



**The 62nd Pugwash Conference  
on Science and World Affairs  
“Confronting New Nuclear Dangers”  
25-29 August 2017, Astana, Kazakhstan**

**Statement of the Pugwash Council**

Sixty years ago, the first Pugwash Conference was held to confront the new nuclear dangers of that age. By 1995, the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and one of its founders, Joseph Rotblat, received the Nobel Peace Prize “for their efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms.” At that time, there was much hope and expectation that the new realities of the post-cold war world would see great progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Yet over the past two decades some governments have continued to rely upon nuclear weapons and are now expanding or upgrading their arsenals. Given the many security crises across the globe we must once more confront the acute dangers nuclear weapons pose.

The Pugwash Council welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Ban Treaty) which marks a pivotal moment for nuclear disarmament. Such a measure is long overdue and will do much to strengthen the normative and legal framework that ensures that nuclear weapons are never again used in conflict or for testing. It will ultimately lead to the elimination of all such weapons. The agreement would not have been possible without the dedicated engagement of the 124 delegations and the substantive assistance and encouragement of civil society worldwide. The Pugwash Council especially recognizes the long and consistent efforts made by the victims of use of nuclear weapons (*hibakusha*) as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons.

Yet, the Nuclear Ban Treaty requires follow-through. Supporters must rededicate themselves to promote the treaty's entry into force and the adoption of national-level legislation to implement and even extend its provisions. They must also engage the states that remain outside the negotiation process, essentially the nuclear-armed states and those in security arrangements with nuclear-armed states or nuclear-sharing arrangements. Indeed, even with the presence of the Ban Treaty, a select group of states may continue to rely on nuclear weapons. Ultimately, the disarmament debate cannot move forward without a revisiting of the fundamental beliefs that have long underwritten nuclear deterrence-based order. Sustaining progress in nuclear disarmament will require the exploration of non-military security alternatives to replace the deterrence function ascribed to nuclear weapons.

Some 15-16,000 nuclear weapons remain in existence, most of which are possessed by the US and Russia. There are currently no bilateral arms control negotiations between both countries. On the multilateral level the UN Conference on Disarmament remains unable to agree on any agenda, let alone negotiate weapon control agreements. Under those circumstances care must be taken that crucial nuclear arms control treaties currently in force do not lapse. In particular, Russia and the US must continue to fully comply with the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and resolve concerns about possible violations by means of high-level discussions. Both countries must furthermore extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) by another five years and aim for new talks to reduce their strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals even further.

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Worryingly, many nuclear weapons remain on quick reaction alert. Hot spots of nuclear danger around the globe need to be dealt with urgently: tensions on the Korean Peninsula have escalated as a consequence of the DPRK’s continuation of nuclear detonations and testing of possible delivery systems; India and Pakistan remain locked in a nuclear-armed rivalry; and the complicated situation of the Middle East is intensified by the presence of Israeli nuclear weapons. There is a strong risk that short-term political interests may jeopardize the Iran nuclear agreement (JCPOA), holding grave consequences for the non-proliferation regime. Expansion or upgrading of nuclear weapons deployed on the territory of other countries may become a shortcut for proliferation (without formally violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT).

On the Korean peninsula, actions to lower tensions are urgently needed. To this effect, track II dialogue to communicate the shared hope of avoiding large-scale conflict should be encouraged. Unilateral decisions from North Korea, South Korea, and the U.S. to gradually reduce missile tests and military exercises in the region would send positive signals that mitigate the risk of inadvertent large-scale conflict. The onus is on both the U.S. and North Korea to engage in some level of dialogue, eventually leading to the opening of formal negotiations without preconditions. One approach could be dual-track discussions with distinct sets of parties and goals. The first track involves a return to six-party talks as a platform for an open dialogue on a range of issues, including a freeze on North Korean nuclear testing, a reduction of missile tests and nuclear disarmament. The second, simultaneous, set of discussions would be between the main participants in the Korean war concerning the modalities of a peace agreement and normalization of relations with North Korea.

