

Toward A World Without Nuclear Weapons



2019 Joint Media Project Report



CREDITS

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Cover Image: The Ohio-class USS Nebraska submarine returns to port in Washington in 2018. Credit: Michael Smith/U.S. Navy



Back Cover Image: Memorial Cenotaph, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, 9 May 2012 [CC BY-SA 2]

PREFACE

BY RAMESH JAURA, DG OF THE INPS GROUP AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF ITS FLAGSHIP AGENCY IDN

This Report of the Joint Media Project of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and the International Press Syndicate (INPS) Group is a compilation of independent in-depth news and analyses by IDN from April 2018 to March 2019. IDN-InDepthNews, online since 2009, is a flagship agency of the INPS Group and its partner, the Global Cooperation Council established in February 1983.

The articles in this compilation appeared on www.indepthnews.net in the category nuclear weapons and disarmament, and on the INPS Group's thematic website 'Toward A Nuclear Free World' – www.nuclearabolition.info. These can be accessed free of charge 365 days a year.

2017-2018 was the third year of the INPS Group's media project with the SGI, a lay Buddhist organization with headquarters in Tokyo. But IDN has been a party to the joint project, first launched in 2009 in the wake of an agreement between the precursor of the International Press Syndicate (INPS) Japan and the SGI. We are pleased that meanwhile we are in the fourth year of the INPS Group's joint media project with the SGI.

This compilation comprises 21 articles analyzing developments related to proliferation and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at multiple levels – governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental. Some of the articles have been translated into dif-

ferent languages, including Arabic, Bahasa, Chinese, German, Italian, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Norwegian, Swedish and Thai.

The backdrop to these articles is that nuclear weapon states have been fiercely opposing the Nuclear Ban Treaty arguing that it ignores the reality of vital security considerations, indicating that they would not engage with it. 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 organizations and the civil society.

However, as this compilation underlines in more than one analysis and opinion piece, in order to secure a foothold for a world free from nuclear weapons, it is necessary to expand the involvement of people worldwide. All the more so because UN Secretary-General António Guterres has warned that "Global anxieties about nuclear weapons are the highest since the Cold War". He also launched in May 2018 an Agenda for Disarmament titled 'Securing Our Common Future' - www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/intention.

Eminent Buddhist philosopher, educator, author, and nuclear disarmament advocate Dr. Daisaku Ikeda released his latest Peace Proposal in January 2019 emphasizing that "Amid the continued

escalation of global challenges, crises that were previously unthinkable are now becoming reality throughout the world."

Among highlights of the 2019 Peace Proposal is the need to accelerate progress toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, encourage youth engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and expand the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) network of universities.

I would like to avail of this opportunity to express my gratitude to the network of our correspondents around the world for their insightful contributions, the Project Director, INPS Japan President Katsuhiko Asagiri for his valuable support in implementing the project, and the SGI for the trusted and professional partnership.

Sincere thanks also to Sergio Duarte, President of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, a former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and President of the 2005 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference for taking the time to write a Foreword, and Hayley Ramsay-Jones, Director, Geneva Liaison Office, Soka Gakkai International Office for UN Affairs, for sending her message.

FOREWORD

BY SERGIO DUARTE, PRESIDENT OF PUGWASH

One of the major features of our age is the revolution in communications. Information, commentary and analysis of everyday news can instantly reach every citizen in the world, regardless of their location or level of instruction. In addition, individuals are now able to communicate freely between and among themselves through practically inexpensive, open channels. In this new world, all means of communication have a role to play in shaping public opinion in issues of international significance.

Media are a powerful means of disseminating news on questions regarding public affairs, a realm that in the past remained “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” for a sizable part of humankind, in the words of Walter Lippmann. Today, mainstream media not only provide abundant information on world events but most often also interpret for the rest of us the importance and significance of decisions taken by the different actors on the international stage. Knowledge and the setting of priorities about matters of public interest are based on what the mainstream media presents to us. Academic studies, newsletters, bulletins, articles and commentaries published on the Internet by non-governmental organizations as well as by individuals also play an indispensable role in facilitating and enhancing the exchange of ideas and information that help shape public attitudes and responses to those developments.

Media can be a prominent factor in promoting enhanced human security by raising public awareness of the risks inherent in security postures predicated on the possession and willingness to use nuclear weapons. Regrettably, mainstream media in many countries often hesitate to take a proactive role in the reporting and promotion of multilateral efforts toward the achievement of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons continue to be presented as a key element for the maintenance of international security and as a necessary tool for the preservation of peace.

It is worth stressing, in this context, the important role played by the media in the recent past in support of multilateral efforts to outlaw chemical and bacteriological weapons. Campaigns to outlaw particularly cruel and indiscriminate conventional weapons have also been successfully conducted by civil society and actively supported by media in many countries.

In the early 1980’s the deployment of short- and medium-range vehicles equipped with nuclear warheads aroused great concern among the populations in Western Europe. The media echoed the anxiety of the populations and eventually agreement was reached to remove that threat from the region. It is disconcerting to note that today neither the mainstream media nor public opinion in the countries concerned appear disturbed by the prospect of the early termination

of that agreement or by the current erosion of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Thanks to modern technology, advocates of the elimination of nuclear weapons can utilize a variety of useful alternatives. Quite effective means to influence public opinion and create awareness for a world free of such weapons are available at the touch of a button. Academic journals and other publications, bulletins and press releases by civil society organizations as well as articles and commentaries by individuals are among the tools that can be used by the international community in its efforts to mobilize the communication resources at its disposal in order to ensure the preservation of the disarmament and non-proliferation structure.

One important task at hand is the promotion of universal adherence and support to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The CTBT prohibits all nuclear test explosions in all environments. It was negotiated over many years and was finally adopted in 1996. Since then, the International Monitoring System put together by the Technical Secretariat has proven its ability to identify nuclear weapon tests and help prevent damage from natural seismic events and unilateral moratoria on experimental explo-

FOREWORD

sions is in place. This is positive, but not enough. The Treaty is not formally in force, as signature and/or ratification by eight States named in Annex II of the Treaty is needed for that purpose.

The most recent example of success in achieving a long-sought goal in the field of nuclear disarmament was the negotiation of a multilateral instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. A grassroots movement that united several civil society organizations and a majority of member States of the United Nations in a single common effort secured the adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, aiming at their elimination. This treaty will enter into force as soon as fifty ratifications are deposited with the Secretary-general of the United Nations.

The following compilation of articles published by IDN-InDepthNews over the twelve months until March 2019 provides a useful overview of the efforts undertaken to promote the dissemination of information and the raising of awareness of the importance of strong, multilaterally negotiated and universally accepted international norms on issues relevant to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.



MESSAGE

BY HAYLEY RAMSAY-JONES, DIRECTOR, GENEVA LIAISON OFFICE,
SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR UN AFFAIRS

Tensions surrounding nuclear weapons are widespread. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have come under threat, and two nuclear armed-states in South Asia recently engaged in military posturing exchanges. As Secretary-General António Guterres remarked in the foreword to the Disarmament Agenda “The tensions of the cold war have returned to a world that has grown more complex.”

With these looming political strains, rampant social injustices, economic and environmental instabilities, there has never before been a greater need for “a shared vision of a peaceful societies” as described by Daisaku Ikeda in his 2019 Peace Proposal. Ikeda further states that “The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a forerunner of the kind of international disarmament law that can help frame such a vision”.

The TPNW was adopted on 7 July 2017, by 122 countries, it was a historic and important step toward a world free from nuclear weapons. Despite none of the nuclear-armed state’s participating in the process of its adoption, it nonetheless has demonstrated a strong will for the elimination of nuclear weapons within the international community. The Treaty will enter into force once it has been ratified by 50 States, to date 23 countries have done so, with others working towards this end. In comparison to similar disarmament treaties, at this stage, the ratification process of the TPNW is well on its way.

As an international partner of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Nobel Peace Prize winner, the SGI has been working with governments and civil society actors to help realize the early entry into force and the universalization of the TPNW. Most recently the SGI, ICAN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana – one of the first countries to ratify the Treaty, worked together to organize a regional forum in the Caribbean on the TPNW to increase support for its early entry into force.



MESSAGE

The SGI has long supported the need to keep the victims and survivors of nuclear weapons at the heart of disarmament efforts. As such, we joined ICAN's Positive Obligations (PosOps) groups that function to raise awareness and ensure the implementation of the positive obligation provisions within the TPNW that address victim assistance, environmental remediation, risk; and peace and disarmament education.

In May 2019, during the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the SGI again worked with other faith groups to deliver an interfaith statement calling for governments to “Heed the voices of the world’s hibakusha by unequivocally recommitting to achieving a world without nuclear weapons, by supporting the signing and ratification TPNW. Actively assist victims and remediate contaminated environments and to engage in international cooperation and assistance to affected communities”.

The SGI's submission statement to the NPT states: “Humanity possesses the power of solidarity, a strength with which we can overcome any adversity. The darker the night, the closer the dawn: now is the time to accelerate momentum toward disarmament by taking the present crises as an opportunity to create a new history”.

For a new history to emerge, the SGI continues to highlight the importance of peace and disarmament education, which seeks to understand the multiple factors that foster or undermine peace and disarmament efforts; and encourage attitudes and actions that promote peace and disarmament.

In this regard, peace and disarmament education has a role to make clearer the connections and intersections between differing expressions of violence – including structural discrimination, inequality, oppression, patriarchy and the misuse of power that are prevalent in our societies. All of these collectively create a culture of violence, which has led to the reality and acceptance of violence, including the violence of nuclear weapons.

Applying a social justice and intersectional lens to nuclear weapons illustrates that rather than being far removed from our day-to-day reality, nuclear weapons are profoundly and intimately connected to our very being. As such, we all have a stake in nuclear disarmament, and we should seize this as an opportunity to move towards collective responsibility for a nuclear-free world and a just society for all.

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EXPERTS STRESS IMPORTANCE OF UN HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

BY KATSUHIRO ASAGIRI



Photo: Western States Legal Foundation Executive Director Jackie Cabasso, second from left, at the press conference at the United Nations on March 28. On her right is John Burroughs, and on her left are: Holger Guessfeld, Gene Seidman and Alyn Ware.

NEW YORK (IDN) – The increasing fragility of international peace and security is accentuating the critical need for persistent dialogue and relentless diplomacy to deter multiple conflicts triggering nuclear confrontation, disarmament experts and campaigners say.

Conflicts related to nuclear weapons, including in Northeast Asia, between the U.S. and NATO

on the one hand and Russia on the other, they say, should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy and every effort must be undertaken to make the UN High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament from May 14 to 16, 2018 in New York a success.

“[Russian President Vladimir] Putin’s March 1 speech and the February 2 U.S. Nuclear Posture

Review make clear that Russia and the United States are poised to resume nuclear arms racing on a scale not seen since the dark days of the Cold War,” John Burroughs, Executive Director of the Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy (USA) and UN Representative for the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, said at a media briefing on March 28.

“Arms racing is dangerous in itself. It also is contrary to the Nonproliferation Treaty obligation to negotiate ‘cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date.’ Russia and the United States should seize every opportunity to put the threatened nuclear arms race in reverse,” Burroughs added.

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director of Western States Legal Foundation availed of the opportunity to release an open letter to the leaders of USA, South Korea and North Korea. More than 100 U.S. civil society groups have signed the letter. The letter expresses support for the upcoming inter-Korean summit in April and the U.S.-DPRK summit in May, and urges the leaders “to patiently and diligently seek common ground.”

The letter states: “Dialogue and diplomacy is essential if we are to prevent a war that would likely result in an unthinkable disaster for the Korean Peninsula, the United States and the world. ... We recognize that one encounter between US

and North Korean leaders will not likely produce an agreement that leads to a lasting solution. But the planned summits offer the potential for starting a serious process that could move us decisively away from the current crisis.”

Cabasso said: “This letter has taken on added significance in light of the appointment of John Bolton as US National Security Advisor.” In a March 1 online Wall Street Journal op-ed on February 28, 2018, Bolton called for a preemptive military strike on North Korea.

“The open letter to President Trump, President Moon and Chairman Kim is an unambiguous repudiation of Bolton’s warmongering, with more than 100 peace, faith-based, professional, and Korean-American organizations across the country welcoming the extraordinary diplomatic opening that has appeared,” Cabasso said.

Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute said: “The United Nations has key roles to play in promoting and supporting diplomacy, nuclear risk-reduction and disarmament,” Granoff said. “The upcoming UN High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament comes at a vital time to build global support from UN Member States,” he added. “We encourage all UN members to participate at the highest level, and to give full support to nuclear risk-reduction and disarmament measures.”

Granoff said: “States could use this opportunity to either sign the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or commit to a negotiation process to stop the new arms race, lower nuclear risks, and fulfil existing disarmament obligations by agreeing to a phased process of reductions leading to the universal, legally enforceable, verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons.” said Granoff. “As a first step toward a safer saner world, the nine States with the weapons must all pledge never to initiate a nuclear war,” he added.

Nuclear disarmament campaigners plan to use the UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament to focus public attention on the nuclear-weapons industry, a key stimulus to the nuclear arms race.

“Companies manufacturing nuclear weapons and their delivery systems are a powerful lobby to increase nuclear weapons budgets, and to expand nuclear weapons policies in order to justify this massive public spending,” said Alyn Ware, Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

“Legislators in our networks are becoming increasingly concerned about the risks of the nuclear arms race, and the fact that budget investments in nuclear weapons reduces the funds available for other important needs,” Ware said. “They have joined with civil society in Move the

Nuclear Weapons Money, a global campaign to cut nuclear weapons budgets, and end investments in nuclear weapons companies.”

“The public is not aware of the colossal amount of money wasted on nuclear weapons, and what an incredible contribution this money could instead make to ending poverty, protecting the climate and providing education, housing and basic health care for all,” said Holger Güssefeld, Special Projects Coordinator for the World Future Council.

“We will demonstrate this by counting out 1 trillion dollars – the nuclear weapons budget for the coming decade – while the UN High-Level Conference is taking place,” Güssefeld added.

Gene Seidman, Project Director for Count the Nuclear Weapons Money informed: “Artists have designed mock \$1 million notes. We will count 1 million of these one-by-one over seven days and nights outside the United Nations and in public locations in New York.”

“While counting – at \$100 million per minute – we will shine the light of shame on companies manufacturing these weapons of mass annihilation, and we will highlight areas of economic, environmental and social need that could instead be met with these funds,” Seidman added. [IDN- InDepthNews – 01 April 2018]

PRESSURE MOUNTS ON JAPAN TO JOIN THE NUCLEAR BAN TREATY

BY KATSUHIRO ASAGIRI



Photo (left to right): Michiko Kodama, Assistant Secretary General of Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- & H- Bomb Sufferers' Organizations); Akira Kawasaki, Executive Committee Member, Peace Boat and an international steering committee member of ICAN; Terumi Tanaka, co-chairperson of Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- & H- Bomb Sufferers' Organizations); Haruko Moritaki, co-director of Hiroshima Alliance of Nuclear Weapons Abolition (HANWA). Credit: Katsuhiko Asagiri | IDN-INPS

TOKYO (IDN) – Japan is coming under pressure from within to sign and ratify the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty, which acknowledges the “unacceptable suffering” of the hibakusha – survivors of hitherto the first ever atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

122 member nations of the United Nations adopted what is formally known as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in July 2017.

Aging survivors – 81.41 on an average as of March 2017 – have deplored the Japanese government’s decision to stay out of the TPNW for the reason that

joining the Treaty could “result in the distance between nuclear weapons and non-nuclear weapons states being further widened.”

The remark made by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of atomic bombings at a news conference in Hiroshima angered 78-year-old Hiroshima hibakusha Hiroshi Harada, former head of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

“If the Japanese government isn’t going to do anything, I don’t want (Abe) to keep describing Japan in his speeches as ‘the only country to have sustained atomic bombings in wartime,’” Harada was reported saying. “If you’re going to tout that fact, you need to follow it up with the appropriate action.”

Eight months later, the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition has handed over a solicitation document as well as a written inquiry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), requesting the Japanese government to sign and ratify the Nuclear Ban Treaty.

On behalf of the Japan NGO Network, Terumi Tanaka, co-chair of Nihon Hidankyo, and Haruko Moritaki, co-director of Hiroshima Alliance of Nuclear Weapons Abolition (HANWA), delivered the petition to MOFA’s Parliamentary Vice Minister Mitsunari Okamoto on April 13.

This was in the run-up to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) – Second PrepCom of the 2020 NPT Review Conference from April 23 to May 4 in Geneva.

The solicitation document also asked for information about Japan’s nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policy and its stance on the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review.

PRESSURE MOUNTS ON JAPAN TO JOIN THE NUCLEAR BAN TREATY

Responding, Okamoto paid “respect to the efforts undertaken by people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to convey to the world the consequences of nuclear weapons.” He added that while the Nuclear Ban Treaty shares the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, its approach is different from that of the Japanese government.

Okamoto further stated that the Japanese government would like to contribute to heighten the international momentum toward the advancement of nuclear disarmament by “building bridges to effective nuclear disarmament” as suggested by the Group of Eminent Persons on the Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament in its recommendations submitted on March 29 to Foreign Minister Taro Kono.

Eminent representatives of the Japan NGO Network did not hide their disappointment at what they were told at the MOFA. At a press conference, Akira Kawasaki, an international steering committee member of Nobel Peace Laureate ICAN criticized the Ministry for sticking to the existing policy of not joining the Nuclear Ban Treaty.

“We had the impression that they have not yet decided on statements they would make during the PrepCom. Therefore, I have no idea about the Japanese government’s policy toward nuclear disarmament,” Kawasaki said.

HANWA’s co-director Moritaki said she was “disappointed,” adding that the Japanese government “should explain concrete measures if it claims to play the role of bridging nuclear states and non-nuclear states while focusing on an approach other than that of the Nuclear Ban Treaty.”

It was against the backdrop of grave differences between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states on the one hand and among the non-nuclear-weapon states on the other in regard to the best way to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons that the then Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida announced the establishment of a Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament in his statement at the First PrepCom of the 2020 NPT Review Conference in May 2017 in Vienna.

The Group comprising 16 experts – 6 Japanese including the chairperson, and 10 foreign – has meanwhile tabled a set of 25 wide-ranging recommendations. Foreign experts are from both the nuclear weapon and non-nuclear

weapon states comprising the States promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The Group urges all member states of the United Nations to undertake “with a sense of urgency . . . the bridge-building measures . . . necessary to re-energize nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation during this cycle of the NPT review process, enhance the process itself and lay the ground for converging different approaches.”

The Group says that the norm of non-use of nuclear weapons, which is backed by the 73-year practice of non-use, must be maintained by all means as one of the premises for upholding the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Besides, the NPT must remain central to advancing the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. “To preserve the NPT,” the Group declares, “all states parties should fulfil their joint commitment to the ultimate total elimination of nuclear weapons, and to the implementation of the Decisions on Principles and Objectives and Strengthening the Review Process of 1995 and the Final Documents of 2000 and 2010.”

The Group adds: “Based on the resolution adopted in 1995 and Action Plan agreed in 2010, the concerned regional actors and co-sponsors/conveners – the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States – in close communication with interested states parties to the NPT and the United Nations, should work to convene as soon as possible a conference on the Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction to be attended by all states of the region of the Middle East.”

