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The G7 Hiroshima Summit and the Challenges to Nuclear Disarmament

*Mitsuru KUROSAWA**

Abstract

The G7 Summit in 2023 was held in Hiroshima, Japan on May 19-21, and many issues connecting with nuclear disarmament were widely discussed. In this Summit the leaders from France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada as well as the representative from the European Union have participated. First, this paper introduces the contents and results of the Summit, and then it evaluates its outcomes from the viewpoint of the progress toward nuclear disarmament. Second, as the challenges to nuclear disarmament in the future, it examines (i) the negotiations on nuclear disarmament after the New START Treaty, (ii) ensuring the non-use of nuclear weapons, (iii) nuclear risk reduction, and (iv) the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As the current international security environment is very tough, the progress in nuclear disarmament seems to be very difficult.

Introduction

The current international security environment regarding nuclear weapons is extremely severe, with Russia launching a military invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and threatening to use nuclear weapons. The past achievement regarding nuclear disarmament have been largely discarded, and the situation is conversely moving in the direction of a nuclear arms race.

The G7 Hiroshima Summit, held against this backdrop and partly on the strong initiative of Prime Minister Kishida, featured a large discussion of nuclear disarmament in a way not seen at previous summits, with the G7 leaders gathering in Hiroshima to address the reality of the atomic bombing and adopting documents specifically on nuclear disarmament. Even if these formal aspects can be considered a great success, the Summit's conclusions on the substantive progress toward nuclear disarmament are extremely inadequate because three of the members are nuclear weapon states and the other four are states under the nuclear

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umbrella, and because the Summit strongly emphasized policies based on nuclear deterrence. As a result, the action plan toward nuclear disarmament is extremely inadequate.

Against this backdrop, looking ahead to future progress in nuclear disarmament, it is recognized that progress in the traditional direction of halting and further reducing quantitative and qualitative expansion of nuclear weapons will be difficult for the time being, and the emphasis has shifted to examining measures to reduce the likelihood that nuclear weapons will be used. It has become almost impossible to agree on a successor to the New START Treaty, and it is unclear to what extent an agreement can be reached to reduce the risk of the use of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which adopts a humanitarian approach to promoting nuclear weapons, has been concluded, and the significance of an approach that reject nuclear weapons altogether will also be examined.

I Outcome of the G7 Hiroshima Summit and its Evaluation

1 Movements leading to the G7 Summit

The Japanese Government and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida made an early decision to hold this summit in Hiroshima, and preparations were underway with the expectation that the nuclear disarmament agenda would be actively discussed. 7 years ago, at the Ise-Shima Summit in Japan, then Foreign Minister Kishida led the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hiroshima, and it adopted the G7 Foreign Ministers' Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation. The Ise-Shima Summit Declaration states that "We reaffirm that the non-proliferation and disarmament issues are among our top priorities. We reaffirm our commitment to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a nuclear-weapon-free world in a way that promotes international stability." Immediately following the summit, U.S. President Barak Obama also flew to Hiroshima, visited Peace Memorial Museum, offered flowers to the Cenotaph for the atomic bomb victims, and delivered a prestigious speech on a world free of nuclear weapons and made informal contacts with hibakushas.

Prime Minister Kishida proposed the "Hiroshima Action Plan" in a speech on August 1, 2022, the first day of the NPT Review Conference¹⁾. It was presented as

1) "Statement of Japan," General Debate, August 1, 2022. 10th NPT Review Conference.
[https://unoda-documents-library.s3.amazonaws.com/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Tenth_Review_Conference_\(2022\)/Statement_by_Japan.pdf](https://unoda-documents-library.s3.amazonaws.com/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Tenth_Review_Conference_(2022)/Statement_by_Japan.pdf)

the first step in a realistic roadmap linking the ideal of a nuclear-weapon-free world with the reality of a challenging security environment. The Plan included (i) sharing the importance of continued non-use of nuclear weapons, (ii) increasing transparency, (iii) maintaining a downward trend in the number of nuclear weapons, (iv) non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and (v) promotion of visits to the A-bombed cities by heads of state and others. These action plans were broadly incorporated in the G7 Summit consensus documents.

2 G7 Foreign Ministers' Communiqué²⁾

On April 16-18, 2023, the Foreign Ministers met in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, and issued the G7 Foreign Ministers' Communiqué, which included the following contents on nuclear disarmament.

- (i) We are committed to maintaining and strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation efforts for a more secure, stable, and safer world.
- (ii) We reaffirm our commitment to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, achieved through a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach.
- (iii) The overall decline in global nuclear arsenals must continue and not be reversed. We call for the immediate commencement of long-overdue negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (FMCT). We underline the urgent need to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force.
- (iv) The G7 is committed to working with all states to further identify and implement measures to minimize risks of nuclear weapons use and to strengthen arms control. We deeply regret Russia's decision to suspend the New START Treaty, and call on Russia to return to its full implementation and resume dialogue with the U.S. regarding the reduction of nuclear risks. We are also concerned about China's ongoing and accelerating expansion of nuclear arsenal, and development of increasingly sophisticated delivery systems, without transparency, good faith arms control or risk reduction measures.

2) "G7 Japan 2023 Foreign Ministers' Communiqué," April 18, 2023 Karuizawa, Nagano.
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100492725.pdf>

3 G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament³⁾

This is the first time that a special consensus document dedicated to nuclear disarmament has been issued at a G7 Summit, and the fact that agreement was reached on the following detailed content regarding nuclear disarmament demonstrates how important this meeting in Hiroshima was to nuclear disarmament.

