

Hiroshima Watch 2024



5 August 2024

Hiroshima Watch 2024:

A World on the Brink of Nuclear Use

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*1 Photo of Cover Page: "Pocket Watch"
Donated by Kazuo Nikawa, Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Hiroshima Watch

8:15 AM, August 6th, 1945, the very time of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, a watch stopped working, leaving a world in fear of nuclear war.



The Hiroshima Watch remembers the watch that has stopped, and aims to keep a watch on the progress, or lack thereof, toward a nuclear-weapon-free world, and to propose policies that governments should adopt in pursuit of that goal.

This is the first annual 'Hiroshima Watch' statement. Drawing inspiration from the Helsinki Watch and the symbolism of Hiroshima in the history of the development and use of atomic weapons, The Hiroshima Watch will present the most important developments each year in nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and nuclear security, and their policy implications.

The statement is informed by the Hiroshima Round Table - a group of nuclear experts from Japan, the U.S., China, Russia, the ROK and Australia and as distilled by the Chairperson. The group is convened by the Hiroshima Prefecture. The Hiroshima Watch will also draw on the Hiroshima Report 2024, which has been published annually since 2013.



*2 "Mushroom Cloud"
Photo by US Army, Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

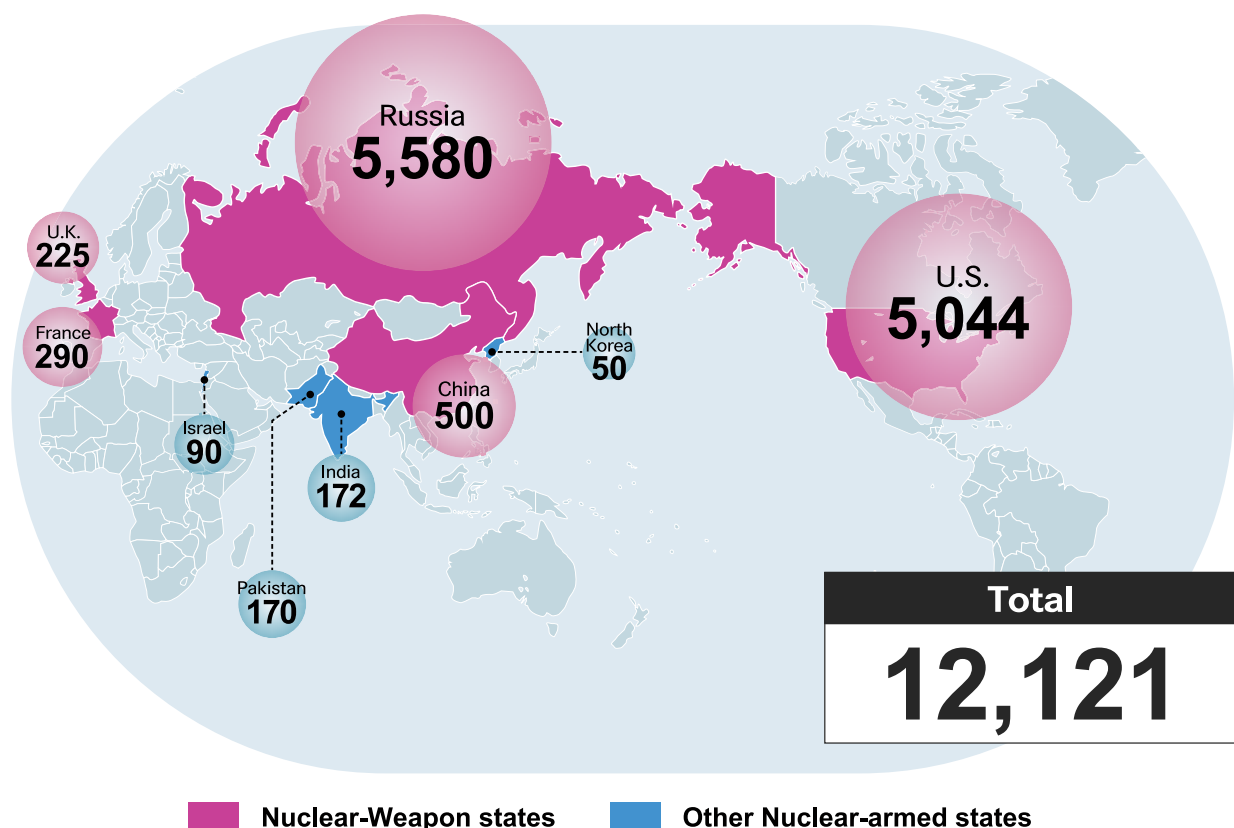
*3 "Pocket Watch"
Donated by Kazuo Nikawa, Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Three backslidings

Several international declarations have been issued in the recent years – including, the five nuclear-weapon states and Bali G20 Summits in 2022, New Delhi G20 Summit in 2023, and the “G7 Leaders’ Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament” in 2023. However, despite multiple affirmations of the global norm that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” and commitments to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, the last year has been one of dangerous backsliding.