The Group is of the view that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) plays a critical role in reinforcing the norm of non-testing, preventing nuclear proliferation, and contributing to nuclear disarmament. The Group urges the remaining Annex II States to sign and/or ratify the treaty without further delay and calls upon all states to refrain from nuclear testing. “All states should make extra efforts to maintain the effectiveness of the treaty’s verification mechanisms and the Provisional Technical Secretariat and ensure adequate funding.” [IDN-InDepthNews – 16 April 2018]

FAITH COMMUNITIES URGE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO PAVE THE PATH TO A NUCLEAR-WEAPONS-FREE WORLD

BY JAMSHED BARUAH



Photo source: LankaNewsWeb

GENEVA (IDN) – Diverse faith-based organizations and individuals are appealing to States gathered at the UN in Geneva to spare the world a nuclear catastrophe and foster sustainable development for the good of humanity affirming moral and ethical imperatives.

Twenty groups and individuals from different faiths, including Christian, Quaker, Muslim and Hindu traditions and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) tabled an interfaith statement on April 25 as one of the civil society presentations during the second session of the Preparatory Committee

for the 2020 NPT Review Conference at the UN Office in Geneva.

The joint statement read by Hayley Ramsay-Jones of SGI on behalf of Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons, calls for “concrete and measurable results” in line with all elements of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and “toward the shared goal of a world free from nuclear weapons,” leading up to the 2020 Review Conference.

The lay Buddhist organization SGI has been engaged in efforts to promote the abolition of nuclear weapons for over sixty years.

The endorsees of the joint statement call to mind the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. “Since then, humankind has been forced to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction,” reads the joint statement and warns: “Any use of nuclear weapons would not only destroy the past fruits of human civilization, it would disfigure the present and consign future generations to the grimmest of fates.”

As people of faith, the endorsees of the joint statement, advocate for the right of all people to live in security and dignity, seek to heed the commands of conscience and the call to justice, and they are united in the determination to protect

the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard Earth for present and future generations.

The statement goes on to say: “Nuclear weapons profoundly violate all these values and commitments. We can never accept a conception of security that privileges the concerns of any state or nation over the good of the human and planetary whole. The horrific destructiveness of nuclear weapons makes their abolition the only path to authentic human security.”

As people of faith, the diverse faith-based organizations and individuals urge States gathered at the UN in Geneva until May 4, 2018 to:

- Heed the voices of the world’s hibakusha (all the victims of nuclear weapons) and recommit to the unequivocal undertaking to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, noting that the fundamental justification for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is the prevention of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of such weapons.

- Recognize that all effective measures are mutually reinforcing and advancement in each area supports advancement in others. The entry into force of the TPNW; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); halting the production and eliminating global stockpiles

of fissile materials (FMT); irreversibly dismantling global nuclear weapon production architecture; ending programs designed to increase the accuracy and versatility and lower the threshold for use of nuclear weapons; preventing a new nuclear arms race; and eliminating nuclear weapon stockpiles, among other effective measures, are global undertakings, fully compatible with and contributing to the realization of the objectives and commitments of the NPT.

- Recognize that there are core prohibitions common to the NPT and the TPNW such as those against the transfer of nuclear weapons, against assisting other states in acquiring nuclear weapons, etc., which can be supported regardless of a state's position toward the TPNW.

With this in view, the joint statement encourages all States “to engage in constructive dialogue regarding the strengthening of such prohibitions as a concrete and practical step toward fulfilling the obligation of all States parties to the NPT to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.”

The significance of this impassioned call is underlined by the fact that the nuclear disarmament agenda remains stalled. The Trump administration's Nuclear Posture Review refers to plans to produce new types of nuclear weapons, including those that could lower the threshold to use.

Such actions stand in direct opposition to commitments made in the previous NPT review conferences, avers the joint statement, and adds: “Nuclear modernization plans alone are slated to

absorb resources on a scale that, redirected, could greatly advance progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: providing the basic necessities, protecting the environment, enhancing the health of women and girls and the future generations, and reducing the risks of wars and tensions around the world.”

The statement read out during the April 23-May 4 session of the PrepCom is the ninth of its kind since 2014. The Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons issued previous interfaith statements on the occasion of international conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons from 2014 to 2016. Statements were also issued during the first PrepCom in Vienna in May 2017 and on the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in New York in July 2017.

Commenting the April 25 statement, Pax Christi's International Representative Jonathan Frerichs said: “We now have the opportunity to help bring the TPNW into force. Each signature and each ratification of the treaty deepens the stigma and the illegitimacy surrounding nuclear weapons.”

SGI Executive Director for Peace and Global Issues Kazuo Ishiwatari added: “The role of faith communities is to offer people opportunities to reflect on their values and ways of thinking. Citizens need to be willing to make decisions to ensure that their national security does not rely on nuclear weapons.”

He also submitted SGI's official statement to Ambassador Adam Bugajski of Poland, Chair of the

second session of the Preparatory Committee, on April 25. Ambassador Bugajski expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by civil society.

As the second session of the PrepCom is the first venue for debate and deliberation with the participation of non-nuclear-weapon, nuclear-weapon and nuclear-dependent states since the adoption of the TPNW in July 2017, SGI has urged the States parties to engage in constructive dialogue and produce concrete results in line with the NPT's ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons, and to continue to heed the voices of civil society, especially the world's hibakusha.

The joint statement was endorsed by: All Souls Nuclear Disarmament Task Force; Anthony Donovan; Beverley Johnstone (Pax Christi International), Bruce Knotts, Director, United Nations Office, Unitarian Universalist; Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; Conference of Major Superiors of Men; Ela Gandhi, Gandhi Development Trust; The Franciscan Action Network; and Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, Soka Gakkai International.

The joint statement was also endorsed by: Malik Mujahid, Sound Vision; Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; Muslim Peace Fellowship, Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti Emeritus of Bosnia, President, World Bosniak Congress; PAX; Pax Christi Australia; Pax Christi International; Pax Christi USA; Unitarian Universalist Association; The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society; and the World Council of Churches. [IDN-InDepthNews – 29 April 2018]

EXPERTS PREDICT VAST RAMIFICATIONS OF US PULLOUT FROM IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

BY SANTO D. BANERJEE



Photo: Trump ending U.S. participation in Iran Nuclear Deal. Credit: White House.

NEW YORK (IDN) – President Donald Trump’s decision to abandon the Iran Nuclear Deal is fraught with multiple imponderables, according to experts. It’s “a costly mistake that can hold wide-ranging ramifications beyond its strictly nuclear parameters,” declared the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize winner Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.

The decision “not only blows up a functioning agreement, it also deals a significant blow to U.S. credibility as a partner in contract and diplomacy,” warned the 2017 Nobel Peace laureate ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons).

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF) termed the U.S. pullout “a dangerous move” that “will have major international consequences”. Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the independent Arms Control Association said the decision was “an irresponsible act of foreign policy malpractice”. The decision undoes many years of constructive and patient diplomacy between Iran and the P5+1, which produced a landmark agreement in non-proliferation, said Pugwash president Sergio Duarte and Secretary-General Paolo Cotta Ramusino in a statement on May 9.

“It [the agreement] not only imposed upon Iran the most intrusive and comprehensive inspection regime, but the International Atomic Energy Agency repeatedly verified Iran’s compliance with the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] JCPOA, providing a measure of certainty regarding Iran’s nuclear program.”

The Pugwash statement welcomed Iran President Rouhani’s remark that they will consult with other partners to preserve the deal. “In this vein, we also welcome the statements by the remaining signatories that they remain committed to implementation of the agreement for the sake of common security.”

The Pugwash leaders urged all parties involved to avoid further actions that might increase tension, particularly to a precarious Middle East. The region is already beset with conflicts that will require diplomatic engagement from all states to change the dynamics causing insecurity. Now is a time for responsible leadership from those remaining in the JCPOA and we call on the

EXPERTS PREDICT VAST RAMIFICATIONS OF US PULLOUT FROM IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

international community to support them in this endeavour, the Pugwash statement said.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation based in Santa Barbara warned in a statement: “The decision to withdraw from the treaty: 1. Makes it more likely Iran will pursue nuclear weapons. 2. Makes war between the U.S. and Iran more likely. 3. Separates the U.S. from its major allies. 4. Shows U.S. commitments are not reliable. 5. Further reinforces lack of U.S. leadership in the world. 6. Will likely have adverse effects on achieving nuclear deal with N. Korea.”

The statement added: “Trump’s decision puts America’s relations with its allies into new and uncertain territory. U.S. allies are committed to staying in the deal, thus raising the prospect of diplomatic and economic disputes as the U.S. reimposes stringent sanctions on Iran. Importantly, it also raises the potential for increased tensions with Russia and China, also parties to the agreement.

“The decision flies in the face of intense lobbying by European leaders who made numerous attempts to produce fixes to the deal that would satisfy Trump. Trump’s prior advisers had persuaded him twice last year not to go this route. However, his newest set of considerably more hawkish advisers, Mike Pompeo and John Bolton, did not act to restrain Trump this time around.”

David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation commented, “This may be the worst foreign policy decision of our time. It vividly demonstrates the downsides to having a U.S. president who is an incompetent bully. He appears more intent on punishing Iran than on maintaining a well-worked out deal, supported by our major allies, to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power. This is yet another reason that there is urgency to impeach Mr. Trump.”

The Washington-based Arms Control Association’s executive director Kimball denounced the decision not to renew U.S. sanctions waivers in violation of the 2015 nuclear deal between the P5+1 countries (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and Iran, known as the JCPOA.

“President Trump’s decision to violate the Iran nuclear deal, which has successfully blocked Iran’s potential pathways to a nuclear bomb, is an irresponsible act of foreign policy malpractice,” charged Kimball.

“Reimposing sanctions absent Iranian violations is a twofold abrogation of U.S. commitments under the JCPOA and it is critical that members of Congress and Washington’s P5+1 partners denounce Trump’s actions as a breach of the accord. Not only did the United States commit not to reimpose sanctions, Washington also committed not to interfere with the full realization of sanctions relief,” explained Kelsey Davenport, director of nonproliferation policy for the Arms Control Association.

“Trump’s action today does not kill the agreement, but it jeopardizes the future of the deal unless other partners, particularly the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), take immediate steps to insulate their companies and banks which are engaged in trade with Iran from U.S. secondary sanctions,” warned Davenport.

“We call on the E3, Russia, China, and other responsible states to pursue implementation of the JCPOA without the United States and implement measures that block the application of U.S. secondary sanctions. We also urge Tehran to continue abiding by the limits of the deal. Resuming troublesome nuclear activities limited by the accord will not serve Iran’s interests and risks provoking a deeper crisis,” Davenport said.

“European-U.S. efforts to negotiate a supplemental agreement intended to address Trump’s complaints failed to yield results because Trump stubbornly refused to guarantee that he would uphold U.S. commitments under the JCPOA and demanded that Europe help to unilaterally impose major changes to the original terms of the agreement,” Kimball said.

“The Iran nuclear deal is a strong nonproliferation agreement that delivers permanent and robust international monitoring of Iran’s nuclear activities, strictly limits its capacity to enrich uranium and prohibits other sensitive nuclear activities. Through his reckless actions, Trump is precipitating a proliferation crisis rather than working with our allies to develop a long-term diplomatic strategy to build on the agreement in the years ahead,” Kimball charged. [IDN-InDepthNews – 11 May 2018]

NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES' LONG ARM SEEN BEHIND DEFERRAL OF LANDMARK UN CONFERENCE

BY ALYN WARE*



Photo: Security Council meeting on Maintenance of international peace and security, Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Credit: UN Photo/Loey Felipe

NEW YORK (IDN) – May 14, 2018 was supposed to see the opening at the United Nations of a three-day High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, scheduled to discuss “effective nuclear disarmament measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including, in particular, on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.”

The UN General Assembly decided five years ago to hold such a conference in 2018, following a

series of annual, one-day, high-level meetings at the United Nations.

The importance of the 2018 High-Level Conference only increased during these five years with a range of nuclear-weapons related conflicts heating up – Russia vs. NATO, North Korea vs. USA, India vs. Pakistan – to such an extent that the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in January 2018 moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock to 2 Minutes to Midnight. This is the closest human-

ity has been to nuclear Armageddon since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

Uncertainty over the future of the Iran nuclear deal following the withdrawal of the United States on May 8 has only added fuel to the nuclear fire.

A High-Level Conference (scheduled for May 14-16) would have provided a powerful platform for world leaders to support diplomacy and nuclear-risk reduction in these nuclear-related conflicts, as well as to advance nuclear disarmament measures such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which was concluded by non-nuclear States at the UN in July 2017 but has not yet entered into force.

Right at a time when such a conference is needed the most, it has surprisingly been postponed to an uncertain future date.

Civil society representatives, many of whom had already booked their flights to New York for the conference, were left perplexed. The High-Level Conference had been initiated by the 120-nation Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which in the past has led on a number of nuclear disarmament initiatives, such as challenging the legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1994.

Many of the Non-Aligned countries were also active in the 2017 negotiations that concluded the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. So why would the NAM now reverse itself and drop such an important event?

The Indonesian Mission (Embassy) to the UN, which serves as the UN Coordinator for NAM, indicated that they had not found a suitable country to chair the conference. This indeed appears to be true. Several candidates invited to chair the conference had declined. But this still begs the question why? Wouldn't one or more of the NAM countries want to chair the conference and elevate their standing in the international community as a broker for peace and disarmament?

It appears from informal conversations with some NAM members that there are deeper reasons, most of which fall back to the long-arm influence and intransigence of nuclear-armed States on nuclear issues. This plays out in a number of ways.

Firstly, it appears that the NAM was unsuccessful in persuading leaders of nuclear-armed and allied states to commit to coming to the UN High-Level Conference. Having a conference where these states are represented only at ambassador level (or even lower) would undermine the conference and would limit the degree to which these countries would commit to any nuclear risk-reduction or disarmament measures.

This argument would be totally understandable if the NAM had indeed put strong pressure and invested political capital to move the leaders of nuclear armed and allied states to come. But this did not seem to be the case. Leaders of countries

are not moved to come to UN Summits or High-Level Conferences solely on the basis of a UN resolution.

They would be so moved if NAM leaders announced that they themselves were coming to the UN conference at the highest level (President or Prime Minister), publicly called on the nuclear armed and allied states to do the same and made this a priority in their bilateral meetings with the leaders of the nuclear armed and allied States.

The fact that NAM did not appear to do this indicates that something else is happening within NAM that appears to have reduced their collective resolve and impact on nuclear disarmament issues.

Indeed, since the end of the Cold War, a number of NAM members, like many other non-nuclear States, have developed closer trade, financial and political relationships with specific nuclear-armed States. They appear hesitant to do anything that would seriously impact on such relationships. These countries are ready to support nuclear disarmament statements and resolutions that look good but have little impact on their nuclear-armed friends. They are hesitant to adopt measures that might impact significantly on the practices of the nuclear-armed states and incur the wrath or even counter measures from them.

This was evident, for example, in the negotiations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The nuclear-armed States and the allied states under extended nuclear deterrence relationships have all indicated that they won't join the Treaty which means that the general Treaty obligations will not apply to them.

However, there were proposals to include Treaty provisions that would have had direct impact on practices of the nuclear-armed States. These included prohibiting transit of nuclear weapons in the land, sea and air spaces of Treaty parties, and to ban financing of nuclear weapons, i.e. investments in nuclear weapons corporations. The fact that the states negotiating the Treaty rejected these proposals demonstrated their unwillingness to confront the nuclear-armed States.

This was also evident in the recent case taken by the Marshall Islands against nuclear-armed States in the ICJ. This was a direct legal challenge of the nuclear-armed States violating their nuclear disarmament obligations.

However, not one other non-nuclear country joined the Marshall Islands in the case. None wanted to come into direct confrontation with the nuclear-armed States. As a result, the ICJ determined that it was not a real legal dispute regarding the disarmament obligation, and they dismissed the case.

It appears that this low level of resolve by NAM and other non-nuclear States to confront the nuclear-armed States is not the only reason for the deferral of the UN High-Level Conference.

Another reason appears to be that the heightened tensions between nuclear-armed States make it difficult for even the strongest disarmament advocates and the best 'bridge-builders' to succeed in bringing the nuclear-armed States together to cooperate in such a forum.

An indication of this is the responses of the nuclear-armed States to two recent initiatives by

Kazakhstan, a country that had been incredibly influential and successful as a bridge-builder at the end of the Cold War. Kazakhstan was instrumental in bringing Russia and the United States together in 1991 to cooperate on nuclear threat reduction, the dismantling of the nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus and the securing of nuclear materials in these countries.

However, two of Kazakhstan's more recent attempts to encourage cooperation between nuclear-armed States (and especially USA and Russia) have had much less success. These included the Universal Declaration for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World, which did not get unanimous support, and the Security Council session on confidence building and weapons of mass destruction which Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev chaired on January 18, 2018.

The U.S. used the opportunity of the Security Council session not to discuss confidence-building measures, but rather to launch a multifaceted attack against Russia. Russia then responded in kind. This, and other indications of increased antagonism between nuclear-armed States, appears to have convinced some NAM countries that now was not an optimum time to hold the High-Level Conference.

On the other hand, it is understood that other NAM countries believed that this dynamic and other tensions and conflicts such as in North-East Asia, were the very reason that a High-Level Conference would be so important at this time.

Many civil society organizations share the latter view. "If ever there was a time when there was a need for a high-level summit ... it is now," said Jackie Cabasso, executive director of Western States Legal Foundation speaking at a press conference at the United Nations on March 28.

"One of the things I think we're here to say is that this opportunity should be seized upon by the nuclear powers which are confronting each other now in a very, very dangerous way that threatens all of us," continued Cabasso. "This high-level conference could provide support and encouragement especially as it comes between the planned summit between the two Koreas in April and the U.S.-North Korea summit in May/June."

There is concern that the postponing of the UN High-Level Conference might be a sign of 'wet feet' from the Non-Aligned Movement leading to it being cancelled altogether. "NAM needs to hear from civil society and from other non-nuclear governments that the High-Level Conference must proceed, either later in 2018 or in 2019," says John Hallam, Convener of the Abolition 2000 Nuclear Risk Reduction Working group.

"The threats to humanity and the planet from the conflicts and policies of the nuclear armed States are too high, too risky, and too important to leave to them alone. The High-Level Conference is vital to pull them back from the nuclear abyss and set the world on a path to nuclear disarmament," he adds.

Civil society action has been successful in the past in re-building the resolve of NAM to take action in the face of strong opposition from the nuclear-armed States.

In 1993, as a result of pressure from the nuclear-armed States, the NAM withdrew their resolution to the United Nations requesting the International Court of Justice to rule on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. At that time, it appeared as though the initiative was lost.

However, a coalition of over 700 civil society organizations took action and convinced the NAM to resist the pressure from the nuclear-armed States and to re-submit the resolution to the UN General Assembly in 1994. The result was a successful vote in the UN General Assembly, followed by an historical case where the court affirmed the general illegality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons and the universal obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament.

A similar campaign by civil society in support of the UN High-Level Conference could convince NAM to move the UN General Assembly this October to re-schedule the UN High-Level Conference for 2019. Civil society organizations are meeting in New York to discuss the issue.

*Alyn Ware is Co-Chair, World Future Council Disarmament Commission.[IDN-InDepthNews – 14 May 2018]

TRANSFORMING RISKS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA INTO STABLE PEACE IN NORTHEAST ASIA

BY KATSUHIRO ASAGIRI



Photo: Toda Institute Director Kevin P. Clements briefing media on the Colloquium. Credit: Kotoe Asagiri | IDN-INPS

TOKYO (IDN) – ‘Building Stable Peace in Northeast Asia: Managing and Transforming Risks on the Korean Peninsula’ was the subject of a colloquium in which regional experts on peace and security, policy makers and civil society organizations from the United States, China, South Korea and Japan participated against the backdrop of a volatile situation in the region.