- (i) We reaffirm our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all.
- (ii) We underscore the importance of the 77-year record of non-use of nuclear weapons. Threats by Russia of nuclear weapons use are inadmissible. We recall the P5 Joint Statement, and we reaffirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Our security policies are based on the understanding that nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war and coercion.
- (iii) The overall decline in global nuclear arsenals achieved since the end of the Cold War must continue and not be reversed. The NPT must be upheld as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- (iv) We emphasize the importance of transparency with regard to nuclear weapons.
- (v) We call for the immediate commencement of long overdue negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).
- (vi) We are resolute in our view that no nation should carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion, condemn any threat to do so, and emphasize the bringing the CTBT into force is another urgent matter.
- (vii) A world without nuclear weapons cannot be achieved without non-proliferation. We reiterate our unwavering commitment to the goal of North Korea's complete, verifiable, and irreversible abandonment of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. We remain deeply concerned about Iran's unabated escalation of its nuclear program.
- (viii) We underscore the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education and outreach. We encourage other leaders, youth and people

3) "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament," May 19, 2023, Hiroshima.
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100506512.pdf>

around the world to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

4 G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communique⁴⁾

The Hiroshima Leaders' Communique is the central document covering the entire G7 Hiroshima Summit. Nuclear disarmament is mentioned in two places, first in the first item "Preamble" three lines long. The other is in the item 5 titled "Disarmament and Non-Proliferation," 13 lines long, but here we quote the first seven lines that directly relate to nuclear disarmament.

- (i) We are taking concrete steps to: Strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, toward the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all.
- (ii) Together with the G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament, we express our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, through taking a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach. We reaffirm the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts to create a more stable and safer world. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

5 Evaluation of the G7 Hiroshima Summit: Formal Aspects

The first aspect is to provide an opportunity for many people to experience the reality of the atomic bombings as part of education for the advancement of nuclear disarmament, and visit to the A-bombed cities by heads of state and young people, which has been encouraged at the NPT Review Conferences and elsewhere. M. Lorenzini states that "Kishida's decision to host the summit in Hiroshima rather than Tokyo or Osaka – two of the main economic metropolises of Japan – sent a clear signal to domestic and international audiences that Tokyo's commitment to a world without nuclear threat is a priority for his administration."⁵⁾

First, the G7 leaders visited Hiroshima, offered flowers at Peace Memorial

4) "G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communique," May 20, 2023.

https://www.G7hiroshima.go.jp/documents/pdf/Leaders_Communique_01_en.pdf

5) Marina Lorenzini, "In Hiroshima, the G7 economies leverage global security gains," May 22, 2023, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

https://thebulletin.org/2023/05/in-hiroshima-the-g7-economies-leverage-global-security-gains/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=ThursdayNewsletter05252023&utm_content=NuclearRisk-HiroshimaG7_05222023

Park, visited Peace Memorial Museum, and listened to A-bombed survivors. Even if the effects of their visit will not be immediately apparent, it should be appreciated that they provided an opportunity to experience the reality of the atomic bombing. Furthermore, the fact that not only the leaders of the G7 countries but also the leaders of the invited states – Republic of Korea, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Comoros, India, Vietnam, the Cook Islands – as well as Ukraine visited Hiroshima and were exposed to the reality of the atomic bombing is considered a major achievement of this meeting.

The second aspect is that, in a major departure from previous summits, this year's summit gave priority to nuclear disarmament issues by holding the summit in Hiroshima and for the first time adopted a separate and special document, the "G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Vision on Nuclear Disarmament." That was the result of the efforts of Japan as the chairing country and Prime Minister Kishida as the chair. This fact should be highly appreciated.

G7 summits originally focused on the discussion of economic issues, and the agenda has gradually expanded to include political issues. At this year's summit, the agenda covered Ukraine, disarmament and non-proliferation, India-Pacific, global economy, finance and sustainable development, energy, food security, regional affairs and others. In the G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communique, nuclear disarmament issues are described as one of the most important issues next to the Ukraine issue. The G7 Leaders' Vision on Nuclear Disarmament also includes the above-mentioned contents. It is the first time that such a special consensus document has been prepared in this way, and its contents are extremely detailed.

6 Evaluation of the G7 Hiroshima Summit: Substantial Aspects

First, G7 expresses "its commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all through taking a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach," emphasizing the pursuit of "the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons" and the importance of "strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation efforts."

This part of the document, stated as a general statement of opinion, stipulates that a world without nuclear weapons is the "ultimate goal," and that it must be achieved "through a realistic, pragmatic and responsible approach." However, there are no specific statements how to do so, and they are only very abstract provisions. It also includes the reservation "with undiminished security for all," which traditionally implies a veto by a state unwilling to pursue nuclear disarmament. As a result, these do not indicate a policy of actively pursuing

nuclear disarmament.

