

Pugwash Peace & Disarmament Conference

Working Group A: Nuclear arms control and disarmament

Chair: Dr Ian Crossland, British Pugwash

Rapporteur: Kevin Miletic, Student/Young Pugwash UK

These notes were taken by the rapporteur, whom was asked to record some interesting points from the presentations and the ensuing discussions. They are not a comprehensive summary and do not necessarily reflect the views or emphasis of the guest speakers.

If you would like to contact a presenter, please enquire via syp@britishpugwash.org

Presentations (followed by discussion):

- *Ideas about nuclear disarmament* – Jana Wattenberg – PhD Candidate – Aberystwyth University
- *The Nuclear Ban Treaty* – Taniel Yusef – Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom
- *The JCPOA’s ‘Other’ Issues: Iran’s Ballistic Missile Program & Regional Activity* – Ezra Friedman, International SYP
- *Strategies for Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Universalization and Entry-Into-Force: Notes from the Field* – Sahil Shah – CTBTO Youth Group and ELN – VIDEO MESSAGE
- *Hypersonic missiles vs strategic stability* – Matteo Frigoli – Independent researcher

Rapporteur notes:

The discussion in the Working Group revolved around the following thematic issues:

Barriers to nuclear disarmament: The participants considered the process of nuclear disarmament in light of the meaning that is ascribed to it. It was noted that the traditional nuclear disarmament process is construed as a long-term process and multilateral in nature. This traditional understanding of the nuclear disarmament process produces the perception that nuclear disarmament requires time and cannot happen before the right conditions are met. As a result, proponents of immediate nuclear disarmament are seen as irresponsible because they do not share the same concerns for the importance of creating the right conditions. Concretely, this view is held by those who think that the Nuclear Ban Treaty is not the appropriate way forward but that we should wait for conditions to be more amenable before addressing nuclear disarmament. It was also noted that the use of multilateralism as the preferred format to deal with nuclear disarmament also has very practical consequences. It means that blame for lack of progress is shared among multiple states. Responsibility for nuclear disarmament is hence diluted. The corollary focus

on a step-by-step approach is used as an excuse to slow down progress by diverting attention to marginal issues.

The Nuclear Ban Treaty: A participant addressed the issue of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted in 2017. It was noted that the ratification process takes time and it is normal for a Treaty not to have entered into force only a couple of years after its negotiation. It is understood that the TPNW is not an end in and of itself, rather it is only a step toward global nuclear disarmament. Contrary to criticism, the TPNW does not reflect a western civil society agenda. It actually comes from states from the Global South, whom have grown frustrated about the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. It was also noted that the TPNW provides concrete benefits to women and minorities: women are more vulnerable to nuclear radiation and the TPNW reduces the risk of such radiation by prohibiting nuclear weapons; it guarantees that indigenous people will no longer suffer nuclear testing; and it frees up money that can be invested in economic development, education and health. Furthermore, disinvesting from nuclear weapons and investing in women create more economic opportunities for everyone. Nonetheless, it was argued that such a shift from a militarized security system to a demilitarized security system would require a change of mind-set.

Progress on disarmament: Ways of making progress in nuclear disarmament were considered. It was noted that nuclear weapons are not an inclusive form of security. The inclusion of civil society and academia in the nuclear disarmament debate would bring a more cooperative-based narrative rather than a competitive one. At the same time, it was noted that the discourse around nuclear weapons dismantling that emanates from within the security establishment is very powerful one. The 'Club of 4' of Kissinger, Perry, Schultz and Nunn is a case in point. It was also noted that including nuclear weapons in school and university curriculum can help raise public awareness.

Iran nuclear deal: Participants addressed the Iran nuclear deal, also known as the JCPOA. It was noted that Iran is in full compliance with the terms of the JCPOA according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, the US have given other reasons for the pull out. They oppose the development of Iran's ballistic missile program, which is believed to be indigenous, sustainable and dual-use. They also oppose what they dubbed Iran's malign regional activities, such as involvement in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. It was argued that the amount of US public attention given to Iran is excessive and counter-productive. Given the current international context, Russia and China might keep supporting Iran to upset the US. This poses a risk to two UNSC resolutions on ballistic missile technology and heavy conventional weaponry that may not be renewed. It was further noted that the mechanism set up by the EU to allow Iran to trade internationally will hardly make up for the losses caused by economic sanctions. Participants were concerned that the current tense and sub-optimal situation for all parties could escalate into conflict.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT): It was noted that the objective of the CTBT was to ban nuclear tests. Despite the fact that the CTBT has not officially entered into force, the CTBT Organization is already working. The CTBT

Organization has developed a sophisticated system of sensors that are useful in monitoring tsunamis and earthquakes. It was noted that just calling on the remaining states to ratify the CTBT does not work. Participants were encouraged to think creatively by using both security/realist and humanitarian/ethical arguments. 'Nukespeak' – the traditional discourse around nuclear weapons – overlooks moral consequences of nuclear weapons. For example, the first Indian tests were framed as moments of national pride. It is therefore important to counter 'nukespeak' and find new narratives to address nuclear weapons by using language inclusive of those whom suffered nuclear tests. The CTBTO is uniquely placed to raise awareness of risks linked to nuclear weapons.

Hypersonic missiles: It was noted that hypersonic missiles have unusual speed, manoeuvrability and trajectories, making them almost invisible to early warning systems. The destabilizing factors of such systems are due to warhead ambiguity (conventional or nuclear) and destination and target ambiguity (in-flight change of course). The current hypersonic systems in development are hypersonic boost glide missiles and hypersonic cruise missiles. Those systems were not believed to bring major imbalance in nuclear forces but they will enhance first strike capability. It was also noted that these hypersonic systems were borne out of or in response to the US Global Strike Program. As a result, some countries updated their military doctrines to reflect the emergence of hypersonic missiles and anti-ballistic missile systems and allow for the use of nuclear weapons in a conventional conflict. It was noted that there are a series of short-term and long-term arms control measures that could be taken to mitigate the risks of hypersonic systems. For example, states could share red lines on the use of hypersonic systems; agree on different deployment sites for conventional and nuclear missiles; exchanges assurances that warning systems and satellites will not be targeted; limit deployment of hypersonic missiles; and allow for on-site inspections.