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Toward Regional Stability with a Reduced Role of Nuclear Weapons and Multilateralization of Nuclear Disarmament: An Agenda for a “World Free of Nuclear Weapons” in the East Asian Context

Introduction

The phrase “A world free of nuclear weapons” first appeared in an op-ed written by the “Gang of Four” published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2007. This statement from four significant statesmen who fought the Cold War had tremendous impact that brought ‘change’ in international public opinion toward the promotion of nuclear disarmament.

In April 2009, US President Barak Obama made an epoch-making speech in Prague. The Prague speech on a ‘world without nuclear weapons’ turned the idealistic concept of a nuclear-free world into a goal that can be achieved. Of course, the goal cannot be accomplished in the foreseeable future. But it can be utilized as rhetoric by the United States to promote international cooperation in combating nuclear terrorism, which the United States considers as its most serious threat. Indeed, actions encouraged by and in sympathy with the nuclear-free vision have been spotted among political leaders, civil society, and in the area of diplomacy. Important actions that support nuclear disarmaments are: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s five-point disarmament plan, the Japan-Australia initiative to establish the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, the signing of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by the United States and Russia, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of the United States, and the consensus adoption of the final document of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). It is significant that such actions have been taken in the last few years.

In reality, however, it is difficult to believe that a nuclear-free world can be achieved only by maintaining the current momentum. There are many issues that international society must overcome in framing practical steps toward achieving that goal. In order to make the goal of a “world free of nuclear weapons” an operational policy concept, we need to address a number of questions that may require the rethinking of an international order that is premised on the logic and strategic concepts of nuclear weapons, which the security community has regarded as givens.

First, a “world free of nuclear weapons” should, at the very least, be a world that is safer than a world ordered by nuclear weapons. Furthermore, stable management should be enforced during the transition period to a “world free of nuclear weapons,” since a destabilized security environment could encourage conflict and be without proper means of controlling escalation. A set of questions thus arises: What should be the next step of nuclear disarmament negotiations

following the ratification of New START? How can we get countries that possess nuclear weapons, other than the United States and Russia, to become involved in the disarmament process? And if the scale and role of nuclear forces diminish, how would the security of allies that are under the protection of extended deterrence be guaranteed? In properly answering these questions, we may find that traditional nuclear deterrence and the theory of “strategic stability” no longer fully provide an adequate explanation.

Discourses on a “world free of nuclear weapons” have also raised moral issues in the use of nuclear weapons. In the cold reality of politics, it was strongly believed that appealing to humanity and ethics was out of the question when the survival of the state, as the ultimate objective of statecraft, was at stake. However, President Obama clearly stated that the United States has “a moral responsibility to act” toward nuclear disarmament “as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon.” Moreover, in reinforcing the danger of threats regarding nuclear terrorism, he indicated that not only could a single nuclear weapon unleash massive destruction but ultimately affect the very survival of humankind. This clearly underscores the seriousness of the threat of nuclear terrorism and the moral dilemma states would face before actually using nuclear weapons. President Obama did, at the same time, refer to the importance of nuclear deterrence in this speech. Nonetheless, interest in the relationship between nuclear weapons and morality has risen: the question remains regarding how this would influence the framing of a nuclear strategy and the political meaning of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, if a “world free of nuclear weapons” was actually realized, then, how would it be maintained? In a world without nuclear weapons, peaceful uses of nuclear energy would grow, which could invite risks of nuclear proliferation, as the spread of nuclear fuel cycle technologies may be diverted for military use if not properly safeguarded. This would no doubt have enormous—perhaps unimaginable—impact. Can we really control these risks completely under the existing non-proliferation regime? And if we cannot, then would it be possible to create a mechanism that can effectively prevent the spread of nuclear weapons? Cases of North Korea and Iran pose serious challenges in this regard.

In reality, there are much more problems to be solved, but the following arguments will rest upon trying to solve these question.

1. Multilateralizing the Nuclear Disarmament Process

As of September 2010, New START has yet to be ratified by neither the U.S. Congress nor Russian Duma. The Obama administration expressed its intention to move beyond New START as soon as it enters into force. But there are several difficult tasks that the two countries must overcome in order to advance bilateral

nuclear arms control and disarmament negotiations. The reduction of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW), issues regarding the deployment of the missile defense (MD) system, and the role of conventional weapons, including Prompt Global Strike (PGS), in deterrence are just a few things on which the views of the United States and Russia are divergent. The United States is interested in moving to reducing its TNWs, whereas Russia considers them vital to complement its weakness in its conventional weapons capabilities in Europe. Although the United States has withdrawn its plan to construct a MD architecture in Europe, Russia's discomfort with the U.S. interest in its MD system with allied countries remains. Furthermore, the United States and Russia have different views on elaborated conventional weapons being an alternative to nuclear ability because of the different technological levels the two countries possess.