K. Swanson sharply criticizes this point by stating “Yet, all countries comprising G-7 have nuclear weapons in their security policies. The G-7 leaders promote the hibakusha vision of global nuclear disarmament while allowing this goal to remain a vision. In the final communique issued by the summit, the group declares they have ‘taken concrete steps to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation efforts’ without specifying what these steps are. They proceed to condemn Russia’s nuclear threats while failing to acknowledge the pre-existing status of nuclear weapons in their own countries. The only way to evoke extreme change for such extreme circumstances is for the G-7 countries to exemplify what their leaders have called for in their reaffirmation of the NPT.”⁶⁾

The G7 Summit document contains no reference to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), nor does it mention the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament at all. This makes the discussion at the G7 Summit far removed from the actual situation of the international community regarding nuclear weapons. The TPNW is a positive international law that has already entered into force, has been signed by nearly half of the international community, and is considered by the signatories to be the implementation of Article VI of the NPT, and compatible with and complementary to the NPT. Various paths toward a world without nuclear weapons should be discussed.

Second, the G7 stresses the importance of the 77-year record of non-use of nuclear weapons, condemns the threat by Russia to use nuclear weapons, and affirms that there can be no winners in nuclear war and that nuclear war must never be fought. And “our security policies are based on the understanding that nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war and coercion.”

While this part of the statement appreciates the record of non-use of nuclear weapons, condemns the threat by Russia to use nuclear weapons, and states that nuclear war must never be fought, it also indicates that the G7 nations will rely even more strongly on nuclear deterrence and on the threat to use of nuclear weapons to prevent nuclear war. This language is also included in the Joint Statement of the P5 Leaders in January 2022, which indicates an ever-stronger reliance by the G7 nations on nuclear deterrence and adopts measures that are fundamentally confronting to the objective of promoting nuclear disarmament

6) Kristina Swanson, “The G7 Summit’s Disarmament Plan – Or Lack Thereof,” May 27, 2023, The Organization for World Peace.

<https://theowp.org/reports/the-g-7-summits-nuclear-disarmament-plan-or-lack-thereof/>

toward a world without nuclear weapons.

To the contrary, the Bali Declaration adopted by the G20 in November 2022 states that “The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is admissible. The peaceful resolution of conflicts, efforts to address crisis, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital. Today’s era must not be of war.⁷⁾” The New Delhi Declaration adopted by the G20 in September 2023 also states that “the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons are inadmissible.⁸⁾”

Z. Mian and D. Kimball also state that “The U.S. and its allies must acknowledge that any and all threats to use nuclear weapons, not just Russia’s are unacceptable....They should declare that the U.S. and its allies will act as they demand others do, and will accept being judged by the same standards they apply others. They must accept, without any self-serving caveat, that any use of a nuclear weapon, by any state, under any circumstances, would be an act of hostility against humanity and unjustifiable in any way.⁹⁾”

Third, G7 states that the overall decline in global nuclear arsenals achieved since the end of the Cold War must continue and not be reversed and the NPT must be upheld as the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation regime. They also call on Russia to enable a return to full implementation of the New START Treaty, and state that China’s accelerating build-up of nuclear arsenals poses a concern to global and regional stability.

While the number of nuclear weapons in the G7 nuclear weapon states has not increased, the nuclear arms race in the qualitative modernization is being implemented, particularly strongly in the United States as seen in the Biden Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review¹⁰⁾. F. Kaplan states that “The fact is, the world is less disposed to nuclear arms control than at any time in the past half-century – and the pressures for a renewed nuclear arms race, this time involving

7) “G20 Bali Leaders’ Declaration,” Bali, Indonesia, 15-16 November 2022.

<https://japan.kantei.go.jp/content/000118212.pdf>

8) “G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration,” New Delhi, India, 9 September 2023.

<https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf>

9) Zia Mian and Daryl G. Kimball, “At Hiroshima, Leaders Should Choose to End All Nuclear Threats,” May 17, 2023, Scientific American.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/at-hiroshima-leaders-should-choose-to-end-all-nuclear-threats/>

10) U.S. Department of Defense, “2022 Nuclear Posture Review,” October 27, 2022.

<https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENCE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>

more than just two players, are disturbingly intense.¹¹⁾” The qualitative arms race, the modernization of nuclear weapons, is being conducted on a large scale among nuclear weapon states including the U.S.. With regard to these military confrontations, they should be addressed through political and diplomatic means, and all states should strive to initiate consultations and negotiations, not just condemn other states.

Fourth, the G7 emphasizes the importance of transparency with regard to nuclear weapons and welcomes actions already taken by the United States, France and the United Kingdom to promote effective and responsible transparency measures and calls on nuclear weapon states that have not yet done so to follow suit. In this regard it stresses the benefit of pre-notification of relevant strategic activities, as a substantial contribution to risk reduction.

The importance of transparency has been discussed at every NPT Review Conference and is an essential measure for progress in nuclear disarmament, but here, while the G7 nations are praised for their adequate transparency, it is a tough demand on Russia and China, especially China. While transparency measures are essential for confidence-building formation, we should explore ways in which all nuclear weapon states can cooperate in the direction of jointly conducting tasks such as basic exchange of views and consultations for this purpose.

Fifth, G7 calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations of a FMCT and call on all states that have not yet done so to declare and maintain moratoria on production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

With regard to a FMCT, despite the agreement in the final document at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference to “the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a convention,” negotiations have not started even after 28 years have passed. The main reason for this is that the decision to start negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) requires consensus, and negotiation has not started for many years mainly due to opposition from Pakistan. The G7 document does not mention how to solve this problem at all, and if negotiations are impossible at the CD, it is necessary to start negotiations elsewhere, but the G7 has not discussed it at all. The nuclear weapon states should start talks among them and seek solution through consultations and negotiations.