The potential threat of use of nuclear weapons, with its catastrophic humanitarian consequences and existential risk to life on this planet, is more alarming than ever before. Hiroshima Watch has identified three trends in particular as of grave concern. First, nuclear-weapon states are increasingly relying on nuclear weapons in their national security policies. Second, there is a growing risk of significant increase in the number, types and deployment of nuclear weapons. Finally, there is a serious potential of the resumption of nuclear weapons testing by major nuclear-weapon states.

Number of Nuclear Stockpile (As of January 2024)



Source: SIPRI YEARBOOK 2024

Increasing reliance on nuclear weapons

Strategic doctrines of nuclear-weapon states include plans to use nuclear weapons first.

The five nuclear-weapon states have stated that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” Yet the strategic doctrines of several nuclear-armed states include plans to use nuclear weapons first if their sovereignty is threatened or non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction (such as biological or chemical weapons) are used. Russia has announced that it is reconsidering its nuclear doctrine. The increasingly casual way in which the deployment and use of nuclear weapons, including so-called ‘tactical’ nuclear weapons, is discussed by policymakers in too many countries is profoundly concerning. These nuclear doctrinal statements are not consistent with the unwinnable nature of nuclear war.

Aside from China, the five nuclear-weapon states have not declared “no first use” of nuclear weapons, and there has been no change in the policies.

Among the five nuclear-weapon states, only China has declared a policy of “no first use.” If China has indeed begun to deploy some warheads with launchers, then the implications for its declared policy of no first use may not be helpful. Among those not party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nuclear-armed states, the scope of India’s declared policy of no first use is also unclear.

While there are governments that agree with providing negative security assurances, the effectiveness of such assurances has been limited, due to restrictions on their application. Furthermore, there has been no noticeable change in the policies of the nuclear-weapon states over the past year with regard to “no first use” , “sole purpose” , or negative security assurances.

The necessary policy response

No first use and negative security assurance commitment; Reduce reliance on nuclear deterrence and extended nuclear deterrence

All nuclear-armed states, including those not party to the NPT, must commit to “no first use” and negative security assurances. They, and those allied with or dependent on them, should recognize that excessive reliance on nuclear deterrence, and extended nuclear deterrence, increases the prospect of actual weapons use.



*4 “Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall (now called the A-bomb Dome)”
Photo by US Army, Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Increase of nuclear weapons: Number, type, deployment

Upgrading nuclear forces in China, the U.S., Russia and others / Deployment in non-nuclear states.

According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China may also have begun to deploy a small number of warheads with launchers in peacetime. The U.S. and Russia are upgrading their Cold War-era nuclear forces and developing other delivery methods. And the ROK continues to actively debate whether it should acquire or re-station nuclear weapons in response to the DPRK's acquisition of a significant nuclear armory.

The U.S. continues deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons in several NATO non-nuclear states, and the potential redeployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons in the U.K.. In 2024, Russia deployed tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus. The U.S. is now developing a new tactical Nuclear-Armed Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM-N) to be deployed on attack submarines and surface ships, which would reintroduce tactical nuclear weapons to the Pacific region for the first time since 1991.

New START numerical limit is in crisis / A renewed nuclear arms race and risk of potential use of nuclear weapons.

A particularly serious issue is the stalled nuclear disarmament process between the U.S. and Russia. Russia notified the U.S. of its suspension of implementation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in response to the U.S.' alleged non-compliance with the Treaty, and withdrew its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

(CTBT) to mirror the U.S. non-ratification of the Treaty since it was opened for signature in 1996. A U.S. official said that "absent a change in the trajectory of adversary arsenals, we may reach a point in the coming years where an increase from current deployed numbers is required."

As of now, both countries state that they will abide by the numerical limits in the New START Treaty. If the U.S. and Russia abandon these limits there is a serious risk of a renewed nuclear arms race and increased risk of the potential use of nuclear weapons. Since the NPT came into existence at the height of the Cold War, the global nuclear landscape has become polycentric. This makes it imperative to develop a more multilateral architecture of nuclear arms control agreements.

The necessary policy response

Stop production and deployment of new nuclear weapons; Numerical limits of the New START Treaty must be upheld and observed.

The production and deployment of a new generation of nuclear weapons must stop immediately. At the very minimum, numerical limits of the New START Treaty must be upheld and observed. An arms race is not inevitable. Adding more nuclear weapons, missile silos, bombers or submarines in China, Russia or the U.S. will not change the fact that use of even one nuclear weapon would change the world as we know it. The resumption of serious arms control negotiations between the U.S. and Russia, and their extension to China, is of critical importance.

