

2.3 Japan and Australia and the nuclear abolition agenda
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I would like to highlight two key tasks that Japan and Australia can undertake to build upon the 2008-2010 International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) co-chaired by Gareth Evans and Yoriko Kawaguchi.¹ One is further reducing and eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in their respective security policies. The other is to commence preparatory works towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC), a multilateral treaty to categorically ban nuclear weapons.

“Sole purpose” policy and Japan and Australia

In support of “no first use” policy as a mid-term agenda, the ICNND recommended the nuclear-armed states to “at least accept the principle that the sole purpose of possessing nuclear weapons – until such time as they can be eliminated completely – is to deter others from using such weapons against that state or its allies” (Recommendations 49-52).

The US Nuclear Posture Review Report of April 2010 took that same direction but stopped one step short. It stated that the US is “not prepared at the present time” to adopt a sole purpose policy but that it “will work to establish conditions under which such a policy could be safely adopted.”²

In response to this, the Australian government stated that “Australia would be comfortable” if the US were to reach its stated objective of a sole purpose policy.³

In Japan, there was huge resistance and reluctance amongst the traditional defense community to accept this direction.⁴ Yet in January 2010, then Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada declared in his Foreign Policy Speech at the Diet that he found the sole purpose policy “worthy of attention,” and that the government would “deepen discussions with countries such as Australia and the United States” on such questions.⁵ His successor Seiji Maehara also referred to a “sole purpose” declaration, at the first Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of ten countries co-hosted by Japan and Australia in September 2010, and made clear that he “would like to deepen discussion about these ideas.”⁶

In the process to develop the new National Defense Program Guideline 2010, there was a certain

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1 Refer to *Eliminating Nuclear Threats – A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers* Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, December 2009
<<http://www.icnnd.org/Reference/reports/ent/default.htm>> and Vienna Communique, July 2010
<http://www.icnnd.org/Pages/100705_vienna_communique.aspx>

2 US Department of Defense, Nuclear Posture Review Report, April 2010 pp.15-17

3 Australian Government’s response to the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) Report, May 3, 2010 <http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2010/fa-s100503a.html>

4 Akira Kawasaki, 'Nuke ban must apply to all,' The Japan Times, April 20, 2010
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ea20100420a1.html>

5 Foreign Policy Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Katsuya Okada to the 174th Session of the Diet, January 29, 2010, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/okada/speech1001.html>

6 Statement by H.E. Mr. Seiji Maehara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at the 1st Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Co-hosted by Japan and Australia, 22 September 2010, New York
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/disarmament/arms/statement100922.html>

amount of discussion amongst the ruling Democratic Party of Japan on if and how to incorporate limiting the role of nuclear weapons, including possible reference to a sole purpose policy, into the document. However, the reference turned out to be general and vague.

Building on those existing commitments of Japan and Australia, the ten-countries group launched by the two governments, now called the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), should work to advance the agenda of limiting, with a view to eliminating, the role of nuclear weapons. The group should present a model of how non-nuclear weapon states can contribute to diminishing the role of nuclear weapons, including by developing non-nuclear security mechanisms that can help the phasing out of salience on nuclear weapons, especially in countries allied to the US. Exploring a Northeast Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone is a good agenda to be discussed in this context.

Preparatory works towards a NWC

The ICNND recommended that “work should commence now” on further refining the concepts in the Model NWC, “with the objective of having a fully-worked through draft available to inform and guide multilateral disarmament negotiations as they gain momentum.” (Recommendation 73)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put forward, in 2008, the Five-Point Proposal for Nuclear Disarmament. As its first point, he proposed that governments could pursue “a framework of separate, mutually reinforcing instruments” or consider “negotiating a nuclear-weapons convention, backed by a strong system of verification.” He referred to the Model NWC submitted by Costa Rica and Malaysia and now in circulation among all UN member states as offering “a good point of departure.”⁷

The 2010 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference stated in its Final Document that the conference “affirms that all States need to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. The Conference notes the five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which proposes, inter alia, consideration of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or agreement on a framework of separate mutually reinforcing instruments, backed by a strong system of verification.”

Now is the time to commence the work for a NWC. Japan and Australia have the potential to take new and flexible approaches.

The Japanese government has been quite skeptical in regards to the Costa Rica and Malaysia-led annual UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions calling for the commencement of negotiations leading to a NWC⁸ abstaining from voting. Yet at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Japan recently expressed that it is “willing to participate in discussions” on how a NWC should look like “in the final phase of nuclear disarmament.”⁹ While it looks like that the Japanese government still maintains that a commencement of a NWC negotiation is “premature,” there is no room for further delaying preparatory works, including consultations as recommended by the ICNND.