Sixth, it is stated that nuclear weapons should not be detonated and that the entry into force of the CTBT is also an urgent matter.

11) Fred Kaplan, “The Alarming Reality of a Coming Nuclear Arms Race,” May 20, 2023, Slate. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2023/05/new-nuclear-arms-race.html>

The demand of no-testing is a response to Russia's suggestion that a nuclear test be conducted in connection with its attack on Ukraine as well as demand to North Korea. However, among 44 countries whose ratification is a condition for its entry into force, neither the U.S. nor China has not ratified the CTBT. First of all, a realistic response to these two states will be necessary.

Seventh, G7 states that a world without nuclear weapons cannot be achieved without nuclear non-proliferation, reiterates the goal of North Korea's complete, verifiable, and irreversible abandonment of nuclear weapons and existing nuclear program, and expresses deep concern about unabated escalation of Iran's nuclear program.

Since "disarmament" stipulated in Article VI of the NPT includes the abolition of nuclear weapons as well as various concrete measures leading to the abolition of nuclear weapons, the two objectives should be pursued in parallel. The agreement on various concrete nuclear disarmament measures would conversely strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

II Challenges to Future Progress on Nuclear Disarmament

At the first Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference held at the end of July, 2023, a little over two months after the G7 Hiroshima Summit, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, commented on international security today, saying, "There has not been a time since the depth of the Cold War that the risk of nuclear weapon being used has been so high, at the same time as the regime intended to prevent such use is so fragile....We are seeing the highest level of geopolitical competition, rising tensions and deepening divisions among major powers in decades, coupled with increased military spending and mistrust rapidly replacing dialogue,¹²⁾" emphasizing that current security environment is at its worst.

1 Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations after the New START Treaty

The first issue relates to the possibility of negotiating a new treaty. The New START Treaty which was entered into force on February 5, 2011, reduces the number of U.S. and Russian nuclear warheads to 1,500 deployed Intercontinental

12) "Statement by Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs," 2026 NPT Review Conference, First Preparatory Committee, 31 July 2023.
[https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Preparatory_Committee_for_the_Eleventh_Review_ConferenceFirst_session_\(2023\)/HR_Statement_opening_NPT_PrepCom_31_July_2023.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-_Preparatory_Committee_for_the_Eleventh_Review_ConferenceFirst_session_(2023)/HR_Statement_opening_NPT_PrepCom_31_July_2023.pdf)

Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) and heavy bombers to 700, and their total deployed and no-deployed to 800. With a treaty term of 10 years and a provision for a possible five-year extension, soon after the Biden administration took office, the U.S. and Russia agreed to a five-year extension, so the current treaty expires on February 5, 2026.

On June 16, 2021, the U.S. and Russia issued the U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability and agreed to begin a dialogue that would lay the foundation for future arms control. However, on February 24, 2022, Russia launched a unilateral military invasion of Ukraine, and the international security environment has changed dramatically and become extremely dangerous. The U.S. and Russia were also scheduled to discuss the successor to the New START Treaty, but on February 21, 2023, Russia suddenly announced the suspension of the implementation of the New START Treaty. Russia, however, states that it would abide by the treaty's numerical limits, so the basic parts of the treaty will be maintained, but on-site inspections and reporting of the numbers of nuclear weapons held to ensure implementation of the treaty will also be suspended, and the Bilateral Consultative Committee will no longer function.

Negotiating a new treaty in these circumstances has become impossible, and it is highly unlikely that the two countries will agree on a new treaty before the expiration of the treaty. Depending on when and how the military confrontation in Ukraine comes to an end, it will be extremely difficult to start treaty negotiations at an early date. Therefore, measures other than the conclusion of a new treaty upon its expiration should be seriously considered. Since both the U.S. and Russia are in favor of maintaining the basic obligations of the treaty, it would be desirable for the U.S. and Russia to express a political agreement, but even if this is not possible, it would be desirable to issue a separate unilateral statement of maintenance of the treaty framework between the two countries.

At the Arms Control Association's annual meeting on June 2, 2023, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan stated that "the United States is ready to engage Russia now to manage nuclear risks and develop a post-2026 arms control framework. We are prepared to enter into those discussions, ... We're also ready to engage China without preconditions – helping ensure that competition is managed,

and that competition does not veer into conflicts.¹³⁾” However, with the ongoing war in Ukraine, no progress has been made in reality.

The second issue is that even if negotiations were to be initiated between the U.S. and Russia, it would be extremely difficult to reach agreement because the two countries’ priorities for nuclear disarmament and regulation are very different. In the previous U.S.-Russia negotiations, the U.S. has strongly insisted that negotiations include non-strategic nuclear weapons and Russia has insisted that negotiations include strategic defense, but no agreement has been reached.

Today, the U.S. would like to include Russia’s non-strategic nuclear weapons and new kinds of Russian weapons in the negotiations, but Russia opposes it. While Russia wants to include missile defense, long-range conventional weapons, and space weapons, but the U.S. opposes this. Russia, on the contrary, has deployed the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle and continue to develop the Poseidon autonomous underwater drone, possibly in response to concerns about US missile defense capabilities, while the United States might add a new nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile to its force in response to concerns about emerging regional challenges¹⁴⁾.

