



## The UN Nuclear Ban Treaty Enters Into Force in January: Then What?

**November 13, 2020**

**George Perkovich:**

Welcome. Thanks to those of you who are joining us now and to those who may join as we proceed. My name is George Perkovich from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, it's my pleasure to moderate this discussion with a terrific panel that we have with you today. And what we're going to do is look ahead on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. A treaty that will enter into force, this January and that offers a lot of promise to the world and for the world and also faces obstacles. And so rather than look back, we want to say, "Okay, this is a great achievement now what happens going forward?" And to do that I can't think of a group better than the people that we have with us today.

Starting with Beatrice Finn, whose bio you all have and know but has been leader of ICAN, which has been a champion of this treaty. Togzhan Kassenova, a dear friend and colleague also an accomplished author and scholar who's got a book coming out relatively soon on Kazakhstan and the history of its nuclear program, which everyone should be interested in reading and Togzhan in fact joins us from Almaty. And then Zia Mian, a physicist, a leader in the disarmament community, the arms control analysis community at Princeton University. So, it's a great group. I'm going to ask these colleagues a few questions and then we'll have some cross conversation and then we're going to open it to questions in the chat function, which I will then relay from you to them in the limited time that we have.

But we'll get started, now the first question that I would want to ask all of you to the extent that you want to answer is... It's going to be based on the observation, the nuclear-weapons states in 2000 at the NPT Review Conference committed to pursue the ultimate elimination of nuclear arsenals. Yet despite that pledge and especially since 2000, we've seen that their interest in nuclear weapons, the continuing enhancement

qualitatively if not quantitatively of their nuclear arsenals continues to be entrenched in at least those five and I would argue also in India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea. So the question is, how and in what ways does the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons serve to shift the at least ambivalence amongst nuclear possessing states and how can it counter the entrenchment of nuclear thinking but also nuclear arsenals in these states and lead to a greater commitment to nuclear disarmament? Sorry it was a long question but Beatrice do you want to start?

**Beatrice Finn:**

Yeah. And thank you so much George for having me here, it's really nice. Yeah, I think this ambivalence that you talk about is really present and somehow the nuclear arms states and many of the nuclear endorsing states have this idea that you can value nuclear weapons and believe that they are fundamental and fundamentally necessary for your security. And still also try to disarm them but you're trying to do both of those things at the same time which really doesn't make a lot of sense when you think about it. If they are so good for security then why have you committed to the disarmament? Then everyone should have it then, that kind of thing, and I think that's really one of the main problems that we've seen in the world.

And I see it also, not an issue that's unique to nuclear weapons but really to struggles for power in all the areas that feel like this idea that somehow we can solve the problems without it being difficult or giving up anything at some point, in some sort of magic state, things will just work out. We will at some point in the world be in a very comfortable place where we'll just feel that we don't need nuclear weapons anymore and nobody will need nuclear weapons and everything will be fine and white tops will fly and all we'll be peaceful. I mean that's not how reality works, at some point you have to decide that actually we don't want these weapons. We want to get rid of them and they are not useful for security, they're actually bad weapons and we should get rid of them. And I think that's really what the TPNW is trying to do. We have given nuclear armed states quite a lot of time to do it on their own. Clearly it isn't leading to results, in order to give up that kind of weapon, there needs to be an outside push. There needs to be a change that forces the issue in another way. That's how all big changes have happened, not by the people in power suddenly giving up their power but the situation around it has to change.

So I think that there's a couple of different ways where the TPNW is really going to change the dynamics around nuclear weapons. I mean obviously it has a huge awareness raising part in educational role to play, the focus on humanitarian consequences that's really important I think for mobilizing attention around this issue, it is an issue that dropped off the radar for many people since after the Cold War and with the TPNW and the work around that it's kind of going up again. It creates a movement. We don't know

exactly how nuclear weapons are going to be eliminated, when that final bomb is going to be disarmed but we do need to know that we need a movement, we need pressure on it. So what we're trying to do is prepare for all of these... To build that movement that will be ready to utilize moments when there's possibilities emerging and I think that the energy and excitement around the TPNW is really creating that sense that people want to be involved in this issue.

There's been a lot of talk about how young generation don't like this issue, they're not engaged in this issue. I don't experience that with the TPNW. I feel that there's a lot of interest in that and a lot of people are excited about it and that creates energy and attention to it. And I think it's really funny to see from the outside now some of the conversations after the U.S. election on the Democratic Party, the AOC camp that talks about, "Well, we need to do it this way," and then you have the moderates in the middle, "No, we have to do it this way." And I see a lot of similarities on the nuclear weapons issue as well and I think that the TPNW can be used as that energizing movement, creating a base, creating public support, opening up scope for these conversations.

