

August 21-22, 2019

Hiroshima Round Table 2019

Chairman's Statement

Over the past 7 years, specialists and practitioners from around the world have met in Hiroshima, the city where a single blast of an atomic weapon took away the lives of massive number of citizens and left lasting suffering for those who survived. Hiroshima was followed by Nagasaki three days later. With a firm conviction that such humanitarian disaster should never happen again, the participants of the Hiroshima Round Table have discussed and proposed concrete steps to reduce dependence on nuclear deterrence and advance nuclear disarmament, and have issued a chairman's statement at the end of each meeting.

The participants in the 2019 Hiroshima Round Table were alarmed by the resurgence of dependence on nuclear deterrence, accelerating nuclear forces modernization, and crumbling nuclear arms control and non-proliferation regimes. In this light, members of the group decided to issue an *urgent appeal to keep the international nuclear arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation pacts alive*.

Hiroshima Urgent Appeal

Keep the international nuclear arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation pacts alive

The participants of the Hiroshima Round Table and the Governor of the Hiroshima Prefecture, undersigned, are very concerned about the rising risk of the use of nuclear weapons, the steadily deteriorating situation surrounding nuclear arms control and disarmament, and the danger of the eroding credibility and effectiveness of the nuclear nonproliferation regime based on the NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty). Therefore, we make an urgent appeal to preserve, uphold, and further advance nuclear arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation pacts, and to maintain peace and stability.

1. Regrettably, the INF (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces) Treaty has been abandoned. Bearing in mind the destabilizing consequences of any intermediate-range missiles arms race, we strongly urge all countries to exercise maximum restraint, and to explore all possibilities for reciprocal restraint.

2. It is imperative to exercise the option to extend the New START Treaty for an additional five year period. This would help maintain stability and provide time to negotiate a follow-on agreement. We also urge the parties to discuss measures to control new types of strategic offensive arms under development, as well as strategic defensive arms.
3. The CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) is an important constraint on nuclear proliferation and the arms race. We urge relevant states to sign and/or ratify the CTBT in order to enable its entry into force as soon as possible. Until such time, all countries should refrain from activities that would defeat the object and purpose of the treaty.
4. The JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) has made a significant and effective contribution to achieving non-proliferation goals in the Middle East and globally. We deeply regret the unilateral decision by one party to abandon it and urge all parties to continue to uphold its multilaterally negotiated commitments.

Further proposals for action

In addition to the urgent appeal above, the participants of the 2019 Hiroshima Round Table propose the following initiatives, for the purpose of reducing dependence on nuclear deterrence, and of advancing nuclear disarmament both at the global level and also at the regional level in East Asia.

I. Breaking away from reliance on nuclear weapons

The group underscores the importance of strict adherence to the principles of international humanitarian law that any use of force in military conflict must be minimum necessary, discriminate to avoid civilian casualties and proportionate. If these principles are strictly applied, there will be very limited utilities left for nuclear weapons.

The political and military leaders of the countries possessing nuclear weapons need to be constantly reminded of such requirements of international humanitarian law. Nuclear weapons have horrible humanitarian consequences, and therefore should be reduced and ultimately eliminated. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) articulates the aspirations of the great majority of the international community for a world free of the existence and the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Credible conventional alternatives can serve the roles previously assigned to nuclear weapons. With the emergence of new technologies in such areas as cyber, artificial intelligence (AI), lethal autonomous weapons systems, and hypersonic missiles, however, countries will have to ensure that strategic stability is not undermined.

II. Reducing risks of nuclear weapons use

The existing architecture of nuclear arms control and disarmament is unravelling despite the rising risk of nuclear weapon use. One reason for the existing architecture to be re-framed may be that it reflects the bipolar nature of the Cold War nuclear reality. There is a continuing need for both bilateral arms control negotiations and multilateralization of arms control. Meanwhile the nuclear-armed states are modernizing and upgrading their nuclear weapons, delivery systems and infrastructure. Pending total abolition, there is an urgent need to undertake measures to reduce nuclear risks.

To this end participants propose a practical, action-oriented agenda that include:

- major reductions in nuclear warhead stockpiles to decrease global stockpiles;
- doctrinal changes to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons, for example the adoption of policies of no first use of nuclear weapons and the negotiation of a global no first use convention;
- de-alerting of around 2,000 nuclear weapons that are held in high alert status, ready to launch on warning;
- reductions in the numbers of operationally deployed nuclear weapons;
- dampening the rhetoric of nuclear weapons possession and use that has contributed to the normalization of the nuclear discourse in recent years.

III. Building peace and nuclear disarmament in the Korean Peninsula and East Asia

Achieving peace that is not dependent on nuclear weapons is an especially urgent agenda item in East Asia. On the Korean Peninsula, the development of nuclear weapons in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) indicates a failure of past nuclear non-proliferation efforts. While the participants of the Hiroshima Round Table support dialogue with DPRK, the participants believe denuclearization will not be achieved without further concrete measures. In particular, DPRK could agree to a series of denuclearization steps in exchange for partial sanctions relief, beyond the current moratorium on nuclear testing and the flight-testing of intermediate- and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles.

These steps might include,

- complete dismantlement of the missile engine test stand and launching pad at Tongchang-ri;
- invitation of international nuclear experts to verify the disablement of the former nuclear test site at Punggye-ri;
- verifiable dismantlement of all nuclear facilities at Yongbyon.

The above measures could serve as a first step towards the next stage, namely, a full declaration of nuclear inventory by DPRK, and total freeze on fissile material production.

Such measures need to be balanced and reciprocal however, and the possibility of reciprocal restraints need to be explored. For this purpose, a gradual step-by-step, or phase-by-phase approach in the context of achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is essential.

- Parties must respect existing political commitments on joint military exercises and training. The details of this commitment are disputed and should be the subject of future negotiations. Parties should also respect the September 19th Joint Military Agreement;
- DPRK and the Republic of Korea (ROK) could further agree to a reciprocal freeze on flight testing of short - and medium range ballistic and cruise missiles;
- Security assurance to DPRK and easing of economic sanctions toward DPRK should take place on a step-by-step basis commensurate with measures taken reciprocally.

As observed in the stalled Six-Party Talks, previous search for a multilateral security architecture in East Asia has been unsuccessful. The participants of the Hiroshima Round Table find the absence of a regional security mechanism to be a matter of deep concern, because it leaves the nuclear armed states free to engage in unilateral measures.

Here participants propose a summit-level meeting of the members of the Six-Party Talk to enhance dialogue and mutual confidence as a basis for the development of a regional security mechanism, possibly as a complementary process in relation to the East Asia Summit, and possibly also including a Northeast Asian nuclear weapons free zone.