

## Young Deep Cuts Policy Brief #2

# From NATO to NPT and Beyond: Diversifying Debates, Expanding Nuclear Mindsets

By Sara Bundtzen and Ekaterina Lapanovich

### Summary

- The emergence of the Humanitarian Initiative and the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) changed the dynamics and the tone of the nuclear disarmament debate. A principal incompatibility between approaches to security centered on nuclear deterrence and approaches that view nuclear deterrence practices as an imminent threat to humanity has come to the forefront of nuclear policymaking. States that pursue either approach rushed to the defense of their respective viewpoints, rarely trying to genuinely engage arguments made by the other.
- NATO allies should embrace alternative pathways so not to forego opportunities to lead nuclear disarmament efforts and to reflect more comprehensively about nuclear policy options. Beyond the Alliance, States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should envision a more inclusive and open-minded discussion on the principal drivers of the Humanitarian Initiative rather than focusing on the (in)compatibility between the TPNW and the NPT. The NPT Review Conference in 2022 presents an opportunity to make progress on some of the issues at stake: States Parties should acknowledge the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon states should pledge to respect international humanitarian law in their doctrines and operational planning.
- NPT States Parties and cross-regional initiatives should advance the conversation on nuclear risk reduction and seriously consider meaningful measures to reduce the dangers posed by nuclear deterrence practices. De-alerting presents an urgent and legitimate interim step pending nuclear disarmament.

### *The dire state of nuclear disarmament today*

Amid a continuous shift towards more confrontational and competitive global politics, military and security policymaking risks cementing a worrying reliance on nuclear weapons. At the same time, progress in nuclear arms control and disarmament stagnates or worse, is reversed. Today, those states that rely on nuclear deterrence for their security and those that do not claim to be equally focused on making the world safer, while seeking to do so in incompatible ways, which ultimately encourages polarized and insular discussions.

The polarized discourse prominently plays out in the dispute between supporters and opponents of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), also known as the Ban Treaty, that entered into force on 22 January 2021.<sup>1</sup> Surely, fundamental disagreement on how (and, actually, whether) to achieve nuclear disarmament between nuclear-weapon states (NWS)<sup>2</sup>, their allies, and non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) existed long before the TPNW. NNWS – to varying degrees given respective stances on nuclear deterrence – have constantly pressured NWS into tangible progress on nuclear disarmament.<sup>3</sup>

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The emergence of the TPNW leads to an unprecedented contestation between the orthodoxy of nuclear deterrence and the urge for nuclear disarmament, as well as the open display of division among NNWS themselves. One group of NNWS categorically rejects nuclear weapons. The other believes them to be a fundamental guarantee of their own security. The latter group practices extended nuclear deterrence and therefore finds itself in an awkward position that is more closely aligned with that of NWS than NNWS.

Importantly, the TPNW challenges dominant narratives about nuclear deterrence. An underlying approach of Ban Treaty supporters is to center concerns over legality, ethics, and morality of nuclear weapons. They bolster historically marginalized voices, including those who would have to face the consequences of nuclear use on the ground, those who approach nuclear weapons from the perspective of international humanitarian law (IHL), and those who suffered from nuclear use and testing. In other words, this avenue expands security and connected threat perceptions to intersectional grievances<sup>4</sup> and individual-level considerations.<sup>5</sup>

For example, nuclear weapons testing has devastated the way of life of many indigenous communities – be it the people of the Pacific Islands, native tribes in South Australia and Algeria, Uyghurs in Xinjiang, or Native Americans in New Mexico.<sup>6</sup> A humanitarian lens recognizes the local grievances of populations affected of nuclear activities. It confronts an unequal and hierarchical nuclear order, habitually portrayed by NWS as universal and legitimate to conceal underlying power relations.<sup>7</sup>

The humanitarian approach encourages all stakeholders to reflect about the safety of nuclear weapons, the complexity of grievances, and whose security nuclear weapons really prioritize.

An inclusive and ambitious approach to nuclear policymaking is long overdue and anticipated by vocal supporters of nuclear disarmament in the run-up to the postponed tenth NPT Review Conference.<sup>8</sup> A chance to fulfil the NPT's ultimate negotiation mandate on nuclear disarmament, as stipulated in Article VI of the Treaty<sup>9</sup>, necessitates transformative, diverse, and open discussions between and among NWS and NNWS.

