting the Achilles' heel of the NFWF would be a practical contribution of NNWSs to strengthening world peace and stability. [IDN-InDepthNews]

[1] Mongolian NGO established in 2005 devoted to promoting the common goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

[2] Para. 60. UNGA Official Records. Tenth Special Session. Supplement 4 (A/S-10/4). New York. 1978

[3] Second generation zones means NWFZs in regions have their own problems or where strategic interests of nuclear weapon states are involved making establishment of zones complicated.

## A Nuclear-Free World Begins with Young Leaders

By Thalif Deen



Image credit: UNODA

UNITED NATIONS, 31 May 2023 (IDN) — The United Nations now believes—and perhaps rightly so—that a world free of nuclear weapons should begin primarily with young future leaders.

In pursuing this ambitious goal, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the government of Japan are calling on young people to apply for an innovative learning programme that will empower them to make their contribution to a world free of the deadly weapons.

Applications are now open for a new global training programme called the “Youth Leader Fund for a World Without Nuclear Weapons”. The training programme, which is run by UNODA and made possible by the generous financial contribution of Japan, offers up to a hundred scholarships for young people aged 18 and over. The programme is aimed at equipping the leaders of the future “with the knowledge, skills, and network to join global efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons—the most dangerous weapons on earth”.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Last summer, at the tenth Review Conference of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan announced his country's commitment to contribute ten million US dollars towards the United Nations to establish this new disarmament education and mobilization initiative, which seeks to "bring the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the world, and the world to Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

In a statement released here, UNODA says although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare—in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—about 12,500 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date.

"One nuclear weapon can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects," said UNODA.

The programme is seeking youth who are motivated to use their talents to promote change for a more peaceful and secure world – without nuclear weapons.

"The intention is to bring together an eclectic and geographically diverse group of advocates for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament".

In addition to young people interested or active in international affairs, such as government or civil society organisations, those with a background in education, academia, journalism, industry, and other areas, are encouraged to apply.

The programme is open to youth from across the globe, from nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike.

Joseph Gerson, President of the Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security and Convener of the Peace & Planet International Network, told IDN: "I was encouraged to read about UNODA's Youth Leader program".

"UNODA's persistence in working to prevent nuclear war and for arms control and disarmament makes it an invaluable resource for the world's people".

"That said, my hope is that beyond learning history, diplomatic and lobbying skills, the Young Leader trainees will also be encouraged to press the limits, to question and challenge illegitimate authority, and at times lead civil society into uncivil actions to disturb the peace of the powers that be

who accept and make preparations to inflict nuclear Armageddon," he pointed out.

With the collapse of the hard-won arms control order, Gerson said, humanity faces growing existential dangers of nuclear war.

"On the one hand, there is the immediate danger that if Russian control of Crimea is seriously threatened, in desperation President Putin may follow through on threats to respond with tactical nuclear weapons", he warned.

They would have genocidal impacts on Ukraine, Gerson said, and possibly lead to further nuclear escalation. On the other hand, there is the Orwellian manufacturing of consent photo of the G-7 leaders standing in front of the Hiroshima cenotaph near 1945's ground zero.

"Each of these men and women either preside over first strike nuclear arsenals and doctrines, or as in the case of Japanese Prime Minister Kishida, lead nations whose military centerpiece is reliance on U.S. first strike nuclear attacks," he declared.

The reality is that humanity faces two urgent existential threats: nuclear war and climate catastrophe. On the eve of the 2010 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review, then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon advised 1,000 civil society nuclear weapons abolitionists from around the world that governments will not deliver us a nuclear weapons-free world.

This can only be achieved by pressure from below. Here's hoping that the civil society Young Leaders trained in the UNODA program are inclined and encouraged to break the bonds of civility in order to build the popular pressure needed to win new governmental commitments for nuclear disarmament and better ensure human survival, said Gerson.

Meanwhile, UNODA said that over the course of two years, the selected participants will receive training in general principles of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control through online courses, with a selected cohort going on a week-long in-person study tour to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The future leaders will also exchange ideas with disarmament experts from think tanks, civil society organizations, media, and the diplomatic field, and develop the practical know-how to engage and contribute on issues related to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Importantly, participants will learn about the lessons that the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, called *hibakusha*, have long been sharing with the world about the unimaginable suffering that nuclear weapons caused. As the *hibakusha* continue to age, it is vital that their powerful stories and appeals to eliminate nuclear weapons are carried forward by the future generation.

The programme will start in 2023 and culminate in 2030—a year marked by various milestones, including the 85th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and the 60th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Upon completion of the programme, the alumni will play a key role in training and mentoring the next cohort of interested young nuclear disarmament advocates. Following the 2023–

2025 inaugural training programme under the Youth Leader Fund, three more rounds of similar trainings will be conducted, generating a positive ripple effect, and consolidating a worldwide network of talented future leaders with the shared goal of saving humanity from nuclear weapons.

Through education, skills training, mentoring and other support, the hope is that participants will continue their disarmament and peace and security work in their field of interest and expertise after the programme.

In recent years, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has made a major push to empower youth, recognizing their role as the ultimate force for change and noting that they have proven their power in support of the cause of disarmament.

Visit: <https://www.disarmamenteducation.org/ylf>  
Contact: [youthleaderfund@un.org](mailto:youthleaderfund@un.org)

[IDN-InDepthNews]

## G7 Leaders Falter Over Nuclear Disarmament in Hiroshima

By Thalif Deen



*G7 leaders— European Council president Michel (left), Italy's PM Meloni, PM Trudeau of Canada, President Macron of France, Summit host Fumio Kishida, US President Biden, Chancellor Scholz, and European Commission president von der Leyen. Credit: European Union.*

UNITED NATIONS, 22 May 2023 (IDN) — When leaders of the Group of 7 (G7) countries met in Hiroshima May 19-21, one of the issues on the agenda was nuclear disarmament.

The venue of the summit was symbolically stark because the US atomic bombings in 1945 killed

over 226,000 people in the twin Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with the heaviest toll in Hiroshima.