We know that disarmament is going to take a long time, it's going to be complex, it has to go in steps. But I think that the TPNW can really be used by anyone who genuinely wants disarmament and not everyone wants that. To build that case so that we can start taking those steps.

**George Perkovich:**

Thanks, so much Beatrice. Togzhan what would you add to that, to what Beatrice said in terms of how... I mean Beatrice talked about people are going to have to be pushed, you need to create motivation from the outside otherwise the problem would have been solved. So other ways that you think about doing that?

**Togzhan Kassenova:**

So, I see TPNW as a very good example of positive disruption, good trouble. I think if you compare TPNW to maybe more classic three days with more tangible outcomes, number of warheads to be caught, pages and pages of verification then some might argue, what is tangible that is coming out of this? But I actually think the intangible outcomes this disruption and this very forceful shakeup of the discourse and the environment for even thinking in discussing these issues is very important. And I think it's really pushing certain things and causing some shifts. And there are a couple of things that I'm noticing, first, it really pushed countries in the middle especially the European ones to have necessary uncomfortable conversations. And I think that's very important when... And that's what Beatrice was talking about, it's when the pressure is coming a little bit from the outside, when it becomes uncomfortable when you have to make a decision on where you stand on these issues.

And as an outcome of this discomfort I see a greater and more tactical push for what they call building bridges, stepping stone initiatives. And I know some proponents of TPNW are not thrilled about them, now that we have the TPNW I'm actually very in support of this interim initiatives, because I think if I would be a country and I would know that complete disarmament is still far away, I would keep it as an ultimate goal but I would be accepting all these mini prizes along the way. And I think TPNW really pushed those initiatives to the forefront. And on the nuclear-weapons states again, no matter how condescending they sound and how dismissive the rhetoric is there, though no country with nuclear weapons will ever sign it and this treaty doesn't make any difference, I think TPNW did put them on the defensive.

Again, I don't think we can have a direct outcome of dismantlement or something very practical and something that we can directly link to TPNW but I think TPNW reduce the space in which this countries now operate and put them on the defensive and I think it's a very positive push. And finally I agree very much on the point of education and awareness raising. And I just think that the civil society and the governments of the countries that never before felt they had a say at the global nuclear politics, the fact that they now feel they have a say and that this new energy it's actually quite refreshing and galvanizing and it's breathing new air into more public education that I think we desperately need because the public I think is not appreciative enough of the nuclear risks that we're living with. So just to summarize, not something very tangible and immediate but there is definite shift in the environment.

**George Perkovich:**

Thanks. Zia anything that we've omitted, that haven't thought of. That's usually your role in life is to think of the thing that nobody else thought of, like Sherlock Holmes or whatever, what are we missing? Yeah, I think you're missing your mute thing.

**Zia Mian:**

I think the mute function on Zoom has many benefits, it often stops me from saying something silly. But I want to come back to this question of ambivalence and entrenchment, I think that George mentioned at the beginning. Because the ambivalence is connected to the entrenchment. The ambivalence about nuclear weapons this gap between wanting them for security and wanting them to go away doesn't exist freely in people's minds. It is actually a result of the entrenchment in institutions of nuclear weapons complexes, ideas live in people's minds and people exist within institutions. And it is the entrenchment within institutions that allows this ambivalence to persist and it's not that all institutions have this, we've seen institutions change.

And what came to my mind listening to George was that back in the 1946, one of the first military studies by the United States and for the Joint Chiefs of Staff of nuclear weapons, on the military utility of nuclear weapons. It said, "We have nuclear weapons, they're really destructive, we'd be better off without them but since they're here and we don't know how to get rid of them, then we're stuck with them, but we'd be better off without," and that was an early sense of ambivalence. But over time, having the nuclear weapons, the care and nurturing of nuclear weapons, trying to find ways of thinking how to make them useful and thus make yourself useful, has created these vast, what E.P. Thompson called exterminist complexes that live in the nuclear-weapon states. We pay people every day to go to work, to look after, think about using nurture nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon ways of thinking.

So the fact of this continuing ambivalence is... Sure on the one hand you have a moral sensibility of what decent people want the world to be like, on the other hand we pay people a wage to think about how to use nuclear weapons and keep nuclear weapons and make them useful. So I think it is precisely the coming of something that exists from outside, either the realm of free ideas or of existing entrenched institutions of national security that we have space to create a third poll for thinking about an engaging institutional with nuclear weapons here. I think this is where law, an international community and domestic politics actually offers a new space for this.

