

Building Bridges to Effective Nuclear Disarmament: Recommendations for the 2020 Review Process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Recommendations of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament

Report by Tariq Rauf



Source: http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press11e_000024.html

Urgent steps to address crumbling nuclear disarmament efforts and mounting nuclear dangers, will be presented in Geneva, Switzerland, by a group of international experts as preparations get under way 23 April 2018 for the 2020 review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Among concerns expressed by the group is the necessity of maintaining the taboo against using nuclear weapons that has held for 73-years and refocusing the vision of a world without nuclear weapons that has become blurred.

“The stalemate over nuclear weapons is not tenable,” the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament (EPG) says in recommendations that urge all States to “reaffirm the understanding that nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought.”

The [Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr Taro Kono](#), was formally presented with the [recommendations](#) on 29 March 2018, by the chair of the group, Prof. Takashi Shiraishi, president of the Institute of Asian Economic Studies, of the Japan External Trade Organization.

“In the recommendations, the EPG views the current situation that two opposing trends in disarmament have come into sharper relief in parallel to the deteriorating global strategic environment in recent years, and that states with divergent views have been unable to engage with each other in dialogue,” [Kono](#) said receiving the recommendations.

“Against this backdrop, the group recommends the measures for the international community to seek for a common ground in which we can pursue a world free of nuclear weapons while improving the international security environment in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT),” he said.

“The recommendations propose to enhance the NPT review process along with increasing transparency over nuclear arsenals, to develop effective verification mechanisms, and to tackle ‘hard questions’ about the relationship between security and disarmament.”

On the official website of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kono said the recommendations served international efforts under difficult circumstances - such as recent deterioration of the international strategic environment to converge different approaches towards achieving a nuclear weapons free world.

He requested the EPG chair and its members continue their discussions in the next Japanese fiscal year.

Meanwhile, the recommendations will be presented at a side-event on 25th April to the [Second Session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 NPT Review Conference](#), 23 April - 4 May in Geneva.

Atomic Reporters director, Tariq Rauf, is one of the 16 members of the [Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament](#) (SAG). The Group comprising six Japanese and 10 international experts, participating in their personal capacities and drawn from both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states.

The Group finalized its recommendations at its [second meeting](#) held on 26-27 March 2018 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. During its two-day session, a series of events was held, including a [working dinner](#) hosted by Foreign Minister Kono on 26 March. A roundtable with members of the National Diet of Japan, representing various parliamentary associations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was held 27 March, followed by a dinner hosted by Mr. Mitsunari Okamoto, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.



Meeting in Tokyo, 26-27 March 2018: Source: http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000066.html



Group photo with Foreign Minister Kono: Source: http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_001974.html

Report and Recommendations

The [Recommendations](#) of the [Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament](#) (SAG) are directed towards supporting a civil dialogue between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States and cover the following issues:

- The vision for a world without nuclear weapons has become blurred and needs to be refocused.
- Two opposing trends in disarmament have come into sharper relief.
- Deepening concerns over the deteriorating strategic environment impel some states to reaffirm reliance on nuclear deterrence in the belief that nuclear deterrence benefits national and international security and stability and prevents a major war.
- At the same time, other States and civil society groups, including [hibakusha](#), seek the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay, based on deep concerns about the risks of catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear use, as reflected in the adoption of the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (TPNW).
- The stalemate over nuclear disarmament is not tenable. Whatever the disagreements expressed by States regarding the [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons \(NPT\)](#) process and the TPNW, it is not in any State's interest to allow the foundation of the global nuclear order to crumble.
- It is a common interest of all States to improve the international security environment and pursue a world without nuclear weapons in line with [Article VI](#) of the NPT (on nuclear disarmament).
- The international community must move urgently to narrow and ultimately resolve its differences. Civility in discourse and respect for divergent views must be restored to facilitate a joint search for a common ground for dialogue, where all parties even though they might have different perspectives can work together to reduce nuclear dangers