But the seven leaders—from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus the European Union



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

(EU)—failed to produce anything singularly significant towards “a world without nuclear weapons”. The failure was even more disappointing because three of the G7 countries—France, UK and US—are not only major nuclear powers (along with Russia and China) but also permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Asked at a press briefing in Hiroshima May 21, about the G7 “Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament”, which implicitly justified nuclear weapons for defensive purposes, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: “Well, I’m not a commentator of documents. (But) I think it’s important to say what I believe should be done. I don’t think we can give up on our main objective, which is to have a world free of nuclear weapons.”

“And one thing that disturbs me is that disarmament that was moving forward quite positively during the last decades of the 20th century has completely stopped. And we are even seeing a new race to armaments,” he noted.

“I think it is absolutely essential to re-introduce disarmament discussions about nuclear weapons, and I think it is (also) absolutely necessary that countries that own nuclear weapons commit not to do the first use of those weapons—and I would say commit not to use them in any circumstance.”

“And so, I think we need to be ambitious in relation to the capacity of one day, I hope still in my lifetime, to see this world without nuclear weapons,” Guterres declared.

In a statement released May 19, G7 leaders laid out their “Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament”. Excerpts:

“We, the Leaders of the G7, met at a historical juncture in Hiroshima, which together with Nagasaki offers a reminder of the unprecedented devastation and immense human suffering the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced as a result of the atomic bombings of 1945. In a solemn and reflective moment, we reaffirm, in this first G7 Leaders’ document with a particular focus on nuclear disarmament, our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all.”

“We underscore the importance of the 77-year record of non-use of nuclear weapons. Russia’s irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, undermining of arms control regimes, and stated intent to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus are dangerous and unacceptable. We recall the statement in Bali of all G20 leaders, including Russia.”

“In this context, we reiterate our position that threats by Russia of nuclear weapon use, let alone any use of nuclear weapons by Russia, in the context of its aggression against Ukraine are inadmissible.”

“We recall the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States issued on January 3, 2022, on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races, and affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

“We call on Russia to recommit—in words and deeds—to the principles enshrined in that Statement. Our security policies are based on the understanding that nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion.”

[Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/19/g7-leaders-hiroshima-vision-on-nuclear-disarmament/>]

Alice Slater, Board Member, World Beyond War, posed the question: “Was the G7 Vision on Nuclear Disarmament blind arrogance?”

She told IDN that in the shadows of the bombing of Hiroshima, nuclear-armed and nuclear “umbrella” states, relying on the US to use its nuclear weapons on their behalf, met at the Hiroshima Memorial Park, heard the painful testimony of the Hibakusha, survivors of that catastrophic day, August 6, 1945.

“And they delivered the most tone-deaf remarks, hypocritically espousing the awful nature of nuclear weapons and how Russia was endangering the whole planet with its nuclear threats, tossing in North Korea as well, and calling merely for transparency going forward, as if by merely revealing our terrifying arsenals and activities related to rebuilding, refurbishing redesigning and testing would prevent a nuclear cataclysm.”

While condemning Russia’s decision to “undermine the New START Treaty”, not one word was uttered about how the US walked out of the ABM Treaty with Russia as well as the INF Treaty, and has not returned to the nuclear deal that (former US President Barack) Obama negotiated with Iran, Slater pointed out.

She said the US also rejected requests, many times, from Russia and China, it’s latest target for war, to negotiate treaties to ban weapons in space and cyberwar, which would have created the conditions for “strategic stability” called for by



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Russia to negotiate for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

“US allies in nuclear crime, include five NATO countries with US nuclear bombs on their territory—Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Turkey—and Japan of all nations, ironically, under its nuclear umbrella which is abandoning its Peace Constitution under US pressure and will become a NATO affiliate instead of urging that all the G7 nations join the new Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which they have all boycotted and rejected,” she said.

“The US leads the way in dishonoring its Non-Proliferation Treaty obligation for “good faith efforts” for nuclear disarmament and has never acted in “good faith”. From the time Truman rejected Stalin’s plea to put the bomb under the UN’s control, newly established to end the scourge of war—its first resolution for nuclear disarmament—to Obama’s commitment to a trillion-dollar program over 30 years for two new bomb factories, warheads, missiles, planes and submarines to deliver them, the US has been the leading nuclear offender and proliferator.”

The latest hypocritical language messaging in a pretense of trying to eliminate nuclear weapons is taking “steps”. “We have been taking endless steps to nowhere under the rubric of “arms control”, she noted.

The G7 meeting was just another futile step to nowhere and resembles M. C. Escher’s drawing, *Ascending and Descending*, where grim men march endlessly up and down a staircase in circles and never arrive at the top, said Slater. [<https://www.sartle.com/artwork/ascending-and-descending-m.-c.-escher>]

Daniel Högsta, interim Executive Director, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), said: “This is more than a missed moment. With the world facing the stark risk nuclear weapons could be used for the first time since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed, this is a gross failure of global leadership.”

“Simply pointing fingers at Russia, China and North Korea is insufficient. We need the G7 countries, which all either possess, host or endorse the use of nuclear weapons, to step up and engage the other nuclear powers in disarmament talks if we are to reach their professed goal of a world without nuclear weapons,” he declared.

In a press release from Hiroshima May 19, the

2017 Nobel Peace Laureate ICAN said leaders of the G7 have failed to come up with any concrete proposals that would take forward their stated goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

With the danger of nuclear conflict at its highest level since the Cold War due to Russia’s and North Korea’s threatening nuclear rhetoric, Japanese Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, chose to host the summit in the first city ever to be attacked with a nuclear weapon in order to put nuclear disarmament high on the agenda.

The leaders started the day with a visit to Hiroshima peace memorial park and museum where they met a survivor of the atomic bombing in 1945. ICAN welcomes this meeting, but the leaders appear not to have listened to what the survivors, whose average age is now nearly 85, want —real progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons in their lifetimes.