People who remember that 10 years ago, George did a book with his colleague James Acton on the abolition of nuclear weapons, this was in the immediate past Obama days where everybody was talking about the elimination of nuclear weapons. And the issue then was about how to make national security arguments about getting rid of nuclear weapons. What the TPNW says is that there are other grounds for thinking about nuclear weapons other than your national security and deterrence. There are humanitarian grounds, there are legal grounds, there are moral grounds, there are ethical grounds and this by institutionalizing it into a legal instrument and making it part of the international legal and political structure creates a new institutional possibility for changing the dynamics of this ambivalence. And ultimately that's why I think that the TPNW has the potential as not just an idea but as a new space, as Togzhan was saying, a new institutional space for taking on the ambivalence and the existing exterminist complexes.

**George Perkovich:**

Thank you. And thanks all three of you. There are a bunch of questions but I think in several of your comments raise for me that question of... We're talking about creating a, whether it's a movement or outside demand for, or interest in thinking about these weapons differently, challenging the institutions that are driven by, or for nuclear weapons and deterrence. And so one of the questions I have is, do those movements,

does that kind of dialogue and pressure operate in for example, China, in Russia, in Pakistan, in Israel and in North Korea and even in France? Because that's a big part of the challenge.

Or is the theory of change, that if you get the U.S. and the UK and maybe some allied countries in NATO, if they change their outlook then somehow that's going to change how Russia thinks about an approach to this and how China thinks about and approaches it and how Pakistan and Israel and North Korea think about approaching it. So, take me through the next step in a theory of the change that extends into places that aren't having these discussions right now and anybody who wants to start go ahead, we don't have to go in order.

**Togzhan Kassenova:**

George, if I could start. And I think I would want to take this question especially from the angle of the humanitarian consequences because that's one of the fundamental components of the TPNW. I completely agree with how you put the question and that one cannot compare civil society and the role and the power of civil society in countries like the U.S. and Europe. And especially when I look from the humanitarian angle and let's take, for example Russia is the inheritor of the Soviet nuclear program. And since I'm just freshly back from the villages next to the former Soviet nuclear testing site and because I see how much people there are still suffering and all of that but I also saw enough documents in the archives of Kazakhstan requesting, for example data and medical records on what happened to the population and they never got anything.

And that's just like documents and data, so I'm not very optimistic as of right now that Russia and China suddenly would start caring about the humanitarian consequences and that would somehow push them to embrace the treaty. But I also... I think when the question is posed like that, that okay in the U.S. it's such a thriving democracy and civil society can have an impact and the power, I think we shouldn't dismiss Russian and Chinese and other societies, there are important and courageous civil society actors that are trying to be agents of change. And I think I do see what's happening in some of these countries and it's a much slower process there but it's not hopeless. So I guess for right now, we might not see immediate embrace or we might not see me that impact as we can see in the U.S. or in Europe but I just want to caution us from dismissing the societies that will never be more free or more democratic or more open. And so yeah, I guess I would stop.

**George Perkovich:**

Thanks, Togzhan. Beatrice?

**Beatrice Finn:**

Yeah. I think that... Just to continue a little bit on Zia's point on this building institutions, some building laws. These things apply to non-democratic states as well. And I think that's really important to remember, that of course it's very easy for ICAN to constantly talk about civil society as a driving factor in this. But the institutions themselves and the relationship between governments is equally important in many cases in shifting behavior. And I think that we've seen based on other treaties, other laws that this also impacts... These changes behaviors also in non-democratic countries. And we've heard a lot when it comes to politicians and individuals in these systems that the peer pressure from other actors in similar roles in other countries is really actually quite important and shifts expectations when they come to conferences, when they come to meetings.

I mean, there's a reason why we are all so upset when North Korea tests nuclear weapons. They haven't ratified the CTBT. The law doesn't apply to them, I mean, in the treaties and such but still, we have this expectation on them. And we base all our work on that, we see, for example Russia lying about violating treaties, recognizing that it's not actually acceptable to just violate treaties. They might do it but it's part of this trying to pretend like they're not doing it or trying to find excuses or "No, actually it wasn't us, we didn't do that." And I think that's a testament to the actual strength of these norms that they do create expectations also on non-democratic countries.

And then I just do want to highlight that when you look at which countries that builds it security on threatening to mass murder civilians with weapons of mass destruction, the majority of them are democracies. If you look at all countries that are part of the nuclear weapons system and thinks it's legitimate to threaten, to use these weapons on population, it's majority democracies and a lot of non-democracies have rejected these weapons and do not feel the security on weapons of mass destruction.

