

Keynote Lecture

Toward a World Without Nuclear Weapons: Overcoming the Inhumanity of Nuclear Weapons

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Introduction

In recent years, a global consensus has emerged regarding the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. With multi-partisan cognizance of this inhumanity, momentum for multilateral negotiations to legally prohibit nuclear weapons is finally, in 2017, coalescing at the United Nations. This move is being led by more than 150 nonnuclear powers as well as numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as representatives of civil society. Conversely, the world's nuclear powers, who rely on policies of nuclear deterrence (including those regarding expansion deterrence), as well as allies such as Japan and the NATO member countries, claim that a legal ban is premature and that the rapid conclusion of a such a treaty is fraught with security risks, and opposition between these two camps is becoming more pointed. In this keynote lecture, I would like

to reflect on how we can clarify and overcome the obstacles standing in the way of the gradual clearance for abolishing nuclear weapons by our recognition of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

1. International Politics and the Global Consensus on Inhumanity

Behind the growing recognition of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, dissatisfaction with the state of the process of abolishing nuclear weapons, which has made little, if any, progress to date, has been accumulating, particularly on the part of civil society and the nonnuclear powers vis-à-vis the world's nuclear powers despite the demand imposed on all nuclear powers and nonnuclear powers by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which came into force in 1970 and Article 6 of which mandates that "each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes 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."

In 2009, shortly after his inauguration, the then U.S. President Barack Obama, in a speech delivered in the Czech Republic's capital, Prague, promised that "as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility ... to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" for which he was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

After a statement issued in 2010 by its chairman, Jakob Kellenberger, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, based in Geneva, Switzerland), an institution that has contributed to relief activities and the establishment of international humanitarian law as a neutral organization in the context of natural disasters,

wars, and conflict since its establishment in 1863, has once again been highlighting the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and insisting on the practical impossibility of preventing damage from nuclear explosions and on the fact that fundamentally, abolishing nuclear weapons is our only possible option. This move was immediately reflected in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (2010 NPT Review), and an expression of “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” was included in the final document adopted by the conference.

Internationally, in line with the same ideological current, the first International Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons was held in Oslo, Norway, in February 2013, which was soon followed by second and third conferences held in Nayarit (Mexico) and Vienna (Austria), respectively, in 2014, which included many presentations and discussions that ran the gamut from ethical to scientific findings concerning inhumanity. A document known as the “Austrian Pledge” that could be called the culmination of this process was agreed upon by 120 countries for submission to the subsequent NPT Review Conference in 2015. This was later renamed the “Humanitarian Pledge.”

Thereafter, discussions at the UN began to be driven primarily by nonnuclear powers such as Austria, Mexico, and Egypt, along with international NGOs such as International Campaign for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and a proposal for multilateral negotiations slated to begin in 2017 and aimed at the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons based on their inhumanity was passed by a majority vote in the First Committee in October 2016 (123 in favor, 38 opposed, 16 abstaining). The government of Japan voted for the first time to

oppose this type of resolution. This resolution was finally forwarded to the UN General Assembly in the middle of December, and at the time of writing, a decision is expected to be imminent.

However, this growing consensus has not been readily accepted by the world's nuclear powers, and the movement for nuclear disarmament and abolition is facing a crisis of division. The government of Japan, as the only country ever to have been subjected to the wartime use of atomic weapons and that has until now regarded leading the charge for abolishing nuclear weapons as a national policy by expressing similar concerns, sparked astonishment at home and abroad by turning against the resolution. For the nonnuclear powers pressing forward on the logic of the majority to a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons treaties, the attitude of the nuclear powers poses one of the most difficult political challenges of today for all of humanity.

On May 27, 2016, President Obama made his first official visit to Hiroshima to pray for the victims of the atomic bombings. However, no apology has been forthcoming for the non-humanitarian use of weapons by the U.S., and when humanity (i.e., the U.S.) raised the curtain on the nuclear age in 1945, it ushered in a nuclear arms race during the Cold War era as the product of the wisdom that humanity derived by combining science and military affairs and only revealed that it has failed to achieve the wisdom necessary to abolish the nuclear weapons that now dictate the very survival of our species. In contrast to President Obama's advocacy of a world without nuclear weapons, the nuclear policy that will be followed by his successor, President Trump, remains to be seen. The immediate future of the move for abolishing nuclear weapons has grown cloudy.

2. A Legacy of Inhumanity for Japan and the World

1) Prior to the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)

Studies by American historians have revealed concerns within the U.S. government and military regarding the use of weapons of mass destruction. For example, General Eisenhower, who, at the time, served as the Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force in the European theatre, was opposed to their use in war. However, this did not affect President Truman's ultimate decision to drop the bombs.