Traditionally, the power balance between the United States and Russia was achieved in the field of strategic nuclear weapons, and this systemized the reality of mutually assured destruction (MAD) through certain arms control treaties. Moreover, the United States and Russia admitted that they were both in a vulnerable position, or in the state of the mutual vulnerability, and mutually confirmed a kind of *pro forma* standardized "strategic stability." It was important that one could believe nuclear deterrence was actually working against its counterpart when it was confident that its counterpart had certain understandings toward the strategy of stability that derives from mutual deterrence.

However, when pursuing arms control and disarmament negotiations, including TNW, MD, and PGS, how to subsume the asymmetric views of the United States and Russia on the understanding of strategic environment and force structure into the equation of strategic stability becomes an issue. It therefore becomes crucial that a new style of strategic stability be established regarding future U.S.-Russian arms control negotiations.

At the same time, designing a nuclear disarmament process that includes nuclear armed states besides the United States and Russia also becomes an important task. How can we achieve a multilateral disarmament process that links disarmament talks to actual negotiations without waiting for progress on the next round of New START and diminishing the nuclear forces of the United States and Russia to a certain level? Some countries may seek the downsizing of the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals to their own levels. This logic may not work, as functions of their nuclear forces are very distinct from that of the United States. Some also note that Russian and the United States arsenals are, to some extent, covered by restrictions in the bilateral arms control regime while others are not.

Addressing this issue is no easy task. Consider, for example, the idea of getting China involved in the disarmament process. The rise of China itself, particularly in economic and financial sectors, is generally regarded as a very positive development for international society. However, it is also true that many countries

are concerned about China's rapid military modernization, including the development of mobile and stealth capabilities of its nuclear forces and the country's anti-access or area-denial capabilities, in addition to its forceful approach toward territorial disputes in the South China Sea (which China describes as a 'core national interest,' the same expression as used for Tibet and Taiwan) and East China Sea. According to the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), "developing and fielding large numbers of advanced medium-range ballistic and cruise missiles, new attack submarines equipped with advanced weapons, increasingly capable long-range air defense systems," and others are US concerns.

Indeed, the NPR claimed that the United States will be deemphasizing the role of nuclear weapons, with non-nuclear elements playing a vital role in enhancing extended deterrence and the regional scope of maintaining non-strategic nuclear weapons being reduced. It implies that deterrence and extended deterrence ought to be structured focusing not only on nuclear forces but also on the role of conventional weapons, including damage limitation capabilities of missile defense or conventional power-projection capabilities, and pursuing confidence building with Russia and China through dialogue. Such a tailored deterrence architecture, as well as a regional security architecture that will take into account the regional situation, is an example of a vision among the United States and its allies to maintain regional stability until a better stability scenario comes to be shared among all states involved.

For the time being, there are two different ways that the alliance between the United States and Japan may pursue in establishing 'strategic stability' with China. The first is to maintain asymmetry and not allow China to pursue 'mutual balance' with the United States. This is mostly along the line of conventional thinking on deterrence. Under this thinking, the alliance would seek that (1) Chinese strategic nuclear forces (DF-5/DF-31A) to maintain a second-strike capability (or counter-value strike) against the United States be kept to a minimum, and (2) Chinese MRBMs (those with ranges that can cover Japan) not deteriorate the deterrence structure of the US-Japan alliance.

The alternative view is to accept a 'mutual balance' between the United States and China if this leads to a cap on the number of Chinese nuclear warheads. In this case, the stability-instability paradox may become a significant concern for Japan. If China perceives that the United States can be deterred with its increasing survivability and reliable second-strike capability, it may be tempted to engage in low-intensity conflicts, such as territorial disputes over islands. This would be acceptable for the alliance under the condition that Japan obtains missile defense capability to deal with Chinese MRBMs to maintain the same level of security assurance as the alliance currently provides. But the pursuit by Japan and the United States of regional security and stability in the context of the alliance may

not be comfortable for China. This raises the necessity of finding a new formula for strategic stability that would be beneficial to all the parties in the region.