In the run-up to North Korea claiming that it had conducted its first successful test of an inter-continental ballistic missile that can “reach anywhere in the world,” 1995 Nobel Peace Laureate

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs expressed concern in a statement on May 4, 2017 that “the mounting confrontation with North Korea is raising grave dangers.”

Some nine months later, on January 25, 2018, the iconic Doomsday Clock moved 30 seconds closer to midnight, the closest to the symbolic point of annihilation that the Clock has been since 1953 at the height of the Cold War.

This disquieting situation added to the importance of the colloquium co-organised by the The National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at

the University of Otago, New Zealand, the Japanese think-tank Toda Peace Institute and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) on February 1, 2018.

This Second Tokyo Colloquium identified in the face of geopolitical instability, “the forces generating insecurity, and turbulence” and analysed “impediments to diplomatic and negotiated responses to North Korean challenges.” Furthermore: “It focussed on ways in which existential nuclear threat can be dealt with through preventive diplomacy, negotiations and collaborative problem solving.”

Two panels of influential experts and policy makers shared their insight and wisdom on “dealing with security threats in Northeast Asia” and “managing risks in the Korean Peninsula, breaking the impasse with North Korea”.

Since the colloquium was held under Chatham House Rules, the press briefing by Kevin P. Clements, Director of Toda Peace Institute and Chair of the National Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago conveyed a gist of discussions.

According to the Toda Peace Institute director Clemens, the first panel focused on “tensions and challenges in Northeast Asia generally and

how to respond to those creatively and non-violently”. In particular, the panel looked on “how to improve on relations, among others, between China and Japan which is considered to be a major bilateral relationship critical to many of the issues that were on table.”

Clemens added: The panel also looked at what kinds of regional security architecture might be necessary for managing disputes non-violently, and focussed attention on how to build trust and respect between China and Japan, Japan and Korea, and between North and South Korea.

The major focus of the second panel, he said, was on North Korea’s nuclear threat and how to respond to that “creatively, non-violently and without a military strike”.

The panellists also scrutinised “a whole range of different options that were on the table – in terms of building confidence between North and South Korea, between North Korea and the United States, how to facilitate constructive negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea, and find ways in which all of the countries of Northeast Asia can begin working towards creating an environment within which the challenges facing the region posed by North Korea can be dealt with creatively internationally.”

Asked what was North Korea’s real intention, its strategic and tactical goals while continuing with nuclear build-up, Ambassador Joseph Yun, U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, who

joined the briefing, said what his interlocutors in Pyongyang had communicated to him was that “they want security, they want economic prosperity, and so on.”

North Korea’s desire was for security and economic prosperity, affirmed Yun Sun, Senior Associate with the East Asia Program at the Stimson Center and a non-resident fellow at the Brookings Institution, China.

The North Koreans’ main objection, as they told Ambassador Yun, was “what they call U.S. hostile policies.” This was an occasion for him “to engage with them” and explain to them that the U.S. position had consistently been the disapproval of the “nuclearisation” of North Korea, its nuclear weapons”.

In an attempt to counter widespread speculation that a pre-emptive strike was Washington’s endgame, he said: “I don’t believe we are close to (a military strike), and I think we want to have credible negotiations. But we also have said, and we’ve been very consistent, that all options are on the table, and by all options, it has to include military options.”

These remarks came close on the heels of a former White House official who, once tipped to become the next U.S. envoy to South Korea, in a critical opinion piece in the Washington Post said that Washington’s “all options” pursuit was with the goal of delivering a “bloody nose” to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

“Some may argue that US casualties and even a wider war on the Korean Peninsula are risks worth taking, given what is at stake,” wrote Dr Victor Cha, a professor at Georgetown University and senior adviser at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. “But a strike (even a large one) would only delay North Korea’s missile-building and nuclear programmes, which are buried in deep, unknown places impenetrable to bunker-busting bombs.”

U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, Ambassador Yun maintained that Washington’s “peaceful pressure” policy involved “very strongly piling on pressure as well as leaving the door open for a dialogue”, adding that the U.S. has a communication channel open with Pyongyang.

“Everybody wants to give diplomacy a good run,” he said, referring to talks between the two Koreas on the North’s participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Games in the South, which kicked off on February 9. Washington has also agreed to postpone until after the Games its annual joint Foal Eagle military exercises with South Korea, which Pyongyang sees as a dress rehearsal for invasion.

But Ambassador Yun cautioned that diplomacy is “not conducted by smoke signals”, and said the North had to make a firm commitment to stop provocation in order for the U.S. to agree to talks. U.S. President Donald Trump in his State of the Union address on January 30, said Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons might “very soon threaten” the U.S. mainland. [IDN-InDepthNews – 12 February 2018]

ICAN EXPECTS NUCLEAR BAN TREATY TO ENTER INTO FORCE IN 2019

BY NEENA BHANDARI



Photo: Tim Wright addressing the UN conference to ban nuclear weapons on behalf of ICAN on the second last day of negotiations on 6 July 2017. Credit: ICAN | Vimeo

SYDNEY (IDN) – As the world witnesses an increase in nuclear sabre-rattling in 2018, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is supporting global public movement to put pressure on governments to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. ICAN’s Treaty Coordinator Tim Wright (TW) spoke to IDN’s Neena Bhandari (NB) about disarmament, raising

awareness about the risk and consequences of nuclear weapons, and why the world needs a nuclear ban treaty more than ever before.

Wright expects the Treaty to enter into force in 2019. He commends South Korea’s “great leadership” role by initiating the inter-Korean dialogue. “But true peace must be based on the total rejection of nuclear weapons by all nations, not just

North Korea.” The rejection by President Donald Trump of the Iran nuclear deal, he says, “undermines the non-proliferation efforts.”

Following is complete text of the interview:

NB: As the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Coordinator for the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, what in your opinion has changed in the global disarmament scenario since ICAN was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize?

TW: Being the recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize has helped ICAN shine the light on the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It has contributed to the momentum in gaining signatures and ratifications. It has shown that an alternative pathway is possible and that we don’t need to live forever in a world on the brink of nuclear war.

We said in our Nobel lecture that we have a choice between the end of us and the end of nuclear weapons. I think that simple message has resonated with the global public. People everywhere are deeply concerned about the threat that these horrific weapons pose to humanity and they want to see governments take urgent steps to eliminate this threat. The public is desperate for change. We have people across the

world, who are working to get their governments to sign up to this Treaty.

NB: Since the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons opened for signature on September 20, 2017, 58 countries have signed and 10 have ratified it. Fifty countries must ratify the Treaty for it to enter into force. The UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament scheduled for May 14-16, 2018 has been postponed indefinitely. When do you expect the Treaty to come into force?

TW: We are hopeful that the Treaty will enter into force in 2019. We are working towards that target. For the Treaty to come into force we need 40 more ratifications. We know of many countries that are well advanced in their ratification processes. Some countries should be ready to deposit their ratification instruments in the next few months.

We expect New Zealand and Ireland to ratify the Treaty by the middle of this year. Many of the Latin American countries have submitted the Treaty to their congresses and they are expected to ratify it this year. So, the Treaty should be well on the way to entering into force by the end of this year.

There was a general feeling that given all the activity on nuclear disarmament in New York in 2017, the 2018 UN High Level Conference was in a way less crucial than it had previously been considered. There were various factors that led to the indefinite postponement, particularly a lack of organisation on the part of the originators of the resolution that set up the conference.

ICAN was not involved in the preparation of the conference. We want to focus on increasing the

number of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty. We are concentrating our efforts towards the first meeting of the parties to the Treaty, which will happen within one year of the Treaty entering into force.

ADVANCING NORTH KOREA'S DE-NUCLEARISATION AND PROMOTING NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

NB: It seems the United States-North Korea summit scheduled for June 12 is now going ahead. What outcome do you expect from the summit for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to come into force? What are your thoughts on South Korea's active role in bringing about peace on the Korean Peninsula?

TW: It remains unclear whether the summit will take place. We have heard comments from both Mr Kim [North Korea's supreme leader Kim Jong-un] and Mr Trump [U.S. President Donald Trump] that it might be cancelled or the date might change. Both are very unpredictable leaders. Anything could happen, but we do remain cautiously optimistic that something positive will come out of this process.

South Korea has shown great leadership by initiating this dialogue. Mr Moon [South Korea's President Moon Jae-in] is the sensible adult in the equation. But true peace must be based on the total rejection of nuclear weapons by all nations, not just North Korea. It's crucial that South Korea rejects the idea of protection from the so-called nuclear umbrella of the United States. This dangerous military construct reinforces the fallacious belief that nuclear weapons enhance security.

We want to show that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is highly relevant to advancing the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and promoting nuclear disarmament more widely. We are calling on all the countries involved in these talks to sign and ratify the Treaty and use it as a tool for realising nuclear disarmament.

NB: What does the United States withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal mean for the world? Will Iran begin enriching uranium at industrial level? Will this augur a nuclear arms race in the Middle East?

TW: This is a very concerning development. Every indication was that Iran was in full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The International Atomic Energy Agency had verified on a number of occasions that Iran was doing what it had undertaken to do as part of the Agreement. This move by the U.S. is completely unjustified and it undermines the non-proliferation efforts. I think it sends a dangerous message to radicals in Iran, who might be eager to see an Iranian nuclear weapons programme. I don't believe that the current Iranian government is intent on developing nuclear weapons.

The U.S. withdrawal from the deal also has broader ramifications. For example, it will make it more difficult for the U.S. to be taken seriously in any negotiating process with North Korea. Why would North Korea expect the U.S. to honour its word when it hasn't done so with respect to Iran. The European countries, which are parties to the Agreement [UK, Russia, France and Germany], have responded to the U.S. withdrawal with strong criticism, but we need to move beyond simply focusing on non-proliferation.

We must all do away with the weapons that already exist and every country that is part of this Agreement possesses nuclear weapons other than Iran. We would like to see the European countries join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and actually eliminate their nuclear weapons. Germany doesn't possess its own nuclear weapons, but it hosts the U.S. nuclear weapons on its territory.

NB: A recent paper in New England Journal of Medicine says, Disarmament has stalled with a nuclear strike "only a computer malfunction, other human or technical error, or military escalation away"? What steps must urgently be taken to reduce this likelihood?

TW: I think all nuclear arms states can take steps to reduce the risk of inadvertent use of their nuclear weapons. This would involve removing the weapons from hair-trigger alert and then from active deployment. I think the only absolute way to guarantee that the weapons will never be used again is to dismantle them irreversibly. So long as these weapons exist in the world, there will be a grave risk that they will one day be used again with cata-

strophic humanitarian and environmental consequences.

In addition to urging countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, ICAN will be continuing to raise public awareness of the risk and consequences of nuclear weapons. Many people remain unaware of the actual danger that we face.

The U.S. and Russia possess between them more than 90 percent of world's nuclear weapons. We need to see leadership from both these countries towards disarmament. I think that leadership will only come with domestic public pressure and pressure from the rest of the international community and that is why it is so important that we have a vast majority of states joining this new Treaty quickly and showing that they urgently want disarmament.

NB: What has been the response to the new Treaty from countries, such as India, Pakistan and Israel, who possess nuclear weapons, but are not signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty?

TW: India and Pakistan have long criticised the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on the basis that

it establishes a discriminatory regime by treating differently those countries that possessed nuclear weapons before the Treaty's negotiations and those that developed them subsequently.

However, the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons treats all states equally and so there is no longer an excuse for India and Pakistan not to support disarmament steps. We haven't heard any clear justifications from those states as to why they are refusing to sign and ratify the Treaty. I hope there will be greater pressure on the Indian and Pakistani governments from the people of those countries and ICAN will be working to build the public movement in those countries.

As for Israel, we have a campaign presence there. The Israeli Disarmament Movement is a partner organisation of ICAN and they have worked to generate public debate about nuclear weapons. They have had discussions within the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) about disarmament and they have achieved small gains. But there is a lot of work still to be done and the new treaty offers a way for all states to contribute to disarmament on an equal basis. [IDN-InDepthNews – 28 May 2018]

UN CHIEF'S DISARMAMENT AGENDA FACES ROUGH WATERS

BY JAYANTHA DHANAPALA



UN Secretary-General António Guterres



Jayantha Dhanapala

KANDY (IDN) – The much heralded disarmament programme of the UN Secretary-General was unveiled on May 24 before a university audience in the city of Geneva.

It comes in António Guterres' second year in office when the stage has unfortunately been dominated by the exhibitionist antics of Trump with his bellicose statements asserting U.S. military and in particular nuclear weapon superiority.

And this, though conflicts rage in Syria, Yemen and other parts of the world with the use of prohibited weapons like chemical weapons as well as new weapon technologies using artificial intelligence. The symbolism of a youthful audience and its likely impact for the future is unmistakable.

The General Assembly had agreed just a month earlier on April 26 that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament stands postponed indefinitely.

The unchanged context was described by the UN chief accurately: "At the same time, the very nature of the war has changed.

"Conflicts are now more frequent, longer and more devastating for civilian populations. Civil wars are linked to regional and global rivalries. At times belligerents are found – violent extremists, terrorists,

organized militias and common criminals. And these groups have a vast arsenal that includes both handguns that drones or ballistic missiles, and they are constantly seeking to strengthen.

"Military spending is increasing and the arms race is accelerating worldwide, especially in the most dangerous regions.

"Last year, arms purchases and military spending amounted to more than \$1.7 trillion: a record sum since the fall of the Berlin Wall, which is about 80 times the amount needed for global humanitarian aid.

"Chemical weapons have reappeared. The international community is divided and fails to take action to combat them effectively.

"Powerful and devastating explosives designed for the battlefield are now used in populated areas.

"And new weapons using artificial intelligence and autonomous systems are emerging, in violation of existing laws and conventions.

"Meanwhile, action to end poverty, promote health and education, combat climate change and protect our planet is being deprived of the necessary resources."

Even under normal circumstances the Secretary-General of the United Nations has a hard time competing for attention to his messages on peace and disarmament amidst the Permanent Five members of the Security Council with their nuclear arsenals.

Ban Ki Moon's simple 5-point plan was announced and ignored by the Permanent Members of the Security Council. They could well be voicing Joseph Stalin's reportedly cynical riposte to the Pope about how many divisions he has. The common posture of these P5 is that as the putative global decision makers they want a SG who is more "Secretary" than "General".

The unrivalled legitimacy of the UN's role in global peace and disarmament goes back to the origins of the UN and the fact that the very first resolution of the UN General Assembly in January 1946 focused on nuclear disarmament.

We have passed through the Cold War when the frightening imminence of nuclear war on a global scale surfaced dramatically in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

Today nine countries – five of them within the 50-year old Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) – hold some 15000 nuclear warheads amongst themselves ready to be launched through deliberate policy or unconscious accident triggering a nuclear holocaust.

The famous Doomsday Clock of the Chicago-based Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, in the setting of which I once participated as a member of its Science and Security Board, is now at TWO MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT – the closest it has been since the Cold War.

I was fortunate to be a member of the 1996 Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons – a multilateral grouping convened by the Australian Government.

Its report stated unforgettably: "Nuclear weapons are held by a handful of states which insist that these weapons provide unique security benefits, and yet reserve uniquely to themselves the right to own them. This situation is highly discriminatory and thus unstable; it cannot be sustained. The possession of nuclear weapons by any state is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them.

"The world faces threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. These threats are growing. They must be removed.

"For these reasons, a central reality is that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all states. Indeed, states which possess them become themselves targets of nuclear weapons."

The latest UN Agenda for Disarmament with its evocative origami paper crane symbolizing peace makes powerful arguments analysing the security environment at global and regional levels.

Patiently setting out the case for why we need a new Disarmament Agenda amidst rising military expenditure, the document goes on to describe Disarmament to save humanity; Disarmament to save lives; disarmament for future generations and strengthening partnerships for disarmament.

Supported by individual boxes devoted to special subjects, figures and statistical tables the arguments are marshalled with precision and rigour.

The First Special Session of the UN Devoted to Disarmament, convened in 1978 at the request of the coalition of Non-aligned countries, broke new ground with a historic Final Document by setting up a special machinery for the deliberation and negotiation of disarmament. Much of the machinery is now, forty years later, rusty and inactive. It is not clear how the new agenda will be fed into this ineffective system and who will be the driving force.

Already international civil society helped achieve the 2017 Treaty for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons which won ICAN the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. That Treaty is gaining support but slowly.

The NPT meets in 2020 for its ritualistic Review Conference.

The successful negotiation of the JCPOA by the EU with Iran has been wrecked by Trump encouraged by Netanyahu and Saudi Arabia.

Only the possibility of a peaceful settlement of the nuclear threat of the DPRK at the "off-again; on-again" Singapore Summit promises a positive signal.

The new Disarmament Agenda of the UN Secretary-General seems unlikely to secure our common future with the present actors. We will either have to wait for a change of actors or search among the debris of failed negotiations for a fresh start.

But that depends on the unpredictable Trump and Kim Jong Un. [IDN-InDepthNews – 7 June 2018]

73 YEARS ON, A NUCLEAR-WEAPONS-FREE WORLD REMAINS A MIRAGE

BY RAMESH JAURA



Photo: UN Secretary-General António Guterres (front left) views an exhibit at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum on 9 August 2018. UN Photo/Daniel Powell

BERLIN (IDN) – Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda recall a quote from Martin Luther King Jr – “We are always on the threshold of a new dawn” – and aver that the adoption of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July 2017 is such a ‘threshold’.

In a joint appeal ‘To the Youth of the World’, released to the media and wider public in Rome, and handed over to Pope Francis, they note that the Treaty “is an international legal instrument that establishes the absolute illegality” of nuclear weapons.

The statement also refers to the international symposium ‘Perspectives for a World Free from Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament’, which Pope Francis convened at the Vatican in November 2017.

The symposium participants – including the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI) presided by Dr Ikeda – agreed that in pursuing the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, we must eliminate the threat nuclear weapons pose.

“There is,” therefore, “an urgent need to disarm our ways of thinking,” accentuates the appeal Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr Esquivel presented to Pope Francis on June 9, 2018 at the Vatican.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres agrees. “Sadly, 73 years on, fears of nuclear war are still with us,” he said in Nagasaki on August 9 commemorating the 73rd anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city and of Hiroshima on August.

“Millions of people, including here in Japan, live in a shadow cast by the dread of unthinkable carnage. States in possession of nuclear weapons are spending vast sums to modernize their arsenals,” he said.

This, Masato Tainaka commented in the *The Asahi Shimbun*, was “a thinly veiled attack on the Trump administration”. Guterres, the first UN chief to attend the annual ceremony in Nagasaki, added Tainaka, “deftly sidestepped naming the United States, but there was no disguising that his speech was a scathing indictment of the Trump administration’s position on nuclear arms.”

More than \$1.7 trillion was spent in 2017 on arms and armies, noted Guterres. That was not only the highest level since the end of the Cold War but also around 80 times the amount needed for global humanitarian aid, he said.

“Meanwhile, disarmament processes have slowed and even come to a halt,” said the UN Chief in an obvious dig in particular at the five nuclear weapon states: USA, Russia, China, Britain and France. “Many States demonstrated their frustration by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year,” he added.