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### *Pitfalls of the current debate in NATO*

NATO presents a pressing case to critically engage popular arguments made by NWS and their allies, and to identify potential alternative pathways and opportunities. Three out of five NWS are members of the Alliance. NATO's NNWS too merit special attention in the context of the campaign to ban nuclear weapons as they are perceived as having some leverage in the nuclear debate with their nuclear-armed allies.

NATO allies quickly ascribed an incompatibility between the TPNW and the NPT, setting up a confrontation early in the debate on the Humanitarian Initiative.<sup>10</sup> In a 2016 non-paper, the US urged NATO allies to oppose a nuclear ban treaty. The Obama administration argued that such treaty would “degrade enduring security relationships” and “undermine the long-standing strategic stability.”<sup>11</sup> Only one ally – the Netherlands – participated in the negotiations of the TPNW, and eventually became the only state to vote against the Treaty's adoption in the UN General Assembly.<sup>12</sup>

In September 2017, on the day the TPNW was opened for signature, NATO allies declared that they would not support the Treaty.<sup>13</sup> When the TPNW neared entry into force, allies reiterated that the TPNW does “not reflect the increasingly challenging international security environment” and that it remained “at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.”<sup>14</sup> NATO's three nuclear-armed allies equally made their position on the TPNW known. On 7 July 2017, the day the TPNW was adopted, the P3 issued a joint statement arguing the Humanitarian Initiative “clearly disregards the realities of the international security environment.”<sup>15</sup> In a UN Security Council meeting on the NPT Review Conference, the French representative reiterated the Ban Treaty would “weaken the NPT standards and the non-proliferation regime.” The US representative noted that the TPNW failed “to address the security challenges that continue to make nuclear deterrence necessary.”<sup>16</sup>

Briefly put, beyond rejecting the actual ban of nuclear weapons, allied governments discard the Ban Treaty's intended normative effect. The

arguments put forward neither offer a response to the urgency nor engage new perspectives on nuclear deterrence practices that stem from the Humanitarian Initiative. Instead, NATO's central effort sought to secure the codification and authority of the existing nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament architecture, the NPT, and the step-by-step approach.

Discrediting the Ban Treaty – aside from genuine intentions to discuss the actual implications on the existing nuclear order – NATO allies widely rejected the concerns of the Humanitarian Initiative. Understanding the shortcomings of prevalent attitudes on nuclear deterrence and strategic stability opens space for alternative thinking.

### *“Unilateral disarmament” of liberal democracies?*

In the context of the NPT and the five NWS, Russia and China do not have any lesser moral and ethical responsibility to grapple with the disarmament concerns at hand than the other NWS. However, genuine and open deliberations on the role of nuclear weapons are less likely to happen in these countries. Decision-making processes in Moscow and Beijing remain unbound by civil society.

This lack of accountability should not hinder liberal democracies from stepping up to the challenge of shifting societal and multilateral dynamics. Importantly, it is a fundamental characteristic of liberal democracies to engage legitimate concerns of civil society and marginalized voices. Furthermore, waiting for more favorable or suitable security conditions that allow for nuclear

disarmament offers no foreseeable or tangible course of action. Regardless of whether China or Russia intend to progress in the matter any time soon or not, NATO allies should respond to the concerns of other NNWS regarding nuclear weapons and their own security.

Allies should turn international and societal pressure into an opportunity to engage valid concerns over the very real moral, ethical, and legal implication of nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence becomes intrinsically unstable and lacks credibility if not thought through all its aspects – be they strategic or moral: After all, political leadership must show credible willingness and ability to make the ultimate decision without hesitation. A more engaging stance would also improve NATO allies' credibility to point Ban Treaty supporters towards China, Russia, and non-NPT nuclear weapons possessors and start off a much-needed conversation among and with them.