“What we got in the leaders’ statement today fails to present a credible alternative vision involving new steps to actual disarmament,” ICAN said.

The G7 leaders urged all states “to take their responsibilities seriously” but they are evading their own responsibility for the current threat nuclear weapons pose to everyone, said ICAN.

“They say nuclear weapons should only serve “defensive purposes”, but these weapons are indiscriminate and disproportionate, designed as they are to kill and injure on a massive scale, so under international humanitarian law cannot be used for defensive purposes”.

The three nuclear-armed states in the G7, ICAN said, are spending billions on modernizing their nuclear capabilities. Today’s statement calls on all nuclear-armed states to release data on their arsenals and continue to reduce their size, yet not all G7 countries are transparent about the number of weapons they have, or that they host them on their territory, while some of them are increasing their stockpiles.

The G7 praises Prime Minister Kishida’s “Hiroshima Action Plan”, but this is a rehash of old non-proliferation measures that don’t reflect the urgency of the moment and don’t go nearly far enough.

“What’s required from the G7 to meet the security challenges the world is facing is a concrete, actionable plan to engage all nuclear-armed states in disarmament talks under the international legal framework established by the UN Treaty on

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” ICAN declared.

Akira Kawasaki of Peace Boat, an ICAN partner, said: “Japanese citizens and particularly the survivors of the atomic bomb attacks have been let down by Prime Minister Kishida – by hosting the summit in Hiroshima he raised expectations, but has not delivered any substantive progress on getting rid of nuclear weapons.”

Footnotes from ICAN:

1. All the G7 states have nuclear weapons in their security policies, either as nuclear-armed states (France, the United Kingdom and the United States) or as host (Germany and Italy) or umbrella (Canada and Japan) states.
2. Japanese Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, represents a district of Hiroshima and some of his relatives were killed when the United States used an atomic bomb to attack the city in 1945. He decided to host
3. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) currently has 92 signatories and 68 states parties.
4. Article VI of the NPT commits all states parties, which include all G7 countries, to pursue nuclear disarmament: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” [IDN-InDepthNews]



*Hiroshima Peace Memorial. Source: Wikipedia*

## A 21st Century Freeze on Nuclear Weapons: Will it be a Reality?

By Thalif Deen



Senator Edward Markey picture over US Congress building. Source: [markey.senate.gov](https://markey.senate.gov)

UNITED NATIONS, 13 May 2023 (IDN) — US Senator Edward Markey (Democrat from Massachusetts) announced plans on May 4 to re-introduce legislation that would establish a 21st century freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons.

A former US army reservist and co-president of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), Markey will re-introduce into the US Senate the *Hastening Arms Limitation Talks (HALT) Act*.

The *HALT Act* stipulates that the aims of U.S. policy should include:

1. An agreement on a verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and further deployment of all nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for such weapons;
2. A resumption of on-site inspections and verification measures per the New START Treaty;
3. A bilateral U.S. agreement with the Russian Federation on a treaty or agreement that covers non-strategic

nuclear weapons or strategic systems not covered by the New START Treaty;

4. Negotiations of a verifiable Fissile Material Treaty or Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty in the United Nations (UN) Conference on Disarmament or another international forum;
5. Series of U.S. disarmament summits to reduce stocks of weapons-usable nuclear material;
6. U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and mobilization of all countries covered by Annex 2 of the CTBT to pursue similar action necessary for entry-into-force of the treaty;
7. Other engagements with all other countries that possess nuclear weapons to negotiate and conclude future multilateral arms control, disarmament, and risk reduction agreements; and;
8. Prohibition of funds to prepare for or to conduct U.S. explosive nuclear-weapon testing.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

According to PNND, the HALT Act comes 41 years after one million people gathered in New York's Central Park to promote a nuclear weapons freeze—the largest peace demonstration in U.S. history.

Markey (then a member of the House of Representatives) addressed the crowd on 12 June 1982, demanding an end to President Ronald Reagan's unnecessary spending on new nuclear weapons systems and calling for the President to begin negotiations on nuclear arms reduction with the Soviet Union.

Experts credit the freeze movement with creating the political will necessary for the negotiation of bilateral arms control treaties between the United States and former Soviet Union, later Russia.

And on April 14, Senator Markey, also co-chair of the Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control Working Group, along with Representative Ted Lieu, announced the reintroduction of the *Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act* to prohibit any United States President from launching a nuclear strike without prior authorization from Congress.

The legislation would also institute safeguards to prevent the president from introducing nuclear weapons in a conflict and reaffirm Congress' singular constitutional authority to declare war. The reintroduction of *Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act* comes after a year of reckless nuclear threats from Russian President Vladimir Putin in his war of aggression against Ukraine.

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director at the California-based Western States Legal Foundation (WSLF), told IDN that 53 years after entry into force of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the Hastening Arms Limitation Talks (HALT) Act of 2023, provides a menu of policy recommendations that seek to address growing nuclear dangers.

If enacted, HALT would also begin to implement the NPT's disarmament obligations, enshrined in the Preamble and Article VI, which have been reiterated and reinforced by agreements made in connection with the 1995 Extension Decision, the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, and the International Court of Justice's 1996 Advisory Opinion, which provided the authoritative interpretation of Article VI.

The Court found unanimously, "There exists an obligation to pursue *in good faith* and *bring to a conclusion* negotiation leading to nuclear

disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

"Unfortunately, however, there seems to be no political constituency in Washington, DC or in the capitals of the other nuclear-armed states to prioritize nuclear arms control, much less disarmament," Cabasso pointed out.

The hard truth is that neither legislation like the HALT Act nor the resolution introduced in the House by Representative Jim McGovern to Embrace the Goals and Provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (H. Res. 77), which has an energetic grassroots advocacy movement behind it, are likely to go anywhere for the foreseeable future.

It is clear that none of the nuclear-armed states are willing to reimagine a global system based on Common Security, rather than nuclear coercion - euphemistically called "deterrence," said Cabasso whose Foundation (WSFL) is described as a non-profit, public interest organization which monitors and analyzes U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies.