So, I think it's kind of... Yes, of course we can see that civil society, it's very easy for me to tweet very mean things about my prime minister, for example and it's not a personal security challenge to me. So you will see that a lot more as well, it doesn't mean that there isn't work going on but there's other avenues. I think we also have to be careful of not taking the way [inaudible 00:24:10] but ICAN expresses itself in certain countries where it's safe to express ourselves like that, as the only way that we think change will happen.

I'm also very mindful that asking activists to do what I do in my country, it's out of the question for them. I'm not willing to put colleagues and friends in those countries at a personal risk they will go to prison, they will disappear. Challenging the military in some of these countries is extremely dangerous. So I think that we have to also understand

our immense privilege in being able to speak out like this and that also gives us a certain responsibility to both see what we can do to help in other ways in these countries, but also create a system where, from the outside again, there can be pressure on these governments to change, to help people in those countries.

**George Perkovich:**

Right. Thank you.

**Zia Mian:**

Let me add one thing, if I might. It's worth looking backwards for a minute and asking the question, how was it that it took the Nuclear Freeze Movement and millions of people coming into Central Park in New York and resolutions in states and towns across the United States to force the Reagan administration to the Reykjavik Summit. There was no such equivalent mass democratic citizen based mobilization in the Soviet Union. And yet Gorbachev shows up at Reykjavik and he is the one who is actually more enlightened and more progressive and more forward-thinking about the possibility of eliminating nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. And I think that coming back to what we talked about earlier in terms of entrenchment that within capitalist democratic society is this entrenchment of the nuclear complex also expresses itself in domestic politics and decision-making.

And countries that don't have the same kind of confluence of private capital investment, intellectual investment, and military investment in these complexes may have a different dynamic about how they think about some of these issues. Matthew Evangelista wrote a wonderful book called *Unarmed Forces*, which looked at the end of the Cold War and the dynamics that played out in the United States and in the Soviet Union in the last decade or so of the Cold War. And it teaches a very interesting lesson about how, what seem at the surface to be violent autocratic unfeeling, uncaring political structures ended up in basically the same perspective. And in some cases, a more enlightened perspective on the nuclear weapons question than that of the United States and Britain and France and many people remember the mass protests in England that C and D organized against Mrs. Thatcher in those years.

And in one sense democracy is an enormously hopeful project. But you find most of the time that civil society is actually struggling against democratically elected governments because democratically elected governments usually don't end up doing what people want. So I think the story's a bit more complicated than the way that you described it initially and lastly, it is worth reflecting your first question began by talking about the 2000 NPT where the five permanent members of the Security Council who are the first five countries to get nuclear weapons states all jointly made the same commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Nobody made the Chinese come and make that

statement, they chose to do it. And so I think that the story of enlightened Western democracies has a certain old fashioned 19th century colonial civilized sensibility to it, which needs to be interrogated a bit more carefully perhaps than people might like to do in Washington or London or Paris.

**George Perkovich:**

I never said enlightened democracies now or before number one. Number two you're right about Gorbachev, but what was going on there was regime change. And so that raises another interesting issue, which is that's why you had disarmament in South Africa- regime change, why you had the reversal of the nuclear programs in Argentina and Brazil- regime change. And so my question is, does nuclear disarmament require regime change? And if so, where are you more likely to get regime change in democracies or in China or Russia or North Korea or Pakistan?

And also, to Beatrice's point about the numbers, well, the numbers that you cited that the majority are democracies that's because they have alliances. China has no allies except Pakistan. Russia has Belarus but I think that's a little dodgy now and there are no alliances. So if the numbers are being produced because it's a nuclear alliance, that's partly because countries freely chose to unify and ally against Russia and China. So we can play games on it but I think the underlying issue is, how do you engage one way or the other? And so if Zia you're right, if China's enlightened on this and I've written to this recently, then the Chinese ought to be leading and we ought to be able to work with them to push in that direction, that doesn't seem to be the case. So where do you go from here to overcome the resistance that you've articulated very well in the democracies and where is there evidence that the Russians and the Chinese and Pakistan and Israel are going to help in that project?

**Zia Mian:**

I don't know that I can make a case that they will help in that project. What we do know is that when the voting was taking place about whether we should even have the negotiations for the treaty, the U.S. and friends and the UK all voted against; the Chinese and the Pakistanis and the Indians abstained. They were not going to say, "No, we should not. We won't turn up for the negotiation, but if you want to negotiate a prohibition of nuclear weapons, well go for it. We're not going to say we support it. We're not going to say that we oppose it." Whereas the U.S., Britain and France, categorically opposed it. And some of you, will remember very well, when the negotiations were actually taking place, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley actually led a handful of, at the time I called a ragtag crew of U.S. allies and wannabe allies, in a boycott outside the negotiating chamber, and Beatrice can tell that story with much great memories.