Possible resumption of nuclear weapons testing

Both Russia and the U.S. reported to considering resumption of nuclear weapons testing.

Today, a number of states are considering resuming nuclear weapons testing in order to develop new types of nuclear weapons. Although no country has conducted a test in 2023, the Hiroshima Report 2024 describes the scientific director of the Russian Federal Nuclear Center as stating that Russia is ready to resume testing at the Novaya Zemlya nuclear test site if necessary. The former Assistant to President for National Security Affairs under Donald Trump, called for the U.S. to “maintain technical and numerical superiority to the combined Chinese and Russian nuclear stockpiles,” recommending the resumption of nuclear weapons testing and the production of fissile material.

Resuming nuclear weapons testing will further increase the risk of a renewed nuclear arms race.

The five nuclear-weapon states that are members of the NPT have committed, under Article VI of that treaty, 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.”

Resumption of nuclear weapons testing by any of the nuclear-armed states would lead others to follow suit, contributing further to the risk of a renewed nuclear arms race. There is a serious risk that a future U.S. presidential administration could consider resuming explosive nuclear weapons testing. Any such resumption of testing would have major

diplomatic and national security repercussions.

We believe that to start testing and build new nuclear weapons in the absence of negotiations with other states to avoid such measures is a violation of Article VI.

The necessary policy response

***Nuclear weapons testing must be prevented;
Nuclear testing moratorium and the CTBT must be upheld.***

The resumption of nuclear weapons testing by any of the nuclear-armed states, or the conduct of such tests by any other states must be prevented at all costs. Testing nuclear weapons is not necessary, and the nuclear testing moratorium and the CTBT remain in the security interest of all countries.



The Path Ahead

As long as countries continue to depend on nuclear deterrence and extended nuclear deterrence for their security, we cannot realistically anticipate the elimination of nuclear weapons in the future. There is a scarcity of evidence supporting the practical utility of nuclear weapons as a deterrent, and an abundance of evidence about the enormous risks of their use, either deliberately or as a result of human or system error. As long as any such weapons continue to exist, we cannot ignore the fact that deterrence based on nuclear weapons is a strategy laden with the risk of nuclear war.

It is not a matter of disarmament in the face of potential adversaries, but rather a recognition that a gradual reduction of nuclear weapons, based on bilateral and multilateral agreements, is in itself a means of reducing tension between nations, and an opportunity to transition from an international politics dominated by distrust and fear to one based on mutual trust. It is also inappropriate to assert that a strategy of deterrence necessitates nuclear weapons. Deterrence with conventional weapons is possible and is currently being employed.

The vast majority of the international community is made up of

non-nuclear-weapon states. They too share the aspiration of a world free of the existence and threat of use of nuclear weapons. The aspiration is expressed in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) that was adopted by the United Nations in July 2017 and entered into force in January 2021. The actions taken by nuclear-weapon states and their allies are far short of bringing the TPNW into reality.

It is crucial that all governments make further efforts to transform the elimination of nuclear weapons from a future goal into a serious ongoing process, with measurable results. Hiroshima Watch will continue to hold governments accountable for failing to act on their commitments and to encourage concrete actions for a safer future.



Those who cooperated in the creation of the Hiroshima Watch 2024 at the Hiroshima Round Table are as follows:

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Hidehiko YUZAKI (Governor, Hiroshima Prefecture / President, Hiroshima Organization for Global Peace (HOPE))

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(Country-by-country, in alphabetical order)

The views expressed herein, while based on shared principal ideas and views of the participants of the Hiroshima Round Table, are those of the chairperson and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of each individual participant.

International agreements and items for which the status of implementation has been verified

1. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons(NPT) (Effective since 1970)

Target Countries:

- All nuclear-armed states, including those not party to the NPT

Items to be verified:

- Whether or not the Parties to the Treaty are negotiating in good faith with respect to:
- Effective measures to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament
- General and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control

2. Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) (Effective since 2011)

Target Countries:

- United States of America and the Russian Federation
(States Parties to New START Treaty)

Items to be verified:

- Whether each Party has deployed in excess of the number of weapons restricted by this Treaty

3. G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament (2023)

Target Countries:

- G7 member countries

Items to be verified:

- Whether the trend of overall decline in global nuclear arsenals since the end of the Cold War continues today
- Whether the Member State is engaged in the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

4. The G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration (2022), and the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (2023)

Target Countries:

- G20 member countries

Items to be verified:

- Whether the Member State is engaged in the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

5. Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races (2022)

Target Countries:

- Five Nuclear-Weapon States as defined in NPT

Items to be verified:

- The statement asserts that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought," but whether they are acting in accordance with this statement's significance.



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