Dr M.V. Ramana, Professor and Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security Graduate Program Director, MPPGA at the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, told IDN one has to be grateful to Senator Ed Markey for introducing acts like the *Hastening Arms Limitation Talks (HALT) Act*.

There is a growing arms race among the leading nuclear-armed countries, and the US or Russia (or both) have walked out of the many arms control treaties that traditionally limited their nuclear arsenals, he pointed out.

"Added to these, we are now in a period of heightened military tension. It is precisely in such a milieu that efforts to introduce some degree of rationality to moderate the growing race become valuable."

"That said, I wish Senator Markey and others like him also introduce some arms control steps that might not just reduce the magnitude of the destruction in the event of war, but also to reduce the risk of war in the first place," Dr Ramana declared.

Meanwhile, the NPT, which entered into force in 1970, includes a binding commitment to the goal of disarmament by the five original nuclear-armed States—the U.S., UK, USSR/Russia, France, and China.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

In Article VI, all States, including the nuclear-armed states, pledged “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”.

Yet today, all of the nuclear-armed states are doubling down on the centrality of nuclear weapons in their national security policies and modernizing their nuclear arsenals.

With Russia’s illegal war of aggression in Ukraine, its repeated overt threats to use nuclear weapons, and other potential nuclear flashpoints including Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, South Asia, and the Middle East, the specter of nuclear war has risen to its highest level since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

The scale and tempo of war games by nuclear-armed states and their allies, including nuclear drills, are increasing and ongoing missile tests, and frequent close encounters between military forces of nuclear-armed states are exacerbating the dangers of nuclear war.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an expert on nuclear disarmament said: “This is a very familiar virtue-signalling wish list that adds nothing, has no strategy and won’t be taken up by anyone serious. Pity, but that’s the reality”.

Dr Emma Belcher, President of Ploughshares Fund said: “With nuclear risks growing almost every day in Ukraine and a dangerous new arms race with Russia and China brewing, it is more important than ever that the United States works to reduce global nuclear arsenals rather than increase them.”

“Senator Markey reminds us that arms control diplomacy, such as the New START treaty, is the

only proven way to address these dangers. The only way to win an arms race is not to run. We thank Senator Markey for his leadership at this crucial time,” she said.

John Hallam, member of the No First Use Global Steering Committee, said “The *HALT Act* is an important move to ensure that bilateral nuclear arms control does not disappear.

“By calling for a United States freeze on testing, production and further deployment of nuclear weapons, the *Act* leads by example and provides a possibility to engage with Russia. And the call for no-first-use helps to prevent nuclear war from occurring through crisis escalation, miscalculation or accident.”

“If the intent of this legislation becomes a bilateral U.S.-Russian reality, then the cause of arms control will be coming back on track instead of, as it is now, being on the brink of disappearance,” said Hallam, who is also co-convenor of the Abolition 2000 Nuclear Risk Reduction Working Group.

Alyn Ware, Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, said conflicts between USA and other nuclear-armed States—including Russia, China and North Korea—threaten to spill over into nuclear war unless leadership is taken to halt the nuclear arms race, end provocative policies such as the threat of first-use of nuclear weapons, and resume arms control and disarmament negotiations.

The *HALT Act* makes sound, feasible proposals which, if enacted, will enhance the security of all,” said Ware. [IDN-InDepthNews]



Credit: Ploughshares Fund

## Should We Fear Nuclear Submarine Proliferation?

By Leonam dos Santos Guimarães Capt. (ret.) Brazilian Navy\*



*Dolphin Class Submarine. Credit: Thyssen Krupp*

RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 May 2023 (IDN) — The potential cause-effect relationship between nuclear attack submarine development and nuclear weapons production by Non-Proliferation Treaty/nonnuclear-weapons states is a subject that has been scarcely discussed in unclassified sources until the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS), announced on 15 September 2021 for the Indo-Pacific region.

The issue can be stated as follows: Given their cost, environmental impact, and possible connection to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, are nuclear attack submarines the most appropriate naval technology for facing realistic threats to the national security of a particular non-nuclear weapons state?

The debate on the wisdom of nuclear attack submarine acquisition is reminiscent of the long-standing controversy over the desirability of using nuclear power as an energy source in developing countries—in particular states—without nuclear weapons.

The connection between nuclear power and the spread of nuclear weapons arose after India's first nuclear-weapon test in 1974, and from the perception that the use of nuclear power would expand rapidly after the 1973 oil crisis.

The conventional wisdom was that the establishment of a civilian nuclear power program could provide a convenient rationale for the acquisition of special fissile material and related technologies for nuclear weapons production. To avoid this possibility, an international safeguard

regime was established by Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agreements and enforced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Reactors, enrichment, reprocessing, and other nuclear facilities in states without nuclear weapons are internationally safeguarded in order to detect and deter the production or diversion of weapons-grade fissile material.

*De jure* Non-Proliferation Treaty/nuclear-weapons states (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China), however, have more often than not regarded this regime with skepticism. They are not fully confident that safeguards could detect illegal actions in a timely manner. The prevailing view has been that mere possession of sensitive technologies elevates a state without nuclear weapons to a *de facto* nuclear-weapons-state status.

The possibility that a nuclear device might be made rapidly leads prudent adversaries to act as if the weapon already has been made. Nevertheless, from a technical point of view, special-fissile-material acquisition constitutes only a first step for those procuring an explosive device—the further steps also are submitted to other international safeguard regimes, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Today, the fears about the spread of nuclear power—potentially leading to a "horizontal" nuclear weapons proliferation—have not been realized. Mainly owing to concerns about reactor safety, slow economic growth, and the high costs of the required infrastructure and reactor construction, nuclear power has hardly diffused

beyond those states where it already existed in the 2000's. The focus of proliferation concerns has been on the efforts of some countries to develop a nuclear-weapons capability.