But my point is that, I'm not saying that right now we can expect Xi Jinping or anybody else to say, "Yes, we support the ban treaty and this is what we're going to do to help it go forward." But at the same time, they are not in the same way, providing a determined obstacle to the possibility and what you called the promise. And it is, I agree, a promise of having a goal at a question that we have failed to resolve for such a long time.

**George Perkovich:**

Well, I mean, I think it'd be interesting about... Or whether it's degrees of cynicism in terms of some of the states that... I think it was dumb for the Western States to object to and criticize the TPNW negotiations, it was ridiculous, stupid, counterproductive, and now it's going to enter into force and they were wrong. It would also be very easy to be cynical and say, "Go ahead and have the negotiations. We don't care. It's not going to bind us anyway. We'll stay out of it." So to go forward because the treaty is entering into force, it becomes a different issue of whether and how you engage these states.

So for example, if you think about what people are worried about in the U.S.-China relationship increasing tensions, the possibility of conflict escalating from the maritime domain, all the different things that people worry about, and this is basically a question that Matthew Harris has asked, and worries that people have about escalation, including to nuclear war. Where can TPNW and its advocates come in to help address that threat, or is that left to other actors and pursuing other lines of work? Anyone?

**Togzhan Kassenova:**

George, just a couple of thoughts. If I kind of feel your question correctly, there is a little bit of maybe a frustration, which I sometimes share that in this kind of disarmament discussions, there is a very visible almost anti-Americans feel that the focus is so much on the U.S. and so much less on Russia or others. And sometimes I also get frustrated with that, but I think it's, for somebody like myself who is not an American, but chooses to leave in the United States, I think there is this... It's less cynical, it's more idealistic view also of the United States that we do hold the United States to higher standard almost. And so I think it is true that it is a fact that there is more emphasis on the United States and what the U.S. does. There are greater demands, greater expectations. There is more transparency coming from the U.S. which sometimes works against it, but I just wanted to push it more to the side that it's also for good reasons why there are these great expectations of the U.S.

The question on how, and whether TPNW should solve all the national security dilemmas of the U.S., I just feel that it's really putting too much faith and also... Yeah, it's putting too much into TPNW to resolve all the security dilemma and the United States is the country with the most powerful conventional force. If they don't feel secure,

then how are others supposed to feel? So you're making such valid points, but is it for TPNW to resolve all this very valid and complicated questions?

**George Perkovich:**

Great. Thanks Togzhan, Beatrice?

**Beatrice Finn:**

Yeah. I think I completely agree with Togzhan there and I think we very often end up in a conversation where as you mentioned that we have to solve everyone's problems, right? And that the whole world has to solve the United States problems for them before they can kind of grace us with the decency to not mass murder the entire world and promise it's a little bit of, I think that what people in the nuclear arms states, and again, I come back to that as a part of being the privileged group, being the people in power, and very often lacking the ability to identify with those without power.

As a Swede living in Switzerland, for example, it is also my future. We're talking about my kids' future. We're talking about nuclear war that will significantly impact my life. And I have nothing to say basically, Pennsylvania decides on whether or not the risk of nuclear war is going to increase next year or not. And it can feel very unfair and who is looking out for my security interest. My security interest is that the armed states, they get rid of their nuclear weapons, that would benefit my security interests. And there has to be an opportunity for countries and people and groups of people that are going to suffer from the consequences as well, to express that.

And we have a very narrow view of whose security matters. And this is something that we see in all kinds of fights for justice and equality. That's what we see, for example, in the United States, when it comes to Black Lives Matter, when it comes to gender and violence against women, for example, whose security gets to take precedent? Did the people in the Semipalatinsk region benefit from the security of nuclear weapons testing? For example, and no, obviously they were harmed. Who gets to decide which security it is? We look at countries like Kiribati and the Maldives two state parties to the TPNW that are literally facing an existential threat, they will disappear.

And why do we think that say Norway has a bigger existential threat that needs nuclear weapons to be protected, than a country that actually will disappear in a couple of decades? Why isn't Kiribati allowed to point nuclear missiles to Washington, Beijing, Moscow, and all the countries that are polluting so much that they will disappear in a few decades. And there's a very kind of this inherent perspective of whose security matters and who gets the excuse to behave in a certain way. And that their problems, United States problems, are taken more seriously than other countries problems and security concerns.

And of course, in a country, you have to look after your own security concerns. So I'm not saying that that doesn't matter, that that's not an issue, but I think when it comes to international law it can't be dependent on solving some problems for some countries and ignoring others. It has to be a law that applies equally to everyone. I think that's what's powerful with the TPNW as well, that it actually kind of even out things. Now actually these weapons have no excuses for anyone really. It doesn't matter what the security situation are threatening to mass murder civilians is against the Geneva conventions. We shouldn't be doing that. That's not behavior we want in any case.

