

Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament: Why It Matters and What's Next

ACA | Arms Control Association

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“Today, should total war ever break out again—no matter how—our two countries would become the primary targets...

All we have built, all we have worked for, would be destroyed in the first 24 hours....

We are both caught up in a vicious and dangerous cycle in which suspicion on one side breeds suspicion on the other, and new weapons beget counter-weapons.”

—**John F. Kennedy**, American University, June 10, 1963



Decades in the Making.

1963: U.S.-Soviet "Hotline" Agreement & Limited Test Ban Treaty

1967: Latin American Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

1968: Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

1972: Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT)/Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

1975: Nuclear Suppliers Group

1979: SALT II

1985: South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

1987: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

1987: Missile Technology Control Regime

1991: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I

1991: U.S.-Soviet Presidential Nuclear Initiatives

1991-2: Soviet Nuclear Test Moratorium/U.S. Nuclear Test Moratorium

1995: Indefinite Extension of the NPT

1995: Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

1996: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

1996: African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

2002: Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty

2006: Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

2010: New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

2017: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Arms Control... has been critical to creating:

“... an era where adversaries could disagree and debate across basically every domain but could always find ways to work together to limit nuclear risks.”

“An era where world leaders chose transparency even during times of tension—especially during times of tension—because what was at stake was too important, too vital to our shared future.”

“But over the last few years—that foundation has begun to erode.”

- ***Jake Sullivan, June 2, 2023***



A Nuclear Arms Control System Under Stress....

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1975: Nuclear Suppliers Group- voluntary system

1979: SALT II

1985: South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

1987: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

1987: Missile Technology Control Regime-voluntary system

1991: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I

1991: U.S.-Soviet Presidential Nuclear Initiatives

1991-2: Soviet Nuclear Test Moratorium/U.S. Nuclear Test Moratorium

1995: Extension of the NPT – key disarmament commitments unfulfilled

1995: Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

1996: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) –has not entered into force

1996: African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

2002: Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty

2006: Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty

2010: New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – expires Feb. 5, 2026

2017: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear Deja Vu (All Over Again)

“
Today--perhaps more than any other time since the Cold War—
we must work to reduce the risk of an arms race or nuclear escalation.”

- ***Joe Biden, June 2, 2022***

“Today, humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation.”

- ***António Guterres, August 2, 2022***



What is to be done?

Halting and Reversing the Arms Race and Preventing N-Use Involves:

Jumpstarting U.S.-Russian Disarmament Diplomacy

Engaging China and Other N-Armed States

Universalizing Nuclear Risk Reduction Practices

Mitigating the Adverse Effects of New Military Technologies, such as AI

What is to be done? (cont.)

Reducing the Role and Salience of Nuclear Weapons/Deterrence

Reinforcing the Nuclear Taboos Against Nuclear Use, Threats, and Testing

Underscoring the Catastrophic Consequences of Nuclear Use



“Conveying the reality of the nuclear attack is important as a starting point for all nuclear disarmament efforts.”

-- Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, 2023

Deterrence vs. Disarmament

“There is a tension between nuclear deterrence policies and the ability of the international community to *categorically* reject nuclear weapons as instruments of policy and coercion.”

... and as a result, “the general approach [of the nuclear weapon States] is to manage the status quo and prevent any measure that would actually demonstrate readiness to move away from reliance on nuclear weapons” and to make real progress on achieving nuclear disarmament.

- Amb. Alexander Kmentt, June 2, 2023

For more information see:

www.armscontrol.org

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