7 The UN Secretary-General's Five-Point Proposal for Nuclear Disarmament, 24 October 2008

<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/sg5point.shtml>

8 For the latest 2011 version A/C.1/66/L.42 “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*,” visit:

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/1com11/res/L42.pdf>

9 Statement by Ambassador Akio Suda of Japan, the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 27 January 2011

<http://www.disarm.emb-japan.go.jp/statements/Statement/110127CD.htm>

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) publishes a database of governmental positions on a NWC. The latest December 2010 edition counts 54 countries as “very supportive,” 88 “supportive,” 21 “lukewarm,” and 29 “skeptical.”¹⁰

The three countries of Austria, Mexico and Norway submitted an interesting proposal to the UN General Assembly First Committee this year, in the form of the draft resolution “Taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations” that suggested establishing a new mechanism of nuclear disarmament negotiations if the stalemate of the CD continues.¹¹ The draft resolution was not put to a vote this year. However, Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba made it clear at a Upper House session that he directed his office to vote in support of the resolution. The three countries' proposal included the establishment of a working group to address “the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons,” possibly implying a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Role of civil society

Public bottom-up pressure is vital in order to apply an Ottawa or Oslo-type of process to nuclear weapons. NGOs that gather around networks such as the ICAN and Abolition 2000 are making efforts not only to revitalize public opinion in support of nuclear abolition, but also to reach out to wider constituencies.¹² Focusing on the humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons is one such way to free the disarmament discourse from politicized governmental bargains and position it as a universal agenda for the people.

Recent scientific studies have proven that a serious climate change, or a “nuclear winter,” would be caused by nuclear explosions. Focusing on such environmental aspects, nuclear abolition advocates are now reaching out to environmental groups. The Fukushima disaster also allows facilitation of collaboration amongst those who have worked on nuclear weapons and those who have been active on climate and environment issues.

Another aspect is the economy of nuclear weapons. As in the UK debate over the cost of upgrading Trident, economic impracticality could trigger wider concerns among parliamentarians and the public around the world against nuclear weapons. NGOs are trying to reach out to groups that are working on development and social justice. These developments would have certain, if indirect, impact on the mainstream nuclear abolition agenda and help facilitate governmental processes towards a NWC.

As the 2006 Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report rightly pointed out, so long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them.¹³ A process for a NWC would play the role of building a global norm against nuclear weapons, rejecting any political excuses for leaders to maintain or pursue such inhuman weapons. It would thus have impacts on the nuclear-armed states outside of the NPT, and deter any countries from breaking out of their existing commitments, in parallel to strengthening NPT-based disarmament. Past examples of landmines and cluster munitions show us that building up a movement from non-possessing countries can be effective enough to pressure the possessors in a later stage, as the norm grows.

10 Tim Wright, “Governmental Positions on a Nuclear Weapons Convention,” December 2010.

<http://www.icanw.org/files/NWC-positions-December2010.pdf>

11 A/C.1/66/L.21/Rev.1 <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/1com11/res/L21Rev1.pdf>

12 See ICAN at www.icanw.org and Abolition 2000 at www.abolition2000.org ICAN promoted the Nuclear Abolition Day on 25 June 2011. The results of the global action can be seen with photos at: <http://www.nuclearabolition.org/>

13 Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, *Weapons of Terror*, 2006 <http://www.blixassociates.com/>

Although it might be difficult to expect direct participation of a nuclear-weapon state (NWS) in NWC negotiations at this stage, governments and experts from NWSs can be and are encouraged to participate in consultations by contributing to practical discussions regarding verification and technical aspects of disarmament processes. Consultations on non-nuclear security can also be promoted with NWSs and their allies.

1997 Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams has said, “The arguments against banning antipersonnel landmines, cluster bombs and chemical weapons were specious. It is specious now to maintain that it is premature to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons. ... Governments can change their positions seemingly in a heartbeat. Particularly in response to collective pressure by civil society. Such change has happened before and it can happen now. It is a matter of recognizing the humanitarian costs and then generating sufficient political will.”¹⁴

14 Jody Williams speech “A Nuclear Weapons Convention: the path to abolition,” 7 May 2010.
<http://www.icanw.org/node/5203>