2) In the Immediate Wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)

At the end of the war, the Suzuki Cabinet drew attention to the non-humanitarian character of the atomic bombs and protested America's actions through an intermediary, the Swiss government. The report by Dr. Marcel Juneau, one of the first physicians dispatched to Hiroshima by the ICRC to provide relief activities, highlighted this inhumanity, and the central office of the ICRC quickly notified its branch chapters around the world. In Nagasaki, Major General Yasuyama Kōdō, the director of the Ōmura Naval Hospital, which housed 780 atomic bomb survivors, was astonished at the severity of their injuries. He sent a telegram via the Governor of Nagasaki to notify the ICRC that the damage caused by the atomic bombs demonstrated an inhumanity that far surpassed that of weapons such as poison gas that were prohibited by international humanitarian law.

3) The Shimoda Ruling (1963)

This was a ruling in a suit, known as the A-bomb Trial, for reparations by several victims of the atomic bombings against the Japanese government that recognized the illegality of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As of now, it is the only court case to have issued a ruling on the humanitarian impact of nuclear

weapons. However, the claim for reparations was dismissed. It is known as the Shimoda ruling after the leader of the group of plaintiffs, Mr. Ryuichi Shimoda.

4) International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion (1996)

As an advisory opinion issued by the court on the basis of an initiative of the UN General Assembly, an incidental provision was attached stating that the “use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the … rules of humanitarian law … the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the … use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defense, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake.” In this respect, some ambiguity continues to exist in that exceptional provisions may conceivably exist regarding the use of nuclear weapons. Even now, this issue provides certain grounds for assertions, such as those by nuclear powers who argue the need for nuclear deterrence, being made in the context of discussions of a possible nuclear weapons convention (NWC).

5) UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Five Point Proposal (2008)

In addition to the first paragraph, which aims at imposing legal restraints on the use of nuclear weapons by multiple mutually reinforcing treaties, this proposal is a proof of concept for a prohibition treaty accompanied by advanced inspections and draws heavily on model ban treaties that have been proposed to the UN by, among others, Puerto Rico.

6) Declaration by Jakob Kellenberger, Chairman of the ICRC (2010)

7) Expression of Concern regarding “Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences” by the 2010 NPT Review Conference

8) Three International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (2013 and 2014) in Oslo (Norway), Nayarit (Mexico), and Vienna

(Austria)

As the conclusion of the third Humanitarian Conference, Austria issued a summary, which is as follows: “The impact of nuclear weapons ... would not be constrained by national borders and could have regional and even global consequences, causing destruction, death and displacement as well as profound and long-term damage to the environment, climate, human health and well-being, socioeconomic development, social order and could even threaten the survival of humankind. ... The use and testing of nuclear weapons have [also] demonstrated their devastating immediate, mid- and long-term effects. ... As long as nuclear weapons exist ... the risks of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized, or intentional use of nuclear weapons are evident [and] ... the only assurance against the risk of a nuclear weapon detonation is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. ... The imperative of prevention as the only guarantee against the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use was highlighted. Looking at nuclear weapons from a number of different legal angles, it is clear that there is no comprehensive legal norm universally prohibiting possession, transfer, production, and use... [The] suffering caused by nuclear weapon use is not only a legal matter, it necessitates moral appraisal. The catastrophic consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation event ... raise profound ethical and moral questions on a level transcending legal discussions and interpretations.”

9) Discussions of Inhumanity at the 2015 NPT Review Conference

The Austrian-led statement by 159 countries was submitted as the agenda for discussion. Its central issues included the catastrophic consequences of the detonation of nuclear weapons, the impossibility of immediate humanitarian response to such explosions, the direct

benefit to mankind of such weapons never being used again, and the fact that the only guarantee of nuclear weapons never being used again is their complete elimination. The content of this statement is substantively similar to that of the Austrian Pledge mentioned earlier.

In response, a second joint statement by the U.S. and 26 other countries that included many of its allies (including Japan) was also submitted with sponsorship by Australia. This statement, while emphasizing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, also stated the necessity of efforts involving the substantial participation of the world's nuclear powers. In order to realize a broad-based reduction of nuclear weapon arsenals, it advocated the need for emphasizing the global security aspects of nuclear weapons at the same level as their humanitarian aspects. This Australian proposal insisted that constructive efforts with the participation of nuclear powers would be indispensable and that efforts involving only nonnuclear powers would lack feasibility.

Even though this NPT Review Conference was concluded without successfully arriving at a final document, it did result in several important matters being proposed to the UN's General Assembly.

