



Towards a Nuclear Restraint Regime: From a Normative Ban Treaty to a Substantive Agenda

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Summary

Many strategic analysts fear that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons may widen the rift between the nuclear weapons states and the non-NWS by stigmatizing the nuclear weapon possessors rather than the weapons. The pertinent questions are therefore how to translate the normative pressure that the treaty poses into something more substantive? Can some measures be identified for the NWS to take, and for the non-NWS to encourage them into taking, to promote its objectives? Can bridges be built between the positions of NWS and non-NWS; and between adversarial nuclear rivals? This paper argues that the pathway to elimination is as important as the process of elimination itself. It suggests a nuclear restraint regime that addresses many dimensions of nuclear weapons deployment – their role, targets, force postures, types and numbers, and also the circumstances in which they are employed. Each restraint would circumscribe the role of nuclear weapons, and as the circle of their utility becomes smaller, eventual elimination will become possible.

1. Multilaterally negotiated treaties are never easy to conclude given conflicting interests of nations and the rifts that often exist among stakeholders. However, when they do come into being they reflect the mood of the member states. The Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, popularly called the Ban Treaty, adopted at the UN General Assembly in July 2017 by 122 non-nuclear nations, likewise serves as a barometer of the collective frustration of the non-nuclear weapon states on their inability to get the nuclear weapons states (NWS) to move towards nuclear disarmament.

2. Unfortunately, the non-NWS had lost any leverage they might have enjoyed in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to push the NWS in this direction when they agreed to grant the treaty an indefinite and unconditional extension in 1995. The treaty had always been skewed in favour of non-proliferation, which was certainly the primary objective of the US and USSR when they joined hands to realize it in the late 1960s. The non-NWS could have used the opportunity of the review and extension conference of the treaty when it turned 25 in 1995 to redress the non-proliferation-disarmament imbalance. But they did not, and the NPT became a permanent non-proliferation mechanism.

3. With little hope of the NPT ever being able to bring about nuclear disarmament, it is not difficult to understand why many non-NWS found the need to construct another instrument to mount pressure on the issue of disarmament. So, a multilaterally negotiated treaty that prohibits development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, transfer, possession, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, as well as their use or threat of use, was concluded and opened for signature on 20 September 2017. Fifty countries, again all non-nuclear, signed it the same day. The treaty will enter into force 90 days after 50 countries have ratified it. The NWS are nowhere on the scene.

4. The Ban Treaty supporters contend that the intention of the treaty is to exert *normative pressure* on nuclear weapon possessors. There are few indications though that any of the nuclear weapons possessing states is feeling pressured into rethinking its commitment to nuclear deterrence. In fact, if anything, all of them are engaged in buttressing their nuclear capabilities. Consequently, the world seems to be caught between two camps – those wanting to make nuclear weapons somehow disappear and those asserting the salience of these weapons like never before since the end of the Cold War.

5. The 2020 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) could prove to be a clash of the titans when the NWS (entrenched in their nuclear deterrence strategies) and the great majority of the non-NWS (exhilarated by the successful negotiation of the Ban Treaty) come together in 2020. Many strategic analysts have expressed apprehension that by widening a rift between the NWS and the non-NWS, the Ban Treaty may have caused harm to the NPT. It may end up breaking the consensus on non-proliferation.¹

6. Another way of looking at the Ban Treaty, however, could be to view it as scaffolding for the NPT – to bolster its pillar of disarmament,

which seemed to have remained stunted even as the pillar of non-proliferation had shot up substantially, creating thereby a lop-sided structure. Considering the Ban Treaty from this perspective does not create a gap between the two treaties. Rather, it makes the Ban Treaty another additional measure of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime to strengthen an element which had not got the necessary attention within the NPT.

7. Certainly, in the years to come, the NPT-Ban Treaty dynamic will find its balance. The more critical issue, however, is whether the latter will be able to push the nuclear possessors towards disarmament? Will normative pressure work? How could it be translated into something more substantive? Can some measures be identified for the NWS to take, and for the non-NWS to encourage them into taking, towards the realization of the intent of the Ban Treaty? Can bridges be built to cover the chasms over positions of NWS and non-NWS; and between adversarial nuclear rivals? Can pursuit of the cause of disarmament become inclusive?