**George Perkovich:**

So, Beatrice, are there other forms of warfare that also could quite well involve mass murder of civilians that concern you, or that you think concern other states? And how do you advise them to deter or defeat those other forms of massive warfare that would be non-nuclear?

**Beatrice Finn:**

Well, I think that we've seen, and this is one of the reasons why I'm quite... Well, things seems like a pretty dark place at the moment in international law and multilateralism and security, looking over time since the end of World War II, we've made some pretty amazing achievements in the world with things like the Geneva conventions and protection of civilians in warfare. Following that we started ticking off these weapons system that caused indiscriminate harm during the conflict, but also a long time after the conflict, biological weapons, chemical weapons, landmines, cluster munitions... we see a huge evolution in warfare right now with lethal autonomous weapons on the horizon. And I think that that's where warfare is going in the future, of course, and that's what we need to look at minimizing.

And for me, the TPNW and banning the nuclear weapons is part of that wider strategy to kind of constantly narrow down the room of maneuvering for states. What are states allowed to do in warfare and what are they not allowed to do? And constantly shrinking that space in absence of being able to simply banning war that's kind of how we're trying to shape behavior. And is it flawless and works all the time? Obviously not, nothing is flawless and works all the time, but is it the tool that we actually have and that we can use, and that we've seen actually giving results and shifting behavior over time? Yes. So it's something worth doing.

**Zia Mian:**

So, on this point, if I can George...

**George Perkovich:**

Sure.

**Zia Mian:**

I want to just follow up in one way on what Beatrice just said and the way that you framed your question. It's worth remembering that the purpose of the entire United Nations system, the architecture of what we call the international community and the world order, is premised on a commitment to what it says: ending the scourge of war. That was why it was created. And the first decision they made, that if we are going to end the scourge of war, the first thing we do, resolution one, January 1946, before we deal with the tragic devastation of World War II, before we even agreed on the languages that will be the languages of the United Nations, the first order of business is we need to plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons, because you will not eliminate the scourge of war until you begin from the fact that these new weapons-that only the United States possessed at that time-would mean that the scourge of what would be far worse than anything we could ever have imagined, even what we've just been through.

And what we've seen since then up to now has been a contest between the traditional practice of national security and alliance politics embodied in structures like security treaties, NATO alliances, nuclear umbrellas, vast armies, the right of ships and submarines bristling with nuclear weapons to go anywhere in the world that they wish. For nuclear armed airplanes and others to fly anywhere across the planet, as they wish. To have 800 American bases around the world and for other people. And at the same time, you have the United Nations system, which has grown from 50 countries in 1945 to almost 200 countries now.

**George Perkovich:**

Yeah.

**Zia Mian:**

And this contest between two ways of ordering the world is actually where the core of this dilemma that you talked about, I think comes from, and that we're going to deal with- what Matthew asked in his question about the U.S. and China and escalation is that- if you want to deal with this by two states talking to each other and using coercion and bargaining and negotiation, that's one way, and I will have allies, you will have allies, and eventually one of us will prevail; or we go back to the core principle, which is the United Nations system- the international community together has to find a way to resolve these disputes between states. And so I think the question is, where are you willing to commit the resources? Politically, legally, morally, economically, to finding answers to these kinds of questions by strengthening your state and your friends? Or by strengthening the international order that can work on behalf of everyone?

**George Perkovich:**

What do you do with the veto, Zia? At the UN? I mean, it's great. I love the UN, but the people who invented it also gave themselves, five of them, the vetoes. So tell me how you get the UN to be useful in solving these problems. And it bears very well on, on TPNW and more importantly, on nuclear disarmament by other means because there's a question that people ask about verification and enforcement. And those two are related. So, if there isn't verification or people stop allowing verification, who redresses that? what's the enforcement mechanism?

TPNW doesn't have one, nor does the NPT people point to the UN, which is great. You just made a case for the UN and then boom, you run up against the veto. And so, take us through how we should think about the veto and the UN project or the international project when it comes to preventing war, dealing with those who violate international rules and laws like the TPNW and again, anybody can jump in on it.

**Zia Mian:**

Well, since I started that, let me just make at least one observation. And then have Togzhan and Beatrice, explain how they see things, but it seems to me that all I'm saying is that we actually need a commitment of effort to see what we can do with that system, which pales historically in comparison to the effort that has been made into building national security structures, national militaries, military industrial complexes is nobody talks about the international legal, ethical complex. There is a Pentagon, where is a Pentagon sized equivalent devoted to building peaceful, legal, international order. You remember John Bolton saying that they could take the top 20 or 30 stories of the UN building?