Third is the issue of possible bilateral arms control talks with China. The U.S. estimates that China’s nuclear warheads will be greatly increased in the future, reaching approximately 1,500 warheads by 2035. In addition, the U.S. has proposed to China that talks begins without preconditions, but there is currently a big difference in the number of nuclear weapons between the U.S. and China. Also, there is no indication that China will agree to talks at all. In addition, if China’s nuclear arsenal increased, an arms race among the three countries could be initiated, but it would be impossible for the three countries to start negotiations on nuclear arms control for the time being.

L. Rustin and M. Melamed argue that the United States should prioritize maintaining verifiable and mutual limits with Russia on nuclear forces, while deepening dialogue with China and aiming to bring it into the bilateral and

13) U.S. White House, “Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan for the Arms Control Association ACA,” June 2, 2023.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/06/02/remarks-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-for-the-arms-control-association-aca-annual-forum/>

14) Amy F. Woolf, “The Past and Future of Bilateral Nuclear Arms Control,” UNIDIR, March 2023. https://www.unidir.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/UNIDIR_past_future_bilateral_nuclear_arms_control.pdf

multilateral nuclear arms control over the long term¹⁵⁾. A. Nelson and M. O'Hanlon propose a new strategic framework that would broaden participation in arms control and provide mechanisms to include all five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the P-5) with China, Britain, France joining the United States and Russia in a future accord¹⁶⁾. D. Kimball further suggests that the U.S. and Russia should reengage in nuclear risk reduction talks and agree to continue observing the central limits of the New START Treaty until a new nuclear arms treaty is in place, and that China, France, and the U.K. should freeze the size of their nuclear arsenals as long as the U.S. and Russia meet their nuclear disarmament responsibilities¹⁷⁾.

These arguments are particularly useful in the current very difficult times to look forward to find out the better ways in the future. In reality, the international community is facing an extremely difficult situation, and the focus of discussion on nuclear weapons has shifted to the issue of “non-use of nuclear weapons,” which is examined below.

2 Ensuring the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons

Against the backdrop of the complete lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and the continued threat by Russia to use nuclear weapons, the issue of non-use of nuclear weapons has been widely discussed, and the term ‘nuclear risk reduction’ is also widely used in general, although this phrase still lacks its definition that is universally accepted. U. Kuhn and H. Williams argue that arms control as we know has come to an end, and new responsible behavior should include a transparency about nuclear arsenals, risk reduction efforts, crisis communication

15) Lynn Rusten and Mark Melamed, “The Three-Competitor Future: U.S. Arms Control with Russia and China,” *Arms Control Today*, March 2023.
<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-03/features/three-competitor-future-us-arms-control-russia-china>

16) Amy J. Nelson and Michael O'Hanlon, “All START: a proposal for moving beyond US-Russia arms control,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March 16, 2023.
https://thebulletin.org/2023/03/all-START-a-proposal-for-moving-beyond-us-russia-arms-control/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=MondayNewsletter032023&utm_content=NuclearRisk_All_START_03162023

17) Daryl G. Kimball, “Global Nuclear Freeze Could Avert New Arms Race,” *Arms Control Today*, April 2023.
<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-04/focus/global-nuclear-freeze-could-avert-new-arms-race>

channel, and restraints on potentially escalatory activities¹⁸⁾.

In order to understand the issue of the non-use of nuclear weapons more clearly, it is necessary to distinguish between the intentional use of nuclear weapons and the unintentional use of nuclear weapons. Because the meaning of these two cases, sometimes used without distinction, is clearly different each other, the measures to meet or prevent each case is naturally different. The measures to prevent or prohibit the intentional uses are mainly of political, legal or policy nature. On the other hand, the measures to prevent or prohibit the unintentional uses are mainly institutional or procedural nature. The measures to prevent or prohibit the intentional use of nuclear weapons are firstly and mainly the discussions related to strategic stability among nuclear weapon states. In addition, there are arguments for no first use of nuclear weapons and negative security assurances. The measures to respond the unintentional use should be discussed under the concept of nuclear risk reduction as the nuclear weapon states generally use it.

First, the most recent statement between the United States and Russia on strategic stability is "U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability" on June 16, 2021¹⁹⁾. It stipulates that "even in periods of tensions, they are able to make progress on their shared goals of ensuring predictability in strategic sphere and reducing the risk of armed conflict and the threat of nuclear war," and further states that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" and states that they will embark together on integrated bilateral strategic stability dialogue. In reality, however, this dialogue has not progressed at all, as the general deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations has developed in the wake of war in Ukraine.

On January 3, 2022, the Five Nuclear Weapon States issued the "Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear Weapon States on Preventing

18) Ulrich Kuhn and Heather Williams, "A New Approach to Arms Control: How to Safeguard Nuclear Weapons in an Era of Great-Power Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, June 14, 2023.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/new-approach-arms-control>

19) U.S. White House, "U.S.-Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability," June 16, 2021.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/16/u-s-russia-presidential-joint-statement-on-strategic-stability/>

Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races.²⁰⁾” In its first paragraph, the five nuclear weapon states state that “the avoidance of war and the reduction of strategic risks among nuclear weapons states are their most important responsibilities.” Here, “strategic risk reduction,” not strategic stability, is clearly stated²¹⁾. The objectives of the actions planned here are (i) to foster confidence and increase predictability through dialogue, (ii) to eliminate ambiguity and increase clarity, communicate clearly, and promote understanding, and (iii) to have effective crisis prevention mechanisms and crisis management measures.