### *Promoting nuclear accountability in a NATO context*

Norway's newly elected government announced it will participate in the first Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW, scheduled to take place from 22-24 March 2022 in Vienna, as an observer.<sup>17</sup> The new German government intends to follow suit.<sup>18</sup> With more allies potentially seeking to articulate new positions, it is in NATO's core interest to respect and consider the sovereign decisions of its members. To sustain cohesion, allies should take these evolving political realities seriously and develop constructive interim steps towards disarmament in a united, open-minded manner – this will not only enhance

NATO's commitment to liberal democratic debate, but also the credibility of its deterrence. Key questions guiding such effort could be: How would a more concrete and scenario-based assessment of humanitarian and other consequences of nuclear weapon use undermine or strengthen NATO's cost-benefit analysis and deterrence calculus? What would be the practical implications, if the debate centers humanitarian considerations, inter alia, to the credibility of NATO's deterrence posture?<sup>19</sup>

First, NATO allies should envision exchange with non-governmental organizations, including think-tanks and advocacy groups, as well as experts from different scientific fields that focus on humanitarian, postcolonial, gender, and environmentalist perspectives. Dialogue should acknowledge diverse historical, social, political, economic, and geographical contexts to allow for comprehensive discussions on the role of nuclear weapons. An open debate about the assumptions intrinsic to nuclear deterrence may prove beneficial to disarmament efforts and the real-world security dilemma. The annual NATO Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament and Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation may offer an occasion for an inclusive dialogue that allows deterrence-focused as well as abolitionist viewpoints to be presented in an equal manner. Such a step would also help to make the conversation more transparent and accessible for public discourse.

Second, as States Parties to the NPT, NATO allies should – preferably in a collective manner – support progressive ideas on how to accelerate nuclear disarmament. Some proposals are already on the table. For instance, a working paper on integrating gender perspectives in the implementation of the

NPT submitted by Australia, Canada, Ireland, Namibia, Sweden, and the UN Institute for Disarmament Research encourages States Parties “to apply a gender analysis to issues covered under all three pillars” of the NPT. The paper affirms the need for “a general appreciation among multilateral practitioners of the ways in which the substantive issues they deal with are often gendered.” It calls for integrating “gender analysis as a means to ensure that the differential needs of women, men, girls and boys are addressed in the Treaty review process.”<sup>20</sup> NATO allies should support this effort and put gender analysis into practice beyond representation and participation. Merely increasing the number of women at the table will neither improve gender awareness nor alter policymaking processes. Inclusivity at all stages of the NPT review cycle requires opening a space to scrutinize dominant assumptions and intersectional grievances that exist in practices and concepts of nuclear policymaking.

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Together with national gender advisors and gender focal points, NATO's human security unit should be enabled to lead an effort to reflect on nuclear deterrence practices. Allies should be encouraged to pursue an open consultation process that considers cross-ministerial and cross-department expertise. NATO could facilitate regular working-

level exchange as well as high-level interventions. A concrete outcome would be a critical assessment of the humanitarian, legal and ethical implications of NATO's nuclear deterrent, which could then be presented by the High Representative for Women, Peace and Security to the Nuclear Planning Group. Additionally, individual allies could submit ambitious food-for-thought and non-papers to help stir the conversation.

### *Promoting accountability and IHL principles in the context of the NPT*

NPT States Parties should address perceptions about each other's concerns, approaches, and intentions in an inclusive and accountable dialogue. Opponents and critics of the TPNW should focus on the drivers of the TPNW rather than circling around supposed incompatibility with the NPT, an argument that legal assessments refuted previously.<sup>21</sup>

A peculiarity of NWS' approach towards the TPNW is an "absence of substantive engagement" on the arguments that underpin the Humanitarian Initiative.<sup>22</sup> One of these arguments is that IHL applies to all weapons – including nuclear weapons – and that all states must comply with IHL at all times. The decision to root the initiative in IHL was driven by the fact that at the least some of its norms are widely accepted and reflected in customary international law.

A requisite for a much-needed conversation on the interplay between nuclear deterrence practices and the principles of IHL is the acceptance that all states and civil society actors merit agency in the debate. A nuclear war or any nuclear use would almost

certainly affect considerable parts of humanity beyond the populations of conflicting parties.<sup>23</sup> NWS should critically re-assess the ancient perspective that, as nuclear weapons possessor, they had the right do with them whatever they wanted.<sup>24</sup> The very first sentence of the preamble of the NPT stresses, "the devastation that would be visited upon *all mankind* by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of *peoples*" (emphasis added).<sup>25</sup> The NPT places this obligation on all States Parties, nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States alike.

