

[Column 1] Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and Future of Nuclear Disarmament

Mahmoud Karem

At the outset I wish to praise the excellent work for the cause of a world free of nuclear weapons, disarmament, and non-proliferation done by the Hiroshima Prefecture in its annually published “*Hiroshima Report*”, and the 2011 Plan for “Global peace”. No one is more fit to achieve these pioneering objectives as the brave people of Hiroshima, Japan’s legends of the *hibakusha*, and the painful living memories of the first use of nuclear weapons against Humanity.

I also wish to praise the excellent work done in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in educating the youth, students with the scourge of a nuclear war and how to avert it.

Now it is necessary to historically address the question; why now a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the Future of Nuclear Disarmament?

When the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed in 1968, the euphoria and hope at the time was very high despite the inherent imbalances in the treaty between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states. The world believed that article VI will be realized and its objectives reached in a relatively short period of time. However, the long history of repeated international crisis with the possibility of escalating into a global war closely linked to an aggressive doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons, all raised international frustration over the fact that little is being done to honor the obligations enshrined in Article VI by the nuclear-weapon states. Yes, important arms control agreements and some

reductions were reached but juxtaposed against a long period of time, fifty years to be exact, these achievements seemed little and albeit insufficient.

Part of this international frustration also went back to several issues:

1) Calls for reversing military expenditures on modernizing nuclear weapons remained unheeded, exceeding \$100 billion per year depriving social and economic developmental needs of humanity.

2) Despite global developmental aspirations the impact of the nuclear arms race was never reversed contradicting the objectives of the 2015-2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

3) The nuclear weapons states could not realize the urgent need for reversing military expenditures and allocating them to solving persistent global problems such as water security, protecting the environment, climate change, poverty, spread of epidemics, food and energy security. Instead, the world continued to live under the fear that a regional conflict and a possible confrontation between nuclear-weapon states may exacerbate quickly into a nuclear exchange. In the same time nuclear weapon states continued to operate from hair trigger alerts, threatening first use options, and forcing these doctrines on countries under extended nuclear deterrence, thereby involving those non-nuclear-weapon states in conflicts thousands of miles away from them.

4) This all underscored the fact that deterrence policy anchored on rationality may not always succeed as we have seen in the case of the regional conflict in the Korean peninsula. The fear now is that leaders who can launch nuclear missiles may not be rational enough to take rational decisions, let alone allow for a war by accident.

5) This led many states in three international

conferences to highlight the humanitarian impact of use of nuclear weapons, and no people in the world can present a moving example in this regard, other than the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In conclusion, the TPNW must be evaluated in a proper context. It sends a distress signal to world conscious that continuing with the status quo is not permissible given global challenges. Therefore, the future path of nuclear disarmament should be based on several issues:

1) A strong political will from nuclear reliant states to join the negotiations as a measure to convince NWS to cooperate.

2) The need to address at present, several compromise solutions such as, a “framework agreement” to secure a broad agreement at the beginning leaving the details to further negotiations, consonant with the convention on climate change. Another idea is holding an NPT amendment conference and adding a nuclear disarmament protocol that would also cover fissile material, nuclear weapons free zones, WMD’s, de-alerting, stockpile reductions, and retirement of nuclear weapons placed in foreign countries. Further on, a no first use pledge signed and deposited in the UNSC and announced by all nuclear weapons states in an international nuclear disarmament summit that replicates efforts done previously in nuclear security summits.

3) My own preference is to consider all that under the umbrella of a new UNGA special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD) before 2020.

Finally, nuclear-weapons states should demonstrate political will and show the world that they are serious and determined to reduce their nuclear stockpiles within an agreed to timeframe towards achieving General and Complete nuclear disarmament.

Dr. Mahmoud Karem
Former Ambassador of Egypt to Japan

[Column 2] A Personal Evaluation of the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and Possible Pathways to Move Nuclear Disarmament Forward Following the Adoption of the TPNW

Tim Caughley

This evaluation of the TPNW is in two parts, headed “cause” and “effect”.

1. Cause

The negotiation of the TPNW was influenced by a variety of factors. Many non-nuclear-weapon states were concerned that the sanctity of the NPT was being jeopardized by the lack of sustained action on the part of NPT nuclear weapon states to reduce their nuclear arsenals. Courses of action agreed by all that Treaty’s parties towards the elimination of nuclear armaments were gaining little or no traction.