Earlier, in Hiroshima, Izumi Nakamitsu, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, thanked on behalf of Guterres “the Hibakusha (the survivors of atomic bombings) and the people of Hiroshima for their decades of dedication to educating the world about the threat nuclear weapons pose to our global, national and human security.”

“The world needs your continued moral leadership. After decades of momentum towards the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, progress has stalled,” she added on behalf of the UN Chief. “Tensions between nuclear-armed States are rising. Nuclear arsenals are being modernized and, in some cases, expanded.”

These remarks echo a stark reality that smashes the hope of “a new dawn”: But since, as American mystic and author Terence McKenna wrote, “reality itself is not static... but “some kind of an organism evolving toward a conclusion,” nuclear disarmament experts are not plunging into despair.

“We have seen how young people worldwide worked as key agents of civil society in solidarity with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to propel the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” Dr Esquivel and Dr Ikeda maintain.

Anticipating that the international support that exists for a permanent end to the threat posed by nuclear arms, as well as frustration at the slow pace of achieving this goal, can change the current reality, Guterres is pleading with world leaders “to return to dialogue and diplomacy, to a common path towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and a safer and more secure world for all.”

This is the background for his new initiative on disarmament. His disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future*, released in May 2018, seeks to strengthen disarmament as a practical tool that enhances international peace and security.

UNFOLD ZERO advises looking forward to September 26, United Nations International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Abolition Day), and the day in 1983 when a nuclear war was almost triggered by accident. Remembering that day, the UN will hold a half-day High-Level Meeting at its headquarters in New York.

On that day, world leaders will in New York for the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly, notes UNFOLD ZERO, a project of PragueVision, PNND, Basel Peace Office, Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign, Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace, World Future Council, World Federalist Movement and Global Security Institute.

UNFOLD ZERO also points to another opportunity to contribute to a nuclear weapons free world – by way of supporting the three-day High-Level Conference (Summit) on Nuclear Disarmament originally scheduled for May 2018. However, according to Alyn Ware – co-chair, World Future Council Disarmament Commission – pro-nuclear forces managed to have the Summit postponed; they are now at pains to have it cancelled altogether. However, if the Summit takes place, it could provide important opportunities to make concrete progress on nuclear war prevention and disarmament initiatives, such as de-alerting, no-first use, nuclear stockpile reductions and building more support for the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, notes Alyn Ware.

The co-founder and Treaty Coordinator Tim Wright of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize laureate ICAN analyses how the Nuclear Ban Treaty, adopted by 122 states, is faring nearly one year on.

When the Treaty opened for signature on September 20, 2017 in New York, he says, there was a welcome rush to sign. Fifty states signed that day, three of them ratifying at the same time.

Meanwhile 60 states have signed and 14 ratified, from diverse regions. The pace of ratification, Wright notes, has been faster than for any other multilateral treaty related to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), such as the conventions banning biological and chemical weapons, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Besides, parliamentary, departmental and legislative processes towards joining the Treaty are well underway in many countries in Africa, Latin America,

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Southeast Asia and the Pacific. “Recently Switzerland’s first chamber of parliament voted to join, and New Zealand’s Cabinet has decided to ratify... the European Parliament reiterated its call for all 28 EU member states to sign and ratify the Treaty,” adds Wright.

In an interview published on IDN-INPS special website, he said: “We are hopeful that the Treaty will enter into force in 2019. We are working towards that target... We know of many countries that are well advanced in their ratification processes. Some countries should be ready to deposit their ratification instruments in the next few months.” The Treaty will enter into force 90 days after 50 states have ratified.

Nonetheless, even after it has come into force, efforts would have to continue at multiple levels for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Because neither the five nuclear powers with veto-wielding permanent seats (P5) in the Security Council, nor India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea – that together possess around 15,000 nuclear weapons – are willing to abandon their atomic arsenal.

This is true of NATO member nuclear weapons sharing states (Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey) and countries enjoying U.S. nuclear umbrella such as Japan and South Korea as well.

The outright refusal of the P5 – USA, Russia, China, Britain and France – to forsake their arsenal encourages the other four nuclear powers to follow in their footsteps. While Israel has a policy of ambiguity in relation to its nuclear arsenal, neither confirming nor denying its existence, both India and Pakistan justify their stockpiles as deterrents to a potential nuclear assault by either.

India is convinced that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process “underwritten by a universal commitment” and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory to non-P5 nuclear powers.

This is the argument North Korea has been advancing for many years at meetings of non-aligned movement (NAM) – a point that is often overlooked in discussions about the country’s “denuclearisation”. [IDN-InDepthNews – 20 August 2018]



CALLS FOR MAKING GLOBAL NUCLEAR TEST BAN LEGALLY BINDING

BY RAMESH JAURA



Photo: Participants of the 2018 CTBTO GEM – Youth International Conference in Astana. In the front is ATOM Project leader, Honorary Ambassador and artist Karipbek Kuyukov. Behind him: Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov (on the right) and CTBTO Executive Secretary Dr Lassina Zerbo (on the left). Credit: CTBTO. | Photos of Kazakh Foreign Minister Abdrakhmanov and Dr Zerbo in the text are by Katsuhiko Asagiri | IDN-INPS

BERLIN | VIENNA | ASTANA (IDN) – The Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov and CTBTO Executive Secretary Dr Lassina Zerbo have called on all States Signatories “to spare no effort to ensure that the nuclear test ban becomes legally binding by achieving the entry into force” of the Com-

prehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in limbo for 22 years.

This clarion call is backed by Foreign Minister Heiko Maas of Germany, which has been elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2019-2020. In a statement issued to

mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests (IDANT) on August 29, he declares: “The danger posed by nuclear weapons is particularly concrete when it comes to nuclear tests. Despite a de facto ban, these tests are unfortunately still taking place. Only one year ago, North Korea conducted its most recent nuclear test.”

Germany's chief priority therefore continues to be fighting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and preventing nuclear tests for their further development.

"It's clear that we need swift entry into force of the CTBT," Maas adds. It would put in place a binding instrument of international law that universally bans nuclear tests. "We are working unstintingly to achieve this, together with our partners in Europe and elsewhere. The states that have not yet ratified and signed the CTBT should finally do so."

In a joint statement, Kazakh Foreign Minister and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Executive Secretary accentuate the historic significance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests on August 29. The UN General Assembly proclaimed the day at the initiative of the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. They emphasize that it "is a symbolic day for Kazakhstan because of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site [the primary testing venue for the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons] in 1991."

The joint statement adopted in Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan, during the five-day 2018 Youth International Conference of the CTBTO Youth Group and the Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) – from August 28 to September 2 – also calls on all States "to continue the moratoria on nuclear test explosions," and urges "those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so without delay."

The joint statement urges in particular the remaining eight CTBT Annex 2 States, whose ratifications are needed for the Treaty's entry into

force, "to demonstrate leadership by taking this important step".

Those States are: China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA. India, North Korea and Pakistan have yet to sign the CTBT. Altogether 183 countries have signed the CTBT, of which 166 have also ratified it, including three of the nuclear weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. But 44 specific nuclear technology holder countries must sign and ratify before the CTBT can enter into force.

The Astana joint statement reaffirms the commitment of Kazakhstan and the CTBTO to realizing a world free of nuclear testing and renews their resolve to achieve the entry into force of the CTBT.

"For the last 22 years the CTBT has been a beacon of hope," Foreign Minister Abdrakhmanov said in an opening address to the Conference. "However, as stated recently by the UN Secretary General global peace yet remains elusive. Lack of common political will is the main obstacle on our path towards a nuclear free world."

He drew attention to the fact that High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly will convene in New York on September 6 to commemorate the International Day Against Nuclear Tests.

Global security and a safe future for coming generations can only be guaranteed when the world is completely free from the nuclear weapons, he said. The ATOM (*stands for: Abolish Testing is Our Mission*) Project and its Honorary Ambassa-

dor and artist Karipbek Kuyukov have done a lot in this regard.

"As a step further we encourage states to pledge their support to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons," the Kazakh Foreign Minister said. Kazakhstan signed the Treaty on March 2, 2018 and is currently preparing for its ratification.

"Our future is in the hands of youth. Your valuable contribution and active involvement will be helpful at raising further public awareness of the dangerous consequences of the use of nuclear weapons," he added.

IDANT was commemorated around the world on August 29 with events taking place at the United Nations in New York and Vienna, as well as in Astana. The highly symbolic date marks both the anniversary of the first Soviet nuclear test in 1949 and the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. In the intervening years, 456 tests were carried out at that site, with devastating consequences. Globally, more than 2050 nuclear tests were carried out between 1945 and 1996.

A historic decision to close the Semipalatinsk testing site, which was made by the Kazakh President on August 29, 1991, sent a strong political message and contributed to the international efforts that led to the adoption of the CTBT in 1996, says the joint statement.

Over the years, the joint statement adds, Kazakhstan has provided strong support for the CTBTO and demonstrated determination to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons. In 2008, the CTBTO held the first large-scale on-site inspec-

CALLS FOR MAKING GLOBAL NUCLEAR TEST BAN LEGALLY BINDING

tion (OSI) integrated field exercise in Semey, until 2007 known as Semipalatinsk. In 2015-2017 Kazakhstan, together with Japan, co-chaired the CTBT Article XIV Process to facilitate speedy entry into force of the Treaty.

“Kazakhstan, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018, is tirelessly supporting international efforts aimed at strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, highlighting the danger that nuclear weapons pose to global peace and stability,” notes the statement.

CTBTO’s Dr Zerbo said the CTBT is “a confidence-building element, ensuring that no nuclear test goes undetected, a common denominator for NNWS [non-nuclear weapon states] and NWS

[nuclear weapon states] and a solid basis for continuing dialogue and expanding cooperation”.

In a statement distributed from Vienna, Dr Zerbo – who returned a few days earlier from a visit to the Republic of Korea, where he discussed the situation of Korean Peninsula with many senior officials and members of the civil society – said: *“The discussions that I had strengthened my conviction that the CTBT and its organization can play an important role in finding a lasting solution to the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula.”*

The Treaty and its verification regime, as well as the expertise and capabilities of the Commission, are all the more relevant to contribute to the process of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, he added.

At its headquarters in Vienna, CTBTO together with the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan – supported by the United Nations Information Service – organised an exhibit and commemorative event for members of the diplomatic community, staff of the Vienna-based International organizations and civil society.

On that occasion, the CTBTO and Peace and Cooperation (a Spanish NGO), jointly launched the 2018 Global Scholar Art Campaign “For a Safer World-Join Forces with the CTBTO”. This campaign will engage school children around the world to increase public awareness of the need to put an end to nuclear testing and culminate in an awards ceremony and art exhibition at the CTBTO 2019 Science and Technology Conference. [IDN-InDepthNews – 30 August 2018]



CTBTO Executive
Secretary Dr Lassina Zerbo



Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov

JAPAN CONSIDERS WAYS OF SHEDDING THE STRAITJACKET AND GO THE WHOLE HOG FOR NUCLEAR ABOLITION

BY KATSUHIRO ASAGIRI



Photo (from left to right): Ms. Kaoru Nemoto, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo; Mr. Nobuharu Imanishi, Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Division, MOFA; Ms. Masako Toki, Education project manager at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey; Ms. Mitsuki Kudo, Nagasaki Youth Delegation 2018. Credit: Katsuhiko Asagiri.

TOKYO (IDN) – Japan’s profound interest in the international community’s efforts to help usher in a world free of nuclear weapons was underlined in the run-up to the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on September 26, which was observed first time in 2014

in accordance with a decision of the UN General Assembly.

Two events marked the efforts of Japan’s civil society to avail of the day to enhance awareness of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, and enable the country shed the straitjacket

of compulsions imposed by the North Korean threat, delicate relations with China and the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

One of the events was the joint antinuclear exhibition of Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and the 2017 Nobel Peace laureate, International Cam-

campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) titled “Everything You Treasure – For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons” that opened for the first time in Tokyo on September 21.

The exhibition stressing the importance of the early entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has been held in 88 cities in 20 countries since its launch in Hiroshima in 2012.

The Treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2017. It opened for signature on September 2017. Until now, 69 countries have signed and 19 ratified the Treaty. It will enter into force 90 days after 50 states have ratified.

Japan did not attend the Treaty negotiations; it has neither signed nor will it ratify the Treaty. Foreign Minister Taro Kono explained the reasons in a message to the event titled “Towards a world free from Nuclear Weapons – Thinking about the role of the only country to have been a victim of atomic bombs” on September 24.

The event was co-organised by the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition and the United Nations Information Centre in cooperation with Faculty of Law, Meiji University and The Hibakusha Appeal.

Minister Kono explained that although the Treaty’s approach is different from that of the government, the government shares the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons. On the other hand, he said, the TPNW was drafted without taking into account the security aspect: both Nuclear Weapons States and states facing security threat, such as

Japan. For this reason, neither of the two groups has participated in the Treaty negotiations.

Nevertheless, declared Kono, the Japanese government will persistently pursue practical as well as concrete efforts which involve nuclear weapon states through promoting early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments.

He also pledged to strive for an early start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), a proposed international agreement that would prohibit the production of the two main components of nuclear weapons: highly-enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium.

Further, said Minister Kono, he would continue to promote the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, which in his view is a cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and has accomplished several outcomes as a crux of the regime.

In his view, it is important to seek security and nuclear disarmament simultaneously. Japan believes the trajectory towards “a world free of nuclear weapons” lies in steadily accumulating concrete and practical measures under the cooperation of both Nuclear Weapon States and Non-nuclear Weapon States, while striking a balance between humanitarian and security aspects. Maintaining and strengthening the NPT will therefore continue to be the focus of Japan’s efforts.

Transparency, a nuclear disarmament verification mechanism, and interactive discussion involving both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, and active efforts by as well as discussions among the NPT state parties could help build bridges leading to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Minister Kono believes that as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings, Japan has the mission to firmly pass on to next generations the correct understanding of the realities of atomic bombings across borders and generations.

As the atomic bomb survivors (Hibakushas) are aging, the Government of Japan launched the ‘Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons’ program in 2013 in order to support efforts to transmit the realities of atomic bombings to future generations.

A Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons is expected to participate in various international events, such as atomic bombing exhibitions, conducive to sharing the realities of the use of nuclear weapons with the international community as well as with future generations.

Secretary-General Terumi Tanaka of Nihon Hidankyo, a Japan-wide organization of atomic and hydrogen bomb sufferers, in his keynote speech titled ‘I see a light in pathway towards Nuclear Abolition’ said the TPNW was adopted by 122 countries representing about 60 percent of the world population.

As the Japanese government has announced, it would neither sign nor ratify the Treaty, the challenge is how we convince the Japanese government to sign and ratify the treaty. “But even if

the TPNW enters into force, and Nuclear Weapon States do not cooperate, we would not be able to realize nuclear abolition,” said Tanaka.

“Therefore, we will need to change the mind set of Nuclear Weapons States and dependent states such as NATO, the mindset of being dependent on nuclear deterrence policy,” he added.

The Japanese government has taken the stance of a state dependent on the U.S. nuclear arsenals for the safety of the nation. “It is time for us to ask anew ourselves whether a majority of Japanese people really would like to be dependent on the U.S. nuclear weapons for our safety,” emphasised Tanaka.

“From the perspective of the Hibakusha, we fear that a war involving weapons would ultimately lead to a nuclear war. Therefore, I believe that the Japanese people should keep in mind that we must not use nuclear weapons; in fact we must eliminate them and that the idea of becoming dependent on nuclear weapons is wrong.”

MOFA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, says it attaches significance to disarmament education and invites young diplomats from abroad to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to have them meet with the Hibakusha, said Tanaka.

“From my perspective, these efforts do not suffice. Japan should lead the world in disarmament education. In my opinion, Japan should place nuclear abolition education as the pillar of its disarmament education aimed at young people and concentrate its activities on the pillar.”

Renowned actress Sayuri Yoshinaga, who has made reciting atomic bomb poetry her life’s work, said in Talk with Akira Kawasaki, a Member of the Executive Committee of Peace Boat and a member of the ICAN International Steering Group, said: “Now that the TPNW has been adopted, I hope that we in Japan will ponder over this issue and say ‘No’ to nuclear weapons.”

The event on September 24 included a panel discussion on “the potential of disarmament education” with Ms. Kaoru Nemoto, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo as the moderator.

Nobuharu Imanishi, Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Division of the MOFA pointed out that every August, MOFA has been organizing at the Japanese Permanent Mission in Geneva a meeting between Hiroshima-Nagasaki peace Messengers (High School Students selected by 50 peace organizations in Japan since 1998 to convey voices of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the world) and diplomats from various countries in Geneva.

Besides, the MOFA has been supporting the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament – Visit Japan Program. Since 1982, 957 diplomats from various countries have visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki through this program. Several diplomats who are working at the UN in New York and Geneva on disarmament issues have participated in this program and gained knowledge of the reality of atomic bombing.

Ms. Masako Toki, Education project manager at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation

Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, emphasized the importance of disarmament education. She referred to a remark by William Perry at Critical Issue Forum at Monterey: “Unless young people understand the real threat posed by nuclear weapons through education for reducing nuclear threat, advancement towards nuclear abolition is impossible.”

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his lecture in Monterey 2013 said: “It is easier for students to learn the logic of nuclear deterrence than to learn to discard the myths that keep nuclear weapons in place. But education can help to refute the claim that nuclear disarmament is utopian.”

Ms. Mitsuki Kudo of the Nagasaki Youth Delegation showed a five-minute video which her team presented at a side event during the Second NPT preparatory committee session in Geneva in April 2018. The video introduced voices of ordinary young people in Nagasaki on their perception of nuclear weapons. These included statements such as: “it’s difficult to completely abolish nuclear weapons”; “nuclear weapons are next to death”, “nuclear weapons are unpredictable”, and “terrible to co-exist”.

Even among youth in Nagasaki, Ms Kudo said, where young people are presumed to have received peace education, some appear to be negative towards nuclear disarmament issues and some are almost in a state of giving up the hope to change the reality. [IDN-InDepthNews – 30 September 2018]

UN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING REFLECTS BROAD SUPPORT FOR TOTAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

BY SANTO D. BANERJEE



Photo: María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés (right), President of the 73rd session of the General Assembly, listens as Secretary-General António Guterres (left) addresses the high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September). At left is Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). UN Photo/Ariana Lindquist

NEW YORK (IDN) – The United Nations has pursued the goal of nuclear disarmament since the adoption of the very first General Assembly resolution in 1946. But aware that countries possessing nuclear weapons have well-funded, long-term plans to modernize

their nuclear arsenals, in 2013 the UN declared September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Commemorating that Day against the backdrop of a deteriorating global security environment and

to mobilize international efforts towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, the General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on September 26 at the UN in New York.

Throughout the day, Heads of State and Government and senior officials of more than 50 countries, as well as Observer States and civil society, took the floor to spotlight the many ways in which nuclear weapons endanger humanity – from the modernization of existing arsenals by major Powers to the risk of deadly nuclear technology falling into terrorist hands.

One of the speakers who stood out as a voice of passion and persistence in the quest of a nuclear-weapons-free world was Kehkashan Basu, the 18 year old Youth Ambassador of World Future Council.

“I am growing up in a world where factories churn out Trident submarines at \$4 billion each, while in the developing world 80,000 children die each day due to poverty – most of whom could be saved with food or medication costing less than 1/10th of the cost of one Trident submarine,” she said.