8. This paper argues that for all its seminal importance in terms of the objective it seeks, the Ban Treaty may end up being only an expression of exasperation of the non-NWS with the current state of nuclear disarmament. For now, it seems to have banned nuclear weapons only for the non-possessors. The major possessors – US, Russia, UK and France – have expressed a rather rigid stand on never joining such a treaty. In that case, the real intention of the Ban Treaty may never be obtained. If such an outcome is to be avoided, it becomes imperative to identify some measures that the NWS could be encouraged to take – individually, bilaterally or multilaterally – that may create the ground for future elimination of nuclear weapons.

9. Even though little seems possible in the near term given the contemporary strident positions of major nuclear powers, nevertheless the need for these is clear for two reasons. First, it is important to appreciate that the *pathway to elimination is as important as the process of elimination itself*. The Ban Treaty seems to have

¹ See for instance, Paul Meyer, "The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty: *Fin de Regime?*," *Arms Control Today*, April 2017, p. 16.

ignored this dimension. As one analyst puts it, the treaty supporters hope to “exploit their power of numbers to attach such a deep stigma to possessing the bomb that the nuclear powers will be shamed into stepping off the nuclear weapons path.”² This may, however, be the problem. The treaty has ended up stigmatizing the weapon possessors, not just the nuclear weapon. In the process, it has created a divide between the two sets of states that makes a conversation difficult.

10. The lesson to be learnt is that only by following the right measures that enhance security, rather than those that exacerbate insecurities and rifts, will universal nuclear disarmament ever be possible. While the goal of nuclear disarmament is worthy of pursuit, the manner in which it is obtained is even more important for it to become attainable and sustainable. Accordingly, this paper suggests an approach in which small steps taken one at a time reinforces the possibility of the next.

11. Second, history shows that nuclear situations are like shifting landscapes of sand. Apparently intransigent positions could change if, for instance, a leader or two of nuclear weapons possessing states were to act like statesmen and take steps to change belief systems on nuclear weapons; or if an untoward nuclear incident were to take place anywhere. In both cases, the global nuclear mood could change quickly. This *impermanence of nuclear positions provides the impetus for ideas to be kept ready for sowing when the time appears right.*

Elements of a Nuclear Restraint Regime – Preparing the Soil for Nuclear Disarmament

12. An attempt is made to identify and flesh out some possible elements of a nuclear restraint regime as a first steady step towards eventual nuclear disarmament. While a Nuclear Weapons Convention should be the ultimate

goal to achieve verifiable, universal elimination of nuclear weapons, the journey towards it must touch certain milestones that create a set of interlocking mechanisms of better security – a pre-requisite for a nuclear weapon free world. All of these should collectively reduce the salience of nuclear weapons and help leach them of their utility in national security strategies. A nuclear restraint regime could be conceived to impose restraints on many dimensions of the nuclear weapons -- their role, targets, force postures, types and numbers, as also their employment circumstances. Each restraint would circumscribe the presence of nuclear weapons and as the circle of its utility keeps becoming smaller, eventual elimination will become possible.

Restraint on Role of Nuclear Weapons – Narrowing Nuclear Doctrines

13. Instead of catering only to nuclear deterrence, or deterrence of the use of nuclear weapons by the adversary, nuclear weapons have acquired multi-role utility over the years. Countries have found them useful for different objectives: to offset conventional military inferiority (Russia and Pakistan); to deter cyber attacks (USA, Russia, France); to guard against regime change (North Korea); to retain prestige and status (UK and France); to bargain for economic and security assistance (Pakistan and North Korea); and to deter interference in the conduct of their foreign policy (Russia and China).³ Success of such strategies has been perceived as enhancing the utility of nuclear weapons beyond their primary purpose of nuclear deterrence. This can only motivate others to reach out for them.

14. More recently, another dimension of the use of nuclear weapons has re-emerged into prominence. This pertains to the projection of the use of low-yield, even sub-kiloton, weapons

² Ramesh Thakur, “The Nuclear Ban Treaty: Recasting a Normative Framework for Disarmament,” *The Washington Quarterly* 40:4 (2018), p. 81.