The NPT has long been dogged by tension between its five nuclear-armed parties and those 186 nations that have bound themselves never to possess nuclear weapons in the expectation that such arms would eventually be eliminated. The five NPT possessors and states allied to them see the road to a nuclear free world as requiring the banning of nuclear-weapons testing (via the CTBT) and a treaty banning production of fissile material (FMT).

But paralysis surrounds both steps, frustrating progress towards elimination. The CTBT’s entry into force and negotiation of a FMT are both blocked by states that possess nuclear weapons. Absent any recognition by possessors that multilateral nuclear disarmament had stalled, the international community reached a crossroads. The nuclear disarmament agenda could be surrendered to the possessors of nuclear weapons to take the next steps at their own pace (e.g., ratifying the CTBT; negotiating

a FMT in the CD (or elsewhere); implementing key actions agreed by them at NPT Review Conferences). Or the vacuum would be addressed in other ways.

Concern expressed universally in 2010 by NPT parties about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was harnessed to draw attention not only to the risks surrounding nuclear weapons but also to the chronic impasse just mentioned. Momentum, driven by a broad coalition of non-nuclear states, civil society and inter-governmental organizations including the UN and Red Cross Movement, quickly developed for prohibiting nuclear weapons as a fresh step. Its supporters were not persuaded by the rationale—put forward by nuclear-armed states and their allies—that nuclear disarmament had become a casualty of today’s fraught global security situation. To prohibition advocates, that argument was tantamount to a justification for nuclear weapons, and inconsistent with the NPT and its non-proliferation ethos.

With this standoff now deeply engrained, the decision of the UN General Assembly in October 2016 to undertake negotiation of what became the TPNW was well supported but far from consensual. The resulting treaty was adopted less than a year later with 122 in favour, one against (Netherlands) and one abstaining (Singapore). But those 50-plus UN member states that in 2016 had opposed or abstained on the call for a prohibition, largely opted out of the negotiation.

2. Effect

The TPNW has thus had a difficult and controversial birth. Assessment of its impact requires four acknowledgements:

- a prohibition of nuclear weapons is an essential step among measures needed for a nuclear-weapon free world (it already has counterparts banning chemical and biological arms);
- while the intention of the architects of the TPNW was that its terms exclude no state, support for

it from weapons-possessors and their allies that chose not to participate in its negotiation will nonetheless be hard won;

- given the time-consuming process of ratifying treaties, it is too early to assess—based on the level of formal support from states that have so far signed (56) or ratified the TPNW (5)—how effective it will be legally; and
- although it augments rather than supplants the NPT, the TPNW’s most valuable impact may be to precipitate moves to tackle the divide that is corroding the NPT. The TPNW’s emergence underlines a disturbing reality—a continuing lack of any coherence in charting the way forward for multilateral nuclear disarmament.

It is vital that nuclear-armed states and non-possessors acknowledge this last reality. Exploring scope for common ground might focus first on *methods* for bridging the gap (e.g., format for talks, informal expert groups, procedural framework for elimination). Next, issues of substance could be pursued (mitigating risk, identifying confidence-building measures, threat reduction, etc). In either case, these efforts must begin in earnest and with urgency – the recent moving of the hands of the symbolic Doomsday Clock to 2 Minutes to Midnight shows that the threat of a nuclear war through accident, miscalculation or intent has risen to an alarming level.

Mr. Tim Caughley

*Senior Fellow, United Nations Institute for
Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)*

[Column 3] The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Nuclear Disarmament

Yasuyoshi Komizo

1. Background on the Adoption of TPNW

The cold war ended more than 25 years ago, but we are still struggling with causes of conflict. While globalization proceeds, the sense of belonging to the same human family remains yet to be developed, and economic/social imbalance keeps expanding. Thus divisions, distrust, and conflicts among people remain the unfortunate reality. Furthermore, recent rise of intolerance and protectionism add risks of turning conflicts into armed confrontation. Nearly 15,000 nuclear weapons still exist in such a volatile world. Nuclear weapons are claimed to be weapons of deterrence, but they may be actually used as a result of accidents and/or miscalculations. The concept of nuclear deterrence is also contagious. It invites the danger of nuclear proliferation, as in the case of North Korea. The international community has begun to realize that the existence of nuclear weapons itself constitutes a security risk of the world. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry has stated that “the risk of nuclear catastrophe is greater today than during the Cold War.”¹

Despite strong opposition by major powers, the UN Conference adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in July 2017. This happened under the background of heightened international awareness of the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and risks of their actual use, which is widely spreading among civil society groups and non-nuclear weapons states.