While the nuclear force structure of the United States is centered on long-range strategic forces, the weapons China possesses are mainly mid-range and long-range forces. From a US perspective, it would be enough to have long-range forces when considering only bilateral relations with China; when considering its allies, such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, it becomes crucial to take into consideration ways to deal with China's short- and medium-range forces as part of the nuclear deterrence it provides to these countries. From China's perspective, on the other hand, maintaining its mid-range nuclear forces is vital to preserving a strategic balance with neighboring nuclear weapons states like Russia and India. If the ability of "deterrence by denial," such as the MD initiated by the United States and Japan, improves, it may change the modality of deterrence, which used to be centered on "deterrence by punishment"; the way it changes and how its strategic implications are evaluated may also alter the balance of power between the United States and China. In order to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in shaping the regional security order, we, through close discussions and consultation with China, need to address the implications of asymmetrical force structures (between China on the one hand and the United States or the alliance on the other, including conventional forces) and asymmetrical strategic interests. We also need to understand China's overall strategic interests, such as the motives behind its quest for expanding its domain of influence beyond the First Island Chain and closer to the Second Island Chain.

The asymmetry in the nuclear forces of the United States and China also raises issues. The United States and Russia traditionally maintained strategic stability by systemizing nuclear deterrence, or mutually assured destruction, by balancing the levels of nuclear arms with arms control mechanisms, including verification for confidence building. Guaranteeing the transparency of forces was an important foundation in verifying the balance of forces for strategic stability. However, China has not announced its overall nuclear forces (number of warheads, delivery systems, and deployment status) to complement its asymmetric inferiorities regarding its forces vis-à-vis the United States or others. Rather, since there is a gap in recognition on nuclear deterrence between the United States and China, it is extremely difficult to achieve agreement on gaining transparency as a bottom line for strategic stability; in other words, this implies that there is no presupposition for "strategic stability."

The formula for "strategic stability" in East Asia is expected to have many more variables, making it all the more complicated. Furthermore, if we would consider China's strategic interests, the scope of strategic balance cannot be limited to within East Asia. The rivalry between India and Pakistan in South Asia has its own unique structure and is a major problem for global nuclear

disarmament. But more than that, a nuclear arms race in South Asia will have a huge influence on neighboring China's strategic thinking. If so, the security environment that decisively influences regional nuclear disarmament will expand in scope beyond specific geographic areas and become intertwined among multiple regions. The future nuclear disarmament process, whether it is a bilateral one between the United States and Russia or a multilateral one, has to proceed in parallel with a process to establish a new modality of "strategic stability" among nations that possess asymmetric force structures and asymmetric strategic interests.

At a time when we are experiencing a paradigm shift regarding the threat of nuclear weapons, a track record of traditional nuclear deterrence does not necessarily guarantee the legitimacy of nuclear weapons or nuclear deterrence. Rather, the necessity of structuring a new logic of "strategic stability" is being felt more than ever. Nuclear weapons states and other concerned states should work with each other to framework a process of comprehensive strategic disarmament talks, as well as arms control negotiations, and pull together their respective strategic understandings. Additionally, we need to take into account the new realities of the international politics of economic and strategic interdependence among the United States, China, and Japan in calculating the stability of the relationships among the three.

2. Toward a Reduced Role of Nuclear Weapons: Revisiting "Nuclear Strategy and Ethics"

In considering nuclear strategy, we must also pay attention to the issues of the ethics of nuclear weapons. The issue, however, is nothing new. Arguments for nuclear abolition rest on the tragic experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and deal straightforwardly with the inhumane side of nuclear weapons; antinuclear activities, thus, are deeply rooted in these moral positions. UN General Assembly Resolution 1653 (XVI) of 1961 declares: "the use of nuclear weapons cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction to mankind and civilization and, as such, is contrary to the rules of international law and to the laws of humanity." Furthermore, in 1963, taking into account three international law scholars' opinions, the District Court of Tokyo ruled that the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki constituted indiscriminate bombing against unguarded cities in violation of international law: not only a violation of the "Doctrine of Military Objective," which divides military objectives to civilian ones, but also a violation of the "Principle of Humanity," which bans inhumane means of injuring the enemy that cause unnecessary pain. As these examples illustrate, the illegitimacy of the use of nuclear weapons has been argued politically as well as legally.