³ India does not fit into any of these since its doctrine describes nuclear weapons use only for nuclear deterrence, while Israel looks at them to deal with existential threats. In the above cases I was looking at utilities other than just nuclear deterrence, which is why these two countries are not mentioned.

to undertake selective targeting as a feasible proposition to inflict “limited” damage. It may be recalled that the United States and the Soviet Union had accumulated large stockpiles of nuclear weapons of different yields with the objective of gaining the advantage in nuclear exchanges. However, many individually and jointly-conducted war games showed that the concept of limited nuclear war with “surgically precise accuracy” was pure folly.

15. After toying with the idea for nearly two decades, in the late 1980s, both sides under the stewardship of Presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev accepted the conclusion that achieving success in a limited nuclear war by confining attacks to counterforce targets could only be illusory and downright dangerous since escalation would be difficult to stop. This had closed the chapter on limited nuclear war as a feasible proposition. But, the idea has seen a revival in more recent times.

16. The most recent Nuclear Posture Review brought out by the Trump administration in 2018 asserts “expanding flexible US nuclear options now, to include low yield options.”⁴ It seeks additional “diversity in platforms, range, and survivability, and a valuable hedge against future nuclear ‘break-out’ scenarios.”⁵ The US argues that it is compelled to take this direction⁶ to meet similar projections from Russia which too threatens a strategy of ‘escalate to de-escalate’ in its military doctrine. That may be so. But, individually and collectively, such doctrines enhance the salience of nuclear

weapons, making disarmament well nigh impossible.

17. Therefore, as a first step towards elimination of nuclear weapons, it is necessary to undertake some redrafting of nuclear doctrines to reduce their role to nuclear deterrence alone given that their high destruction potential makes their “limited” use unthinkable for any rational political end. The more usable the weapon is made to appear, the greater value gets ascribed to it and the more attractive it appears. In such circumstances, vertical and horizontal proliferation cannot be stopped. The role of the nuclear weapon must be circumscribed to dealing with only extreme circumstances. Restricted to a very limited utility, over a period of time, it would be possible to remove it from national arsenals.

Restraint on Threats to Non-NWS – Extending Negative Security Assurances

18. It was to reduce the attraction of nuclear weapons as a strategic equalizer and to dissuade non-NWS from acquiring these that the concept of negative security assurances (NSA) to the non-NWS parties to the NPT had first developed in the late 1970s. Under such an NSA, the NWS were to provide an assurance or a guarantee to non-NWS that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons as instruments of pressure, intimidation or blackmail against them. However, none of the five NWS (as recognized by the NPT) has actually made these assurances available unconditionally without any qualification, or as part of a binding legal agreement. Nearly all, in fact, maintain the right to use nuclear weapons to respond to attacks by a non-NWS in alliance or in association with other NWS.

19. In an attempt to take the idea forward, the 2010 NPT RevCon called upon the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to “discuss substantively, without limitation, in order to elaborate recommendations, including an internationally legally binding instrument” for extending legal-

⁴ *Nuclear Posture Review* (Washington DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 2018), p. xii.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. xii.

⁶ It is rather interesting to recall that the US representative to the UN in 1956 had responded to an appeal for an agreement on cessation of nuclear testing by India’s Defence Minister Krishna Menon by saying: “The simple fact is that in the absence of arms control and in the face of constant new developments, a wide variety of weapons is required to provide the versatility and flexibility essential to defend against aggression whenever, wherever and however it may occur.” JP Morray, *From Yalta to Disarmament: Cold War Debate* (New York: MR Press, 1961), p. 267. The US perceives similar threats to its security 60 years later!

ly recognized negative security assurances to non-NWS. However, except for reaffirming a discussion on the subject as part of the agenda of the CD,⁷ no real progress on this front has been achieved.

20. Meanwhile, positive security assurances, or the guarantee that other NWS would come to the assistance of a state under nuclear attack, have been held out on the basis of alliance systems. Extended nuclear deterrence was the assurance to the allies of protection under the nuclear umbrella of a NWS. This was again to dissuade them from building their own nuclear weapons. NSAs and extended deterrence were, therefore, tools of non-proliferation.