Reflecting the basis of such awareness, the Preamble to the TPNW clearly notes the testimonies and earnest appeals for the nuclear abolition by the *hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The collective turning point for this reawakening to the horrors of nuclear weapons came with the three “International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons” held in 2013 and 2014. Participants in these Conferences came to realize that there had been numerous nuclear accidents and repeated cases placing nations on the verge of nuclear war. With such alarming knowledge, they listened to the testimony of the *Hibakusha*. This combination awakened the participants of the risks that anyone can become a victim of nuclear catastrophes, and it brought about a strong sense of ownership among large numbers of non-nuclear weapon states in nuclear disarmament negotiations.

2. The Nature of TPNW

Article 1 of the TPNW prohibits nuclear weapons, both comprehensively and indiscriminately. Other aspects of the TPNW should also be noted: The Preamble states to the effect that the TPNW reaffirms and builds upon relevant existing international laws, reaffirms the role of the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, and recognizes that a legally binding prohibition constitutes an important contribution towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. The last point is particularly important, since currently nuclear-weapon States (NWS) and nuclear umbrella states (hereinafter referred to collectively as “nuclear dependent states”) oppose the treaty. In order for the prohibition to contribute effectively towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, the TPNW encourages all states, including nuclear dependent states, to join the TPNW (Article 12); it also incorporates measures to enable wider participation of states.

[1] William J. Perry, “The Risk of Nuclear Catastrophe Is Greater Today Than During the Cold War,” *Huffington Post*, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/william-jperry/nuclear-catastrophe-risk_b_9019558.html.

For example, while a “verification” clause is indispensable for nuclear disarmament treaties, reliable verification clauses cannot be drafted without participation of the NWS. In order to cope with this difficulty in drafting a verification clause, the TPNW adopted a type of framework-agreement approach, in line with recommendations made by Mayors for Peace (A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WG.15). More specifically, Article 4 (on the total elimination of nuclear weapons) provides only a general outline in regard to the related verification measures, while Article 8 (Meeting of States Parties) includes in its mandate the consideration of specific measures of disarmament verification. States including nuclear dependent states that are not yet parties to the TPNW can participate in the deliberation of these meetings as observers.

3. Path towards Nuclear Disarmament

The TPNW has been adopted. Yet nuclear-dependent states oppose the treaty, arguing that it does not address security concerns. Instead, they propose a “step-by-step” approach as the only realistic measure. The problem is that there has not been any tangible progress in recent years. On the other hand, the risk of the nuclear weapons use as well as their humanitarian consequences have become much more widely recognized in the international community, and the very existence of nuclear weapons has become a serious security concern. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded last year to ICAN is clearly a reflection of such a trend.

The path we need to take is clear. Both supporters and opponents of the TPNW are under the NPT’s Article VI obligation to undertake to pursue nuclear disarmament negotiations in good faith. An immediate step should be for both camps, despite their differences, to come together and engage in dialogue focused on identifying and implementing practical nuclear disarmament measures. Through such efforts, further steps towards a nuclear-weapons-free world will become clearer.

In order to overcome the notion of “nuclear deterrence”, intensive efforts are needed worldwide, especially among nuclear-weapon States, to turn mutual distrust into mutual understanding. Even the difficult issues of Ukraine and North Korea can be made specific test cases for a fundamental shift from “confrontational security” to “cooperative security.” Nuclear deterrence does not at all contribute to—and in many ways detracts from—the settlement of contemporary issues such as terrorism and refugees that originate from mutual distrust and confrontation. Global cooperation beyond these differences is indispensable to cope with climate change and other global security challenges. We sincerely expect the political leadership in all countries to support progress in achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world. We hope they will learn and follow the decisive leadership precedents of advancing nuclear disarmament at a peak of international tension, such as the cases between John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, and between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan. Mayors for Peace will not spare any efforts, together with a wide range of civil society partners, to promote mutual understanding and cooperation in the global community, transcending differences in national boundaries, religions and cultures.