On the other hand, arguments for the abolition of nuclear weapons may be criticized as being nothing more than sentimentalism that do not take political reality into account. In the face of the current sovereign-state-system-centered international society, which revolves around the national security of respective sovereign states, the legitimacy of means is sometimes relatively less respected in regards to reaching the achievement of the most important value.

However, can we say that attacks by nuclear weapons that aim strictly and only at military facilities should be allowed even if it invites casualties among civilians as a secondary consequence? Are threats regarded moral when it implies nuclear retaliation that assumes the mass killing of civilians of your enemy as a means to deter a nuclear attack on your soil? And ultimately, if deterrence fails, can policymakers really come to a decision to use nuclear weapons against their enemy that may kill millions of innocent civilians? Questions raised by Joseph Nye in his 1986 work *Nuclear Ethics* should be re-examined in the light of rising interest in a “world free of nuclear weapons” and with issues related to the use of nuclear weapons and international humanitarian law, as included in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

If the idea becomes well-established that catastrophes created by nuclear weapons are against international humanitarian law, and if the legitimacy of the proviso in the International Court of Justice (ICJ)’s advisory opinion loses effect, the use of nuclear weapons aimed to attack cities (i.e. the general public) becomes impossible under international law. Furthermore, in a situation where the number of nuclear weapons has dropped significantly, will it be possible to apply the principle of “counter value” as a “counterforce” when one considers that it involves a highly reliable retaliation strategy with few nuclear weapons, even if they are intended for deterrence and not a first strike? And more, if one were to apply the principle of counter value, but was not able to defeat the counterpart’s fighting spirit, it may invite retaliation through the use of the remaining nuclear forces. If so, applying a counter-value strategy becomes difficult even if the number of nuclear weapons decline: on the other hand, even if a counter-value strategy can actually maintain deterrence, inconsistency between international humanitarian law and nuclear doctrines becomes obvious. In order to avoid this inconsistency, will prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons and moving toward the abolition of nuclear weapons become an assumable scenario? If this is a difficult task, then, a logic that can bridge this gap must be established.

There are arguments that counterforce strategy is possible with a limited number of nuclear weapons. Nuclear forces possessed by countries that the United States sees as threats are not that powerful; thus, by focusing the target on core facilities, such as missile silos and command divisions, as well as raising the flexibility of use of remaining forces, a counterforce strategy may become possible.

However, if there is an asymmetric balance in forces, it becomes rather difficult to locate the specific station of the target as well as the force structure. In this case, information becomes imperfect and, although one may be superior in the number of forces itself, it becomes difficult to maintain a counterforce strategy as a principle for target selection. If applying the principle of counter value becomes impossible, the United States and Russia have no option but to take the initiative in cutting down its nuclear forces dramatically; this would be the only way in which other nuclear weapons states would eventually decrease their own nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the role of morality vis-à-vis the use of nuclear weapons invites complexity in the decision-making process and makes rational calculations of the costs extremely difficult, which would take away a foundation of stable strategic relationships.

Misjudgement by decision makers due to faulty information, misjudgement of the information itself, and misjudgement of one's counterpart's presumed actions that may lead to irrational decision making could all trigger an accidental nuclear war. Looking back at history, continued misjudgements as well as the unfortunate assassination of the crown prince of Austria before World War I became a trigger which resulted in war due to the collapse of a "crisis stabilizing" situation. Irrational factors, such as misjudgement and mistakes may, indeed, well invite the collapse of the deterrent system.

The situation becomes even more complex when the notion of attitude towards international norms and morals differ. For example, the reason why declaratory policies, such as the declaration of no first use or negative security assurances, do not help in easing tensions or lead to nuclear disarmament is because no one can be sure of compliance with these declaratory policies. In order to avoid such misjudgements and mistakes, confidence building measures, which include improving transparency, become indispensable.

But from the viewpoint of countries that are in conflict with states under the umbrella of nuclear weapons states, maintaining the secrecy of their nuclear forces to complement their inferiority in forces is a crucial concern. Moreover, in the mutual threat reduction process, high assurance and trust must be established; otherwise renouncing nuclear and conventional forces becomes impossible due to internal politics and security strategy. This is significant in areas with vulnerable security environments, such as South Asia and the Middle East, where there is tension, respectively, between India and Pakistan and between Israel and Iran. The situation is also significant in asymmetric relations, such as those between the United States and China that have not proceeded to detailed strategic talks. In such cases, a framework for a confidence-building process that confirms the necessity of mutual threat reduction becomes crucial.