21. Both these two assurances, if extended by NWS through some form of legally binding agreement, could make this non-proliferation measure a helpful step towards disarmament since it would drastically reduce the attractiveness of nuclear weapons for non-NWS and also foster a greater sense of security. Therefore, negative security assurances could provide credible guarantees of non-use of nuclear weapons against non-NWS and prove to be a far more useful step towards eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. It would help restrain the number of targets against which nuclear weapons could be used, circumscribing thereby their area of influence.

Restraint on Threats to NWS – Accepting No First Use (NFU) of Nuclear Weapons

22. While security assurances to the non-NWS would significantly reduce the attraction of nuclear weapons, an acceptance of NFU by nuclear weapon possessors would further remove the possibility of nuclear exchange between NWS too.⁸ In fact, adoption of NFU

would be a crucial step towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons since it would involve an assurance from every country that it would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into a conflict. Since there will no first user, it would effectively mean no use of nuclear weapons and hence, a reduced dependence on the weapon in national security strategies over a period of time.

23. More comprehensively, an NFU brings many advantageous restraints on nuclear weapons. First of all, the arsenal requirements of a state with an NFU are drastically reduced. Naturally, a country that professes first use of nuclear weapons can only look credible if it has the requisite first strike capability – a large nuclear arsenal, accurate and MIRVed missiles, and an elaborate command and control structure, including a certain pre-delegation of authority to maintain a high level of readiness for first use. An NFU arsenal, on the other hand, must only be capable of assured retaliation to cause unacceptable damage. This can be well carried out with even relatively less accurate missiles. Neither does the command and control structure have to be elaborate enough to coordinate the logistics of a large first strike over many targets. The arsenal must only be survivable to be able to launch a counterstrike.

24. Secondly, with a no first use doctrine, the decision maker in charge of authorizing nuclear use is freed of the psychological burden of having to make the momentous decision that would vaporize millions in minutes. Since every nuclear-armed state today has a secure second strike capability that rules out the possibility of a decapitating or a disarming first strike, no country that uses nuclear weapons

⁷ The topic of negative security assurances first entered the CD agenda in 1979. Nearly, four decades later that is still where it stays.

⁸ At present, only two countries – India and China – accept NFU. China's NFU, however, does not apply to its own territory or territories that it claims as its own. Hence, there is ambiguity regarding the possibility of Chinese nuclear

weapons in a conflict over Taiwan, or Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian state to which China lays claim. Meanwhile, the Indian NFU which had been unconditional as spelt out in the draft nuclear doctrine presented to the government on 17 August 1999 by the first National Security Advisory Board has since been somewhat diluted by a Cabinet Committee on Security note on operationalization of the doctrine put forth on 4 January 2003 and which does not rule out India's nuclear use against a chemical or biological weapon attack.

first can hope to escape nuclear retaliation. Once this happens, the first user cannot hope to come out looking better even after its first use of nuclear weapons. Rather, the first use may well turn out to be suicidal, besides imposing on it the stigma of breaking a taboo on non-use of nuclear weapons which has a fairly sacrosanct status today. In such a situation then, where the military and political utility of nuclear weapons appears doubtful, even negative, the only rational purpose of these weapons can be deterrence of nuclear use. And, a no first use doctrine performs the task of deterrence most effectively, and entails least risk.

25. Thirdly, NFU allows a restrained force posture. Doctrines that ascribe a war-fighting role to nuclear weapons envisage 'first use' to retain the military advantage and, therefore, adopt launch on warning or launch under attack postures. A pre-emption capability requires a large infrastructure in the form of command and control, early warning, etc. NFU, on the other hand, frees the nation of such requirements. It allows for greater response time for self and a more relaxed posture for the adversary since he is liberated of the 'use or lose' syndrome.

26. Another advantage of NFU is that it would allow the NWS to retain the notional sense of security that they derive from their nuclear arsenals. They would still be able to keep their nuclear weapons if abandoning them looks too big a leap to take. But pledging not to use them first would gradually lessen the desire to improve an unusable weapon, making it easier to give it up.

