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Looking Back at the NPT Review Conference of 2015

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Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held from April 27 to May 22 in New York, unfortunately failed to adopt a final document and instead ended "broken off." The differences in views between countries seen at this Review Conference were great from the Preparatory Committee stage, and many people foresaw that the conference would face difficult going. However, the fact that 2015 was the 70th year since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had also led many to anticipate some concrete progress toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, and the outcome betrayed these expectations.

Immediately after the start of the Review Conference, someone from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs publicly expressed this personal outlook as an optimistic view: "Even if there are opposing views on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, ultimately a compromise is going to be reached. The peaceful use of nuclear energy does not have to become a major problem. The Middle East problem, however, is difficult." This was more or less how matters turned out. A variety of problems emerged during the Review Conference, and followings are some major problems. (For more particulars on the course of the Review Conference and discussion-ns in the main committees, please refer to RECNA's NPT Blog 2015(<https://npt2015recna.wordpress.com/>) and the RECNA policy paper (<http://naosite.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10069/35474/1/REC-PP-01.pdf>).(only in Japanese)

The direct cause for the Review Conference ending in being broken off was the discord involved in the problems of the Middle East. This brought home again how deep the divisions between countries can be when it comes to nuclear disarmament, the theme that is one of the three pillars of the NPT.

The 2015 Review Conference could be called the first such conference to be held amid a movement highlighting a humanitarian approach. After the previous Review Conference in 2010, the statement in its final document that "the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons " took a central position in the international discussion of nuclear disarmament. The contributors to this movement were the countries of the humanitarian group---namely, Switzerland, Norway, Austria, New Zealand, South Africa, Mexico, and others---that took steps to shape the international debate by issuing five joint statements and hold-



Venue of 2015 NPT Review Conference:
UN HQ in New York, April 24 2015

ing three international conferences, together with the wide-ranging support from the civil society for those activities.

Within a context of strong dissatisfaction with the dilatory efforts and lack of progress by the nuclear weapon states with regard to nuclear disarmament, the countries that focused on the inhumanity of it were a source of rising calls for action to prohibit nuclear weapons entirely. Therefore international attention was focused on how much progress would be made in the discussion of legal frameworks for the prohibition of nuclear weapons at the 2015 Review Conference.

Throughout the four weeks of the conference, many participating countries spoke out on the inhumanity of nuclear weapons. Austria issued a joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons for its sixth time. This was supported by 159 countries, an overwhelming majority of the parties to the NPT. Austria's pledge made at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in December of the previous year (<http://www.recna.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/recna/datebase/document/no7/20141208-3>) continued to find increasing support during the Review Conference. By the end of the conference it had risen to 107 countries. The pledge proclaims the necessity of a legal framework for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, and international NGOs have also given it their strong support as a basis for future legal debate.

A number of countries also actively suggested a variety of schemes to advance the discussion of legal frameworks. The first among them were the six countries of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), made up of Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Ireland, New Zealand, and Egypt. The NAC has been considering alternatives for legal frameworks since 2013, categorizing them under the four patterns of comprehensive nuclear weapon prohibition treaties, concise nuclear weapon ban treaties, and so on, organizing them systematically, and considering their advantages and disadvantages. In this way, the NAC has been seeking first of all to bring this discussion to the table in the international community. In fact, the NAC proposals were taken up at the 2015 Review Conference by the subsidiary body of Main Committee I (nuclear disarmament), which placed the legal approach on its agenda for discussion.

During the process leading to creation of a draft final document, intense disagreement between countries emerged regarding statements recognizing inhumanity and discussing legal frameworks. The nuclear weapon states and their sympathetic allies sought either to remove those statements or to revise them significantly. As repeated revisions were made with that intent, strong dissatisfaction was repeatedly voiced by the humanitarian group and other non-nuclear weapon states.

From the perspective of many non-nuclear weapon states, the draft final document was inadequate but it still contained a number of leads for possible progress in discussing the prohibition of nuclear weapons. One of those was a statement recommending the establishment of an open-ended working group (OEWG) in the United Nations to pursue discussion for the advancement of nuclear disarmament, including by means of legal approaches to the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

What impressed us strongly throughout our observation of the four-week period of the conference was the sight of countries earnestly sustaining the effort to look ahead to what will come beyond the NPT. It is true that the conference did not produce a final document on which all participants could agree, and this could lead to a certain setback in efforts with-

in the NPT structure to exert pressure on the nuclear weapon states to make further efforts toward nuclear disarmament, but it is also possible that, in response to this circumstance, the non-nuclear weapon states will accelerate their activity with a view to the next move in the struggle. The humanitarian approach is a movement that will receive expanding support in the time ahead, and it will prepare the ground for the move to legal debate. There is also a growing momentum in international NGOs that assert the possibility of taking steps toward realization of a ban treaty even without the participation of the nuclear weapon states.