It is also necessary to think of responsibilities for nuclear weapons being actually used. If many lives can be saved by deterrence, since deterrence can avoid wars, then one might be able to argue that deterrence, which implies the use of nuclear weapons, is actually morally correct. However, if deterrence fails and total destruction follows, can we escape from moral judgments even if the action can be fully rationalized? Morality is an issue that cannot be second-guessed unilaterally.

3. Prerequisites for a “World Free of Nuclear Weapons”: Nuclear Non-proliferation and Counter Nuclear Terrorism

When considering the nuclear disarmament process among nuclear armed states, the issue of nuclear threats posed by irrational actors, such as terrorists and “rogue states,” becomes crucial; this was prioritized in the *Wall Street Journal* op-ed by the “Gang of Four” and in the Prague speech by President Obama. The fact that traditional deterrence has functioned becomes meaningless when you look at the threats posed by non-state actors and “rogue states,” which do not move side by side with the logic of nuclear deterrence. In other words, the issue here is how we can concur on the limits of the existing deterrence theory.

The lesson learned from the sinking of the ROK warship *Cheonan* by a DPRK submarine is that even though there is no intention of qualitatively changing entirely the international order as well as relations among concerned states, there is the possibility that countries can actually move toward attack within the threshold of destructive retaliation by trying to break through the present situation and at a level according to the benefits they seek to gain. If an actor with nuclear weapons aims only to perturb the world and not change the international order or gain ascendancy in the aftermath of that change, as is the case for many terrorists and “rogue states,” then, traditional nuclear deterrence loses effect. The diminished meaning of nuclear weapons becomes conspicuous when we consider that the probability of these weapons actually being used against provocative acts as such described has declined. Can we consider this to be the collapse of deterrence? And will improving the probability of the use of nuclear weapons lead to deterring these attempts? Dealing with nuclear terrorism by non-state actors is said to be a difficult task since it is not easy to identify the target for retaliation; therefore, nuclear deterrence and nuclear retaliation are considered rather impossible. If so, deterring terrorists and “rogue states” must be reinforced by approaches besides nuclear weapons.

In recent years, many countries have declared the introduction of nuclear power plants as a means to deal with energy security and global warming. The biggest concern with peaceful uses of nuclear energy is the possibility of the proliferation of nuclear fuel cycle technologies. Hence, the way in which to

control nuclear fuel cycle technologies becomes a vital point in the process of nuclear abolition as well as in maintaining a stable order in the aftermath of achieving “a world free of nuclear weapons.”

There are mainly two approaches in controlling the concerned technology. One is to allow every country to acquire the technology as long as it complies strictly with certain international rules, such as safeguards and verifications: and the other is to limit the acquisition to only certain countries and by certain amounts. Having said so, however, the latter approach does not meet the provisions of Article 4 of the NPT, which states that peaceful nuclear energy is “the inalienable right” of all countries; hence, it may be rather difficult to root this into international society as a universal norm. We thus have no choice but to verify specifically that civilian nuclear activities and nuclear materials used in them are not transferred to military activities as well as to pursue an impeccable way of protecting them from being attacked and/or stolen by terrorists.

Another thing we must keep in mind is measures toward those who are disobedient. If the number of nuclear weapons reaches zero, those countries that possess nuclear fuel cycles become relatively important actors in shaping the international “nuclear order.” By building accurate verification mechanisms and establishing effective measures that international society can take (that is, persuasion or sanctions) until a country acquires nuclear weapons, the possession of nuclear fuel cycle technologies can become a deterrent in “a world free of nuclear weapons.” If both are guaranteed, peaceful nuclear energy, as a deterrent tool, loses meaning. But if the perfection of the verification mechanisms cannot be guaranteed, there might be a possibility that a new nuclear armed state may appear: the international community cannot bear this risk. In order to decrease the political and strategic meaning of possessing nuclear fuel cycles, it becomes necessary to seek perfect safeguards and verification mechanisms in parallel with an effective correction policy through efficient sanctions toward incompliance as a total package. If both are secured, then, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as a deterrent tool will lose its value.