So, I think all I'm saying is, I'm not saying that it is the answer. I come back to your very opening word about the promise. The TPNW for me fits into a larger project of world order that goes back to the end of World War II, and the tragic experience of what total war actually can do. And the question is we've had two competing efforts. One is to build that legal international community where all states and populations are treated lawfully, legally, properly, and we evolve and free humanity from the scourge of war or the continuation of military armed alliances, arm sales, all of those other things in that nuclear weapons fit within that order, but not in the other one. And it is the need to devote effort and attention to thinking through and building that other order that I think is where the TPNW encourages everybody to go, if they want to go.

And as that order develops and becomes clearer and its limitations, you're quite right about the veto. And it's also worth remembering the veto eventually was forced into the situation when the United States said, "If there is no veto, there will be no United Nations." It was the choice that was forced. And so what were people supposed to do?

Give up on the entire project or hope, okay, we'll take this now because that's all we can get. And we will figure out a way it is now time to figure out the way. And so I'm not saying that it is a straightforward matter, and you're quite right to ask this question, but it is that set of questions that need to be asked as much as any debates about how to manage the South China sea or deterrence or any of these other things that also is a core element of what needs political and effort and thought and commitment.

**George Perkovich:**

Beatrice you want to say anything on this? Togzhan?

**Togzhan Kassenova:**

I just wanted to pick up on the verification and enforcement, which-

**George Perkovich:**

Yeah, please.

**Togzhan Kassenova:**

Absolutely again, it's a fact, it's a valid point that it's absolutely missing, but George, what about changing the way we viewed TPNW? Not to view it as the end, as the all-encompassing treaty, but as a first step. And then think about the second step. For example, a convention that would go into more technical more verification and enforcement. So, if, we just change the lens and don't treat TPNW which has its shortcomings and limitations, and also maybe couldn't have possibly include verification and enforcement... It was already seen as an impossible idea that became possible. And if we just switch our thinking and think about it as step one of something, not as the final step of all.

**Beatrice Finn:**

Yeah. And if I can just add something there, because I think that there's a difference between arms control and these humanitarian disarmament treaties in terms of how you approach the weapon. If you want to keep nuclear weapons, you shouldn't sign that treaty. And I think that that's also challenging arms control that trying to reduce the numbers, but never rejecting the weapon and still valuing the weapon as very necessary. But it creates an inherent incentive to not go beyond that, to cheat maybe, or to eventually withdraw and build up your nuclear arsenals. Whereas of course, the TPNW has the stigmatizing part as well, and the kind of rejection and undermining the weapons credibility in itself. So obviously the treaty assumes that you would be wanting to not have nuclear weapons when you join this or that you will want to get rid of your weapons when you were joining this treaty.

And then of course, intentionally as was mentioned the details on how to verifiably eliminate nuclear weapons were left given that, that needs to be of the nuclear arm states when they joined, they would need to be part of it. It's going to look very different when North Korea process of disarming their nuclear weapons to the United States or Russia, for example, with huge arsenals. So it's not going to be one sort of exactly the same timeframe or exactly the same kind of details in that.

But I want to go back a little bit quickly on the veto. And in many ways I feel like the veto is becoming less and less relevant and the Security Council is becoming less and less relevant. The way the world looked in 1945 is not the way the world looks today, we're seeing drastic changes in power dynamics and how the world operates and it's very difficult of course to change the rules because you need approval of the veto states to change it. But what we do see is of course, people using the United Nations in other ways, that the Security Council is losing influence in the United Nations system and international relations that nobody expects the Security Council to do anything these days.

And people are taking to the general assembly, they're taken to the different agencies, working very practically, for example, through things like the World Food Program that just got the Nobel Peace Prize through the human rights agencies, through UNBP. And I see also that the way we constructed that it's not relevant maybe to today's challenges. If you look at the 10 biggest countries, the largest populations in the world, you will have on that list, five nuclear arm states and five TPNW supporters. And the five TPNW supporters are actually growing at a higher rate in terms of populations than the nuclear arm states.

And we will see over the next 50 years, for example, in Nigeria one of the core group members of the TPNW is predicted to be one of the two biggest countries in the world in I think in 50 years or something like that. And one of the biggest economies in the world, I mean, these power dynamics in the world is changing very rapidly. And I think that sort of shows that this new way of doing things and the successes we've had in weapons in disarmament, and disarmament diplomacy these last 20 years has basically been outside traditional consensus forums. The landmines treaty, the cluster munitions treaty, the hopefully killer robots next that it's a new way of doing things. And that's how we are going to have to, we can't work with consensus and moving everyone at the same time, but we can work with these groups of States and sort of setting the pace and the tempo in the world and how we want to see it.