- 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.
- The NPT remains central to advancing our common goal of a world without nuclear weapons.
- To preserve the NPT, all states parties should fulfill 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](#). 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 [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.
- The Russia-US nuclear arms control framework constitutes a fundamental basis for the global nuclear arms and threat reduction effort. The Group urges the Russian Federation and the United States to spare no effort to re-engage and to rehabilitate the framework to secure further reductions in nuclear forces. The most urgent task is the extension of the [New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty \(New START\)](#) for five years.
- Full compliance by all parties with all elements of the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#) is essential to the integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. All stakeholders should continue to support full implementation of the JCPOA, which is underpinned by [United Nations Security Council Resolution \(UNSCR\) 2231](#).
- Catastrophic consequences from the [North Korean](#) nuclear and missile crisis must be prevented. All stakeholders are urged to make every effort to resolve the problems through peaceful means, and to achieve the complete verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Bridge-Building Actions

1. A range of activities to build bridges across the nuclear disarmament divide should be designed to yield a clear common vision for achieving a world without nuclear weapons. “Bridge builders” should consider developing an agenda that requires diverse states to

openly address the fundamental issues and questions that create the divide, so that possible pathways to common ground can be identified and concrete effective steps toward nuclear disarmament can be taken. In particular, despite their diverging approaches to achieving nuclear disarmament, the common commitment of nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states to the objective of the NPT offers a useful point of departure for bridge-building. **The Group recommends the following actions with the recognition that governments along with civil society organizations can jointly play effective roles.**

Enhancing the implementation of the NPT review process

2. All NPT States parties should demonstrate ownership of their treaty – in Statements but also by making concrete and practical suggestions. These could be unconditional voluntary actions, reports on treaty implementation and bridge-building proposals that demonstrate States’ commitments during the review cycle.
3. National reports can be better utilized in the NPT strengthened review process. In particular, it would be useful to convene a session at the third PrepCom, at which nuclear-weapon States explain their national reports, followed by an interactive discussion with other States parties and civil society participants. Information on steps towards nuclear disarmament envisaged by the nuclear-weapon States in the step-by-step approach would be helpful.
4. “Bridge builders” could take initiatives in fostering a dialogue, involving both nuclear-armed States and non-nuclear-weapon States, to improve understanding of and develop enhanced transparency measures intended to: (a) contribute effectively to threat reduction and risk reduction; (b) address security concerns incurred during the process of nuclear disarmament; and (c) improve confidence and trust among all types of States – nuclear-armed States, States under extended nuclear deterrence and TPNW proponent States. The dialogue could address relevant issues, such as concrete measures for reduction, transparency about doctrine, and the policy dimensions of nuclear arsenals, through interactive discussions rather than repetitive statements. In addition, the dialogue should review the content, format, and cost of national reports.

Confidence-building measures as a foundation for bridge building

5. Nuclear-armed States, in cooperation with States under extended nuclear deterrence arrangements, should find ways to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security policies.
6. Nuclear-weapon States should strengthen negative security assurance commitments enshrined in [UN Security Council Resolution 984](#) to NPT non-nuclear-weapon States and States parties to treaties on [nuclear-weapon-free zones](#). Those who are not able to do it

should explain why. Nuclear-weapon States also should consider how to best utilize declaratory policies for confidence-building, including suggesting ways that would allow more empirical assessments that stated declaratory policies are actually operative.

Preparing the ground for convergence of different approaches

A) Identifying elements of nuclear disarmament

7. There currently exists no widely shared understanding of what security-enhancing, verifiable and enforceable nuclear disarmament should entail. The international community will not be able to decide on and implement nuclear disarmament without more clarity on what it will require. States that rely on nuclear deterrence – directly or through alliances – and states that support immediate prohibition should take up this challenge in the NPT process as well as through other forums.