She drew attention of the Assembly to the Sustainable Development Goals the world’s nations adopted in 2015 with concrete programs on re-

ducing poverty and protecting the environment. “Yet governments continue to undermine progress by investing more in military, including nuclear weapons, than in achieving the goals,” she lamented, recognizing that for many countries, nuclear weapons provide a sense of security and perhaps they play a role in preventing war.

“But we are a civilised and intelligent society, are we not? We know how to resolve conflicts, prevent aggression and enforce the law without having to threaten to destroy civilization,” she added.

Also speaking “in the quest to make our world more secure, more just, and more equitable,” on behalf of the 2017 Nobel Peace laureate, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Ray Acheson from Reaching Critical Will declared: “For us, abolishing nuclear weapons is about preventing violence and promoting peace.”

“Some say this is a dream, that we live in a time of uncertainty and change, that we can’t or shouldn’t try to eliminate nuclear weapons now. But when is there not uncertainty and change? It is the only constant in our world,” she noted.

“What is true is that we live in a time where we spend more money developing new ways to kill each other than we do on saving each other from crises of health, housing, food security, and environmental degradation,” she added. “What is also true is that after 73 years, we still live under the catastrophic threat of the atomic bomb. We should have solved this “

To move in that direction, she encouraged States and activists to continue their important work,

underlining that the world is now existing in a new reality in which nuclear weapons are illegal and where the only option for any reasonable State is to reject them, eliminate them and sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

“The only sure way to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons is to eliminate the weapons themselves,” declared Guterres in his opening remarks to the day-long debate, apparently moved by his visit to the Japanese city of Nagasaki – scene of the world’s second nuclear attack on August 9, 1945 after Hiroshima – in August 2018. Regrettably, the global security environment has deteriorated, “making progress in nuclear disarmament more difficult, yet more important,” he added.

Recalling the disarmament agenda that he launched in May 2018, Guterres appealed to the United States and the Russian Federation – the two nations that by far possess the biggest nuclear arsenals amounting to 13,800 warheads – to extend by five years the New Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START) and to begin talks leading to further reductions of their nuclear arsenals. He urged them also to work to overcome their dispute on the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty.

“It is equally important that all States possessing nuclear weapons reinforce the norm against nuclear use,” Guterres said, emphasizing the responsibility of States to fulfil – in letter and spirit – their non-proliferation obligations.

Describing disarmament and non-proliferation as two sides of the same coin – “backward movement on one will inevitably lead to backward

movement on the other” – he said all States should work with nuclear-weapon States to return to the common path of eliminating nuclear weapons.

Ecuador’s María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the current session of the General Assembly, opened the meeting, saying the elimination of nuclear weapons “is probably the existential challenge of our times”. It must remain a priority for the United Nations, she said, stressing that the very survival of humanity hinges on the international community agreeing to forbid the use of nuclear weapons.

Referring to the adoption in July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, she acknowledged that some Member States still have objections to that instrument. But she said she is hopeful that September 26 discussions will sway their opinion, as the Treaty remains open to signing, and will enter into force once it is ratified by 50 Member States.

Describing nuclear weapons as a legacy of the Cold War, Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, expressed concern about nuclear warheads on high alert, because it would take just one push of a button to trigger devastation on an unimaginable scale. According to experts, a staggering 1,800 strategic nuclear warheads are on high alert on land- and sea-based ballistic missiles, ready to launch between 5 and 15 minutes after receiving a launch order.

Calling for the 2020 review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to produce tangible results, he noted a declaration by member States of the Agency

for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, marking the International Day, firmly demanding that nuclear weapons never be used again by anyone under any circumstances.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the world is facing a new nuclear arms race that started when the U.S. President asked for even more nuclear weapons to remain "at the top of the pack". That, and the modernization of nuclear arsenals by States possessing nuclear weapons, are threatening international peace and security and deepening the frustration of non-nuclear-weapon countries.

Every effort must be made to ensure universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, he said, recalling that Israel is not a party to that instrument and emphasizing that its nuclear programme "remains the most paramount threat" to international peace and security. On the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he said successive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports have verified Iran's full compliance.

Fiji Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama echoed the views of other Pacific leaders in emphasizing the human and environmental consequences of more than 300 nuclear tests conducted in the region since the Second World War by far-away Powers that considered it a safe place to carry out explosions.

Those States knew what the impact would be and so they selected a corner of the world they deemed to be largely uninhabited, "but it was not". Many people were forced to relocate from

their homes, he said, and decades later, large swathes of the Pacific remain unsafe for human habitation, fishing and agriculture.

The Marshall Islands Foreign Minister John Silk recalled his country's grim history with the atomic bomb, stressing that his Government's formal requests to the United Nations to end testing fell on deaf ears.

Indeed, the U.S. continued its programme, detonating a total of 67 nuclear bombs between 1946 and 1958 in the Marshall Islands, leaving behind grave health consequences that linger to the present day. He expressed the hope that testing would finally end and nuclear-weapon States would join instruments to ban those arms to rid the world of atomic bombs.

Tomoyuki Yoshida, Director-General of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, agreed, regretting to note that despite the international community's shared common goal, more than 15,000 nuclear warheads still existed around the world.

Encouraging all States, including those possessing warheads, to continue interactive discussions to enhance transparency and advance nuclear disarmament through cooperation and collaboration, he highlighted recent developments, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States summit on denuclearization.

"As the only country to have ever experienced atomic bombings during war, Japan has been engaged in building practical and concrete measures on the basis of cooperation between nucle-

ar-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, while not losing sight of a clear recognition of the humanitarian aspects of the use of nuclear weapons," he said, extending respect for the long-standing efforts of the Hibakusha (survivors of atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki) and civil society who are tersely conveying to the world the reality of atomic bombing.

Speaking on behalf of the African Group, Madagascar's Foreign Minister Eloi Alphonse Maxime Dovo said the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but rather completes, complements and strengthens the non-proliferation regime with that Treaty at its foundation. He called on all Member States – especial nuclear-weapon States and those under the so-called "nuclear umbrella" – to sign and ratify the agreement.

Conveying the African Group's deep concern over the slow pace of progress among nuclear-weapon States to scale back their nuclear arsenals, he called for the prompt establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. He also expressed the Group's concern about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and urged all States to give thought to the impact on health, the environment and vital economic resources.

Sun Lei of the Permanent Mission of China to the UN said his country has always advocated the total prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons and undertaken not to be the first to use its own nuclear arsenal nor to threaten to use them against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. Emphasizing that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the

sole appropriate venue for non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations, he called for a pragmatic and gradual approach towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza Montserrat emphasized the need to organize a high-level conference on nuclear disarmament to review progress made so far. So long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use will persist, he said, adding that all such weapons are a violation of the United Nations Charter as well as a crime against humanity. Their use would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, he added.

Conveying the Movement's deep concern about a lack of progress among nuclear-weapon States to reduce their arsenals, he called for tangible and systematic action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as the urgent implementation of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Describing multilateralism as a fundamental principle of disarmament, he voiced concern over the modernization of existing nuclear arsenals, the manufacture of new weapons and the United States' review of its nuclear doctrine.

Associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale emphasized that the goal of disarmament can only be achieved through a step-by-step process within an agreed multilateral framework.

Underscoring the need for meaningful dialogue, he said the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate venue for negotiating a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention along the lines of the Chemical Weapons Convention but acknowledged that body's inability to agree on a programme work. He added that India also supports negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Saudi Arabia's Abdallah Y. al-Mouallimi, also associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, said peace and security are only possible in a given region when the region is free of weapons of mass destruction. That requires dialogue and cooperation among States, he said, adding however that Israel, unfortunately, is hampering efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Austria's Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz underlined the country's leading role in forging the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and said the danger of such weapons is greater than ever. Since the end of the Cold War, aware-

ness of the danger of the threat they pose to humankind has receded, he regretted.

"But the weapons have not gone away." Besides the modernization of arsenals, nuclear weapons are being made easier to use, he said. Everyone agreed that a world free of nuclear weapons will be a better and safe world, he said, adding that the Treaty sends a powerful signal that most States reject the status quo. The Treaty is a first step, but an essential one, he said, calling on all States to sign and ratify it.

Doc Mashabane, Head of International Peace and Security of the Department of International Relations of South Africa, said disarmament, non-proliferation and ridding the world of nuclear weapons are policies his country supported since its first democratic election in 1994.

South Africa's experience has shown that neither the possession nor the pursuit of nuclear weapons can enhance international peace and security. "Common threats can only be effectively addressed through enhanced international cooperation and strong institutions that can respond to collective security concerns," he said, adding that South Africa would shortly be ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. [IDN-InDepthNews – 30 September 2018]

DISARMAMENT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES DISCUSSED IN REYKJAVIK

BY LOWANA VEAL



Photo: NATO Conference group photo. Credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland.

REYKJAVIK (IDN) – With tension rapidly escalating between the United States and Russia – and indeed between these countries and others – a seminar on disarmament held in parallel with the 14th NATO Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iceland came at an appropriate time.

The idea for the seminar, entitled ‘Practical Approaches to Disarmament in Uncertain Times’, surfaced in July when Iceland’s Prime Minister, Katrin Jakobsdottir, was in Brussels for a NATO conference. While inviting NATO officials to Reykjavik, Jakobsdottir said the focus would be on disarmament. “Disarmament is not discussed enough at NATO meetings,” she told IDN.

In Brussels, she took the opportunity of meeting delegates from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and invited them to Iceland as part of a side event at the NATO conference.

ICAN was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace “for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition on such weapons.”

The conference on October 29-30, 2018, which was attended by 140 delegates from NATO countries, burgeoning NATO countries such as Ukraine,

the United Nations and international bodies such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), was the largest to date.

In a keynote speech, NATO Deputy Secretary-General Rose Gottemoeller stressed that NATO “must persist in working within the NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) and resist the temptation to seek shortcuts that leave out the nuclear weapon states, or ignore our other international commitments. NATO allies have stated clearly that they will not support approaches to disarmament that ignore global security conditions or undermine the NPT.”

Recently, both George Schultz, former U.S. Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan, and Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union, have written opinion pieces in the *New York Times*, with Schultz saying that the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) signed by Reagan and Gorbachev should be kept and Gorbachev asking if it was not too late to return to dialogue and negotiations. Their opinions formed an opener for panel discussion at the disarmament seminar.

Tytti Eräsö, who works with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in Sweden, pointed out that missile defence is one of the obstacles to nuclear arms control, and that Reagan and Gorbachev talked about eliminating all nuclear weapons, not just those of medium range. But “there is no political will for arms control”, she pointed out.

Leo Hoffmann-Axthelm from ICAN, who was standing in for ICAN’s Executive Director Beatrice Fihn at the seminar, told participants: “At present, nuclear-armed states simply have no plans to disarm. So first, you have to agree on the general goal, and prohibit the weapon. Only afterwards can you increase the pressure and take all the necessary steps to move towards that goal.”

“The important point to note is that states that rely on nuclear weapons do not like the idea of declaring them illegal,” he said, adding that “Iceland, which relies on nuclear deterrence via NATO, is currently boycotting the prohibition of nuclear weapons and continuing to rely on nuclear deterrence. The citizens of Iceland should know!”

One of the speakers at the seminar, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu – who also spoke at the NATO Conference –

summarised the main points of the new UN disarmament strategy presented in May 2018 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

“The first pillar of the agenda,” she said, “is disarmament to save humanity. It focuses on the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as on preventing the emergence of new domains of strategic arms competition. The second pillar, disarmament that saves lives, focuses on the regulation of conventional weapons and the third pillar on partnerships for disarmament.”

Nakamitsu used the opportunity to dispel a popular myth about disarmament, saying: “Disarmament is not a naïve and monolithic discipline, despite the popular misconception that falsely equates the removal of arms with insecurity and defencelessness. Rather, it offers policy-makers a strategic set of practical tools that can be applied in the widest variety of situations and contexts. These include measures for elimination, prohibitions, arms control, limitation, reductions, non-proliferation, regulation, transparency, confidence-building, etc.”

Meanwhile, the Japanese Peace Boat, *Ocean Dream*, docked briefly in Reykjavik within 24 hours of the departure of ten military vessels that sailed to Iceland to take part in Trident Juncture 2018, the largest NATO exercise since the end of the Cold War in December 1991. On board were a couple of hibakusha, surviving Japanese victims of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who spoke about their experiences to Icelandic students while in Reykjavik.

“These hibakusha travel on Peace Boat as part of the ‘Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World – Peace Boat Hibakusha Project’, to share their tragic experiences, to educate people about the devastating humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and to engage policy-makers and catalyse public support to make a nuclear-free world reality,” explained Celine Nahory from the Peace Boat and ICAN.

Given that Iceland does not have a military force, when asked whether it was not more fitting for Iceland to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) than to host a NATO meeting and allow Trident Juncture exercises to be carried out, Nahory replied: “Let me make clear that Peace Boat and ICAN do strongly call on Iceland to join the TPNW without delay.

DISARMAMENT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES – DISCUSSED IN REYKJAVIK

We believe there is nothing in the TPNW that prevents Iceland from maintaining a military alliance with a nuclear-armed state.”

She pointed out that NATO’s legal foundation does not mention nuclear weapons, saying: “NATO members are not legally bound to endorse the policy of ‘extended nuclear deterrence’. Some states in alliances with the United States have already signed and ratified the TPNW.”

ICAN submitted information to Iceland’s Foreign Affairs Committee in March this year in connection with a parliamentary resolution on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Part of it states: “The TPNW is designed to help implement the NPT, which requires all parties, including Iceland, to pursue negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament. Such negotiations had, until last year, been at a standstill for more than two decades. The NPT

itself envisages the creation of additional legal instruments for achieving a nuclear-free world.”

In addition, “A state with nuclear weapons may join the treaty, so long as it agrees to destroy them in accordance with a legally binding, time-bound plan. Similarly, a state that hosts another state’s nuclear weapons on its territory may join, so long as it agrees to remove them by a deadline.”

The NPT comes up for review in 2020. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference was held from May 2 to 12, 2017 at the Vienna International Centre,. The second session was convened from April 23 to May 4, 2018 at the United Nations Office in Geneva. The third and last session is scheduled for April 29 to May 10, 2019 at UN Headquarters in New York. [IDN-InDepthNews – 08 November 2018]



"The first pillar of the agenda is disarmament to save humanity." - UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Ms Izumi Nakamitsu

COMBATIVE POLITICS AND HOSTILE DISCOURSE MARK UN DISARMAMENT INITIATIVES

BY JAYA RAMACHANDRAN



Photo: Wide view of the General Assembly Hall. UN Photo/Manuel Elias.

NEW YORK (IDN) – “If one had to pick a single word to describe this year’s First Committee, contentious would be a reasonable contender. The increased volume – in all senses of the word – of accusations and denials has descended as close to name calling as diplomatic forums get,” says Ray Acheson, the Director of Reaching Critical Will in an editorial in November 5 issue of The First Committee Monitor 2018.

She is referring to the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security which met from October 8 to November 9, 2018 in several sessions.

Acheson’s view is confirmed by a close look at the non-official record published by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) for information media. Also UNFOLD ZERO, a platform for UN focused “initiatives and actions for the achievement of a

nuclear weapons free world,” affirms deep divisions manifested in the UNGA debates.

“Disarmament and international security are in your hands and your actions as Member States result in consequences which we must all face,” said Chair of the First Committee, Ambassador Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania to the UN, in his closing remarks. “The manner in which you approach the Committee is the way

in which it can help us all reach our common goals,” he added.

Explaining the four-week long session’s achievements, Jinga said the First Committee sent a total of 68 draft resolutions and decisions to the General Assembly, many approved by recorded votes. Of these, 26 were approved without a vote, accounting for a lower percentage compared with the 48 per cent approved by consensus during the Committee’s 72nd session.

Some delegates elaborated on this trend in explaining the positions of their delegations after casting their votes, pointing out that many drafts that have traditionally been approved by consensus had faced voting during the current session. Indeed, some representatives regretted that recorded votes were requested for the two similar draft resolutions aimed at shaping norm-setting guidelines for States to ensure responsible conduct in cyberspace.

Taking action on one of them, the Committee approved, by a vote of 109 in favour to 45 against, with 16 abstentions, the draft resolution ‘Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security’ (document A/C.1/73/L.27.Rev.1), tabled by Russia. Accordingly, the General Assembly would decide to convene in 2019 an open-ended working group acting on a consensus basis to further develop the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States.

Also by a recorded vote, members approved the draft resolution ‘Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security’ (document A/C.1/73/L.37), tabled

by the United States, with 139 in favour to 11 against, with 18 abstentions. By this text, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be established in 2019, to continue to study possible cooperative measures to address existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security, including norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour of States.

Several delegates pointed out that language in the Russian resolution departed from previous year’s versions and included excerpts from the Group of Governmental Experts reports in a manner that distorted their meaning and transformed the draft resolution. Other delegates said that the U.S. resolution called for the establishment of a new group of governmental experts, with the same mandate as the previous ones and the same selectivity in terms of its composition.

As discussions continued, the representative of the Russian Federation said the U.S. was blocking access to the United Nations of some representatives of delegations whose views do not agree with those of the host country. It is up to Member States to select who represents their countries at this intergovernmental forum and they should be given unfettered access, the Russian delegate said.

The Russian criticism referred to the fact that a director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation responsible for the work of the First Committee had not been issued a visa by the U.S., the host country. This is a surprising state of affairs.

UNFOLD ZERO noted that during the UN Disarmament Week (October 24-October 30), which

kicked off with the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations “a divided UN General Assembly” voted on nuclear disarmament resolutions.

“The deliberations and votes took place in an environment of increasing tensions between nuclear armed States, and also an increasing divide between non-nuclear countries and those countries which rely on nuclear weapons for their security,” UNFOLD ZERO said.

A resolution Reducing nuclear danger submitted by India received 127 votes in favour (mostly non-aligned countries). It failed to get support of nuclear-armed or European countries, primarily because it only calls for nuclear risk reduction measures by China, France, Russia, UK and USA – leaving out the other nuclear armed States – India, Pakistan, DPRK and Israel.

A resolution Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems submitted by a group of non-nuclear countries, was much more successful receiving 173 votes in favour, including from most of the NATO countries and from four nuclear armed States (China, DPRK, India, Pakistan).

A resolution on the Treaty on the Prohibition Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was supported by 122 countries in July 2017. This is more than the number who have signed the Treaty: while 68 have signed, only 19 of these countries have ratified. The vote indicates that more signatures are likely.

However, the resolution was not supported by any of the nuclear-armed countries, nor any of the countries under nuclear deterrence relation-

ships, i.e. NATO, Australia, Japan, South Korea. The opposition of nuclear-armed and allied States to the resolution is another indication that they do not intend to join the new treaty.

In general, this means that they will not be bound by the treaty's obligations. However, the customary law against the use of nuclear weapons which is re-affirmed by the treaty will apply to all States regardless of whether or not they join.

A resolution on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons submitted by India received 120 votes in favour, including from themselves and another three nuclear-armed States (China, DPRK and Pakistan).

Some non-nuclear States have historically opposed the resolution in response to India testing nuclear weapons and becoming a nuclear-armed State in 1998. India has requested these countries to reconsider their opposition, especially in light

of the international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in which India participated and which highlighted the importance of preventing any use of nuclear weapons.

UNFOLD ZERO further refers to a resolution affirming a previous decision to hold a UN High-Level Conference (Summit) on Nuclear Disarmament, which was supported by 143 countries. The resolution, entitled Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, also promotes negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention – a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons that includes nuclear-armed States (unlike the TPNW which does not include them).