Nonetheless, as in the recent case of Iran, the existing safeguard system cannot offer perfect verifications, and there are no compulsory measures effective enough to correct incompliance. The attitude toward Iran of influential states like the United States, Japan, the EU, Russia, and China all differ. Thus, at the moment, it is impossible to work toward this suspicion of proliferation with international solidarity. In addition, as shown in the case of the United States exempting India from NSG’s export control guidelines and also in discriminately regulating access to nuclear fuel cycle technologies through bilateral agreements, applying different criteria according to different countries is creating a political environment that makes it even harder to obtain global consensus regarding nuclear non-proliferation and counter nuclear terrorism.

Conclusion: International Order in a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

In the post-war era, nuclear weapons defined and shaped the international order. If the role of nuclear weapons declines vis-à-vis the roles of other weapons systems, politics, diplomacy, and the economy (in other words, if nuclear weapons are no longer seen as the source of absolute power), would the rules of international politics alter?

If the number of nuclear weapons were to reach zero, it would result in the diminishing of the massive stress the international society bears with regard to politics, society, and the environment. Having said so, the logic that nuclear weapons have actually restrained countries from going into war and ultimately contributed to the situation where there is no war still strongly exists. Moreover, a “world free of nuclear weapons” does not necessarily mean that the world would become a safer place.

Norman Angell, in his classic work *The Great Illusion*, mentioned that as European countries became mutually dependent in finance and the economy, the idea of great powers going into war became inconceivable. Nonetheless, Germany went to war with Great Britain and France in spite of their strong ties in the economic field. From this experience, one cannot expect the deepening of economic and other mutual ties from globalization to completely transform military strategies among the respective countries. The possibility of war, though, can be drastically lowered. Even if the notion—as stated in the Prague speech—that the use of nuclear weapons will influence not only the existence of society and economy but also that of humankind is applied to the context of reinforcing the threat of nuclear terrorism, this still implies that the use of nuclear weapons do indeed still have the power to fatally influence the deepening mutual dependence of international society.

This means that the probability of rational actors using nuclear weapons diminishes, but at the same time, international society becomes more restrained by the behavior of egoistic actors. In a world where the role of nuclear weapons decreases and its influence becomes more relative, even if one possesses the will and ability of denial on certain issues, the problem of actors who have no intention of re-establishing the order and are acting solely as disturbers will need to be addressed. In flipping the current order (in other words, retaining the ability of denial to the existing order), nuclear weapons that can destroy everything are not the only means; the destruction of certain parts of the infrastructure that are at the core of the current order can also become very disruptive. That the United States is focusing on “global commons,” such as the freedom of navigation, outer space, and internet security, clearly shows that stable and open global commons are an indispensable part of the infrastructure for deepening and maintaining a mutual dependent international order.

It is as yet unclear what nuclear abolition would mean with regard to the maintaining of the international order. If nuclear weapons vanish, it can be argued that the political priority of the United States would increase because of its absolute strength in conventional weapons. On the other hand, one can argue that if absolute power, which has shaped relations among nations and the international order, disappears, then the balance of power among nations would become relative, and the international order would head toward multilateralism.

In a world heading towards multilateralism, the power of a sole country to unilaterally shape the actions of its counterparts becomes limited. If interactions among nations are becoming more important in terms of shaping the security environment, understanding one's counterparts' concerns and motives regarding their actions and creating space for the consideration of one's counterparts' concerns in one's own actions and policies become essential to improving one's own security. Cooperation among countries in maintaining the international order is becoming more and more inevitable.

But international society is still divided on the absoluteness of national sovereignty, nuclear deterrence, nuclear non-proliferation, the right to use nuclear energy in a peaceful manner, and the threat posed by nuclear terrorism. We still have a long road ahead before we converge on a direction for the achievement of an international order that addresses all of these issues. Is it possible to create an international cooperation system among countries that hold so different expectations?

In spite of these difficulties, if we are to achieve a "world free of nuclear weapons" and to control that process stably, we must inevitably create a new framework exceeding the current logic to, for example, diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security, establish an ethics of nuclear weapons, and decrease nuclear risks deriving from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Furthermore, we cannot allow a "world free of nuclear weapons" to be altered by a new arms race paradigm. East Asian security could become the key to achieving the goal of a "world free of nuclear weapons," since the regional political and security dynamics consists of four nuclear armed states and two civilian nuclear power states. The participation and ownership of all other countries that possess nuclear weapons and non-nuclear weapons states would be necessary.