Promoting genuine engagement of NWS and their allies with the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, NPT States Parties should seek to embed the wording on the humanitarian considerations of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference in the Final Document of the upcoming one. A straightforward option would be to reiterate previously agreed language that expresses "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and affirms the "need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law."<sup>26</sup>

### *Incorporating IHL principles into doctrinal debates*

Arguably, an agreement on meaningful language requires NWS and their allies to genuinely consider difficult doctrinal and operational questions. Does the United Kingdom's policy of "minimum deterrence" – sometimes promoted as a somewhat

moderate posture or even “a step on the path towards non-proliferation and disarmament”<sup>27</sup> – require countervalue targeting, i.e. targeting the enemy’s civilian population, and is thereby in contradiction of IHL? To what extent does modernization, resulting in lower yield and increased accuracy and a reduction of collateral damage<sup>28</sup>, impact nuclear deterrence practices and what does it mean in terms of humanitarian considerations?<sup>29</sup> Could ‘tactical’ low-yield nuclear weapons be used without violating the rules of distinction and proportionality? How can Russia’s modernized delivery systems, including an autonomous nuclear-armed torpedo, be operated without violating the principles of IHL? Have such modernization efforts and new capabilities of NWS ever been assessed for their compatibility with IHL?

Whether and to what extent can NWS comply with IHL in doctrinal documents and operational plans remains a serious concern.<sup>30</sup> Thus far, a disregard of IHL, such as the prohibition on targeting civilians or the requirement to assess the legality of new systems, enabled nuclear doctrines to focus on strategic and tactical considerations.<sup>31</sup>

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administration and explicitly make a commitment to comply with IHL. The 2013 US Nuclear Employment Strategy stated that all operational plans for the employment of nuclear weapons must be consistent with the cardinal rules of IHL, i.e. to respect the principles of distinction and proportionality, and to minimize collateral damage to civilian populations and civilian objects.<sup>32</sup> NPT States Parties should establish an open working group to address questions concerning the integration of IHL into their nuclear strategies and practices with the aim to report their findings to the 2025 Review Conference.<sup>33</sup>

A more ambitious undertaking to increase accountability would be for NWS to agree on a legal review of whether their nuclear capabilities are consistent with IHL.<sup>34</sup> A gold standard of reporting on the legality of nuclear weapons systems would be for NWS to agree on expanding their NPT reporting requirements to also provide NPT States Parties with an assessment on the characteristics of their nuclear postures and policies: technical description, technical performance, health- and environment-related considerations, including the foreseeable effects, target groups, and use for which a weapon is designed or intended.

Research on IHL and autonomous weapon systems has shown that it is often contentious who conducts a legal review.<sup>35</sup> One option would be the creation of a committee comprised of independent legal experts from NPT States Parties. Fair, transparent, and sufficient vetting requirements for such legal experts should be determined at the preparatory stage. Whatever format is pursued, a multidisciplinary approach including technological, medical, gender, and environmental expertise is

required for facilitating a comprehensive review. A legal review process should bring in the International Committee of the Red Cross as the guardian of IHL.

To support the pathway towards integrating IHL into nuclear discussions, NWS should at least aim to implement proposals formulated by the members of the Stockholm Initiative. The initiative, launched in 2019 by 16 NNWS<sup>36</sup>, presents a multilateral effort to revitalize disarmament diplomacy. The proposed short-term actions (“stepping stones”) call on NWS to inter alia reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their policies and doctrines, to report to NPT States Parties on arsenals and plans for their modernization, to encourage visits to and interaction with communities affected by nuclear weapons, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and former nuclear test sites such as Semipalatinsk and in the Pacific, to further integrate gender perspectives, and to strengthen reporting and transparency commitments.<sup>37</sup> The proposed measures are urgent, achievable and meaningful steps.