**Zia Mian:**

So if I can, and I think there's a really interesting point that Beatrice has made there and it connects directly to this discussion about war and peace, that the two times that

you've seen a real crisis of legitimacy in the past two decades over the security council has been the United States decision to go to war in Iraq, where they went to the Security Council and the Security Council said, "You will not get support." And so the U.S. basically acted outside the international legal structure for this. Sure, they showed that nobody could stop them. And eventually 20 years later, the U.S. admits defeat and has to go.

The second is that with the JCPOA the Iran deal, which was taken to the Security Council, approved unanimously by the Security Council, and then the United States withdraws, the rest of the members of the Security Council, the rest of the partners in the JCPOA continue to try and keep the deal alive as best they can. So the legitimacy of the veto, it need exercise as Beatrice points out. The practice of national security politics, and being willing to compromise the international procedures that have been agreed to have increasingly come into conflict.

And it is a question when the next time the United States or somebody else actually tries to use a veto, how will people deal with that claim that yes, we have a veto and people will say, "How will we deal with this?" And I think that Beatrice has a point that the landscape on which the veto had meaning and purpose as a procedural process of control of decisions may actually wither away more quickly than we had imagined otherwise, which means that we have to have other forms of arriving at collective decisions on these core questions of war and peace, because these will not go away.

**George Perkovich:**

You think how the world will deal if the United States or the UK or France exercise a veto is different than it will react if China and Russia do, just want to stipulate. We've got a couple of minutes left and a number of people have written on you tube questions about, are there ways to put economic pressure on nuclear possessing states to it's not clear to me reduce their arms, give them up entirely, but you understand that just to the question, and I know Beatrice, you referred to this earlier and so you might elaborate on the power of economic divestment and boycotting as relates to TPNW, thank you.

**Beatrice Finn:**

Thank you. Yes. And we're already working a little bit on that, and I just want to be sort of... there's limited amounts that we can do and realistically it's not a coincidence that these are some of the richest countries in the world that have nuclear weapons and the most military powerful countries as well. So we are not expecting countries to boycott the nuclear arms states. It will be quite difficult to more countries to boycott countries like China, the United States and things like that. But what we can do is to, and this is really the whole theory of change behind the TPNW, is to make it harder to have nuclear weapons, so increase this burden of having nuclear weapons. Making them more

difficult so that there will be an incentive to disarms that will create a different kind of decision-making kind of basis for these things.

And a big part of that is things like divestment work, for example, and we've seen that be effective in some other weapons, when treaties like the ban on landmines, ban on cluster munitions, and during the force, a lot of major banks who operate globally in all countries started to pull investments from those companies that make these weapons. And we do our annual report through a partner organization of ICAN called PAX in the Netherlands that does "Don't Bank on the Bomb" that lists which companies are involved in nuclear weapons production, enormous contracts from the government- we see that now in this sort of big modernization programs- and then work to get banks and pension funds to divest from them, it's sort of increased economic pressure on the companies to drop that.

And for example, we've seen with the cluster munitions convention, the U.S. did not participate in the treaty negotiations, did not join the treaty, but the last American producer, just six years after the treaty entered into force. The last American producer, Textron, stopped making custom munitions and citing lack of a future market that it's sort of going out of business. They will be blacklisted by major sort of European investment firms and banks and it was basically bad for business to keep making these weapons. So there are no more American companies that produce it. So it hasn't of course solved, the U.S. still have stockpiles of them, but it's a way to do that.

And it's also a way to kind of identify that this is not an issue that only Trump and Putin and Kim Jong-un, and those people control. There're so many other parts of financial interests, companies, universities in the United States, for example, the allied countries that upholds the system and makes nuclear weapons possible. And we can also start working with the treaty to pick apart some of those, to increase the pressure on the nuclear arms states. So it's something that we're definitely interested in. And what we're seeing from financial institutions is a huge surge in interest in sustainable financing, ethical financing; it's all that they talk about at Davos these years, mainly in terms of climate change and stuff like that, but it's a real thing that banks and investment funds now are very preoccupied with.

**George Perkovich:**

Okay. Thank you. And we're going to have to leave it there we're at time. And I'm not sure how that works, but evidently it actually works, somebody turns off the whole thing. But I want to thank Beatrice and Zia and Togzhan for your forbearance and for the great insights and contribution. I hope those of you watching and listening found it useful. We're of course eager to do this again, but thank all three of you very much.