Now as various countries around the world are formulating strategies for the next step, we in Japan do not have the luxury to lose heart. The reason is that the key to the success or failure of this kind of approach is held by the non-nuclear weapon states, and especially the countries, including Japan, that are under the nuclear umbrella. The position of Japan's government in discussions of the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons can only be described as still minor. Japan is now being called upon to participate actively in these discussions, to include endorsement of the humanitarian pledge.

The factor that caused the 2015 Review Conference to ultimately break down was the Middle East problem. This problem of the Middle East is not limited to the region called the Middle East, and there is a sense in which the problem is deeply rooted in an essential part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is frequently pointed out that one major reason for the creation of the NPT is the rapid recoveries made by Japan and Germany, countries that went from losers in the Second World War to soon become advanced industrial nations possessing the technological and economic capability necessary for manufacturing nuclear weapons. One initially hidden purpose of the NPT was to prevent Japan and Germany from possessing nuclear weapons. At that time, this was considered by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union to be a shared benefit, and no doubt there were many countries that agreed. As a result, the balance between nuclear disarmament and the commitment to nuclear non-proliferation is subject to doubt while many countries, in the face of the real-world necessity to prevent Japan and Germany from possessing nuclear armament, could be said to have taken part in the NPT with their eyes closed to that doubt.



The UN General Assembly Hall where the plenary meetings took place

It is also very much the case, in part, that the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 was decided on by a similar logic. Even though the number of countries voicing criticism or declaring disappointment at the progress toward nuclear disarmament was not small, the result was that significant support was obtained for indefinite extension. Although the context of this outcome included dissatisfaction and doubt regarding the NPT itself, there was also the real-world judgment made by countries individually that the NPT would be useful in preventing the possession of nuclear weapons by potential enemies among their neighboring countries. In other words, they are taking the stance of realism, which says that the NPT may be an inequitable treaty, but it is convenient because it is a treaty that prohibits countries hostile to them from having nuclear weapons. What takes priority in that situation is a country's own security, not the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. For the governments of the countries involved, this must appear to have a natural logic in light of the accepted wisdom in international politics today. On the side of the nuclear weapon states, these countries are trying to maintain the NPT structure and take steps toward stability, and another added factor is their deals with the Arab countries, which are seeking to move in a direction advantageous for themselves with regard to the problems of countries in the Middle East, including Israel, that are under nuclear suspicion. The combination of these factors led to adoption of indefinite extension of the NPT and simultaneously with that, and as though a condition for it, the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In the 2015 Review Conference, again, the problem of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction ended by being taken up not as an approach with the same universality as the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones, but rather as a regional problem having to do with the Middle East. As a result, the NPT Review Conference as a whole was blocked from achieving consensus on it because it was a regional problem. If the future process of reexamination also takes place by argument solely in terms of separate countries' own interests, and especially their security interests, and if negotiations between countries continue to proceed by a system of give and take, then no doubt matters will end in repetition of the recent situation. In order to tie the NPT into the abolition of nuclear weapons, it will be absolutely necessary for the signatory nations to reexamine the NPT from a perspective of universal interests that transcends the individual circumstances of nations and regions. The NPT must have been founded on an ideal, even if the ideal were to be considered just a position for public consumption, of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. At its foundation, that ideal must have not countries but human beings. If this has been emerging due to the rise of argument on the humanitarian aspect of nuclear weapons, then even though the 2015 Review Conference may have ended in failure, it may be considered a crucial juncture on the way to a world without nuclear weapons in that it suggests both the limits of accommodation according to national interests and the possibilities of a universal approach firmly founded in the human being.

The United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Hiroshima; and The Nuclear Disarmament Symposium on the 70th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombs: "Issues in and a Prospect for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons—In the Wake of the Outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference"

Tastujiro Suzuki (RECNA Director)

On August 26-28, the 25th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues was held in Hiroshima. Because 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs, the proceedings included visits to the Memorial Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims and the Peace Memorial Museum and a hearing of testimony by atomic bomb survivors, such features as took advantage of Hiroshima's historical position as an atomic bomb target. At its opening, Mayor Kazumi Matsui of Hiroshima and Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki of Hiroshima Prefecture both spoke on the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and urged the world to seek a shift from security based on them. It was impressive that former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry called on President Obama to visit Hiroshima and urge the world not to use these weapons ever again. Also, Jayantha Dhanapala, President of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, spoke of the importance of an early implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and expressed expectations for Japan's role as the only nation to have suffered nuclear attacks. On February 27, Mayor Tomihisa Taue of Nagasaki joined Session 3 ("Significance of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones and Nuclear Disarmament/ Nuclear Non-Proliferation in Asia ") as a panelist and spoke at length of the Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, a proposal



Amb. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte giving a Keynote Speech at the Symposium in Nagasaki, 29 August 2015

by Nagasaki University's Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA). Also, in a special session "International Student Meeting on Peace: What can the youth do to realize a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons?" on the final day, Ayumi Inagaki, third year member of the Naga-

saki Youth Delegation, joined other students on stage and delivered a speech in English.