Complementing efforts at the NPT level, the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative offers an interesting microcosm of critical positions as it comprises NWS and NNWS as well as non-NPT nuclear weapons possessors. Among them are both supporters and opponents of the TPNW. The Trump administration first proposed CEND in 2018<sup>38</sup> to discuss obstacles to and practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. The forum should aim to address humanitarian and IHL concerns.<sup>39</sup> In 2019, one of its three subgroups, which tackles the reduction of the perceived incentives for states to acquire or increase their

nuclear stockpiles, agreed on a program of work that would include “recommending avenues for future dialogue on nuclear deterrence and the humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons.”<sup>40</sup> Recommendations of the subgroups will be available to the public no earlier than at the beginning of 2023.<sup>41</sup> In the meantime, members of CEND should explore opportunities to brief the wider community of states and offer transparency reporting on their progress. They should do so, inter alia, under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly.

### *Rethinking nuclear risk reduction*

Nuclear risk reduction is a matter of great and widely shared concern. Both, the NPT and the TPNW, refer to the dangers of nuclear weapon use by accident or miscalculation.<sup>42</sup> Equally, the Putin-Biden statement reaffirming that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”<sup>43</sup> or the Working Paper on a Nuclear Risk Reduction Package produced by the Stockholm Initiative<sup>44</sup> ahead of the tenth NPT Review Conference, warned against the general threat of nuclear war. Certainly, such affirmations of avoiding nuclear war are welcome signals to the international community. Yet, there are very distinct approaches towards nuclear risk perceptions among NPT States Parties.

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While NWS and their allies perceive nuclear risk reduction primarily in the context of strategic stability, disarmament proponents perceive nuclear risk as inherent to practices of nuclear deterrence *per se*. A focus on “strategic risks” would arguably prove incomplete and insufficient to those seeking to address humanitarian consequences.<sup>45</sup>

The Working Paper prepared by the Stockholm Initiative calls for exploring links between the significance of nuclear weapons in security concepts, doctrines and policies and the risks it implies. It also features the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and highlights a growing understanding of nuclear risks to be a stimulus to address risk reduction with urgency.<sup>46</sup> The underlying question remains to what extent nuclear risk reduction for the security of all differs from nuclear risk reduction measures for the sake of stability of deterrence practiced by NWS?

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Approaching nuclear risk reduction from the perspective of security for all requires a broader reflection on some deterrence practices, such as hair-trigger alert postures.<sup>47</sup> They are ready-made responses to situations that do no longer exist. A measure such as de-alerting, i.e. decreasing operational readiness<sup>48</sup>, has attracted harsh criticism from NWS in the past. They assert that de-alerting is dangerous because in a de-alerted world

re-introducing operational readiness (during a crisis) could be highly destabilizing. Consequently, critics of de-alerting perceive a need to constantly ensure the highest level of operational readiness.<sup>49</sup> This speaks to the idea that no future without nuclear weapons is conceivable.<sup>50</sup>

The policy mindset of NWS is worrying as it seems to exclude the possibility to forgo nuclear deterrence and pursue even modest adaptations to nuclear deterrence practices. To the contrary, de-alerting should be promoted as a much-needed step precisely because of an increasingly tense security environment. Supporters of the TPNW highlight that the rationale behind a ban was not only – or not at all as some argue<sup>51</sup> – an abstract frustration with the pace of nuclear disarmament, but the very real risks posed by nuclear deterrence. De-alerting presents a necessary interim security measure that proposes to live with nuclear weapons as safe as possible pending their elimination. It would also signify a qualitative step towards lowering the role of nuclear weapons in security policy.

Working Papers submitted by the De-Alerting Group and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) called for de-alerting as a much-needed boost for disarmament efforts. The De-Alerting Group, consisting of Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sweden and Switzerland, proposes to recognize the link between high alert levels, associated risks and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences posed by nuclear weapons use.<sup>52</sup> Based on the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, the NPDI noted that “lowered operational readiness for nuclear weapons systems would demonstrate a

commitment to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security and defense doctrines.”<sup>53</sup>

Proposed efforts are worth expanding at the tenth NPT Review Conference. Looking ahead, it would be useful to exchange perspectives within and among different platforms, including the P5, the Stockholm Initiative, CEND, NPDI, and the De-Alerting Group. Stakeholders of those fora should openly discuss whether and how perspectives on nuclear risk reduction differ and what practical steps states are willing to take.