The supposed—or publicly assumed—plans of several non-nuclear-weapons states to acquire nuclear attack submarines (such as Brazil, beginning in the 1980s) have heated up the proliferation debate.

Historically, the development of nuclear reactors for naval propulsion in nuclear weapons states preceded their use as power sources for civilian applications. For instance, the commercial pressurized water reactor is a direct descendant of submarine reactors developed for the U.S. Navy in the early 1950s. In the case of the United States, nuclear propulsion was developed after nuclear-weapons acquisition.

### A Peaceful Application of Nuclear Energy?

There was a difference between IAEA and Non-Proliferation-Treaty safeguard approaches: the former stated that nuclear energy should not be used for "not-well-defined" military purposes, while the latter insisted that nuclear energy should not be used for "well-defined" explosive warfare purposes. In the past, this led to some ambiguous interpretations, which have since been clarified.

According to IAEA statute the agency shall ensure—so far as it is able—that assistance provided by it, or at its request or under its supervision or control, is not used in such a way as to further any military purpose.<sup>[ii]</sup> This provision implies, for example, that safeguards would be designed to ensure that enriched uranium supplied for use in a civilian power reactor would not be used in nuclear weapons or in non-explosive military applications such as naval propulsion or military satellites.

To harmonize these originally different approaches, the actual IAEA safeguard agreements<sup>[iii]</sup> incorporate the Non-Proliferation Treaty principles, including provisions to withdraw from general safeguards materials to be used in "non-proscribed military activities," such as nuclear submarine propulsion.

The official IAEA opinion—in response to an Argentinean representative on the Board of Governors request arising from the presence of a British nuclear attack submarine in the South Atlantic during the Malvinas /Falklands War is extremely relevant. It directly questioned the degree of compatibility among the Treaty for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in Latin America and the Caribbean, the safeguards agreements in force, and the IAEA statute referring to the legitimacy of non-explosive military applications of nuclear materials.

The IAEA report established that the differences among the various types of agreements do not convey any incompatibility.<sup>[iv]</sup> It is reasonable to say that nuclear submarine propulsion is compatible with a nuclear program exclusively directed to peaceful ends—such as Brazil's program.

### A Deception for Nuclear Weapons?

There is no doubt that the development of nuclear-fission technology enhances the potential capacity of a country to produce nuclear weapons. To make them, however, is a political decision. An example of strong political will against such weapons is Brazil, whose Federal Constitution unambiguously bans nuclear weapons from its national territory.

In 1991, Brazil and Argentina signed the so-called Bipartite Treaty to safeguard their indigenous nuclear facilities, creating an independent agency for nuclear material inventory control called ABACC. IAEA was then invited to participate fully in this particular safeguard regime, and the so-called Quadripartite Treaty was signed in the same year—and is currently being enforced.<sup>[v]</sup>

This treaty defines specific provisions for the use of materials produced by safeguarded facilities in nuclear propulsion. In this case, their "special procedures" assure safeguard enforcement above and beyond the safeguards imposed by IAEA, without disclosing technological or military classified information on nuclear attack submarine design and operation.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons is an eminently political and non-technical subject. Both *de jure* and *de facto* nuclear-weapons states obtained fissile material through programs specifically directed to that purpose.

Consequently, they have followed the shortest and economic way toward the objective pursued, and it is highly unlikely that a country procuring nuclear weapons capability would choose such an indirect route as the development of nuclear naval propulsion.

It is to be noted that, not adhering to NPT, Indian Navy developed nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines, after developed nuclear weapons: the Arihant class.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

This was the first nuclear submarine to be built by a country other than the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

It is to be noted too that Israel, also not adhering to NPT, developed, with German partnership, the Dolphin class, a conventionally-powered and nuclear armed submarine. The same is supposed to be done by North Korea.

### A "Proliferant" Fuel Cycle?

Even though not proscribed by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, naval propulsion is undoubtedly a military application of reactor technology. This might lead some to conclude there is a major difference between the fuel cycles of nuclear submarines and stationary power or research reactors, and that international and/or multilateral safeguards would have difficulty in deterring the diversion of nuclear materials from a submarine's fuel cycle.

Technically, this is not the case at all. Owing to constraints on space in a submarine and the operational requirement for infrequent refueling, submarine reactors do use uranium fuel in an enrichment higher than stationary reactors (current U.S. submarine reactors even are said to use weapons-grade highly enriched uranium). On the other hand, France developed an alternative low-enrichment uranium fuel technology in the 1970s, and there are indications that Russia may not use high-enrichment uranium fuel neither.

Presently, naval propulsion reactors are compact pressurized water types. Fuel enrichment is not necessarily "weapons grade," nor is this kind of reactor suitable for plutonium production. A naval propulsion reactor is exactly the same as many of the research and power reactors that are operating throughout the world—without anyone claiming they may represent a possible violation of the status quo.

Regarding this aspect, a new problem arises from AUKUS Agreement. The specific type of nuclear fuel for the AUKUS submarines has not been announced yet. However, it is expected that they will use highly enriched uranium as US and UK submarines. This poses questions about in what extent the NPT obligations of US and UK, as nuclear weapon states, and Australia, as a non-nuclear weapon state, are fully respected.

### A Rationale for Regional Nuclear Races?

Considering its capital value for naval power, nuclear attack submarine acquisition by a non-nuclear weapons state could induce nuclear

weapons proliferation in other countries that feel threatened by such change in their regional naval balance of power. Nuclear propulsion is a part of a conventional weapon system, however, and a more appropriate response would be to develop their own nuclear submarines. By this same rationale, the introduction of any totally non-nuclear weapon system could alter the balance of power.

There is a widespread consensus among strategists that future naval warfare will rely heavily on submarines—particularly the nuclear attack submarine—rather than on surface ships. This view is corroborated by the continuing development of increasingly sophisticated submarines in the West and Russia. This provides a strong incentive for nuclear submarine acquisition by militarily significant Third World countries.