Mr. Yasuyoshi Komizo
Chairperson,
Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation

[Column 4] The TPNW and the Future of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Regime

Masahiko Asada

On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 122 votes in favor, one against and one abstention. From a standpoint solely based on this fact, one may have an impression that an epoch-making treaty to ban nuclear weapons was concluded, reflecting the “collective will” of the international community as a whole. This is not the case, however; the 122 States do not include any of the nuclear-armed States—neither the nuclear-weapon States (NWS) under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nor other nuclear weapon possessor States— or non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) allied with NWS (nuclear-allied NNWS). This fact generates concern that the TPNW may create, or further expand, a grave “division” in the international community.

Such a division may be created and/or expanded not only between nuclear-armed States and NNWS, but also between nuclear-allied NNWS and non-aligned (NAM) NNWS. In fact, such divisions may have already emerged prior to the conclusion of the treaty. While only five States (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and Israel) voted against the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution entitled “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations” in 2014, as many as 35 States (seven times more), including most of nuclear-armed States and nuclear-allied NNWS, voted against the 2016 version of the resolution according to which the UN conference to negotiate a TPNW was decided to convene. It could be said that the decision to start the negotiation and the conclusion of the TPNW resulted in pushing nuclear-

allied NNWS towards the nuclear-armed States’ side by pressuring them to give up their reliance on extended nuclear deterrence, notwithstanding those NNWS had, at least in surface appearance, taken similar lines with the NAM countries in terms of pursuing nuclear disarmament.

The TPNW, which was ratified by just five signatories as of January 2018, will enter into force in due course with the necessary ratifications of 50 States. According to the treaty, the TPNW process will start with the convening of the first meeting of States Parties within one year of its entry into force, which will be followed by further such meetings on a biennial basis. It would be natural that many of the NAM countries will emphasize the significance of the TPNW, which they took the initiatives to make. It is also easily expected that they would prefer the TPNW to the NPT, due particularly to the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament within the framework of the NPT. In such a case, a division between nuclear-allied NNWS and non-aligned NNWS, as well as one between nuclear-armed states and NNWS, will inevitably be further deepened. It would be more than unfortunate for nuclear disarmament should many NAM States lose interest in the NPT, and such a trend would seriously undermine the NPT process as a universal forum in which both NWS and NNWS participate.

One positive aspect of the adoption of the TPNW would be that it has dramatically demonstrated NAM countries’ frustrations over a lack of conspicuous progress in nuclear disarmament both multilaterally (since the adoption of the CTBT) and bilaterally (after the entry into force of the U.S.-Russian New START). It is of great importance that the NAM countries continue to get NWS to recognize the imperative of their efforts in nuclear disarmament within the NPT process, while reaffirming the paramount value of the NPT even after the entry into force of the TPNW.

Dr. Masahiko Asada

Professor,

Graduate School of Law, Kyoto University

[Column 5] Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Nuclear Disarmament

Anton Khlopkov

I first visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki in December 2016 – almost 20 years after I began to study nuclear physics. I probably should have paid that visit a lot sooner. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum are must-see places for everyone involved in nuclear issues, nonproliferation, and arms control. They cannot leave anyone indifferent. They are a stark reminder of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy used for military purposes. They also enable a deeper understanding of the nonproliferation crises we are facing today, as well as the history and roots of those crises. For example, when I visited the memorial in Hiroshima, I was taken aback that of the 120,000 people who died in the nuclear bombing on August 6, 1945, some 20,000 were Korean.

I am delighted that the Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures have recently been hosting a much greater number of various seminars, forums and conferences that draw experts – beginners as well as experienced professionals – specializing in nuclear nonproliferation, arms control, and international security. Visiting the two museums and meeting the *hibakusha* is an integral part of such events. These efforts are an important long-term investment in upholding peace and security, and advancing the cause of nuclear disarmament.

The goal of nuclear disarmament is impossible to

achieve overnight, because a world free of nuclear weapons does not equal the world as we know it, minus nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, such an approach – in other words, the idea of immediate mechanical renunciation of nuclear weapons – is pursued by the authors of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Nuclear weapons are deeply integrated into the complex, multi-tier, and multi-component national security systems of the nuclear-weapon states and their allies. One simply cannot mechanically snatch one of the crucial blocks from the foundation of that multi-tier pyramid without risking the whole construct teetering and perhaps falling over. What we can do, however, is use a phased, step-by-step approach to reduce the reliance of the construct on that particular block. In the longer term, we should try to re-design the construct, which is just as steady as the one we have now, but which does not rely on nuclear weapons as one of its key blocks – a construct in which the nuclear weapons block is replaced by something else.