## Recommendations

States Parties to the NPT, NWS and NNWS equally, as well as non-NPT nuclear-weapon possessors (the latter notably through CEND) need to engage in a more genuine, diverse, and open dialogue without delay. Non-engagement of humanitarian considerations risks reinforcing isolated debates and nonconstructive blame-games. NATO allies should step up to the changing political realities and nuclear disarmament discourse. Rather than keep waiting for the right security conditions to emerge themselves, inclusive and urgent steps to nuclear disarmament can prove far more beneficial. To advance this approach, the following steps are urgently needed:

- NATO allies should genuinely consider humanitarian arguments, irrespective of their positions on the TPNW, to demonstrate that they are serious about their commitment to liberal democratic debate and accountability.

- NATO allies should embrace the international disarmament impetus driven by the Humanitarian Initiative as an opportunity to reflect on nuclear deterrence practices. Such a step requires scrutinizing all parameters, including the humanitarian dimension, of nuclear use scenarios and planning.
- The annual NATO Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament and Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation presents an occasion to engage alternative views. Diverse exchange should respond to intersectional grievances, including diverse historical, social, political, economic, and geographical contexts, to allow for comprehensive elaborations on the role of nuclear weapons vis-à-vis respective security perceptions.
- Together with national gender advisors and gender focal points, NATO’s unit for human security should be empowered to conduct a coordinated, comprehensive, and open assessment of the humanitarian, legal and ethical dimensions of NATO’s nuclear deterrence policy. Such consultation process could ultimately strengthen the Alliance’s credibility, cohesion, and unity.
- NATO allies should accelerate efforts in NPT Working Groups to implement gender analysis at all stages of the NPT review cycle beyond representation and participation. Inclusive and intersectional approaches should openly challenge hierarchical power structures in policymaking processes and institutions.

- NWS and their allies should acknowledge the legitimate interests of all states and civil society actors in nuclear disarmament efforts considering the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. NPT States Parties should seek to embed this understanding in the Final Document of the tenth NPT Review Conference.
- NWS and their allies should actively engage concerns that drove the Humanitarian Initiative, incorporating expertise from non-governmental stakeholders from diverse geographic and multidisciplinary backgrounds. CEND may offer a suitable forum of opponents and proponents of the Humanitarian Initiative to support such conversations.
- NWS should ensure accountability in nuclear doctrines and operational plans through an assessment of their nuclear planning and consistency with cardinal principles of IHL. Comprehensive assessments should scrutinize to what extent nuclear postures and operational plans affirm this proposition. NWS should ideally provide NPT States Parties with transparency reports concerning the status of the legality of their nuclear weapons systems and potential steps taken to advance a sufficient outcome. In a complementary manner, NWS should engage the proposals of the Stockholm Initiative to revitalize disarmament diplomacy, cooperation and confidence-building, and transparency.
- NPT States Parties should openly consider different nuclear risk perceptions beyond considerations of strategic risks and strategic

stability. The Stockholm Initiative could serve as a platform for progressive deliberations. The initiative should seek to coordinate its work with the P5 and CEND to understand whether and how positions on risk reduction differ and what practical steps all sides are willing to take. De-alerting should be a priority as it offers a sensible interim step pending nuclear disarmament.