To the extent that nuclear attack submarines could serve as surrogates for nuclear weapons, they may promote international stability: "Better a sub under the sea than a bomb in the basement." On the other hand, their acquisition might spur naval weapons races among regional rivals with no net gain in national or international security.

Nuclear-weapons states cannot hope to minimize this trend by "advocating water and drinking wine." Rather, they should follow their own example given in the case of nuclear weapons "vertical" proliferation reduction — by decreasing the reliance on nuclear attack submarines.

### Conclusions

Even if potential nuclear attack submarine-related proliferation risks are not to be discarded, they should not be exaggerated. The emphasis on non-proliferation was largely based on the expectation that nuclear power would spread rapidly after the 1973 oil crisis.

That prediction did not become a reality. For similar reasons, such as high research, development, construction, and maintenance costs, technological risks, and stringent fissile-material supply conditions, the number of Third World states acquiring nuclear submarines will remain small, Brazil, South Korea, Australia and perhaps Iran being the most referenced as potential newcomers. Consequently, it is time to develop an internationally recognized policy toward these acquisitions regarding proliferation.

The emergence of a new class of "nuclear-submarine state" would tend to reduce both the



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

psychological and the military distinctions between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapons states created by the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

As in the case of nuclear-weapons proliferation, the degree of opposition to such a development depends on the identity of the nuclear-submarine state. The United States is strongly opposed to any new nuclear-submarine states—because it might limit the U.S. Navy's freedom of action around the world.

On the other hand, both the United Kingdom and France encouraged Canada's nuclear-submarine ambitions—but presumably they would oppose Latin American ones. Russia leased twice a nuclear guided-missile submarine to India and probably also assisted the Indian domestic

nuclear-submarine program—despite strong opposition from the United States.

China presumably would be extremely opposed to eventual nuclear submarine acquisition by an East or Southeast Asian country, as Australia—but not to others.

The stringent restraints on the supply of fissile materials and the political pressure exerted to prevent the indigenous development of nuclear attack submarines in Non-Proliferation Treaty/non-nuclear-weapons states in the Third World are fundamentally based on geopolitical and military strategic objectives. This practice is hardly related to the Non-Proliferation Treaty spirit; it is, in fact, a matter of freedom of the seas—not nuclear proliferation. [IDN-InDepthNews]

[i] IAEA statute, Article III.

[ii] Non-Proliferation Treaty Article IV.

[iii] IAEA INFCIRC/153, Paragraph 14.

[iv] IAEA Report GOV/INF/433. [v] Brazil adhered to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1998, Argentina some years before that.



*The threat posed by nuclear weapons is neither immediately visible nor consistently palpable within the realities of daily life, and there is a tendency to consider this threat as merely a relic of the tragic past. In order to break down the walls of apathy, it is not enough simply to make people aware of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons or the threat they pose. We need to recognize the irrationality and inhumanity of living in a world overshadowed by nuclear weapons, wrenched and distorted by the structural violence they embody. — Daisaku Ikeda*

## It's High Time the US Signed a Peace Treaty with North Korea

### Halt the Endless and Futile Condemnation of the DPRK

By Alice Slater\*



*Gloria Steinem, Christine Ahn, Leymah Gbowee, and Mairead Maguire were among the 30 women peacemakers who crossed the DMZ in 2015. Source: Women Cross DMZ.*

NEW YORK, 21 April 2023 (IDN) — It is far beyond hypocrisy for the US and its allies to condemn North Korea for testing a long-range missile when the US boasts about its Air Force Global Strike Command of more than 33,700 Airmen and civilians responsible for the nation's three intercontinental ballistic missile wings capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Indeed, a US Minute Man Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (IBM) was tested this past February, with another scheduled for this August.

The 1950-1953 Korean War is the longest-standing US conflict. It has never actually ended. It was only suspended by a truce and armistice between North Korea, representing the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers and the United States, representing the multinational UN Command.

During this endless armistice, we have had US troops stationed in South Korea, amassed on North Korea's border, organizing "war games" and

manoeuvres with South Korean troops in a continuous series of threats over the years against a heavily armed North Korea.

Various peace initiatives were contemplated, but the US withdrew from them or didn't follow through. During those years, North Korea persisted in requesting a peace treaty, offering to stop enriching "peaceful" reactor material to bomb-grade in return for a lifting of punishing sanctions that were causing great stress and poverty to the people of North Korea.

It froze its nuclear program after an agreement with the Clinton administration but started it up again when President Bush in 2002 stopped honouring the Clinton agreements and characterized North Korea as part of the "axis of evil".

In 2017, South Korea elected a new President, Moon Jae-in, who campaigned for a "Sunshine Policy" and for peaceful Korean reunification.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Ironically, at a United Nations First Committee Meeting for Disarmament in 2017, when the amazing International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) succeeded in its ten-year campaign to bring a vote to the UN floor for negotiations on a treaty to ban the bomb, five western nuclear powers, the US, UK, France, Russia, and Israel voted NO.

China, Pakistan, and India *abstained*, and North Korea was the *only* nuclear weapon state to vote YES for negotiations on the new Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted later that year at a special UN negotiating session!

It was clear that North Korea was sending a signal to the world as the only nuclear weapon state to approve the talks to negotiate a ban treaty. But just as the Western reporting about North Korea today fails to acknowledge the extraordinary provocations North Korea suffers at the hand of the Western colonial powers and their allies, not a word about North Korea's startling vote was reported in the mainstream media.

During the Trump Presidency, some progress was made in negotiations between the US and North Korea, with a supportive new peace president in South Korea, but Congress refused to honour Trump's promise to Kim Jong Un that the US would remove some of our troops from South Korea as part of a peace deal for North Korea to forego the development of nuclear weapons. In the United States, there is a growing movement of people inspired by the *Women Cross DMZ*,

which in 2015 organized an unprecedented crossing of the De-Militarized Zone that separates North and South Korea, where 30 women, including Nobel Peace laureates and feminist leaders, joined with 10,000 Korean women on both sides of the DMZ.