10) Official Initiatives to Promote a Consultative Framework to Address the Legal Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the UN General Assembly (December 2015)

A majority vote of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on nuclear disarmament convened in 2016 passed a resolution that three sessions of the OEWG would be held in Geneva in 2017.

11) Three Sessions of the OEWG in 2016

A final resolution to launch discussions of a legal framework to prohibit nuclear weapons at the UN was adopted in 2017 by a majority vote and proposed to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. Japan abstained from this resolution.

12) October 2016 Resolution by the UN General Assembly's First Committee

After vigorous discussion in response to the resolution by the OEWG, a decision to hold two conferences on multilateral negotiations in 2017 was taken by a majority vote, with 123 in favor, 38 opposed, and 16 abstaining. In line with the nuclear powers, Japan voted to oppose the resolution. China and the Netherlands (a NATO country) voted to abstain, and North Korea voted in favor of the resolution.

The reasons for Japan's opposition were that a NWC would be premature, as well as being dangerous and impeding national security. Another reason was that consultations conducted without the participation of the world's nuclear powers would be meaningless. Thus, as many nonnuclear powers voted in favor of the resolution, Japan, as the only country to have been subjected to the use of atomic weapons, was nevertheless unable to accomplish a paradigm shift to transcend its own policies, which had their basis in the theory of nuclear deterrence. However, the government of Japan later expressed its willingness to participate in the 2017 meetings, with Foreign Minister Kishida stating that he would play an active role as a mediator in lobbying nuclear powers.

The foregoing discussion offers a chronological outline of discussions and resolutions in Japan and around the world concerning the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, with particular reference to the UN. Even though these discussions have until now been driven by the world's nonnuclear powers under the UN principle of majority rule, multilateral talks over the legal framework of an NWC are finally slated to begin over two occasions in 2017.

3. Evidence of Inhumanity Apparent in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Let's reflect here from a humanitarian perspective on the damage caused by the nuclear detonation experienced by Japan as the only country to fall victim to atomic bombing. These authors, who attended the first and second International Conferences on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Norway and Mexico, respectively, as representatives of the Japanese government, at the request of the governments of the host countries, delivered lectures on the tragic experience of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

1) No Warning

Immediately prior to the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S. military scattered a large volume of leaflets throughout Japan. Naming the cities that would be attacked, these leaflets urged citizens to flee, indicating that they would be bombed unless the government of Japan chose to surrender. However, neither Hiroshima nor Nagasaki was included among the cities so named; the bombing was in effect conducted with no warning.

2) Indiscriminate

On the natural assumption that the areas targeted included not only soldiers and military facilities but also targets prohibited by the so-called rules of war, such as civilian adults, the elderly, and children, as well as private facilities, the atomic bombs were dropped during the peak hours of civic activity.

3) Extensive Slaughter (Massacre) and Urban Destruction (including that of Communications Infrastructure and Medical Institutions)

The resulting casualties and injuries exceeded a combined total of 200,000 people for both cities and were accompanied by an unprecedented level of urban devastation. Relief activities became

impossible because of the deaths and injuries of medical staff and the destruction of infrastructure, including that of hospitals and other medical facilities.

4) Blast, Radiation, and Heat Damage Causing Pain (Acute Damage) Exceeding Those Caused by Poison Gas

The three elements of the physical force of the atomic bomb worked in combination to trigger the quick elimination of the bombing victims.

5) Lifelong Persistence of the After Effects of Radiation (Subsequent Complications)

Those who managed to survive have suffered over the long term from chronic conditions such as leukemia, cancer, multiple cancer, and myocardial infarction. Leukemia and cancer, in particular, remain persistent even 70 years later, proving that the human impact of sudden radiation exposure can persist over a lifetime. The root cause has been identified to be genetic errors that occur during the repair process after the cells of organs that make up the human body are exposed, resulting in the double-strand breakage of DNA carrying the genes of the affected cells.

6) Sustained Lifetime Psychological Impact

It is now clear that those who underwent the horrific experience of the atomic bombing have continued to suffer from psychiatric symptoms such as depression even now, 70 years later. Cases of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are also in evidence.

7) Attacks Using 16-Kiloton Atomic Bombs and 1-megaton Hydrogen Bombs on Cities with Populations of 1 Million People Simulations of Infrastructural and Human Damage

Despite the fact that the construction of buildings and infrastructure in contemporary cities is now conducted to ensure considerable resilience, the scope of the damage caused by an atomic or hydrogen

bomb surpasses any acceptable range even today, and the scale of human injuries in the case of a hydrogen explosion, in particular, has been estimated at upward of 800,000 dead and injured. It is also assumed that relief activities will be largely ineffective because of the consequent infrastructural devastation.