27. Overall then, NFU has the potential to lessen inter-state tensions, increase mutual confidence and thus reinforce a cycle of positives. It would enhance the inclination towards non-proliferation by sending a strong signal of the diminishing utility of nuclear weapons. It would also lessen the drive of each NWS for new and modernized nuclear arsenals and thus lower inter-state insecurities. Therefore, this step would work towards enhancing the gradual irrelevance of the nuclear weapon, espe-

cially when reinforced by a ban on use or threat of use of the weapon, quite as on the pattern and experience of the 1925 Geneva Convention.

28. One question, however, needs examination when one considers the decision to accept no first use of nuclear weapons. Would a decision/treaty that bans the first use of nuclear weapons lead to an arms race in conventional armaments in order to bridge a perceived security deficit? While there are no empirical studies on the subject, it well might be the case that in the short term, countries divesting themselves of nuclear weapons might lean towards greater conventional acquisitions. However, this trend is unlikely to last if nuclear disarmament is either the result of or results in more cooperative and secure inter-state relations. Hence, the possible spurt in conventional modernization could subside over a period of time. This trend could be further encouraged by a parallel process of conventional arms control akin to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe model.⁹

29. Parallel agreements that provide means to control a conventional arms race would ease the pathway to nuclear disarmament and especially help address the second, and far thornier question of how one could get countries like North Korea or Pakistan that perceive their nuclear weapons as 'strategic equalizers' or potent bargaining chips to prescribe to NFU. Acceptance of NFU goes against the purpose of their national nuclear arsenals.

⁹ The author is grateful to late Air Cmde Jasjit Singh, Director, Centre for Air Power Studies, for bringing out this point in a private conversation. It may also be recalled that the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988 too had catered for simultaneous reduction in conventional weaponry as a mean of moving towards a nuclear free and non-violent world order. The full text of the Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-violent World Order is available as Appendix 2 in Manpreet Sethi, ed., *Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World* (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2009), pp. 151-56. Such a comprehensive approach was also envisaged in Article VI of the NPT.

30. However, a case for convincing/compelling states to accept a universal NFU may be made on three grounds:

- Firstly, an international consensus on and acceptance of NFU will put pressure on such countries and a united approach could provide the necessary firmness to the international community to deal with holdouts.
- Secondly, it is a well known fact established on the basis of elaborate war gaming exercises that a weaker military power can never come out better after the first use of nuclear weapons against another nuclear state. Therefore, first use against a nuclear adversary that also happens to have superior conventional and substantive nuclear capability is nothing short of suicidal for the first user. The admittance of this reality would demonstrate the futility of retaining a first use posture.
- Thirdly, when the NFU is accompanied with comprehensive security assurances, and conventional arms control, it should significantly lower threat perceptions of these nations.

31. Currently, China and India are the only countries with NFU doctrines. In order to kick-start a process towards the universalization of NFU, a first step may be taken by the two to formalize their own commitment into a bilateral agreement and offer that as a template to others. While this appears difficult at the present juncture owing to China's reluctance to accept India's nuclear weapons status, this nevertheless is a reality that Beijing cannot shy away from. Given the strident language used in the US 2018 Nuclear Posture Review and the equally aggressive response of President Vladimir Putin in seeking an "invincible" nuclear arsenal, it looks clear that both these countries that had long provided the example and anchor on strategic stability are unlikely to shoulder this responsibility for some time.

32. In this moment then, China and India are the only two countries whose nuclear doctrines

are premised on the sensible concepts of minimum deterrence and use of nuclear weapons for retaliation only. They would do themselves and the world a service if they could come together to formalize this commitment and set a worthy example on restraint of use of nuclear weapons against other NWS.

Restraint on Force Posture – Formalizing Low Alert Levels

33. Acceptance of NFU enables nations to keep their arsenals in a restrained force posture. This makes it possible for them to undertake de-alerting, de-mating and de-targeting, all three steps that are critical for reducing dangers that accompany nuclear weapons. These steps could significantly reduce the high risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. In fact, a de-alerted and de-mated nuclear arsenal provides for a 'graduated deterrence' response thereby allowing more time to resolve the crisis before nations move towards a state of full alert. This again could significantly transform the mood and optics of nuclear weapons and help reduce their salience.