Over the past 30 years, Russia and the United States have reduced their nuclear arsenals by 85%. Additionally, it is safe to say that Moscow and Washington have accumulated a wealth of experience in negotiating and implementing legally-binding commitments on nuclear arms reductions. With sufficient political will, that experience will enable them not only to make progress towards further reductions of their nuclear arsenals, but also to expedite the negotiations to that effect. Talks on the START I treaty, signed in 1991, took more than six years to complete. In contrast, the New START treaty, signed in Prague in 2010, took only 10 months to negotiate.

What, then, should be the nuclear disarmament priorities for the foreseeable future? As the possessors of largest nuclear arsenals, the United States and

Russia have a special responsibility to maintain strategic stability and reduce nuclear risks. But this is not a task for Russia and the United States alone – or even just for the five official nuclear-weapon states. This task requires multilateral efforts, undertaken either jointly or in parallel, depending on the specific issue.

Talking of Russia and the United States, the primary objective is to preserve and strengthen the already existing arms control architecture. The New START Treaty expires in 2021. The INF Treaty is facing difficult time. These and many other related issues require a resumption of regular, systemic dialogue between official representatives of the two states in the format of inter-agency delegations. Such dialogue would enable Russia and the United States to preserve the already concluded agreements and lay the ground for new steps towards nuclear disarmament.

Also, it is high time for all other nuclear-weapon and nuclear-armed states to make their own practical contribution to the nuclear disarmament process. They could start, for example, by making unilateral announcements of their first – perhaps symbolic – steps to reduce their arsenals.

The non-nuclear-weapon states should also make tangible steps to create an environment that would be conducive to further nuclear disarmament measures. Speaking especially of the nuclear-umbrella states, these countries should reduce the role of foreign nuclear weapons in upholding their own national security. The countries that host foreign nuclear weapons in their territory should move steadily towards those weapons' withdrawal. The non-nuclear-weapon states that have stockpiles of weapons-usable nuclear materials in their territory should consider the possibility of irreversible disposition of such materials – preferably using an economically sustainable technology (in other words,

by using those materials as nuclear fuel).

Complete nuclear disarmament could not be done “at one stroke”, as authors of the TPNW propose. It requires long-term investments and multilateral efforts and should proceed on the basis of increasing rather than reducing strategic stability.

Mr. Anton Khlopkov

Director,

Center for Energy and Security Studies (CENESS)

[Column 6] The NPT Regime: Towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference

Tytti Erästö and Sibylle Bauer

There are several negative dynamics at play that are boding ill for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. As with the 2015 Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) parties to the NPT (i.e. the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States—known as the P5) have little to show in terms of progress on disarmament. The frustration of non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) with this situation was a significant factor in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) that was adopted in July 2017. The P5 and their allies have almost uniformly rejected the new treaty as a threat to the established NPT-based order. Thus, the immediate short-term impact of the TPNW has been increased polarization.

While the TPNW seems to many like the most controversial issue among NPT members, it is merely the tip of the iceberg of deeper divisions regarding the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. Is there a way to bridge these divisions by the 2020 NPT Review Conference, and what would a failure to do so mean for the non-proliferation and disarmament regime?

1. Revitalising the NPT's disarmament pillar

Over the almost half a century of the NPT's existence, disarmament has proven to be the weakest of the treaty's three pillars (nonproliferation, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and disarmament). The 13 "practical steps" adopted in 2000 and the 64-point action plan agreed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference created renewed hopes that were then dashed. Apart from the conclusion and

implementation of the 2010 New START Treaty and the Nuclear Glossary, the P5 have had very little to show in terms of concrete disarmament steps. Another major source of frustration within the NPT has been the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution regarding the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction free zone in the Middle East. Indeed, this latter issue was the single most important reason for the lack of a final consensus document at the 2015 Review Conference.