Despite getting a strong vote in favour, including from some nuclear armed states, the proposed conference does not yet appear to have enough political traction to be held. The resolution did not set a date for the conference.

The UNGA furthermore adopted a Decision to convene a conference no later than 2019 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Despite the objective of a Middle East Zone being supported by most UN members in a separate resolution (supported by 174 countries), the decision to convene a conference in 2019 to 'elaborate a legally binding treaty' was supported by only 103 countries.

The hesitation among many countries to support the resolution was due to the fact that they believe that concrete preparations and negotiations for a Middle East Zone Treaty would require the participation of all countries in the region, and currently there is at least one country (Israel) that is not ready to work on such a regional treaty. [IDN-InDepthNews – 11 November 2018]



THE THREAT OR USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS VIOLATES THE RIGHT TO LIFE, WARNS A UN COMMITTEE

BY ALYN WARE

The author is Coordinator of the World Future Council Peace and Disarmament Program, Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, and International Representative of Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace (the New Zealand affiliate of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms).



Photo: UN Human Rights Committee. Credit: Australian Human Rights Commission

GENEVA (IDN) – The threat or use of nuclear weapons is “incompatible with respect for the right to life” and “may amount to a crime under international law,” warns the UN Human Rights Committee’s new General comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights (ICCPR), on the right to life, adopted on October 30, 2018.

According to paragraph 3 of the General Comment, the Right to Life, as codified in Article 6 of the Covenant, is an “entitlement of individuals to be free from acts and omissions that are intended

or may be expected to cause their unnatural or premature death, as well as to enjoy a life with dignity”.

Besides, the Right to Life is a “supreme right from which no derogation is permitted even in situations of armed conflict and other public emergen-

cies which threatens the life of the nation.” This right is “the prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other human rights.”

The General Comment replaces earlier Comments on the Right to Life adopted by the Committee in 1982 and 1984. (See UN Human Rights Committee concludes that the threat or use of nuclear weapons violates the Right to Life).

The Human Rights Committee referenced in footnote 273 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) – as well as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention – as important treaties contributing to obligations on the non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The Committee referred to the 1996 International Court of Justice Advisory opinion, in affirming that nuclear powers “respect their international obligations to pursue in good faith negotiations in order to achieve the aim of nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.” This reinforces the customary nature of the nuclear disarmament obligation, i.e. its application regardless of whether or not a State is party to the NPT or the TPNW.

And the Committee affirmed that there is an obligation of States parties to the ICCPR to “afford adequate reparation to victims whose right to life has been or is being adversely affected by the testing or use of weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with principles of international responsibility.”

The Human Rights Committee rejected the proposal of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom that the General Comment require “States parties [of the ICCPR] to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.” Nor did it call on States not parties to other related treaties (NPT, CTBT...) to join them. In this, the Committee reflected the general understanding that States should be free to join, or remain outside of, treaties as they so choose.

However, in reflecting key elements of the TPNW, the General Comment provides an example of how to bring these elements to bear on nuclear armed and allied States, none of which have joined the TPNW or are likely to do so in the near future.

The drafting and adoption of the General Comment took three years, a year longer than originally expected, due to the high level of interest from governments, academia and NGOs – and due to the fact that it dealt with a number of contentious issues, including abortion, assisted suicide, non-lethal weapons, protection of sexual minorities from violence, asylum, death penalty, weapons of mass destruction and responsibility for reparations.

A few of the NGOs involved in the process, in particular the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) and its Swiss Affiliate the Swiss Lawyers for Nuclear Disarmament (SAFNA), were specifically engaged in the deliberations on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In submissions and statements to the Human Rights Committee, IALANA and SAFNA argued that the General Comment should:

- Condemn both the use and the threat to use nuclear weapons and other WMD, as being incompatible with the right to life;

- Affirm the obligation to achieve complete nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and customary international law;

- Include the obligation to afford adequate reparation to victims of the testing or use of WMD, in line with the growing recognition of the rights of such victims in various treaties including the Cluster Munitions Convention, Landmines Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – though TPNW focuses more on victim assistance by states parties in which victims reside than on the responsibility of states that caused the harm.

The inclusion of these three elements in the 2018 General Comment reflects a significant step forward from the 1984 General Comment which affirmed that “The production, testing, possession, deployment and use of nuclear weapons should be prohibited and recognized as crimes against humanity.”

“Reflecting the times, the 1984 General Comment was a clarion call to recognize and eliminate the incredible dangers posed by nuclear weapons,” says Dr John Burroughs, Director, UN Office of International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms.

“In contrast, building on legal developments since 1984, the 2018 General Comment is a sober legal assessment, beginning with the unambiguous statement that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the right to life,” he adds.

THE THREAT OR USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS VIOLATES THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The statements from the nuclear-armed States with regard to nuclear weapons indicate they will most likely continue to reject, or resist implementation of, the nuclear-weapons-related obligations clarified in the new comment. Regardless, the new General Comment makes at least five very important contributions to nuclear disarmament:

Firstly, the General Comment makes strong links between human rights law and nuclear non-use and disarmament obligations.

Subsequently, says Dr Daniel Rietiker, President of the Association of Swiss Lawyers for Nuclear Disarmament The Human Rights Committee: “The bridge between arms control and human rights should now be used by civil society in its efforts against nuclear weapons before the Human Rights Committee and other UN bod-

ies dealing with human rights, especially those dealing with the rights of women, children or indigenous peoples, all particularly vulnerable to nuclear weapons,.” (For more information and analysis see Threat and use of nuclear weapons contrary to right to life, says UN Human Rights Committee by Daniel Rietiker.)

Secondly, the General Comment highlights obligations of the nuclear armed and allied States rooted in Article VI of the NPT, UN resolutions and other international law.

Thirdly, the General Comment demonstrates an approach to advancing nuclear disarmament and non-use obligations by bringing them into related treaties to which at least some of the nuclear armed States and their allies are already parties. One such treaty in which this approach is being

tried is the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court.

Fourthly, in affirming the obligation to “afford adequate reparation to victims whose right to life has been or is being adversely affected by the testing or use of weapons of mass destruction,” the General Comment gives support to humanitarian initiatives relating to WMD and to victim assistance. These aspects are reflected strongly in Article 6 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, but are absent in the NPT, Chemical Weapons Convention, CTBT and Biological Weapons Convention.

Fifthly, the General Comment parallels and complements elements of existing nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements providing additional impetus to their implementation. [IDN-
InDepthNews - 27 November 2018]

SAUDI ARABIA'S LONG-TERM GOAL OF GOING NUCLEAR – WITH U.S. BACKING

BY SHANTA ROY



Photo: U.S. Deputy Minister of Energy Pays a Visit to King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KA-CARE). January 2018. Credit: KACARE

NEW YORK (IDN) – The Trump administration’s increasingly cozy relationship with Saudi Arabia has led to widespread speculation that the United States may be assisting the Saudis – directly or indirectly – to achieve their long term goal of acquiring nuclear weapons.

The speculation has been triggered by ongoing secret negotiations between the two countries to help Saudi Arabia gain access to nuclear energy in a proposed deal estimated at over a hefty \$80

billion, according to a front-page story in the New York Times November 23.

The prime architect is the all-powerful Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, whose original plans included the building of 16 nuclear power plants – subsequently reduced to two – over the next two decades.

In a detailed analysis of the Saudi plans, the Times posed the question: “Was the prince laying the groundwork for building an atomic bomb?”

Tariq Rauf, the former Head of Verification and Security Policy Coordination at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told IDN Saudi Arabia’s formal interest in nuclear power plants goes back to 2006, when the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries announced a study on peaceful uses of nuclear energy in cooperation with France.

Reportedly, Saudi Arabia plans to build two large nuclear power stations over the next 20-25 years at an estimated cost of US\$80 billion.

He pointed out that the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KA-CARE) was established by Royal Order of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on April 17, 2010. In July 2017, the Royal Cabinet approved the establishment of the Saudi National Atomic Energy Project (SNAEP).

In April 2016, said Rauf, Saudi Arabia announced its “Vision 2030” that included an energy mix in which nuclear energy has a major role.

SNAEP calls for a nuclear programme based on: (1) large nuclear power stations; (2) small modular nuclear reactors; and, (3) a nuclear fuel cycle including uranium and thorium mining and subsequent stages through uranium enrichment.

A Nuclear Holding Company (NHC) is envisaged for these functions.

Rauf also said Saudi Arabia has in place nuclear cooperation agreements with Argentina, China, France, Russia and South Korea; and is reportedly pursuing nuclear cooperation agreements with the Czech Republic, the UK and the U.S.

An equally important question is: why does a country ideally suited for solar energy need nuclear energy? Is the latter a cover for the ultimate production of nuclear weapons?

Dr M.V. Ramana, Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security at the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia, told IDN the Trump administration's actions show that it, once again, puts profits for its favored corporations ahead of any other considerations, including security or environmental sustainability.

“This deal is all the more unjustified because nuclear energy is a declining source of electricity around the world.”

He pointed out that nuclear energy also makes no sense for Saudi Arabia because the Kingdom can generate electricity much more effectively with solar and wind energy.

“Saudi Arabia has one of the highest Direct Normal Irradiation resources in the world. Thus, for

Saudi Arabia to propose building nuclear plants and for the Trump administration to support this quest is perverse,” he declared. [Visit also <https://www.princeton.edu/~ramana/Saudi-Nuclear-Economics-2014.pdf>]

Meanwhile, the U.S. president has continued to vacillate over the unceasing controversy about the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi, who was murdered and his body dismembered with a bone saw, in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, last month (October).

Dismissing an assessment by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which pointed an accusing finger at the Crown Prince as the brains behind the killing, Trump told reporters: “Maybe he did and maybe he didn’t”.

He also described Saudi Arabia as an economic and strategic partner, an important source of oil, a valuable customer of American weapons and a useful ally against Iran.

Brad Sherman, a Democratic Congressman from California and a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was blunt: “A country that can’t be trusted with a bone saw shouldn’t be trusted with nuclear weapons.”

On Saudi Arabia’s future plans, Rauf said it is reported that Saudi Arabia is seeking a nuclear cooperation (or 123) agreement with the U.S. that will not hamper or limit Saudi Arabia’s rights un-

der Article IV for the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) for developing a complete nuclear fuel cycle that could include uranium enrichment and reprocessing of used/spent nuclear fuel.

This, he said, is unlike that concluded by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with the U.S. in which the UAE committed not to develop enrichment or reprocessing capabilities and to buy nuclear fuel for its reactors from the global nuclear market (referred to as the “gold standard”).

Under the Obama administration, the U.S. was pushing for Saudi Arabia to conclude a 123 agreement based on the so-called “gold standard” but now under the Trump regime reports suggest that the U.S. may conclude a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia that would not prohibit enrichment and reprocessing?, said Rauf.

Explaining further, he said that on June 16, 2005, Saudi Arabia signed a safeguards (Nuclear verification) agreement with the IAEA pursuant to the NPT but this agreement included the “Small Quantities Protocol” under which the IAEA has suspended nuclear verification in Saudi Arabia until the time that the country has nuclear material and nuclear facilities.

“The safeguards agreement entered into force on January 13, 2009 and from that date until now the IAEA has not carried out any safeguards inspections in Saudi Arabia,” he declared. [IDN-InDepthNews – 30 November 2018]

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE THREATEN HUMAN SURVIVAL

JOHN AVERY INTERVIEWS DAVID KRIEGER



Photo (top): David Krieger, Founder and President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. Credit: NAPF

COPENHAGEN | SANTA BARBARA, CA (IDN)
– One of the five “M’s” can trigger a nuclear war any time: malice, madness, mistake, miscalculation and manipulation. “Of these five, only malice is subject to possibly being prevented by nuclear deterrence and of this there is no certainty. But nuclear deterrence (threat of nuclear retaliation) will not

be at all effective against madness, mistake, miscalculation or manipulation (hacking),” David Krieger tells John Scales Avery in an exceptional interview.

Krieger is the Founder and President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF) that has been committed to a world free of nuclear weapons

since 1982. He has been working steadily and unwaveringly for peace and the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Avery is an eminent academician and scientist, and an impassioned peace activist.

As reflected in this Q&A, Avery and Krieger have great admiration for each other, which has not

been filtered out. Nor have the style and content been confined in an editorial straitjacket.

The following is the full text of the interview:

John Avery (JA): Dear David, I have long admired your dedicated and heroic life-long work for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. You did me the great honor of making me an advisor to the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF). Could you tell us a little about your family, and your early life and education? What are the steps that led you to become one of the world's most famous advocates of the complete abolition of nuclear weapons?

David Krieger (DK): John, you have honored us by being an advisor to the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. You are one of the most knowledgeable people I know on the dangers of nuclear and other technologies to the future of life on our planet, and you have written brilliantly about these threats.

Regarding my family, early life and education, I was born three years before the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by nuclear weapons. My father was a pediatrician, and my mother a housewife and hospital volunteer. Both were very peace oriented, and both rejected militarism unreservedly.

I would describe my early years as largely uneventful. I attended Occidental College, where I received a good liberal arts education. After graduating from Occidental, I visited Japan, and was awakened by seeing the devastation suffered by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I realized that in the U.S., we viewed these bombings from above the mushroom cloud as technological achievements,

while in Japan the bombings were viewed from beneath the mushroom cloud as tragic events of indiscriminate mass annihilation.

After returning from Japan, I went to the graduate school at the University of Hawaii and earned a Ph.D. in political science. I was also drafted into the military, but was able to join the reserves as an alternate way of fulfilling my military obligation. Unfortunately, I was later called to active duty.

In the military, I refused orders for Vietnam and filed for conscientious objector status. I believed that the Vietnam War was an illegal and immoral war, and I was unwilling as a matter of conscience to serve there. I took my case to federal court and eventually was honorably discharged from the military. My experiences in Japan and in the U.S. Army helped shape my views toward peace and nuclear weapons. I came to believe that peace was an imperative of the Nuclear Age and that nuclear weapons must be abolished.

JA: Humanity and the biosphere are threatened by the danger of an all-destroying thermonuclear war. It could occur through a technical or human failure, or through uncontrollable escalation of a war fought with conventional weapons. Can you say something about this great danger?

DK: There are many ways in which a nuclear war could start. I like to talk about the five "M's". These are: malice, madness, mistake, miscalculation and manipulation. Of these five, only malice is subject to possibly being prevented by nuclear deterrence and of this there is no certainty. But nuclear deterrence (threat of nuclear retaliation) will not be at all effective against madness, mistake, miscalculation or manipulation (hacking).

As you suggest, any war in the nuclear age could escalate into a nuclear war. I believe that a nuclear war, no matter how it would start, poses the greatest danger confronting humankind, and can only be prevented by the total abolition of nuclear weapons, achieved through negotiations that are phased, verifiable, irreversible and transparent.

JA: Can you describe the effects of a nuclear war on the ozone layer, on global temperatures, and on agriculture? Could nuclear war produce a large-scale famine?

DK: My understanding is that a nuclear war would largely destroy the ozone layer allowing extreme levels of ultraviolet radiation to reach the earth's surface. Additionally, a nuclear war would dramatically lower temperatures, possibly throwing the planet into a new Ice Age. The effects of a nuclear war on agriculture would be very marked.

Atmospheric scientists tell us that even a "small" nuclear war between India and Pakistan in which each side used 50 nuclear weapons on the other side's cities would put enough soot into the stratosphere to block warming sunlight, shorten growing seasons, and cause mass starvation leading to some two billion human deaths. A major nuclear war would produce even more severe effects, including the possibility of destroying most complex life on the planet.

JA: What about the effects of radiation from fallout? Can you describe the effects of the Bikini tests on the people of the Marshall Islands and other nearby islands?

DK: Radiation fallout is one of the unique dangers of nuclear weapons. Between 1946 and 1958, the

U.S. conducted 67 of its nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, with the equivalent power of detonating 1.6 Hiroshima bombs daily for a twelve-year period. Of these tests, 23 were conducted in the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

Some of these tests contaminated islands and fishing vessels hundreds of miles away from the test sites. Some islands are still too contaminated for the residents to return. The U.S. shamefully treated the people of the Marshall Islands who suffered the effects of radioactive fallout like guinea pigs, studying them to learn more about the effects of radiation on human health.

Between 1946 and 1958, the U.S. conducted 67 of its nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, with the equivalent power of detonating 1.6 Hiroshima bombs daily for a twelve-year period. Of these tests, 23 were conducted in the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

JA: The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation cooperated with the Marshall Islands in suing all of the nations which signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and which currently possess nuclear weapons for violating Article VI of the NPT. Can you describe what has happened? The Marshall Islands' foreign minister, Tony de Brunn, received the Right Livelihood Award for his part in the lawsuit. Can you tell us something about this?

DK: The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation consulted with the Marshall Islands on their heroic lawsuits against the nine nuclear-armed countries (U.S., Russia, UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea). The lawsuits in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague were against the first five of these countries for

their failure to fulfill their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the NPT for negotiations to end the nuclear arms race and achieve nuclear disarmament. The other four nuclear-armed countries, those not parties to the NPT, were sued for the same failures to negotiate, but under customary international law. The U.S. was sued additionally in U.S. federal court.

Of the nine countries, only the UK, India and Pakistan accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ. In these three cases the Court ruled that there was not a sufficient controversy between the parties and dismissed the cases without getting to the substance of the lawsuits. The votes of the 16 judges on the ICJ were very close: in the case of the UK the judges split 8 to 8 and the case was decided by the casting vote of the president of the Court, who was French.

The case in U.S. federal court was also dismissed before getting to the merits of the case. The Marshall Islands was the only country in the world willing to challenge the nine nuclear-armed states in these lawsuits, and did so under the courageous leadership of Tony de Brunn, who received many awards for his leadership on this issue. It was an honor for us to work with him on these lawsuits. Sadly, Tony passed away in 2017.

JA: On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was passed by an overwhelming majority by the United Nations General Assembly. This was a great victory in the struggle to rid the world of the danger of nuclear annihilation. Can you tell us something about the current status of the Treaty?

DK: The Treaty is still in the process of attain-

ing signatures and ratifications. It will enter into force 90 days after the 50th country deposits its ratification or accession to it. At present, 69 countries have signed and 19 have ratified or acceded to the treaty, but these numbers change frequently. ICAN [the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons] and its partner organizations continue to lobby states to join the treaty.

JA: ICAN received a Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts leading to the establishment of the TPNW. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is one of the 468 organizations that make up ICAN, and therefore, in a sense, you have already received a Nobel Peace Prize. I have several times nominated you, personally, and the NAPF as an organization for the Nobel Peace Prize. Can you review for us the activities that might qualify you for the award?

DK: John, you have kindly nominated me and NAPF several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, for which I deeply thank you. I would say that my greatest accomplishment has been to found and lead the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and to have worked steadily and unwaveringly for peace and the total abolition of nuclear weapons. I don't know if this would qualify me for a Nobel Peace Prize, but it has been good and decent work that I am proud of. I also feel that our work at the Foundation, though international, focuses largely on the United States, and that is a particularly difficult country in which to make progress.

But I would say this. It has been gratifying to work for such meaningful goals for all humanity and, in doing such work, I have come across many, many dedicated people who deserve to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, including you. There are many talented and committed people in the

peace and nuclear abolition movements, and I bow to them all. It is the work that is most important, not prizes, even the Nobel, although the recognition that comes with the Nobel can help with making further progress. I think this has been the case with ICAN, which we joined at the beginning and have worked closely with over the years. So, we are happy to share in this award.