4. The Ethical and Philosophical Dilemma of Inhumanity

In this section, I would like to touch upon the reality that even while recognizing the horrifying humanitarian consequences of nuclear detonations, which cause terror and privation for individual citizens and destabilize human security, it has remained impossible to accomplish a rapid paradigm shift in the nuclear policies of the world's nuclear powers and their allies, such as Japan, which are based on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. This is also a major dilemma facing Japan.

The security of a country is the security — in other words the lives and safety — of its citizens. When fulfilling the state's responsibility and duty to ensure this security, it must be noted that a latent notion of humanitarianism underlies the world's nuclear powers and nations that rely on nuclear weapons. This is related to a point singled out for special mention in an incidental provision in the advisory opinion issued in 1996 by the ICJ. In other words, in crises where states face emergency life-and-death situations such as being unable to safeguard the lives of their citizens, it is not possible to determine whether states that consider the use of nuclear weapons to be indispensable as the ultimate deterrent are acting illegally or not.

Against the consensus regarding the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons that is focused on human security, the sustained

idea of prioritizing security founded in states' policies of nuclear deterrence is inevitable. During the Cold War, the leaders of the U.S. and the erstwhile USSR sought to overcome the threat that their inevitable antagonism would lead to war with a theory of nuclear deterrence grounded in the doctrine of mutually assured destruction. Directly examining how this idea remains current in the actual sites of international politics even now, 20 years after the end of the Cold War, it must be acknowledged that the barriers that must be overcome in the process leading from a recognition of the inherent inhumanity of nuclear weapons to the realization of a world without them are considerable.

As representatives of civil society, NGOs such as ICAN advocate the principle of human security in the belief that focusing first on norms by establishing an NWC offers a possible solution. Following this somewhat optimistic line of thought, if a treaty were to be established by a majority of nonnuclear powers, it would naturally come to be a norm, gradually filtering through to the nuclear powers, which would then be compelled to obey the norm. While the U.S., which is a nuclear power, and several countries such as Japan that are dependent on nuclear deterrence have announced that while they may sign a treaty in accordance with norms, they are not optimistic regarding all nuclear powers being so inclined.

The U.S. and Japan have attended previous humanitarian conferences and have previously acknowledged the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Japan, in particular, has been extremely cognizant of this fact given its experience as the only country ever to have been subjected to the wartime use of atomic weapons. Given the current state of world politics, in which state security must, in practice, take precedence as a policy concern, the policy of nuclear

deterrence will be sustained for the time being. However, nuclear-dependent countries believe that a world without nuclear deterrence could become a reality in due course. While relying on the presently existing legal framework of the NPT, they seek to achieve intermediate ends such as the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the establishment of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), revealing a school of thought that considers this step-by-step (or building-block) approach to the actualization of such a world as an accelerated way of realizing a world without nuclear weapons in a secure and reliable manner.

As President Obama noted in his Hiroshima speech, humanity has not yet achieved the wisdom necessary for closing out the nuclear era that was brought into being by the power of science. This also echoes how humanity has become ensnared by its own military cunning and strength. In this respect, it is necessary to recognize that humanity is ill. In the group to which I belong, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear Wars (IPPNW, recipient of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize), we liken the spread of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence to a pestilential pandemic.

States (nation states) are human institutions, and we must recognize that the pursuit of nuclear deterrence by targeting cities (and thus, human beings) with nuclear weapons also puts human beings in the crosshairs. It is about time that all of humanity realized just how much the alert system increases the risk to humanity's survival. To this end, we must also ask after the responsibility of scientists, who are also members of civil society. Nuclear weapons are produced by scientists, without whose cooperation they cannot be maintained. It is essential for scientists to awaken to this fact, and it is important for scientists to stand hand in hand with the public.

The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs (recipient of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize), established with the participation of Nobel Prize-winning physicists (such as Albert Einstein and Japan's Hideki Yugawa), have in the past made strong appeals to scientists' sense of responsibility.

Finally, we must also consider the responsibilities of civil society. Ultimately, citizens select the politicians who, by wielding power in their respective countries, become world leaders. The current state of affairs is one in which a majority of citizens approve of, or at least tolerate, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence in countries such as the U.S., which are positioned as nuclear powers. Such a situation is not conducive to the emergence of political leaders that make political decisions transcending nuclear deterrence and prioritize the perspective of human security. There is a possibility of this also applying to the current situation in Japan. In other words, a majority of citizens may expect the extended deterrence of the U.S. to protect against nuclear strikes by China or North Korea.

