

# The “Ban Treaty” and the prospects for Nuclear Disarmament

Subrata Ghoshroy

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Women Ban the Bomb Event

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# Agenda

- The international context and the rule of law
- The status of nuclear disarmament process
- Why the ban treaty is important
- Prospects for nuclear disarmament

# The world situation

- We are in a situation where the major powers like the U.S., but not only, are often in violation of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law with impunity
- One set of rules for them and another for the rest of the world
- Since the end of the Cold War, we have seen country after country invaded, destroyed
- Instead of dissolving, NATO has expanded eastward greatly threatening Russia
- It has been two decades since the ICJ ruling making nuclear weapons illegal

# Disarmament has been at a standstill

- The UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) has been deadlocked for two decades
- NPT five-year review conferences pay only lip-service
- Nuclear super-powers US and Russia say they are acting in good faith because they have reduced their arsenals by thousands
- Yes, but we still have nearly 15,000 warheads in their combined possession
- Us and Russia has 1.500 warheads on high-alert on launchers - ground, sea, and air

# NPT has lived up to its name as the Non-proliferation Treaty

- Disarmament was missing from the title
- It has been mostly a success in preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons
- But vertical proliferation continued for many years
- Now we have modernization programs

# Article VI

- Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

# Other Obstacles to Disarmament

- Ballistic Missile Defense Systems in Europe and Asia
- Space weapons
- Advanced conventional weapons like the prompt global strike, Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) dropped in Afghanistan
  - MOAB the largest non-nuclear bomb has a 11-ton explosive
  - Obliterate everything within a 1000-yard radius

# BMD Systems obstacles to peace and disarmament

- Primarily short and intermediate range systems within close proximity to Russia and China
- Although US still developing the GMD systems, the real emphasis is on short and intermediate range systems like THAAD and Aegis ship-based systems
- These are of immediate concern to Russia and China



# BMD systems are a threat to Russia and China

- There are fundamental physics and engineering challenges in intercepting ICBMs
- But the challenges are less acute for IRBM and SRBMs
- Also, forward deployed systems like the THAAD have components, like the radar, that are much more capable than needed

# a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination

- “The Ban Treaty”
- We expect that the treaty will prohibit a range of activities relating to nuclear weapons, including their use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention and transfer, as well as assistance, encouragement or inducement of anyone to engage in any of these prohibited activities.

– Source: ICAN

# Why is the Ban Treaty Important?

- It has been almost half a century since the NPT came into force
- The NPT was a grand bargain:
  - The states without nuclear weapons at the time of the treaty will not acquire nuclear weapons in the future
  - The states in possession of nuclear weapons will eliminate their stockpiles in a reasonable period of time

# Active opposition by the U.S. and NATO

- All NW states are opposing the negotiations
- US is leading the opposition calling it “Counterproductive”
- All the NATO countries except the Netherlands
- Others like Russia, China, and Israel are also  
India and Pakistan are against negotiations
- DPRK is supporting the negotiations

# Civil Society and the Ban Treaty

- It is because of the painstaking work of the civil society and organizations like the ICAN that has made it possible
- There were successes on banning the Landmines by going outside the UN system
- The Ban Treaty is taking place within the UN giving it more legitimacy

# The world's people are solidly in favor of nuclear disarmament

- On the other hand the opinion of the vast majority of the people of the world support disarmament:
  - 1996 ICJ decision
  - 1996 CTBT
  - Repeated resolutions in the UNGA
  - 2015 NPT RevCOM (107 nations voted in favor of a nuclear weapons convention)
  - 120 nations are participating in the ban treaty negotiations

# Popular pressure

- Progress in nuclear disarmament has happened despite the opposition from the nuclear weapons states, in particular the U.S.
- We remember the Ban the Bomb campaign in the 50's
- We remember the massive mobilization under the Nuclear Freeze Movement and the late Randy Forsberg
- We are inspired by the tenacious campaign of the Japanese anti-nuclear movement and the Hibakushas
- Courageous actions by people like Sister Rice

# We have a tremendous opportunity

- Witnessing an unprecedented mobilization and spontaneous protests against the Trump administration's anti-people policies
  - The massive budget cuts
  - Reckless policies on environment
  - Inhumane policy toward immigrants
- The international situation
  - A new government in South Korea that wants peace
  - A reenergized Labor Party with a leader in Jeremy Corbyn
- We have an opportunity and an obligation to put disarmament once again front and center