JA: Military-industrial complexes throughout the world need dangerous confrontations to justify their enormous budgets. Can you say something about the dangers of the resulting brinkmanship?

DK: Yes, the military-industrial complexes throughout the world are extremely dangerous. It is not only their brinkmanship which is a problem, but the enormous funding they receive that takes away from social programs for health care, education, housing, and protecting the environment. The amount of funds going to the military-industrial complex in many countries, and particularly in the U.S., is obscene.

I have recently been reading a great book, titled *Strength through Peace*, written by Judith Eve Lipton and David P. Barash. It is a book about Costa Rica, a country that gave up its military in 1948 and has lived mostly in peace in a dangerous part of the world since then. The book's subtitle is "How Demilitarization Led to Peace and Happiness in Costa Rica, & What the Rest of the World can Learn from a Tiny Tropical Nation."

The Romans said, "If you want peace, prepare for war." The Costa Rican example says, "If you want peace, prepare for peace." It is a much more sensible and decent path to peace.

It is a wonderful book that shows there are better ways of pursuing peace than through military strength. It turns the old Roman dictum on its head. The Romans said, "If you want peace, prepare for war." The Costa Rican example says, "If you want peace, prepare for peace." It is a much more sensible and decent path to peace.

JA: Has Donald Trump's administration contributed to the danger of nuclear war?

DK: I think that Donald Trump himself has contributed to the danger of nuclear war. He is narcissistic, mercurial, and generally uncompromising, which is a terrible combination of traits for someone in charge of the world's most powerful nuclear arsenal. He is also surrounded by Yes men, who generally seem to tell him what he wants to hear. Further, Trump has pulled the U.S. out of the agreement with Iran, and has announced his intention to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty [INF Treaty] with Russia. Trump's control of the U.S. nuclear arsenal may be the most dangerous threat of nuclear war since the beginning of the Nuclear Age.

JA: Could you say something about the current wildfires in California? Is catastrophic climate change a danger comparable to the danger of a nuclear catastrophe?

DK: The wildfires in California have been horrendous, the worst in California history. These terrible fires are yet another manifestation of global warming, just as are the increased intensity of hurricanes, typhoons and other weather-related events. I believe that catastrophic climate

change is a danger comparable to the danger of nuclear catastrophe. A nuclear catastrophe could happen at any time. With climate change we are approaching a point from which there will be no return to normalcy and our sacred earth will become uninhabitable by humans. [IDN-InDepth-News – 09 December 2018]



PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT EMPHASIZE NEED TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

BY ALEKSANDRA GADZINSKI



Collage: RAJ IDN-INPS

KATOWICE (IDN) – Nuclear weapons and climate change are the two major existential threats to the survival of humanity, civilization and the planet Earth. With this in view, in January 2018 the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the hands of the legendary Doomsday Clock to 2 minutes to Midnight, due to the threats from nuclear weapons and

climate change, said Alyn Ware, Global Coordinator of the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) at an event on December 9.

The event was hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the two-week-long COP24, the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change in Katowice, Poland that concludes on December 14.

Parliamentarians and climate experts joined the event to discuss parliamentary actions to ensure implementation of the Paris agreement on Climate Change, including those outlined in IPU's Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change

endorsed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Governing Council at its 198th session in Lusaka, Zambia on March 23, 2016.

Speaking on behalf of PNND, a global network of legislators dedicating to preventing the use of nuclear weapons – whether by accident, miscalculation or intent – and in achieving the peace and security of a nuclear weapons free world, Ware said, “nuclear weapons and climate change threats can be eliminated, and a sustainable and secure world achieved”.

The prerequisite is that there is “sufficient political will to overcome the institutional inertia and vested financial interests in the status quo”. With regard to climate change, he identified primarily the fossil fuel industries as the vested interests. And, with regard to nuclear weapons the vested interests are the nuclear weapons manufacturers – a handful of companies collectively earning over \$100 billion per year from the business and lobbying powerfully to maintain the nuclear arms race, he added.

The PNND Global Coordinator emphasised parliamentarians’ vital role in building the political will and in advancing specific policies, including financial policies, to ensure success in shifting investments from nuclear weapons into the sustainable development goals, and to replace fossil fuels with 100% renewable energy in order to reverse climate change.

“For this reason, we welcome initiatives which can assist parliamentarians to carry out these

roles effectively in their respective countries,” he said. In particular, he highlighted the establishment of the Global Renewables Congress, an international network of current and former legislators chaired by Bärbel Höhn, former MP in the German Bundestag, and facilitated by the World Future Council, working to build political will and advance specific policies to replace fossil fuels with 100% renewable energy.

Alyn Ware is Coordinator of the World Future Council Peace and Disarmament Program.

On December 11, the World Future Council will hold a special event during COP24 to launch the Global Renewables Congress (GRC), co-chaired by acting Commissioner for Energy Reform in Africa for the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

GRC will encourage:

Exchange of experiences on implementing policies that ensure an enabling environment for renewable energy deployment and investments on national and subnational levels (price on carbon, subsidies, Feed-in Tariffs, etc.)

Information on the political and technical needs for the electrification of sectors not yet electrified (e.g. transport, heating, etc.)

Capacity-building on the development of technical scenarios and policy roadmaps to reach renewable energy targets across all sectors

Reporting on key technical developments and trends (e.g. role of batteries, biofuels, RE cooking solutions, etc.)

“We encourage parliamentarians to join and make use of this new network. We also encourage parliamentarians to give priority to ending the current financial incentives for fossil fuels – incentives which were established to ensure continual energy supply – and instead shift to incentivizing renewable energies, which now have the capacity to fulfil energy needs if sufficiently developed,” he said.

This would include, for example, ending subsidies and divesting public funds (such as sovereign wealth funds and pension funds) from the fossil fuel and nuclear weapons industries.

A number of governments – including Lichtenstein, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland – have already adopted measures to end public fund investments in the nuclear weapons industry, and these measures have had no negative repercussions on the financial performance of the funds.

Similar public divestment from the fossil fuel industry, coupled with reinvestment in renewable energies would contribute significantly to speeding up the transition to renewable energies and ensuring that the goals of the Paris agreement are met, the PNND Global Coordinator said. [IDN-InDepthNews – 10 December 2018]

TIME TO LEAVE THE NUCLEAR AGE, CREATE A GREEN PLANET AT PEACE

VIEWPOINT BY MEDEA BENJAMIN AND ALICE SLATER

*While Medea Benjamin is codirector of CODEPINK for Peace and author of several books, including *Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic*, Alice Slater serves on the Coordinating Committee of World Beyond War and is the UN Representative of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.*



Photo: Medea Benjamin (left) and Alice Slater (right). A collage by INPS-IDN.

NEW YORK (IDN) – A deafening chorus of negative grumbling from the left, right, and center of the U.S. political spectrum in response to Trump’s decision to remove U.S. troops from Syria and halve their numbers in Afghanistan appears to have slowed down his attempt to bring our forces home.

However, in this New Year, demilitarizing U.S. foreign policy should be among the top items on the agenda of the new Congress. Just as we are witnessing a rising movement for a visionary Green New Deal, so, too, the time has come for a New Peace Deal that repudiates endless war and the threat of nuclear war which, along with catastrophic climate change, poses an existential threat to our planet.

We must capitalize and act on the opportunity presented by the abrupt departure of “mad dog” Mattis and other warrior hawks. Another move toward

demilitarization is the unprecedented Congressional challenge to Trump’s support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. And while the president’s disturbing proposals to walk out of established nuclear arms control treaties represents a new danger, they are also an opportunity.

Trump announced that the U.S. is withdrawing from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), negotiated in 1987 by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, and warned that he has no interest in renewing the modest new START treaty negotiated by Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev.

Obama paid a heavy price to secure Congressional ratification of START, promising a one-trillion-dollar program over 30 years for two new nuclear bomb factories, and new warheads, missiles, planes and submarines to deliver their lethal payload, a program that is continuing under Trump.

While the New START limited the U.S. and Russia to physically deploying up to a maximum of 1,550 bomb-laden nuclear missiles out of their massive nuclear arsenals, it failed to make good on the 1970 U.S. promise made in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to eliminate nuclear weapons. Even today, nearly 50 years after those NPT promises were made, the U.S. and Russia account for a staggering 14,000 of the 15,000 nuclear bombs on the planet.

With Trump’s U.S. military posture in seeming disarray, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fashion bold new actions for disarmament. The most promising breakthrough for nuclear disarmament is the new Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated and adopted by 122 nations at the UN in 2017.

This unprecedented treaty finally bans the bomb, just as the world has done for biological and chemical weapons, and won its organizers, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the Nobel Peace Prize. The treaty now needs to be ratified by 50 nations to become binding.

Instead of supporting this new treaty, and acknowledging the U.S. 1970 NPT promise to make “good faith” efforts for nuclear disarmament, we are getting the same stale, inadequate proposals from many in the Democratic establishment who are now taking control of the House.

It is worrisome that Adam Smith, the new Chair of the House Armed Services Committee, talks only of making cuts in our massive nuclear arsenals and putting limits on how and when a President can use nuclear weapons, without even a hint that any consideration is being given to lending U.S. support for the ban treaty or for honoring our 1970 NPT promise to give up our nuclear weapons.

Although the U.S. and its NATO and Pacific allies (Australia, Japan and South Korea) have thus far refused to support the ban treaty, a global effort, organized by ICAN, has already received signatures from 69 nations, and ratifications in 19 parliaments of the 50 nations needed in order for the prohibition against the possession, use, or threat to use nuclear weapons, to become legally binding.

In December, Australia’s Labor Party pledged to sign and ratify the ban treaty if it wins in the upcoming elections, even though Australia is presently a member of the U.S. nuclear alliance. And similar efforts are happening in Spain, a member of the NATO alliance.

A burgeoning number of cities, states, and parliamentarians around the world have been enrolled in the campaign to call on their governments to support the new treaty. In the U.S. Congress, however, so far only four representatives – Eleanor Holmes Norton, Betty McCollum, Jim McGovern, and Barbara Lee – have signed the ICAN pledge to secure U.S. support to ban the bomb.

Just as the Democratic establishment is ignoring the groundbreaking new opportunity to finally rid the world of the nuclear scourge, it is now undercutting the extraordinary campaign for a Green New Deal to fully power the United States with sustainable energy sources in ten years, led by the inspiring Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejected proposals from masses of young demonstrators who petitioned her office to establish a Select Committee for the Green New Deal. Instead, Pelosi established a Select Committee on Climate Crisis, lacking subpoena powers and chaired by Rep. Kathy Castor, who refused a Green Deal Campaign demand to ban any members from serving on the Committee who took donations from fossil fuel corporations.

A New Peace Deal should make similar requests of the members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. How can we expect the chairs of these committees, Democratic Congressman Adam Smith or Republican Senator James Inhofe, to be honest brokers for peace when they have received contributions of over \$250,000 from the weapons industry?

A coalition called Divest from the War Machine is urging all members of congress to refuse money from the weapons industry, since they vote every year on a Pentagon budget that allocates hundreds of billions of dollars for new weapons.

This commitment is particularly critical for members of the Armed Services Committees. No one who has been funded with substantial contributions from arms manufacturers should be serving on those committees, particularly when Congress should be examining, with urgency, the scandalous report of the Pentagon’s inability to pass an audit last year and its statements that it has no ability to ever do so!

We cannot tolerate a new Democratic-controlled Congress continuing to do business as usual, with a military budget of over \$700 billion and a trillion dollars projected for new nuclear weapons over the next 30 years, while struggling to find funds to address the climate crisis.

With the extraordinary upheavals created by President Trump’s withdrawal from both the Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, we must urgently mobilize to save our earth from the two existential threats: catastrophic climate destruction and the looming possibility of nuclear annihilation.

It’s time to leave the nuclear age and divest from the war machine, freeing up trillions of wasted dollars over the next decade. We must transform our lethal energy system to one that sustains us, while creating genuine national and international security at peace with all of nature and humanity. [IDN- InDepthNews – 09 January 2018]

UN LAUDS INDIA FOR TRAINING FOREIGN DIPLOMATS ON DISARMAMENT

BY DEVINDER KUMAR



Photo: ISRO's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F11) successfully launched the communication satellite GSAT-7A on December 19, 2018. Credit: ISRO

NEW DELHI (IDN) – India is the first member country of the United Nations to have launched a fellowship programme on disarmament and international security for for-

ign diplomats. “This is a demonstration of India’s commitment to nuclear issues and disarmament,” a senior official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

With its focus on junior diplomats from a geographically diverse range of countries, the programme has a close parallel with the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, which

was established in 1978 by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. [2019-01-23

Since then, more than 1,000 young women and men, drawn from the vast majority of member states, have been United Nations disarmament fellows. India has been one of the most active participants in the programme. The subsequent career paths of these fellows stand as an impressive testament both to the value of the training and to the high calibre of individuals selected to participate.

Within the framework of the fellowship programme, the External Affairs Ministry's Foreign Service Institute is hosting 27 young diplomats – all below the age of 35 – for three weeks until February 1. Countries that have sent participants include Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mongolia, Egypt and Ethiopia.

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu and Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale inaugurated the first edition of the annual event on January 14.

According to Nakamitsu, the value of engaging younger professionals and students in disarmament is not just a matter of investing in future potential. The UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, released in May 2018, emphasizes the need to empower the young generation as the ultimate force for change.

Young people have worked at the forefront of successful international campaigns to ban landmines, cluster munitions and more recently nuclear weapons. "The cut-off age for your pro-

gramme could not have been more appropriately chosen – every member of the staff of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was under the age of 35 when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017," Nakamitsu said.

"Youth-led dialogue can offer a wellspring of creativity as we seek to understand possible threats from emerging technologies like cybertools, drones and artificial intelligence," she added.

"Such creativity will be crucial as we seek to adapt how we pursue disarmament so that our efforts are relevant to other priorities, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, humanitarian action, the prevention and resolution of armed violence and the protection of the environment," the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs noted.

Moreover, youth-led political coalitions have amplified the voices of women, who remain significantly underrepresented in intergovernmental disarmament processes. Only by ensuring the full and equal participation of women in all disarmament and international security processes can we apply the fullest range of ideas and talents to effectively address the formidable challenges facing our planet, Nakamitsu said.

India considered 65 member states of Geneva based UN Conference on Disarmament as the conduit for participants in the new fellowship programme. Based on geographical representation, 30 countries were finally selected and asked to nominate their diplomats. A key criterion was that they should have prior background in disarmament issues.

The programme covers a range of issues relevant to disarmament and international security such as global security environment, weapons of mass destruction, certain conventional weapons, space security, maritime cooperation, security of cyberspace, export controls, emerging technologies etc.

The Fellowship Programme aims at equipping participants with knowledge and perspectives on various contemporary disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and international security affairs.

The resource persons for the programmes include senior officials from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and The Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

The Vienna-based WA was established in 1995 in order to contribute to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilising accumulations. The aim is also to prevent the acquisition of these items by terrorists.

According to MEA officials, the programme also includes field visits to the Narora Atomic Power Station in Uttar Pradesh, Inland Container Depot at Tughlakabad and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Explaining the background to this unique initiative, EAM official said India had organised a con-

ference on UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540, which puts on the member states the onus to have domestic controls to prevent non-proliferation of nuclear and delivery materials.

“We have organised different workshops on various aspects of export control and nuclear issues like 1540 and chemical weapons convention. But this is the first time that India is organising an umbrella programme which encompasses all related issues,” the official said.

Inaugurating the programme, UN High Representative for Disarmament affairs Nakamitsu said India’s offer to train officials in nuclear disarmament and international security is in line with one of the key aspects of the disarmament agenda: investing in disarmament education, interpreted as one of the contributors for attaining Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for “promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence”.

The fourth pillar of the agenda is partnership. Achieving meaningful progress in disarmament also requires effective coalitions across the United Nations system, with regional organizations, and with scientists, engineers and the private sector, and civil society.

“It is in the last connection that I commend India for launching this fellowship programme. I believe such actions are in line with India’s historical role as a vocal champion for global nuclear disarmament,” said the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

In this period of deteriorating strategic security relations and growing multipolarity, she added, all States that possess nuclear weapons, includ-

ing India, have a special responsibility to pursue renewed dialogue, to seek reciprocal steps to reduce risks, and to lead efforts to return us to a common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. [IDN-InDepthNews – 23 January 2019] NEW DELHI (IDN) – India is the first member country of the United Nations to have launched a fellowship programme on disarmament and international security for foreign diplomats. “This is a demonstration of India’s commitment to nuclear issues and disarmament,” a senior official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

With its focus on junior diplomats from a geographically diverse range of countries, the programme has a close parallel with the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, which was established in 1978 by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Since then, more than 1,000 young women and men, drawn from the vast majority of member states, have been United Nations disarmament fellows. India has been one of the most active participants in the programme. The subsequent career paths of these fellows stand as an impressive testament both to the value of the training and to the high calibre of individuals selected to participate.

Within the framework of the fellowship programme, the External Affairs Ministry’s Foreign Service Institute is hosting 27 young diplomats – all below the age of 35 – for three weeks until February 1. Countries that have sent participants include Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mongolia, Egypt and Ethiopia.

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu and Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale inaugurated the first edition of the annual event on January 14.

According to Nakamitsu, the value of engaging younger professionals and students in disarmament is not just a matter of investing in future potential. The UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, released in May 2018, emphasizes the need to empower the young generation as the ultimate force for change.

Young people have worked at the forefront of successful international campaigns to ban landmines, cluster munitions and more recently nuclear weapons. “The cut-off age for your programme could not have been more appropriately chosen – every member of the staff of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was under the age of 35 when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017,” Nakamitsu said.

“Youth-led dialogue can offer a wellspring of creativity as we seek to understand possible threats from emerging technologies like cyber-tools, drones and artificial intelligence,” she added.

“Such creativity will be crucial as we seek to adapt how we pursue disarmament so that our efforts are relevant to other priorities, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, humanitarian action, the prevention and resolution of armed violence and the protection of the environment,” the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs noted.

Moreover, youth-led political coalitions have amplified the voices of women, who remain significantly underrepresented in intergovernmental disarmament processes. Only by ensuring the full and equal participation of women in all disarmament and international security processes can we apply the fullest range of ideas and talents to effectively address the formidable challenges facing our planet, Nakamitsu said.

India considered 65 member states of Geneva based UN Conference on Disarmament as the conduit for participants in the new fellowship programme. Based on geographical representation, 30 countries were finally selected and asked to nominate their diplomats. A key criterion was that they should have prior background in disarmament issues.

The programme covers a range of issues relevant to disarmament and international security such as global security environment, weapons of mass destruction, certain conventional weapons, space security, maritime cooperation, security of cyberspace, export controls, emerging technologies etc.

The Fellowship Programme aims at equipping participants with knowledge and perspectives on various contemporary disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and international security affairs.

The resource persons for the programmes include senior officials from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR),

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and The Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

The Vienna-based WA was established in 1995 in order to contribute to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilising accumulations. The aim is also to prevent the acquisition of these items by terrorists.

According to MEA officials, the programme also includes field visits to the Narora Atomic Power Station in Uttar Pradesh, Inland Container Depot at Tughlakabad and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Explaining the background to this unique initiative, EAM official said India had organised a conference on UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540, which puts on the member states the onus to have domestic controls to prevent non-proliferation of nuclear and delivery materials.

“We have organised different workshops on various aspects of export control and nuclear issues like 1540 and chemical weapons convention. But this is the first time that India is organising an umbrella programme which encompasses all related issues,” the official said.