Through their efforts, and on behalf of an estimated 100,000 people who cannot visit their families in the Koreas—two nations which continue to live in a perpetual state of war—there is legislation pending in the US House of Representatives, H.R. 1369, *Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act*, calling for a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War. It also calls for a review of the travel restrictions to North Korea and the establishment of liaison offices in both countries.

It is time to reevaluate our perception of North Korea, and treat it, not as a country planning to attack us with nuclear bombs but as a country that wants relief from the harsh sanctions and isolation it has endured these long 76 years. The sooner we understand how the Empire has contributed to the “evil doings” of North Korea, the more true security we will gain. In the memorable words of Pogo Possum, the Walt Kelly comic character who entertained us during the red scare of the 1950s, “We have met the enemy and he is us!”

\* Alice Slater serves on the boards of *World Beyond War* and the *Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space* and is an NGO representative to the UN for the *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*. [IDN-InDepthNews]



A map of the Korean Demilitarized Zone. Source: Wikipedia

## Putin's Nuclear Sabre-Rattling in Belarus Triggers a WW III Warning

By Thalif Deen



*Image source: UPNORTH.EU*

UNITED NATIONS, 4 April 2023 (IDN) — As Russian nuclear threats keep escalating following the invasion of Ukraine 14 months ago, President Vladimir Putin issued a new warning on March 26: that he plans to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, a close political, economic and military ally of Moscow.

“The United States has been doing this for decades,” Putin asserted, insisting that his plans were no different from the American practice of positioning nuclear weapons in allied countries.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, while endorsing the proposal, warned of a “third world war looming on the horizon with nuclear fires”.

Dr Rebecca Johnson, nuclear treaty expert and first president of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), told IDN this sabre-rattling by Putin and Lukashenko is dangerous and foolish.

It is meant to challenge NATO but only emulates NATO's provocative nuclear sharing arrangements with Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey, she said.

“If the threats to share nuclear weapons with Belarus are actually implemented, they will increase the risks that nuclear weapons could be

used in this war, whether through murderous intent, accident or miscommunication.”

Given the brutal war being waged against Ukraine, if Russia puts some of its nuclear weapons into Belarus, how will Putin and Lukashenko take responsibility for what happens next? she asked.

“Putin has already miscalculated in launching this war and underestimating Ukrainian resistance. Nuclear deterrence has already failed. He has already been indicted for war crimes.”

What he is doing now could cause genocide, Dr Johnson declared.

### **A new arrangement**

Hans M. Kristensen, Director of the Nuclear Information Project, Federation of American Scientists, and Associate Senior Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), told IDN the United States had deployed nuclear weapons in a small number of European countries since the 1950s, but President Putin's statements about deploying nuclear weapons in Belarus would be a new arrangement.

Until last year, the Belarusian constitution prohibited nuclear weapons in Belarus, but the constitution was changed to allow this, he pointed out.



## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

Even so, Russian nuclear deployment in Belarus would contradict the joint Russia-China statement from February that "All nuclear-weapon states should refrain from deploying nuclear weapons abroad...."

### Current nuclear risks are alarmingly high

Asked about President Putin's proposal to station nuclear weapons in Belarus, UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters on March 27: "Well, we've seen those press reports, and I can tell you that obviously, we're concerned about the general state of tensions around nuclear weapons that we're seeing recently, which is very concerning. And this also serves as a reminder for every Member State to uphold its responsibility under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)".

Dujarric also said current nuclear risks are alarmingly high. "And all actions that could lead to miscalculation or escalation with catastrophic consequences must be avoided." All nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapon states, he said, must strictly adhere to the commitments and obligations they've assumed under the NPT.

Elaborating further, Dr Johnson said military boffins like to bandy around terms like 'tactical nuclear weapon' as if these aren't quite so bad. Don't be deceived—that's just a word for short-range, typically portable.

"That means more vulnerable nuclear bombs, not ones that are less dangerous. The bombs in NATO bases that are described as tactical are designed to be far bigger in explosive power than the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945," she pointed out.

Dr Johnson said: "There's no such thing as a tactical use of nuclear weapons. Once the taboo on detonating nuclear weapons is broken, nuclear war will be unleashed. That is an unbearable nightmare to think about, but that's the brink where humanity now teeters".

Any use of nuclear weapons, she said, would be strategic in purpose and put populations in terrible danger. The Red Cross has underlined over and over again that there is no humanitarian response service in the world that can handle the carnage and radiation of just one nuclear detonation on a city or 'battlefield', which in the Ukraine war seems to mean a cluster of town and villages resisting Putin's invasion.

Back in the 1990s, Ukraine was right to get rid of the Soviet weapons left on its soil and join the

NPT; and Russia has been right to call on NATO to stop its nuclear sharing policies and comply in good faith with the NPT and disarmament treaties. Now Putin has reversed Russian policies, and put the Russian, Ukrainian and European peoples in terrible danger, said Dr Johnson.

"The only way to prevent nuclear war and the use of nuclear weapons is by eliminating all nuclear arsenals. Now, before it is too late, Russia, NATO countries, and the other nuclear-armed states need to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and start working to prevent nuclear war."

Commenting on Putin's announcement to station nuclear weapons in Belarus, UK Ambassador to the UN James Kariuki told the UN Security Council on March 31 Russia's announcement is "yet another futile attempt at intimidation and coercion".

"Russia's nuclear rhetoric is irresponsible. The UK urges Belarus not to enable Russia's reckless actions. The UK is clear we will continue to support Ukraine. It is Russia who has violated the UN Charter."

In January 2022, P5 leaders said that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". They also said that "nuclear weapons—for as long as they continue to exist—should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war."

Despite this commitment, since the beginning of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, President Putin has used irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, said the British ambassador.

***"Let us be clear: No other country has raised the prospect of nuclear use in this conflict. No one is threatening Russia's sovereignty. It is Russia which has violated the UN Charter by invading another sovereign country," he said.***

"President Putin's announcement on March 25 is his latest attempt to intimidate and coerce. This has not worked and will not work. We will continue to support Ukraine's efforts to defend itself."