Two months after the adoption of the Joint Statement of the Five Nuclear Weapons, Russia launched a military invasion of Ukraine and frequently threatened to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, dialogue among the nuclear weapon states has not progressed at all, and furthermore, relations between the United States and China have become extremely confrontational, with no renewed talks on strategic stability among the five nuclear weapon states have taken place, and no concrete progress has been made at all.

Second, as an important means of preventing the intentional use of nuclear weapons, it is also important to make unilateral, bilateral or multilateral commitments among nuclear weapon states to the no first use of nuclear weapons, or to declare that the “sole purpose of nuclear weapons” is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by other nuclear weapon states. Although China has been consistently declared a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons since its possession of nuclear weapons, it is a unilateral political declaration, and the reception of such a declaration by other countries is not necessarily free from doubt. The preferred direction is to conclude bilateral or multilateral treaties to stipulate the prohibition of first use of nuclear weapons. In the United States, the adoption of a “sole purpose” policy was considered during the Obama presidency and during Biden’s presidential campaign, but has not materialized due to the opposition from the U.S. military as well as allied states.

In the working paper submitted to the 2022 NPT Review Conference, China argues that (i) nuclear weapon states should unequivocally undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, (ii) nuclear weapon states should conclude a multilateral treaty on mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and (iii) nuclear

20) U.S. White House, “Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Race,” January 3, 2022.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/03/p5-statement-on-preventing-nuclear-war-and-avoiding-arms-races/>

21) Ibid.

weapon states should abandon the nuclear deterrence policy based on the first use of nuclear weapons²²). This task also seems extremely difficult in the current international security environment. However, there is an expectation that pursuing this will continue as a means or approach toward prohibiting the intentional use of nuclear weapons.

Third, it is necessary to further expand and strengthen negative security assurances, meaning the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. Legally binding negative security assurances are generally provided by the Protocol to the Treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone to non-nuclear weapon states that are parties of the treaty. This is a legally binding commitment, a major effect of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and may motivate the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones. However, even though reservation is prohibited, conditions may be attached as interpretative declaration that nullify the content of the obligation. This negates the effectiveness of negative security assurances and should be eliminated immediately by nuclear weapon states.

In its Nuclear Posture Review report, the United States stipulates that “the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are parties to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear no-proliferation obligations.” China has often issued political statements that it will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. This issue is being brought into the spotlight now because of Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine. In connection with Ukraine’s accession to the NPT, the U.S., Russia and the U.K. as depositary states of the NPT signed the Budapest Memorandum on December 4, 1994 that stipulates that “the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine and its existing borders shall be respected.” Russia’s recent invasion of Ukraine is a use of force that violates Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and existing borders, and an act in total violation of this Memorandum.

These are political, not legal, commitments that do not give rise to legal rights that could be appealed to courts, but they are important political commitments, and their violation should be sharply criticized. While UN General Assembly resolutions can condemn Russia, the Security Council continues to be unable to make decisions even though clear and serious violations have occurred because

22) Working Paper by China, “Security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” 29 July 2022, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.32.
<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1312225>

Russia, as a permanent member, has veto power.

On the other hand, the Non-Aligned States insist that it is the legitimate right of all non-nuclear weapon states that have given up the nuclear weapon option by becoming parties to the NPT to receive effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and irrevocable legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances²³).

Presently, it is highly unlikely for bilateral U.S.–Russian talks and negotiations between the five nuclear weapon states to prohibit and prevent the intentional use of nuclear weapons. However, nuclear weapon states in particular should make every effort to ensure an early ceasefire in the war in Ukraine and to move toward a gradual improvement in the international security environment.

3 Nuclear Risk Reduction

Reducing the likelihood of the unintentional use of nuclear weapons, along with reducing the likelihood of their intentional use, has been the subject of extensive discussion, especially in recent years. This is because of the general deterioration of international security environment and the growing recognition by many states that the possibility of unintended use of nuclear weapons in highly strained relationships is increasing.

The working paper entitled “strategic risk reduction” submitted by the five nuclear weapon states to the 2022 NPT Review Conference states that in the context of the strategic sphere and nuclear domain, risk reduction is fundamentally about reducing the risk of nuclear use and armed conflict involving states that possess nuclear weapons. It encompasses efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts and crisis that might result from misinterpretations of a potential adversary’s policies, actions and intention or through the failure to foresee the consequences of one’s own steps. ... Accordingly, nuclear weapon states share the desire to reduce the risks of nuclear weapon use, originating from incorrect assumptions by reducing or minimising potential misperception, miscommunication, and miscalculation. As a basis for these efforts, three major elements have been identified: (i) building confidence and predictability through dialogue, (ii) increasing clarity, communication and understanding, and (iii) effective crisis prevention and crisis

23) Working Paper by Non-Aligned States, “Security Assurances,” 14 June 2023, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.14.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4014552>

management tools²⁴).

As for those specifics, the working paper submitted by the United States titled “U.S. Leadership in Strategic Risk Reduction” is instructive. It lists as specific examples: (i) hotline agreements, (ii) national and nuclear risk reduction centers, (iii) ballistic missile launch notifications, (iv) mutual de-targeting, (v) prevention of nuclear war, (vi) notification of major strategic exercises, (vii) incidents in the air and at sea, (viii) dangerous military incidents, (ix) measures to reduce the risk of outbreak of nuclear war, (x) Vienna document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-building measures, and (xi) Treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe(CFE)²⁵).