Later, expert participants in the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues were invited to Nagasaki and held on August 29 the Nuclear Disarmament Symposium on the 70th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombs, "Issues in and a Prospect for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons—In the Wake of the Outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference," jointly hosted by RECNA, Japan Association of Disarmament Studies and the PCU Nagasaki Council for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (PCU-NC). In his keynote speech, former United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio de Queiroz Duarte said, "The outcome of the NPT Review Conference was a disappointment but we cannot afford to remain disappointed. Now more than ever civic society and experts must join forces and open a path to the abolition of nuclear weapons. In all of this, Hiroshima and Nagasaki's role will be enormous."

Later, moderated by Nobumasa Akiyama, President of the Japan Association of Disarmament Studies, a panel discussion

took place consisting of Kazutoshi Aikawa, Director-General (Ambassador) of the Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Science Department of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the U.S. Arms Control Association; Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director of the U.K. Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy; and Hiromichi Umebayashi, visiting professor and former Director of RECNA. Ambassador Aikawa outlined gradual steps set forth in Japan's policy toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. Mr. Kimball, urging the United States to adopt a new course in nuclear policy, called on it specifically to stop its plan to modernize the nuclear arsenal. He also called for a nuclear disarmament summit to be held in Hiroshima. Dr. Johnson pointed out the contradictions in the United Kingdom's nuclear policy. Emphasizing the importance of a civic movement, she stressed the importance of civic society in coordination with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Prof. Umebayashi suggested Japan "propose the establishment of an open working group to discuss a legal framework for the abolition of nuclear weapons" while submitting a motion for the total elimination of nuclear weapons at the United Nations as the only country to suffer nuclear attacks. The panel discussion was then followed by a Q&A session involving audience, developing into an extensive dialogue of experts and citizens.

Nagasaki Peace Declaration 2015—To Return to the Foundation of Peace

Satoshi Hirose (RECNA Vice Director)

The year of 2015 marked the seventieth anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also coincided with the quinquennial Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. So many people may have expected some tangible progress toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, however, no significant developments have yet to take place to date. Against such a disappointing background, the Nagasaki Peace Declaration of 2015 weighs seventy years' worth of history and, scanning the distant path toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, asks us about the fundamental question of peace, from which everything is derived.

2015 is not just the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombs but also of the end of the Second World War, the start of the post-war peace and the founding of the United Nations. Since the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have not been used, but then their abolition has yet to happen. The United Nations has played a critical role numerous times in the international community, but war has not disappeared. Japan has managed to stay out of war for 70 years but the country is now shifting its course drastically. Under such a situation, what message are we trying to dispatch from Nagasaki?

Needless to say, the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not natural disasters. There followed steps in human intent toward those events. The bombs were dropped by design under war conditions. Nuclear weapons can find their justification only in the requirements of that abnormal eventuality that is war. Against the requirements of peace, however, they are merely expensive and dangerous obstacles. Taken in this context, nuclear deterrence means nothing but tentative non-usage of nuclear weapons based on the fears of a coming nuclear war. As such, it cannot be the



A Monument of Atomic Bombing in the campus of Nagasaki University symbolizing the time of the explosion

foundation of real peace. We must confirm and reconfirm this truth and repeat it in our Peace Declaration.

What price are we going to pay when this deterrence fails? For an answer to this question, we can look to the numerous wars from our past. Now that we are basing deterrence on nuclear arsenal, we have come to risk the annihilation of the whole human race in the event of its failure. To call this security seems a contradiction. If we continue to disguise this contradiction in some "realism" and refuse to face its truth,

we will never attain any real security or peace. If we continue to deploy nuclear weapons in this set up, we will have to co-exist daily with their terror for an illusory security. This is not what we want. We do not want an artificial security with nuclear weapons in our midst threatening our casualties. What we want is life in peace free of nuclear weapons and war.

It may be easy to dismiss such a vision of peace as a mere idealism but it will only be an excuse to forfeit effort to change reality. It is perhaps undeniable that the international situation surrounding Japan is stark. It is perhaps necessary to recognize this stark fact. This reality, however, is our start-

ing point and not our goal. To recognize reality does not mean to merely accept it without any question, or a forfeiture of effort to change it.

The Peace Declaration of 2015(http://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/heiwa/3020000/3020300/p027408_d/fil/english.pdf), while raising questions about a security based on nuclear deterrence, examines a number of concrete alternatives to it. To choose these alternatives requires overcoming many challenges but the most critical challenge is to explore the possibility of security alternatives to nuclear deterrence. Nagasaki, as the location on which an atomic bomb has been detonated, must not cease to voice the need for this necessity.



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