In an attempt to escape the constraints of the consensus-based NPT framework and of the traditional security paradigm dominating discourse on nuclear weapons, the majority of the non-nuclear weapon states sought a different approach by bringing international humanitarian law to bear on the issue of nuclear weapons. In 2013–14, the NNWS organized a series of conferences highlighting the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. These conferences contributed to the General Assembly vote by 113 states in December 2016 to begin negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. The negotiations were concluded in July 2017, resulting in the adoption of the TPNW.

According to its negotiators, one of the aims of the TPNW is to strengthen the NPT's disarmament pillar and fill the so-called legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. While the legal prohibition of the TPNW does not apply to nuclear weapon states as long as they remain outside of the treaty, the assumption is that the TPNW could indirectly influence them by strengthening the universal stigma against nuclear weapons.

While the TPNW may work as intended in the long term, its most evident short-term effect has been increasing polarization among the NPT membership. With the exception of the China, the P5 have criticized the TPNW for creating unrealistic expectations and

ignoring current security problems and the role of nuclear weapons in existing security doctrines. A number of factors have arguably contributed to the relatively low number of signatures and ratifications of the NWPT thus far: fears that overlaps between the NPT and the TPNW could lead to a fragmentation of disarmament efforts; reservations about parts of the TPNW text and its relationship with the NPT; and US pressure against signing the treaty.¹

2. Importance of the 2020 Review Conference and ways ahead

Regardless of their position on the TPNW, the majority of the NNWS continue to be frustrated with what they see as the P5's lack of commitment to their disarmament obligations. From this perspective, the most effective way to reduce polarization would be for the P5 to clearly move towards meeting their long-established obligations through practical steps.

It might, therefore, make sense for all states parties to move beyond the TPNW divisions by identifying and committing to the most practicable steps towards disarmament. As outlined by previous NPT documents, these include such measures as reducing the risk of accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons; bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Furthermore—while US-Russian strategic arms reductions have traditionally been considered separate from the multilateral disarmament issues—any progress on this front would also reinforce the NPT framework. In particular, saving the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty from collapsing would be crucial for preventing backward progress in nuclear arms control. More multilateral attention should be given to measures for advancing transparency

and reporting on nuclear arsenals as well as to development of new tools for verifying nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the NPT's non-proliferation pillar could be reinforced by encouraging states that have not done so to adopt Additional Protocols to their existing IAEA safeguards agreements as a new verification baseline. At the same time, support for non-proliferation also means respecting existing agreements, notably continued and clear support of the Iran nuclear deal by all P5 states.

Finally, finding a more cordial way of discussing the TPNW would pave the way for constructive discussions at the NPT, as both treaties share the long-term goal of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. Agreeing on specific and tangible outcomes in 2020 will be essential for the future credibility and legitimacy of the NPT.

Dr. Tytti Erästö

Researcher, Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-proliferation Programme, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Dr. Sibylle Bauer

Director of Studies, Armament and Disarmament, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

[1] Although 122 countries voted for the adoption of the TPNW in July 2017, by Feb. 2018 only 56 countries had signed the treaty and 5 ratified it.

[Column 7] Regional Security and Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones

John H. King

Regional security is an important way to augment general worldwide security. But it is a confusing concept, primarily because it is so difficult to define. What are the elements of regional security? When is it achieved? Is it a goal or a process? The answers to these and related questions indicate that credible regional security depends on using a variety of security-related instruments in a redundant and overlapping way. And these elements must be directly targeted to the specific needs of any given region.

One of these instruments is the Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (NWFZ), which has long been recognized as a way to enhance security in various regions of the world. NWFZs seek to augment regional security by emphasizing the absence of nuclear weapons there as well as by formalizing the agreement of Nuclear-Weapons States (NWS) not to bring into or use nuclear weapons within those regions. In this sense, NWFZ agreements are highly visible symbols that support the objectives of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and give it increased political and legal weight within a region.

Furthermore, regional NWFZ treaties work even better when augmented by other legal and political instruments such as non-aggression pacts, no-first-use (of nuclear weapons) declarations, conventional arms control treaties and the like. But NWFZ treaties have a primary place in the panoply of regional security elements because of their special political visibility, the

fact that the main states in the region are directly involved, and because the five nuclear powers recognized in the NPT sign special protocols giving specific assurances on observing NWFZ treaty requirements.

Although many regions of the world are already covered by NWFZ treaties, important areas remain outside these treaty zones. The two most important are the regions of the Middle East and of Northeast Asia. (Europe and North America are important regions as well but are not examined here since they are composed mostly of non-nuclear countries that nevertheless have implicit nuclear obligations as a result of their NATO treaty membership.)