"We have heard President Putin's claim that the trigger for this announcement is the UK supplying depleted uranium munitions to Ukraine alongside Challenger tanks, as it defends itself in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter." Russia is well aware that this is conventional ammunition—not nuclear munitions. This is yet another example of them deliberately trying to mislead, the British envoy said. [IDN-[InDepthNews](#)]

## Japan Urged to Push Nuclear Disarmament Principle at G7 Hiroshima Summit

By Kalinga Seneviratne



*Photo: Rorry Daniels, Managing Director, Asia Society Policy Institute, giving a presentation at a session titled "Controlling Nuclear Weapons". (from left to right): Nobuyasu Abe, Former Director, Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation; Rorry Daniels; Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute; Audrey Kitagawa, President, IAMC; and Nikolas Emmanuel, Professor, Soka University (Chair). Anna Ikeda, SGI Representative to the UN and Mitsuru Kurosawa, Professor Emeritus Osaka University, participated in the session online. Photo: Katsuhiro Asagiri, Multimedia Director of IDN-INPS.*

SYDNEY | TOKYO, 3 April 2023 (IDN) — Addressing a live-streamed conference held at Soka University in Tokyo on 29 March in preparation for the G7 summit in May, which Japan hosts, Takashi Ariyoshi, Deputy Secretary General of the G7 Hiroshima Summit Secretariat said that Prime Minister Fumio Kishida had put high priority to include nuclear disarmament in the agenda of the summit.

He pointed out that the venue of the conference, the Japanese city of Hiroshima, Prime Minister Kishida's hometown, where the United States dropped a nuclear bomb at the end of the second world war (on 6 August 1945)—killing about 140,000 people—symbolizes the unprecedented challenge atomic weapons pose to humanity. "G7 will deepen discussion and send a strong message to link the idea of a world without nuclear weapons (amid) the harsh reality we face today with the security environment," he said, adding: "There are a lot of ways to tackle this issue".

He listed three ways the G7 discussions may focus upon. One is a "shared recognition" of the non-use of nuclear weapons. The second will be transparency in atomic weapon policies, and the third is to secure a reduction of nuclear weapons

stockpiles and promote the peaceful use of atomic energy.

John Kirton, Director, G7 Research Group—a co-sponsor of the event—told the audience that it is significant the G7 summit is held this year in Hiroshima when the world is threatened with the use of nuclear weapons, particularly by Russia. "This site is important to remind G7 leaders of the horrors of nuclear war," he noted. "We must look at our conduct, and we need to work towards the benefits for all (of disarmament policies)".

G7—The Group of Seven—include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

### Think about our security seriously

Addressing a special panel on controlling nuclear weapons, Anna Ikeda, Representative to the United Nations of Soka Gakkai International, argued that the Hiroshima G7 summit provides an opportunity to think about our security seriously. "Nuclear weapons cannot be the means for achieving national security," Ikeda declared. "We must detoxify ourselves from current nuclear-dependent security doctrines." SGI was also a co-sponsor of the event.

## Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons

She argued that if all nuclear states adopt the "no first use" principle, it will provide space for multilateral dialogue to help resolve the Ukraine conflict. "Such policies must be accompanied by policies to build mutual trust," she added.

Noting that each G7 state's nuclear statistics are in violation of the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Audrey Kitagawa, President of the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation (IAMC)—another co-sponsor of the conference—stressed the need for the G7 summit to raise the nuclear issue to the highest level and demand more attention to eliminate nuclear weapons. If not, she warned that nuclear weapon countries would soon increase.

"We may have ten nuclear weapons states soon when Iran has it, and Saudi Arabia may join. South Korea may also join or ask America to install them there," she noted, and warned that "China and the US are increasing their nuclear weapon budgets. (Thus) nuclear states are contributing to greater insecurity we are seeing today".

The NPT is a landmark international treaty that aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technologies. One hundred ninety-one states, including five nuclear weapon states, have signed it.

"Members of the nuclear club pose the biggest damper to security," Kitagawa said. "No first use of nuclear weapons is a first step (to reduce tension); only China and India have given that undertaking."

"The US response to the rise of China is adding to tension and arms race in Asia," noted Rorry Daniels, managing director of Asia Society Policy Institute. To reverse this trend, she said that a better definition of cooperation is to work on

common interests. She pointed out that China and the US worked together earlier in nuclear research to treat cancer and to reduce the danger of enriched uranium.

Instead, as Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute, noted, "we are creating devices that would end all best human endeavours". He pointed out, "we know 'good' countries that do horrible things (to human beings)" and gave examples of Iraq, Hiroshima, Syria, Sudan and Ukraine. He also drew attention to what happened to some countries that gave up nuclear weapons, such as Libya, Ukraine and Iraq.

"We allow no country to use smallpox as a bio-weapon but will allow nine countries to use plague as a bio-weapon. That is what we have with nuclear weapons," declared Granoff.

He urged that the G7 meeting in Hiroshima take the first steps to pledge "no first use of nuclear weapons" into a legally binding international treaty, perhaps adopted via the UN Security Council.

"In the US, when we activists ask for nuclear disarmament, we are told the other side don't want to do it," explained Granoff. "At the Hiroshima summit (everyone) must be told that nuclear weapons have to be eliminated for us to have security."

To ensure that we eliminate nuclear weapons before we destroy ourselves, Ikeda said, we need to change the narrative that nuclear weapons keep us safe. "We need to confront ways of thinking that justify nuclear weapons. We need to say, avoiding nuclear weapons is the way (to peace)," she argued. "Hiroshima (G7 summit) must set a deadline and pathway towards it." [IDN-InDepthNews]



*Participants of a one-day international conference titled 'Advancing Security and Sustainability at the G7 Hiroshima Summit' held at Soka University on 29 March 2023. Photo: Katsuhiko Asagiri, Multimedia Director of IDN-INPS.*