The final draft document of the NPT Review Conference further recognizes that, given the increased risk of nuclear weapons being used as a result of the current deteriorating international security environment, States Parties have a shared interest in averting nuclear war, and the nuclear weapon states commit to further identify, explore, and implement all nuclear risk reduction measures to mitigate the risk of miscalculation, misperception, miscommunication or accident.

The issue of preventing the unintended use of nuclear weapons is a problem that directly concerns all states although the direct actors are mainly nuclear weapon states. All states should actively discuss the issue at international consultations and conferences and propose the necessary measures or conducts to make new rules or code of conduct for this purpose.

4 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The current nuclear environments continue to be in an extremely difficult situation, and we have moved from the era of promoting nuclear disarmament to the era of nuclear arms race. But in the international community, movements toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, approached from a humanitarian perspective at the initiative of non-nuclear weapon states, are making progress. On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted with 122 in favor, 1 against, and 2 abstentions. It was opened for signature on September 20 of the same year, and entered into force on January 22,

24) Working Paper by 5 nuclear weapon states, “Strategic risk reduction,” 7 December 2021, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.33.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3951744>

25) Working Paper by U.S., “U.S. Leadership in Strategic Risk Reduction,” 19 May 2022, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.55.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3977404>

2021 after ratifications by 50 countries. As of September 20, 2023, there are 93 signatories and 69 ratifiers.

The first development related to the Treaty was the holding of the first Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty in Vienna, on June 21-23, 2022, and its agreed outcomes. The Meeting adopted the Declaration²⁶⁾, the Vienna Action Plan²⁷⁾ and other documents. The Declaration affirms that the purpose of the Meeting was to mark the entry into force of the Treaty, to reaffirm our determination to realize the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and to chart a path forward for the full and effective implementation of the Treaty. Since the Treaty was developed through a short period of negotiations with the aim of its early adoption, there were many areas where the general framework was agreed upon but detailed provisions had not yet been drafted, it was necessary to clarify and flesh out the contents at the Meeting of the State Parties.

With regard to Article 4, “Toward the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons,” a deadline for the destruction and removal of nuclear weapons in cases where nuclear weapon states or nuclear weapon deploying states join the treaty was decided, but a decision on the content of “a competent international authority” to negotiate and verify destruction was left for continued consideration. With regard to Articles 6 and 7, no concrete actions for victim assistance, environmental restoration, or international cooperation and assistance were developed. On Article 18 regarding the relationship with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the countries supporting the treaty insist on the compatibility and complementarity of the two, while the countries opposing the treaty continue to deny it entirely.

The second development was the treatment of the TPNW at the NPT Review Conference, which was held from August 1 to 26, 2022. While the supporters of the TPNW highly evaluated its significance, claiming that it is fulfilling the obligations of Article VI of the NPT, the opponent denied the existence of the TPNW itself, arguing that it undermines and weakens the NPT. In the midst of these major conflicts of opinion, this conference was an important meeting to discuss the international status of the TPNW.

The first draft of the final report reads, “The Conference acknowledges that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted on 7 July 2017. It was opened to signature by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20

26) “Report of the first Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” TPNW/MSP/2022/6. 21 July 2022, pp.7-10.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3984999>

27) Ibid. pp.11-26.

September 2017. The Conference further acknowledges that the Treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021 and held its first Meeting of States Parties on 21-23 June 2022, which concluded with the adoption of a declaration and an action plan.²⁸⁾ Some nuclear weapon states suggested that this clause should be deleted, but in the final draft document, the phrase “which concluded with the adoption of a declaration and action plan” was deleted²⁹⁾. Thus, it did not include the content of the Meeting of the States Parties, but could be interpreted as the existence of a general agreement on the fact that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons exists. Although the final document was not formally adopted due to Russian opposition, it is reasonable to assume that a general agreement on the existence of the TPNW itself has been acknowledged at the conference.

The third development was the G7 Hiroshima Summit held on May 19-21. As discussed above, this Summit meeting brought together seven advanced Western nations, which devoted much to and gave priority to nuclear disarmament and adopted the “G7 Leaders’ Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament” along with the Leaders’ Communique. These seven states depend on nuclear weapons for their national security and strongly support the theory of nuclear deterrence.

As is clear from this position, there was no discussion of the TPNW at the G7 Hiroshima Summit, and none of the documents adopted made any reference to the TPNW. This was expected from the standpoint of the participating countries. However, the absence of any mention of the Treaty during the summit in Hiroshima, the first atomic-bombed city, drew sharp criticism from A-bomb survivors and supporters of nuclear abolition. The opposition to the complete reliance on nuclear deterrence by the participating countries, including Japan, was widely voiced.

The supporting and opposing states remain sharply divided, and a complete reconciliation between them is impossible. However, at the meeting of the States Parties, some of non-nuclear weapon states participated as observers by saying it is impossible to join the TPNW. For example, Germany, while stating its basic position that it is impossible to join the Treaty in light of its status as an ally of NATO and in the face of Russia’s open aggression, but it is committed to

28) NPT Review Conference, “Draft Report of MC.I,” 12 August 2022, NPT/MC.I/CRP.1

https://www.icanw.org/first_drafts_of_npt_review_conference_outcome_documents_are_released

29) NPT Review Conference, “Draft Final Document,” 25 August 2022, NPT/CONF. 2020/CRP.1/Rev.2.