While the effort to achieve a Middle Eastern NWFZ treaty has received much attention in the UN and its First Committee (Disarmament) for many years, far less attention has been focused on the possibility of such a treaty for the Northeast Asian region. While there are fewer potential members of such a treaty in this region (see below), there could be substantial benefits for the region if an appropriate NFWZ treaty could be achieved. This is because the Northeast Asian region runs through a fault line of potentially immediate nuclear conflict, given the existence there of nuclear-armed states and states protected by “nuclear-umbrella” security treaties that do not exist in other such regions. But this is also why a NWFZ treaty for this region would be so very difficult to achieve, and yet so much more important.

A definition of the Northeast Asia security region would include the following states or regions: China, Mongolia, South Korea, North Korea, Russia and Japan. Note, however, that this definition has important anomalies. Mongolia already has Nuclear Weapon-Free (NWF) status,

while formerly independent Macao and Hong Kong are now part of China even though they have a degree of autonomy within that country. China and Russia are defined as NWS, while North Korea possesses nuclear weapons and has left the NPT. South Korea and Japan have defense agreements with the United States that place them under the U.S. nuclear umbrella even if both countries foreswear permitting nuclear weapons into their territories. (Nevertheless, both are NPT members and could thus form a NWFZ.) Taiwan is not recognized as a Member State by the UN and legally cannot be a member of a state-based agreement such as a NWFZ treaty, even if it already adheres informally to the principles of many arms control and disarmament treaties.

For the Northeast Asia region, the most immediate security threat is posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and rogue state status. This must be dealt with first and foremost, with Japan and South Korea playing a major role in view of their close proximity to North Korea. In this regard, presented below are some options for improving regional security such as modified NWFZs, related *sui generis* arrangements and political/diplomatic elements that would lead to improved confidence and security. These options admittedly require new and "outside the box" political thinking and cooperation, but the deteriorating security situation in the region requires this.

First, both Japan and South Korea could seek to join the Bangkok Treaty—amended to permit expansion—thus converting it into an East Asian NWFZ. Article 15 of that Treaty provides for accession by additional states. The main advantage is that the adhesion of both countries to the Bangkok Treaty would give that Treaty greater visibility and effectiveness within the

enlarged zone in dealing with North Korea's nuclear weapons capabilities.

Second, and failing the possibility of joining the Bangkok Treaty, Japan and South Korea could simply establish a Northeast Asia NWFZ between themselves. Although lacking the greater support that an expanded Bangkok Treaty would offer, the smaller NWFZ could still produce a noticeable security effect in the region by demonstrating both countries' desire to work together to offset North Korea's threatening nuclear posture.

Third, as the regional countries most affected, Japan and South Korea together could seek – in partnership with the NWS – the normalization of relations with North Korea so as to provide the political base for dealing peacefully with the security problems caused by its nuclear status. There is precedent: the normalization of relations between the U.S. and China in 1979. Should this be possible – and there is no reason it should not be if planned and executed carefully – steps could then be taken to negotiate an end to the still-existing 1953 armistice as well as various complementary actions to reduce security tensions in the Northeast Asian area and, most importantly, to avoid a catastrophic war.

A necessary precondition, however, would have to be open recognition that North Korea's possesses nuclear weapons. In this regard, there are precedents since members of the international community have already done as much with Israel, Pakistan and India. Such recognition could facilitate negotiations leading ultimately to the re-association of North Korea with the international community and the regularization of the political status of the Korean peninsula, among other goals. A regional East Asia or Northeast Asia NWFZ treaty with its implementing/review organizations would

enhance operational and political efforts to this end and would provide a coordination mechanism concerning nuclear disarmament strategies. The benefits for regional security in Northeast Asia, and for Japan and South Korea in particular, could be enormous.

The proposals made above are just a few examples of steps that might be taken to achieve these important goals. There are obviously others or combinations thereof that can also be considered. The point is that if the security of the Northeast region is to be satisfactorily achieved, a great deal of inventiveness and willingness to shatter long-standing (not to say encrusted) policies will be needed. Hopefully the countries of the region will be able to meet the challenge.

Dr. John H. King

*Research Fellow, United Nations Institute for
Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)*