Inaugurating the programme, UN High Representative for Disarmament affairs Nakamitsu said India’s offer to train officials in nuclear disarmament and international security is in line with one of the key aspects of the disarmament agenda: investing in disarmament education, interpreted as one of the contributors for attaining Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for “promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence”.

The fourth pillar of the agenda is partnership. Achieving meaningful progress in disarmament also requires effective coalitions across the United Nations system, with regional organizations, and with scientists, engineers and the private sector, and civil society.

“It is in the last connection that I commend India for launching this fellowship programme. I believe such actions are in line with India’s historical role as a vocal champion for global nuclear disarmament,” said the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

In this period of deteriorating strategic security relations and growing multipolarity, she added, all States that possess nuclear weapons, including India, have a special responsibility to pursue renewed dialogue, to seek reciprocal steps to reduce risks, and to lead efforts to return us to a common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. [IDN-InDepthNews – 23 January 2019]

UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS IN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

VIEWPOINT BY SERGIO DUARTE

The writer is President of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, and a former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. He was president of the 2005 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference.



Nuclear weapon States are currently engaged in “modernizing” their arsenals and in exploring new technologies for use in war, from cybernetic attacks to new supersonic vehicles and from low-yield “usable” nuclear devices to artificial intelligence (AI) applied to warfare. Competition for military su-premacy among them threatens to bring the world to the brink of extinction, writes Sergio Duarte.

NEW YORK (IDN) – Although humankind has known since the dawn of ages the sorrow, misery and devastation caused by war, the most catastrophic military conflicts in history are quite recent.

World War I lasted from July 1914 to November 1918 and claimed some 40 million lives, among civilians and combatants. In all, between 70-85 million people perished during World War II that lasted from 1939 to 1945. The estimated war casualties include those who are believed to have died from war-related causes, including captivity, disease and famine.

Nuclear weapons were used for the first time in 1945. By today’s standards, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs can be considered “low-yield”, but together they killed over 120.000 men, women and children in a few seconds and more subsequently.

History, however, taught us important lessons. 18th century Enlightenment philosophers suggested averting wars through understanding among nations. The Hague Peace Conferences in 1899 and 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 are among the first formal multilateral formulations of laws governing the conduct of hostilities and humanitarian action in armed conflict.

At the end of World War I, the League of Nations was created in January 1920 with the mission of maintaining peace and achieving the limitation of armaments. It was succeeded by the United Nations in October 1945, established in the aftermath of World War II by the victors of that conflagration, which ensured for themselves a privileged position and corresponding responsibilities for the prevention of “the scourge of war” and the maintenance of world peace and security.

The advent of the nuclear weapon dominated the debates in the first few years of the existence of the United Nations. The very first resolution unan-

imously adopted by the General Assembly on 24 January 1946 set up a Commission “to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy and other related matters”.

It was charged, *inter alia*, with making specific proposals “for extending between all nations the exchange of basic scientific information for peaceful ends” and “for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction”. In 1957 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established “to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world”.

Deep disagreement between the two major powers prevented any progress in eliminating nuclear weapons but the other two categories of weapons of mass destruction, bacteriological and chemical weapons, were eventually outlawed in 1972 and in 1997, respectively.

Despite the climate of mistrust and hostility that prevailed between the two major powers during the decades of the Cold War the international community managed to negotiate and adopt a number of multilateral instruments aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to areas where there were none, such as Antarctica, Outer Space, the Moon and other celestial bodies and the sea-bed and its subsoil. The first zone free of nuclear weapons in an inhabited region, Latin America and the Caribbean, was established in 1967 and was emulated in other continents, encompassing today 114 countries.

The main multilateral instrument in the field of arms control, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came into force in 1970. It recognized the existence of five States possessing nuclear weapons who pledged to work for disarmament. The NPT gradually became accepted by all but four nations. All its non-nuclear parties relinquished the nuclear military option through a legally binding commitment subject to verification procedures by the IAEA.

The Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) concluded in 1996 but not yet into force prohibited nuclear explosions in all environments, creating a taboo that reinforces the nuclear non-proliferation regime and helps constrain the development of new types of nuclear weapons. Most possessors of nuclear

arsenals adopted unilateral commitments on their size and on the conditions of their possible use. The total number of nuclear weapons existing in the world is said to have decreased to about 15,000 today.

One would expect that those and other encouraging developments would have facilitated further progress toward nuclear disarmament. Current reality, however, points to an uncertain future.

International strains intensified since the close of the 20th century and agreements aimed at reducing tensions between the two major powers and at limiting their nuclear forces seem at risk. The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is no longer in force and the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, widely regarded as essential to European security, seems doomed. By the same token, the 2011 New START agreement may not be extended beyond its expiration date in 2021.

Fifty years after the entry into force of the NPT in 1970, the five nuclear weapon States have yet to act convincingly on the promise “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” contained in its Article VI. The credibility of treaty commitments is at stake.

None of the instruments adopted over the past decades contains a clear, legally binding, time-bound and irreversible obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons, in contradiction with the ideals expressed in the Preambles of such instruments. But action by the existing multilateral machinery is urgently needed to ensure the elimination of the threat posed to every nation’s security by the existence of nuclear weapons. The Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament has been at a standstill since 1996. In fact, effective measures of nuclear disarmament have never been the subject of substantive discussion in that body.

Short-term prospects for progress are far from reassuring. New challenges arose. Nuclear weapon States are currently engaged in “modernizing” their arsenals and in exploring new technologies for use in war, from cybernetic attacks to new supersonic vehicles and from low-yield “usable” nuclear devices to artificial intelligence (AI) applied to warfare. Competition for military supremacy among them threatens to bring the world to the brink of extinction. [IDN-InDepthNews – 25 January 2019]

EXPERTS DISCUSS PROSPECTS OF PEACE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

BY KATSUHIRO ASAGIRI



Photo (from left to right): Noboru Yamaguchi (Japan); Yang Xiyu (China), Chung-in Moon (South Korea), Kevin Clements (Coordinator: Toda Institute), Joseph Yun (USA), Georgy Toloraya (Russia). Credit: Yukie Asagiri.

TOKYO (IDN) – Nearly 66 years have passed since the Armistice Agreement formally brought about “a complete cessation of hostilities” of the Korean War. One year later, Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai proposed a peace treaty. But U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, refused – leaving a final peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula hanging in the air.

The signed Armistice established the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the de facto new border

between the two nations, put into force a ceasefire, and finalized repatriation of prisoners of war. The DMZ runs close to the 38th parallel and has separated North and South Korea since the Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953.

A Peace Treaty was not high on the agenda of the first summit meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in June 2018 in Singapore. Nor is it likely to have the pride of place when Trump and Kim meet for the second time on February 27-28 in Hanoi.

In run-up to the Hanoi Summit, a colloquium in Tokyo has explored the prospects of ‘Building Stable Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Turning the Armistice into a Permanent Peace Agreement’.

Organized by the Toda Peace Institute and the National Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago, New Zealand, the colloquium heard South Korean, U.S., Chinese, Russian, and Japanese perspectives on the pros and cons of a peace declaration between North and

South Korea and the modalities for moving from that to a permanent peace agreement to replace the Armistice Agreement.

But as the five different perspectives revealed, it is going to be an uphill task to usher in an era of stable peace on the Korean Peninsula. Both the U.S. and North Korea do not agree in detail on what denuclearization of the Peninsula implies in practice. Also the national and foreign policy interests of each of the five countries – South Korea, USA, China, Russia and Japan – do not seem to synchronize with each other.

Against this backdrop, what the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said in his New Year speech assumes particular importance. He called for “multiparty negotiations” aimed at replacing the armistice with a formal peace treaty.

This came close to the emphasis placed by Chung-in Moon, special advisor for foreign affairs and national security to the South Korean (Republic of South Korea – ROK) President, on the need for confidence-building among states involved and address the nuclear issue. He declared that agreements matter only when they are implemented. In fact, he proposed a summit meeting of all Asian countries involved and the United States.

Joseph Y. Yun, a former U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, was convinced that North Korea will not denuclearize itself without obtaining any special guarantees from the U.S. “Theirs is a nuclear programme they have suffered to build” over the years, he noted. Yun pleaded for a “systematic approach” to a peace agreement, dismantling of nuclear weapons and verification

Yang Yiyu, Senior Fellow at the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), warned against over-interpreting developments on the Peninsula. What appeared to be positive developments in 1991 and 1992 and between 1994 and 2002, when North Korea and the U.S. negotiated on 21 issues, reached an agreement on 17, he said, was followed by a crisis.

Nevertheless, there is a whiff of “historical opportunities” in view of three inter-Korean summits and one summit each between North Korea and the U.S. and North Korea and China in 2018. In 2019 there will be one North Korea-U.S. summit and more than one summit each between North Korea and China, and the inter-Korean summit.

What makes things rather convoluted, noted Yang, is that for North Korea the priority issue is a peace treaty, but for the U.S. it is denuclearization. He also stressed the need for removing “totally the structure of the balance of power as the base for peace”.

Georgy Toloraya, the Director of Korean Programs at the Institute of Economy at the Russian Academy of Science, and Executive Director of Russian National Committee on BRICS Research, pleaded for “balance of interests”.

He recalled the two-pronged Russian proposal in 2018: Freeze for Freeze, implying suspension of U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises on the one hand and holdup of nuclear tests by North Korea on the other; and, secondly, bilateral negotiations leading to a “bulk of agreements and arrangements” between the two Koreas.

Toloraya said the 1953 Armistice Agreement – signed by U.S. Army Lt. Gen. William K. Harrison Jr. of the United Nations Command Delegation and North Korean Gen. Nam Il, who also represented China – could not be a basis of a Peace Regime, as suggested by the theme of the colloquium. South Korea did not sign it. Its sole purpose was to stop fighting and some technical issue of exchanging prisoners etc. It stated that in three months, they should hold a conference to settle political issues. The conference failed.

“We should build peace based on the system in Korean Peninsula and of course involve not only two Koreas but also the U.S. and China as well as Japan and Russia, and the international community because this is a global issue,” said Toloraya. “It is not about bilateral nor regional but the global issue of nuclear proliferation and love of peace.”

Some kind of a legal base for a peace regime should be created, he added, for example through a multilateral declaration “or treaty or something like a 6 party summit for North East Asia” – perhaps by way of declarations by six foreign ministers to start the process, for example, on the side lines of the UN General Assembly in September.

In Toloraya’s view a multilateral process is essential – through a multilateral agreement or a set of legally binding bilateral agreements between warring parties. What is important in his view is that there should be some kind of a mechanism to monitor how they implement their obligations. Eventually it might develop into “a nucleus of regional cooperation and security system” that spans the Korean Peninsula and neighboring states. [IDN-InDepthNews – 20 February 2019]

USHERING IN AN ERA OF PEACE AND DISARMAMENT



Photo: Dr. Daisaku Ikeda. Credit: Seikyo Shimbun.

BERLIN | TOKYO (IDN) – “Amid the continued escalation of global challenges, crises that were previously unthinkable are now becoming reality throughout the world.” This is the backdrop to a wide-ranging proposal eminent Buddhist philosopher, educator, author, and nuclear disarmament advocate Dr. Daisaku Ikeda has put forward. [2019-03-03]

‘Toward a New Era of Peace and Disarmament: A People-Centered Approach’ by Dr. Ikeda, President of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), is a treasure of wisdom and knowledge approaching issues through an interdisciplinary lens, taking into consideration the interconnected nature of themes.

Among critical issues that constitute the backdrop to Dr. Ikeda’s proposal are the alarming climate change, 68.5 million people forcibly displaced worldwide due to conflict and other reasons, and trade disputes impacting the global economy. Besides, the United Nations has been calling for urgent action on disarmament.

SGI, the world’s largest Buddhist lay organization with approximately 12 million practitioners in 192 countries and territories, launched a second People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition in 2018, to build on the work of the first Decade, which concluded in 2017 with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) by the UN General Assembly.

The second Decade, according to the SGI President, is focused on expanding global support for the Treaty and paving the way toward a world free from nuclear weapons, by continuing to work with like-minded partners to this end.

In fact, among highlights of the 2019 Peace Proposal is the need to accelerate progress toward

the abolition of nuclear weapons, encourage youth engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and expand the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) network of universities.

The TPNW, adopted by a vote of 122 States at the UN General Assembly on July 7, 2017, and opened for signature on September 20, 2017, will enter into force 90 days after the 50th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession has been deposited with the UN Secretary-General. Hitherto 70 countries have signed and 21 ratified the Treaty.

Dr. Ikeda urges the creation of a group of like-minded states to deepen the debate and promote ratification – Friends of the TPNW, modelled on Friends of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has been lying in limbo since 1996.

The SGI President calls on Japan to take the lead in this initiative, stating: “Since Japan has declared its desire to serve as a bridge between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, it makes sense that it should take the initiative in creating a venue for such dialogue.”

He also highlights the new Cities Appeal of the 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and its related #ICANSave social media initiative.

With an eye on the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), scheduled to hold its third session from April 29 to May 10, 2019 at the UN Headquarters in New York, Dr. Ikeda calls for steps such as the removal of nuclear warheads from high-alert status.

Going one step further, he suggests that the final document of the 2020 NPT Review Conference “include a recommendation to establish a UN open working group to discuss concrete steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, marking a clear directional shift toward nuclear disarmament”.

Dr. Ikeda argues that nuclear weapons have not been used in war since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and the nuclear-weapon states, NATO member states and others have begun to recognize their declining military utility.

“Even during the Cold War, it was clear that there could be no winner in a nuclear war,” he adds. “Given this growing awareness of their lack of military utility, what reason can remain to justify nuclear-dependent security doctrines?”

However, against the backdrop that the previous review conference in 2015 did not achieve consensus due to longstanding disagreements between nuclear and non-nuclear States, Dr. Ikeda further proposes that a fourth special session of the UN General Assembly be devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) be held in 2021.

The SGI President also stresses the dangers of emerging Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and proposes the convening of a conference to negotiate a treaty banning these weapons, often referred to as “killer robots”.

Applauding the May 2018 Disarmament Agenda of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Dr. Ikeda advocates a shift from seeing security solely in terms of state or military security toward a human focus, a people-centered multilateralism based on the effort to build a world in which all people can experience meaningful security.

He notes how the complexity and scale of global challenges can make youth feel that positive change is impossible. He calls on young people to resist feelings of resignation and “meet the severe challenges of our age as agents of proactive and contagious change”.

Dr. Ikeda urges youth involvement in the SDGs as crucial to their achievement. He calls for expansion of the UNAI network of universities committed to supporting the SDGs through research and teaching programs, and proposes the convening of a world conference of such universities in 2020, the 75th anniversary of the founding of the UN.

The UN’s Youth2030 strategy calls on UN entities to amplify and reinforce the voices of young people at major summits such as the 75th anniversary events and to establish regular engagement between young people and the Secretary-General, argues the SGI President.

“In this context, a world conference of universities in support of the SDGs would bring together educators and students from around the globe, accelerating momentum toward their achievement. It could also provide the opportunity for a dialogue forum with the Secretary-General,” he adds.

He also welcomes the designation of youth as the focus of the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

Another emphasis of the peace proposal is on SDGs concerned with water resource management. Dr. Ikeda hopes that Japan will apply its experience to the resolution of water-related problems in Northeast Asia and regional confidence building, and that Japan, China and South Korea will work together to offer support to countries in the Middle East and Africa where there is growing demand for water reuse and desalination.

The SGI President’s 2019 Peace Proposal is the 19th since the beginning of the 21st century. He has been publishing peace proposals since 1983 on January 26 every year to commemorate the founding of the organisation. Each peace proposal explores the interrelation between core Buddhist concepts and the diverse challenges global society faces in the effort to realize peace and human security. He has also made proposals touching on issues such as education reform, the environment, the United Nations and nuclear abolition. [IDN-InDepthNews – 03 March 2019]

GERMANY BACKS UN CHIEF IN COUNTERING AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

BY RAMESH JAURA



Photo: Heiko Mass, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, addressing the Security Council meeting on collective action to improve United Nations Peacekeeping Operations on 28 March 2018. Credit: UN Photo/Loey Felipe.

BERLIN (IDN) – Keeping humans in control of autonomous weapons and artificial intelligence is an important element of UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ action plan to implement the Agenda for Disarmament, Securing Our Common Future, presented in May 2018. [2019-03-17]

“Essentially, the question is whether we are in control of technology or whether, ultimately, it controls us,” said Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in his remarks on March 15 at the conference ‘2019 Capturing Technology. Rethinking Arms Control’ at the German Foreign Office in Berlin. The development of fully autonomous killer robots, cyber weapons and new biological agents has created scenarios for which there are to date almost no internationally recognised rules, he added.

The conference was part of an initiative by Germany – a non-permanent member of the 15-nation UN Security Council for 2019-2020 – for dialogue on disarmament, in which Izumi Nakamitsu, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), also participated.

In her remarks, she pointed out that the Berlin conference was taking place on the eve of the forthcoming meeting of the ‘Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE LAWS)’ on March 25-29, 2019 in Geneva.

The group was established following a decision taken in 2016 by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – CCW). It is mandated to examine issues related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) in the context of the objectives and purposes of the CCW. Underscoring the urgency of adequate action, Maas said: “If new technologies are capable today of revolutionising the development of weapons and warfare, then we face a most fundamental question, namely will we manage to act with foresight this time around? Or will our rules kick in too late once again – perhaps this time finally too late?”

GERMANY BACKS UN CHIEF IN COUNTERING AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mass further said that Germany will put the issue of nuclear non-proliferation on the Security Council agenda when the country assumes the Presidency at the beginning of April. “We want to take steps to counter the erosion of entire systems, also with a view to next year’s NPT Review Conference.”

The Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will hold its third session at United Nations Headquarters in New York, during German Presidency of the Security Council from April 29 to May 10, 2019. This will be the third and final session prior to the 2020 Review Conference.

The Political Declaration emerging from the Berlin conference said the Foreign Ministers of Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden have pledged “to work together to strengthen existing biological, chemical, conventional and nuclear arms control arrangements in a multilateral endeavour to maintain and reinforce the rules-based international order for a new technological age”.

They said they were deeply worried about the deterioration of the global security environment and the manifold challenges to stability including through the erosion of existing conventional and nuclear disarmament and arms control regimes.

“We are especially concerned about the future of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which has been crucial for security in Europe for over thirty years. We reiterate our urgent call to Russia to return to complete and verifiable compliance with this treaty before August to enable its preservation,” the political declaration added.

The Declaration states further:

- The time to act is now. Given the speed of technological developments, it is of utmost importance that we now analyse closely potential negative and positive effects of new technologies, and identify the need for further regulation and new arms control arrangements in order to maintain international peace and stability.

- There is a need to build a shared understanding of how technologically enhanced military capabilities may change the character of warfare and how this will influence global security.

- We need to intensify cooperation to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of weapon systems, both existing and new.

- The development and use of all weapons needs to be in full compliance with existing international law.

- We need an intensified dialogue with and among the representatives of science, research and industry to encourage the development of ethical standards for the development of new technologies.

These points comply with the recommendations of the report – presented at the Berlin conference by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) – which states that, in order to tackle the governance issues presented by emerging technologies, national governments need to monitor and assess developments in science and technology on a more systematic basis.

They should also strengthen international efforts to foster responsible science and biosecurity awareness. In addition, the report suggests that the private sector should reinforce self-regulation and compliance standards. [IDN-InDepthNews – 17 March 2019]



MEMORIAL CENOTAPH, HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL PARK, 9 MAY 2012 [CC BY-SA 2]