5. Collaboration between the Non-Humanitarian Order (the Nuclear Powers) and the Policy of Nuclear Deterrence (Countries Relying on Nuclear Deterrence) Is Itself the Wisdom of Humanity

The situation is dire. It was resolved in December 2016 that a multilateral "United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons" would be convened over two sessions in 2017. Accordingly, if the nonnuclear powers can push through a majority, the possibility of establishing some form of NWC would emerge. While the degree to which participation can be expected from the opposing faction comprising nuclear powers

and countries that rely on extended deterrence (such as Japan and the NATO countries) and those such as Australia that prefer to balance the existence of weapons of mass destruction with nuclear deterrence, the Japanese government, at least, has announced its intention to attend.

We must work to assuage this split between the two factions. For this, compromise is essential. It is necessary to secure the attendance of the nuclear powers and their understanding, to some degree, of the process leading toward an NWC. In this sense, it will be important for both parties to share the ultimate aim of a world without nuclear weapons.

It is also necessary for the humanitarian faction to demonstrate its understanding of the step-by-step process of undermining the doctrine of nuclear deterrence that the nuclear powers are insistent upon. Amid the political dynamics involved in the lead-up to the establishment of an NWC, it is necessary to place bilateral (meaning both factions) consultation at the core of negotiations. The most effective and rapid measures required to realize each stage of the step-by-step approach insisted upon by countries such as the U.S. (e.g., CTBT, FMCT, and the solutions to various problems such as nuclear proliferation) should be pursued in collaboration. Here, the serious execution of the NPT's Article 6 will be required of the nuclear power faction and the one that considers nuclear weapons to be non-humanitarian.

Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in nuclear deterrence policies is another major step requiring concrete discussion. Here, several possible negotiation items are conceivable, including for Japan, a victim of atomic bombing that deeply understands the inhumanity of such weapons, to suggest measures for their reduction,

such as the prohibition of their preemptive use. This may also be effective as external pressure on the nuclear powers, such as by resuming negotiations for the mutual reduction of nuclear warheads that have been stalled between the U.S. and Russia. If the world's nuclear powers, besides seriously addressing solutions to conflicts that have spread through the world and seeking an improvement in international security, were to agree on the establishment of confidence-building as a common goal, it might be possible to shift gears from opposition to collaboration in the move toward establishing an NWC. For the nuclear powers to acquire a deeper recognition of the inhumanity of their position, they need to agree on a timetable to accomplish goals such as the fulfillment of the nuclear disarmament that they advocate, thorough ratification of the CTBT, and realization of the FMCT — these seem at first glance to conflict with civil society's idea of focusing first on the establishment of norms. However, despite the difficulty of engaging the nuclear powers after the establishment of norms and that of consulting with them on various processes, from a wider perspective, perhaps, the ideas of the two factions might converge in the same direction. Perhaps, we will find an ideal opportunity to demonstrate our wisdom as human beings in this negotiation process itself.

From such a perspective, the typology of the NWC announced by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) assumes greater significance. In other words, this consists of 1) a comprehensive nuclear convention that includes a system for inspections and aims at the complete abolition of nuclear weapons; 2) a nuclear weapon ban treaty that preemptively prohibits the development and use of nuclear weapons — even as a threat; 3) a flexible framework agreement that incorporates various nuclear weapon prohibitions focusing on the

NPT and including the CTBT and the FMCT; and 4) an amalgam of 1), 2), and 3). Of these, the third option of a framework agreement seems to be the one that is most likely to wield influence in negotiations with the nuclear powers. It should be possible to adopt a method in which various arrangements can be established in a flexible manner while the timetable is discussed. However, won't this lead to the realization of an NWC in a staged manner with a time lag that it is essentially identical to the step-by-step approach preferred by the nuclear powers? A report by the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) prepared by the governments of Japan and Australia shows a short-term, medium-term, and final-stage long-term timetable. In this, undertaking precarious negotiations to get the nuclear powers to approve the establishment of a moderate version of an NWC is likely to be the biggest hurdle for the negotiations.

Conclusion

The year 2017 is expected to be the most significant crossroads for the abolition of nuclear weapons — a matter of the gravest human urgency. As a prerequisite for the complete establishment of human security, we must reflect on ways to heed the wisdom of humanity to jointly realize the establishment of an NWC while fostering trust between the world's nuclear and nonnuclear powers. The role to be played by Japan, as the only country ever to have been subjected to the wartime use of atomic weapons, will be incalculably immense and important.

*This translated version was revised on June 10, 2017.