The Pugwash Council recognizes the correlation between nuclear dangers and these critical areas of the world. Pugwash has been addressing conflict resolution efforts where nuclear weapons play a dangerous and destabilizing role. From South Asia (including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India) to North-East Asia to the Middle East, and likewise between Russia and Western States, greater emphasis on diplomacy can help to cool tensions, reduce misunderstandings, and promote cooperation. Equally, track two diplomacy and informal interactions can supplement and enhance such processes. Even in the darkest moments of the Cold War and other intractable conflicts, dialogue across divides has helped to build peace and less dangerous world. The Pugwash Council urges those States to seek or promote diplomatic engagement and eschew rhetoric that exacerbates tensions and conflict.

Similarly, the Pugwash Council calls for greater global commitment to multilateral treaties across the spectrum of weapons of mass destruction. Greater effort must be made to encourage those states not party to those arms control and disarmament agreements to promptly and without reservation adhere to them. In particular, we call upon those States listed in Annex 2 of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to ratify or accede so as to trigger the much-delayed entry into force. The CTBT is an essential instrument in the preservation of the non-proliferation regime and ultimately in the future elimination of nuclear weapons. Equally, the nuclear weapons States should fulfil their obligations under article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to make significant progress to achieve nuclear disarmament. The US and Russia carry a special responsibility to reduce their overwhelming arsenals drastically, and avoid creating the environment of a new cold war.

The Pugwash Council applauds the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and their partners for the establishment of a Low Enriched Uranium bank in Kazakhstan. We urge the international community – governments as well as the nuclear

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industry – to explore further multilateralization of the nuclear fuel cycle, the consequences of a changing nuclear market on the non-proliferation regime and the associated evolution of safeguards, with a commitment to transparency and accountability. We also invite nuclear newcomers to carefully consider the choices of nuclear power versus renewable sources of energy, in particular with a clear plan for the disposition of spent fuel and the decommissioning of nuclear reactors, within a country-specific context of emerging industry, rational consumption and rapid mitigation of climate change.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has achieved near universality: only four UN Members still have to become a party. However, the DPRK, Egypt, Israel and South Sudan are all located in conflict-prone regions. Verified disarmament as offered by the CWC can contribute to transparency and cooperation, and therefore to reduction of tensions. The Pugwash Council condemns in the strongest terms the continuing use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict by both government forces and non-state actors, as confirmed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). Syria is a State Party to the CWC. Furthermore, external parties involved in the conflict should refrain from political or military action that undermines the integrity of the CWC. Chemical warfare must cease immediately.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) remains an active treaty on the local and regional levels. Over the past few years the number of States Parties has increased rapidly and currently stands at 178. However, the multilateral diplomatic forum has once again stagnated. With the failure of the Eighth Review Conference (2016) States Parties have adopted no work programme for the years leading up to the 2021 Review Conference. The Pugwash Council calls on all States Parties to adopt a meaningful programme of work at the Meeting of States Parties to be held in December 2017. Due to their dual-use characteristics, many advances in the life sciences and the different areas of biotechnology carry risks of weaponization – both by states and non-state actors alike.

Scientists with the relevant expertise should communicate reliable information with involved politicians, policy-makers, and diplomats in the context of crises, emerging technologies, and existing risks. The promotion of research and the exchange of different views remain vitally important. Finally, the Pugwash Council urges the broader disarmament community to help engage, encourage, and embolden young people to take an active role in solving the difficult international security problems we all face. Awareness, education, and intergenerational dialogue are critical aspects of achieving a world free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

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*The Pugwash Council Statement is an overview of key thematic points. Pugwash modus operandi is to welcome many viewpoints. Not all Council members subscribe to all points. More than two-hundred-and-fifty participants from 34 countries (including 50 students from 20 countries) gathered in Astana from 25-29 August 2017 for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs. The Conference was organized by Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and the Pugwash 2017 organizing committee. This conference was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan. Pugwash would like to thank The Simons Foundation Canada for its ongoing support for the biennial Simons Symposia, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York for support of Pugwash activities.*