B) Intensifying efforts to develop monitoring, verification and compliance mechanisms

8. Development of effective monitoring, verification and compliance mechanisms is necessary for the achievement of nuclear disarmament. The process of developing such means should in itself help build confidence among nuclear-armed states and between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-weapon states.
9. Several initiatives are currently being undertaken by individual states and groups of states, including nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, to investigate technologies, techniques and methodologies to ensure effective monitoring and verification of nuclear disarmament. Reliable, cost-effective technologies that provide a high level of confidence without disclosure of sensitive information to non-nuclear-weapon states should be the goal. Current efforts should be continued and afforded the necessary resources. Ideally, there should be collaboration among current initiatives to help accelerate progress, with regular reports to the NPT review process. All States should begin to consider how they might contribute to monitoring and verification.
10. A technical study under the auspices of the UN should be undertaken that would ascertain the possibility of conducting verification activities without disclosure of sensitive information (such disclosure would run counter to the provisions of Articles I and II of the NPT), and lay the ground for further efforts to develop nuclear disarmament verification mechanisms involving all interested NPT States parties.
11. An even greater challenge than ensuring effective monitoring and verification is to design and agree on measures to ensure compliance by states with their legally binding obligations, including the use of enforcement measures, when non-compliance occurs. Among the worst-case scenarios that must be confronted is the “breakout” of a State from

a nuclear-weapon-free world by acquiring a nuclear weapon or weapons. To give all states the confidence that nuclear disarmament will be effective and durable, agreed mechanisms must be created to ensure timely enforcement. Research into this relatively neglected but vital subject should be accelerated both by governments and civil society, and results shared in the NPT review process.

12. The control of weapons-usable fissile material – highly enriched uranium (HEU) and weapons-usable plutonium – is both a near term imperative and a prerequisite for disarmament. States are encouraged to end production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; those that continue to produce such material are encouraged to clarify what prevents them from stopping.

13. In this regard, all states should:

- a) Ensure the highest standards of physical protection and security for existing stocks of such material; and
- b) Work cooperatively to develop widely accepted techniques for the irreversible and verifiable disposition of excess ex-weapons fissile material.

14. A world free of nuclear weapons will require an agreed, legally-binding global regime that regulates production, provides verifiable accounting of existing material, provides adequate safeguards against its use in nuclear weapon, and disposes of it in an irreversible and verifiable manner. This regime should include effective provisions to ensure that HEU used in nuclear-powered warships or civilian uses cannot be diverted to weapons use. All states possessing HEU or weapon-usable plutonium should work toward developing the characteristics of such a regime.

C) Setting a nuclear disarmament agenda that addresses hard questions about the relationship between security and disarmament

15. There are fundamental differences within and between states regarding the utility of nuclear deterrence. The existence of these differences needs to be accepted and addressed constructively if they are then to be reconciled in a way that will make the elimination of nuclear arsenals possible. Proponents and opponents of nuclear deterrence must persist in bridging their differences. Although nuclear deterrence may arguably enhance stability in certain environments, it is a dangerous long-term basis for global security and therefore all states should seek a better long-term solution.

16. Meanwhile, all states should:

- a) Reaffirm the understanding that nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought; and
- b) Restore civility in discourse, without which there is no cooperation.

17. In addition, nuclear-armed states should:

- a) Eschew any nuclear war-fighting doctrine; and
- b) Refrain from coercive action based on the threat of use of nuclear weapons;

18. “Bridge builders” should launch honest dialogue that:

- a) Seeks to design a disarmament process or framework with effective measures and benchmarks;
- b) Aims to establish common ground for all states by setting an agenda comprised of hard questions that: (1) address the right of self-defence, which under extreme circumstances of national survival could envisage the possibility of limited threat of use or use of nuclear weapons, mindful of international humanitarian law, taking into account the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and protection of civilians, non-combatants and the environment; and (2) ensure that human security is considered in designing a world free of nuclear weapons, while preserving international peace and security; and
- c) Seeks solutions to the ultimate dilemma facing nuclear disarmament: how to guarantee the security of all states by ensuring compliance with the obligations under such a regime, including timely enforcement when other measures fail to achieve compliance.

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Atomic Reporters will cover the [Second Session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 NPT Review Conference](#) being held in Geneva from 23 April to 4 May 2018 with Tariq Rauf providing Daily Reports, as in 2017 and in 2015..