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/CRP1_Rev2.pdf

participating in constructive dialogue and exploring opportunities for practical cooperation. Furthermore, it particularly appreciates the emphasis on humanitarian perspectives and are interested in positive obligations³⁰⁾. In addition, the Netherlands and Norway have expressed their willingness to participate and cooperate in the meeting as observers.

On the contrary, Japan, despite its position similar to that of above-mentioned countries, has stubbornly expressed its negative position on observer participation in the meeting. Prime Minister Kishida only cites the reason that “none of the nuclear weapon states is participating” and offers no further explanations. The Prime Minister has often positioned the TPNW as a way out toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, but instead of finding a common goal and cooperation with it, as European countries have done, he has stubbornly opposed observer participation in the meeting.

The TPNW prohibits almost all activities involving nuclear weapons, from their development and production to their use, and its goal is the abolition of nuclear weapons. At this stage, only non-nuclear weapon states are parties to the Treaty, which means that the goal of nuclear weapons abolition cannot be achieved directly. However, the underlining objective of the TPNW is to stigmatize and further delegitimize nuclear weapons internationally. It appeals especially to the citizens of nuclear weapon states and nuclear allies, hoping that a majority of the citizens will express support for the Treaty and use it as a means to move domestic public opinion toward supporting the Treaty.

In addition, what is necessary to enhance the value of the TPNW is to increase the number of its states parties. The immediate goal is to achieve as soon as possible the goal of having 122 states who voted in favor of its adoption. Although there appear to be various interventions by states opposed to the Treaty regarding the participation of non-nuclear-weapon states in the Treaty, especially there are over 100 states parties to the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaties and they have no new obligations to assume by joining the TPNW and there is no legal conflict at all between the two treaties, the international community should urge those states to join the TPNW at the earliest date.

On the significance of the TPNW, S. Duarte, former UN Under-Secretary for Disarmament Affairs and Chair of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, lamented the decline of international arms control but noted, “Up to now, the most important

30) “Statement by Germany,” 22 June 2022.

<https://documents.unoda.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Germany.pdf>

result of those initiatives has been the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It derived directly from the provision contained in Article VI of the NPT that calls on each state parties to pursue negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. This is precisely what has been done. The Treaty is the first piece of legally binding international law aimed at banning nuclear weapons on a global scale.³¹⁾

The basic position of the TPNW is the “humanitarian approach,” which pursues nuclear disarmament while bringing the humanitarian aspect to the forefront. The word “humanity” includes the meaning of “human kind or human race” along with “good human nature.” In the Russel-Einstein Manifest, “humanity” is highly emphasized, and the meaning of “human kind or race” is more strongly asserted as “humanity.” This strongly implies that we should move from modern society’s dependence on “national security” to the security of humanity as a whole. That is the security of human kind or human race as a whole.

Therefore, the TPNW should be understood as an approach that emphasizes the humanitarian aspect of the treaty and at the same time pursue the security of “human kind as a whole”, not of nations. It should be understood that the TPNW pursues peace that encompasses all of the human race, not peace based on confrontation between nations. In this sense, the TPNW is a beneficial approach that should play a much more important role.

Conclusion

The G7 Hiroshima Summit, discussed in the first half of this paper, was the first G7 summit to place exceptionally strong emphasis on nuclear disarmament, which is the result of the proactive attitudes of the Japanese Government and Prime Minister Kishida, and should be highly appreciated. The idea that exposure to the ‘reality of the atomic bombings’ plays a crucial role in advancing nuclear disarmament has been widely emphasized by the Japanese Government, Prime Minister, and in various international conferences, including the NPT Review Conferences. This concept was extensively implemented at the summit, contributing to the progress of nuclear disarmament. Another major achievement of the G7 summit highlights that both G7 leaders and invited countries, such as Ukraine, were given the opportunity to experience the “reality of the atomic

31) Sergio Duarte, “The Erosion of The International Arms Control Regimes,” IDN-InDepthNews, May 9, 2023.

<https://indepthnews.net/the-erosion-of-the-international-arms-control-regimes/>

bombing. In these two respects, it is safe to conclude that the Summit was meaningful in terms of its formal aspects.

On the other hand, the outcome documents in relation to the progress toward nuclear disarmament, further emphasizes the nuclear deterrent theory that a world without nuclear weapons can only be implemented “with undiminished security for all”, that means for all states. It does not provide any concrete ways to a nuclear-free world. It further emphasizes nuclear deterrence as nuclear weapons serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war, without providing any realistic, practical and responsible approach to the issue. As a result, in terms of its substantive aspects, the Summit has resulted in almost no progress for orientating the ways toward nuclear disarmament.

Nor are there any concrete progressive measures toward nuclear disarmament.

As for the latter half of the paper, the challenges for future progress in nuclear disarmament, negotiations after the New START Treaty will be extremely difficult. And the issue of banning the intentional use of nuclear weapons has not progressed and discussions have shifted to nuclear risk reduction, that is, the non-intentional use of nuclear weapons, to which we expect a tough situation.

In addition, all of the G7 nations have expressed strong opposition to the TPNW, and the conflict with those nations that support the treaty is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. As the only atomic-bombed country, Japan should, from a humanitarian and human kind perspective, at least participate as an observer in the Conference of the States Parties and explore the scope of cooperation, including support for nuclear victims.