Restraint on Employment of Nuclear Weapons – Prohibiting their Use or Threat of Use

34. As stated earlier, the Ban Treaty prohibits not only the development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, transfer, possession, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, but also their use or threat of use. These prohibitions, however, are applicable only to the parties to the treaty. Since NWS have not shown any inclination to accept the treaty, ways still need to be found for the NWS to accept a prohibition on use or threat of nuclear weapons. This intention is encapsulated in a Resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" that India has annually tabled at the UN General Assembly since 1982.¹⁰

¹⁰ UN General Assembly Resolution 63/75 (L.15), 2 December 2008.

The resolution aims at prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, a step that can substantially reduce the prospect of nuclear use and contribute towards the creation of a climate for a subsequent agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in *toto*.

35. In case all NWS were to commit under a legal instrument that nuclear weapons shall not be used and that any country using them or threatening to use them shall face commensurate retribution and a total boycott by all the countries of the world, it would make these WMD impotent and useless. None would want to acquire weapons that could not be used in war, and hence not as a deterrent either. Consequently, the unique status that nuclear weapons are deemed to provide would no longer seem worth aspiring for.

36. A convention banning nuclear use, in fact, would send an important signal to all concerned constituencies – it would devalue the weapon substantially as a currency of power and status; it would reduce the likelihood of a nuclear exchange between NWS; it would reassure the non-NWS and reduce their temptation to acquire these weapons for deterrence; it would reinforce the taboo against nuclear use and this would influence non state actors too.

Recommendations

37. In 1988, India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had said:

Humanity is at a crossroads. One road will take us like lemmings to our suicide. That is the path indicated by doctrines of nuclear deterrence, deriving from traditional concepts of the balance of power. The other road will give us another chance. That is the path signposted by the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, deriving from the imperative values of non-violence, tolerance and compassion."¹¹

38. Thirty years since that statement we seem to be poised at the same juncture. One could consider this as fortunate since we have not yet blown ourselves up in a nuclear holocaust. But it is unfortunate too that we continue to flirt with nuclear dangers, which have only grown in dimension and become more sinister since then.

39. Today we inhabit a world where far more numbers of states have nuclear weapons; where nuclear modernization is taking place in times of strident nationalism; where nuclear possessors speak of nuclear "fire and fury" in a rather cavalier fashion; where the possibility of non-state actors acquiring nuclear material or weapons for terrorism, either with or without state complicity have multiplied; and where inter-state relations are mired in mutual mistrust.

40. In some sense, the Ban Treaty has responded to the need of the times. But its bane may be the manner in which it has outlawed nuclear weapons without preparing the necessary ground for inclusion of NWS. One can argue that the nuclear possessors were showing no propensity to do so. Indeed that would be true. But to conclude a treaty without their participation cannot be of much use either. It may have driven the wedge between the two classes of states even deeper.

41. It is now contingent upon the right thinking constituencies on both sides to build bridges. Engaging the NWS to conclude some of the steps identified in the paper could result in a start towards elimination of nuclear weapons. A nuclear weapon free world cannot appear overnight. Nuclear deterrence has taken deep roots over seven decades. It will need more than just a ban to get nations to give them up. It will need a change in belief systems behind their utility.

speech accompanying the submission of Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-violent World Order at the Third Special Session on Disarmament of UN General Assembly, 9 June 1988. For full text of speech see Sethi, ed, *Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World*, Appendix 1, pp. 141–49.

¹¹ Rajiv Gandhi, "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,"

42. A nuclear restraint regime that restricts the role, circumstances of their use, and posture of deploying nuclear weapons can offer a viable pathway to their elimination. Steps will need to be taken one at a time – each reinforcing the other to build a sense of security, and encouraging further movement towards nuclear disarmament. Only thus can the idea of the normative, as exemplified by the Ban Treaty be turned into a substantive method for realizing the noble intention of the treaty.

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APLN and the Toda Peace Institute are publishing a series of Policy Briefs together in a partnership on a project entitled “Bridging the Gap: Harmonizing the NPT and Ban Treaties.” The objective of the project is to link global efforts to protect and strengthen international mechanisms for advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament by harnessing the NPT and the Ban Treaty. A key will be to identify ways to improve cooperation between the 122 countries that voted to adopt the Ban Treaty on the one hand and, on the other, the nuclear-armed states and allies under the nuclear umbrella in the North Atlantic and the Asia Pacific.

Funding Support

APLN gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, Washington DC.

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