## Endnotes

- 1 Article 1 of the TPNW prohibits States Parties to use, threaten to use, develop, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess, stockpile, transfer, station, or install nuclear weapons or assist with any prohibited activities. See UN General Assembly, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), A/CONF.229/2017/8, 2017, <https://undocs.org/A/CONF.229/2017/8>.
- 2 “NWS” under the NPT refer to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (known as the “P5”). Although the term “P5 process” has been used in the context of nuclear disarmament, “P5” and “NWS” are not synonymous, and neither historically nor legally linked.
- 3 NWS agreed undertakings to pursue disarmament negotiations “in good faith”, so NNWS pledged to not acquire nuclear weapons on their own. The bargain of the NPT, a promise that the status quo is temporary, developed into a cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation as States Parties decided in 1995 that it should continue in force indefinitely. See Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text>.
- 4 Intersectional theory asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers. Intersectionality recognizes that identity markers (e. g. “woman” and “black”) do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others, often creating a complex convergence of oppression. See YW Boston Blog, “What is intersectionality, and what does it have to do with me?” March 2017, <https://www.ywboston.org/2017/03/what-is-intersectionality-and-what-does-it-have-to-do-with-me/>.
- 5 Emily Enright, “Could Person-Centered Security be America’s Future?” *Outrider*, July 14, 2020, <https://outrider.org/nuclear-weapons/articles/could-person-centered-security-be-americas-future/>.
- 6 Mariana Budjeryn and Togzhan Kassenova, “Nuclear Shades of Red Racism,” *Inkstick*, September 24, 2020, <https://inkstickmedia.com/nuclear-shades-of-red-racism/>.
- 7 Nick Ritchie, “A hegemonic nuclear order: Understanding the Ban Treaty and the power politics of nuclear weapons,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, 40:4, pp. 409-434, January 2019, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13523260.2019.1571852?journalCode=fcsp20>.
- 8 The Tenth RevCon of the Parties to the NPT was scheduled to meet 4-28 January 2022 in New York. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference has been postponed. The President-designate has asked for a tentative hold to be placed on the dates of 1 to 26 August 2022 for the Review Conference. Those dates are subject to formal confirmation by states parties at a later date.
- 9 Under Article VI of the NPT states parties agreed undertakings “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” See Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text>.
- 10 The Humanitarian Initiative (HI) was initiated at the “Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons” in Oslo in March 2013 and developed during follow-up conferences in Nayarit and Vienna in February and December 2014 respectively. The HI included statements delivered at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly and the NPT Preparatory Committees. Increased engagement with humanitarian concerns and research on the consequences of use of nuclear weapons as well as its legality by civil society and think-tanks are considered part of the HI. See Heather Williams, “The Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons Initiative: The ‘Big Tent’ in Disarmament,” Chatham House, March 2015, [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field\\_document/20150331HumanitarianImpactNuclearWilliamsLewisAghlani.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20150331HumanitarianImpactNuclearWilliamsLewisAghlani.pdf).
- 11 “United States Non-Paper: Defense Impacts of Potential United Nations General Assembly Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty,” NATO, October 16, 2016, [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmxc.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/821/attachments/original/1590165765/NATO\\_OCT2016.pdf?1590165765](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmxc.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/821/attachments/original/1590165765/NATO_OCT2016.pdf?1590165765).
- 12 UN General Assembly, 2017, UN conference to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons: Second session, Item 9, A/CONF.229/2017/L.3/Rev.1 Draft treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/A.Conf\\_.229.2017.L.3.Rev\\_.1.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/A.Conf_.229.2017.L.3.Rev_.1.pdf).
- 13 “North Atlantic Council Statement on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” NATO, September 20, 2017, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_146954.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_146954.htm?selectedLocale=en).
- 14 “North Atlantic Council Statement as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Enters Into Force,” NATO, December 15, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_180087.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_180087.htm).
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*About the Authors*



**Sara Bundtzen** is a Research & Policy Associate at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). She previously worked at the Federal Ministry of Defence, NATO HQ, the Delegation of the EU to the US, and Crisis Group. Her research interests lie at the intersection of transatlantic security, nuclear policy, the intel cycle, and online disinformation. Sara holds an MA in International Security from Sciences Po Paris.



**Ekaterina Lapanovich** is an assistant at the Department of Theory and History of International Relations, Ural Federal University. Her research focuses on nuclear deterrence, nuclear disarmament, the Humanitarian Initiative, and the Ban Treaty. Ekaterina is a member of the CTBTO Youth Group. Currently, she is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP).

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The Young Deep Cuts Commission (YDCC) is a group of twelve young arms control experts from Germany, Russia, and the United States with diverse academic and professional backgrounds. The Young Commissioners develop fresh ideas to strengthen and revitalize nuclear arms control and disarmament. YDCC is part of the Deep Cuts project, an independent, nongovernmental initiative, which provides decision-makers as well as the interested public with concrete policy options based on realistic analysis.

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Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg (IFSH)

Beim Schlump 83  
20144 Hamburg, Germany

Phone: +49 (0)40 86 60 77-21  
Fax: +49 (0)40 866 36 15

Project Management  
Franziska Stärk  
Oliver Meier

Email: [ydcc@deepcuts.org](mailto:ydcc@deepcuts.org)