Special Contribution

The Humanitarian Approach to Nuclear Disarmament

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Slide 1 Hiroshima Memorial Peace Memorial Kenotaph

Cenotaph for the atomic bomb victims, Hiroshima

I am grateful for this opportunity to share with you some thoughts on nuclear disarmament in general, and about Austria's role in this important domain of international politics, as well as specifically on the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Last August, among representatives from many other states, I participated on behalf of my country Austria in the commemorative events in Japan dedicated to the victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Let me here express my sincerest respect for the victims of the

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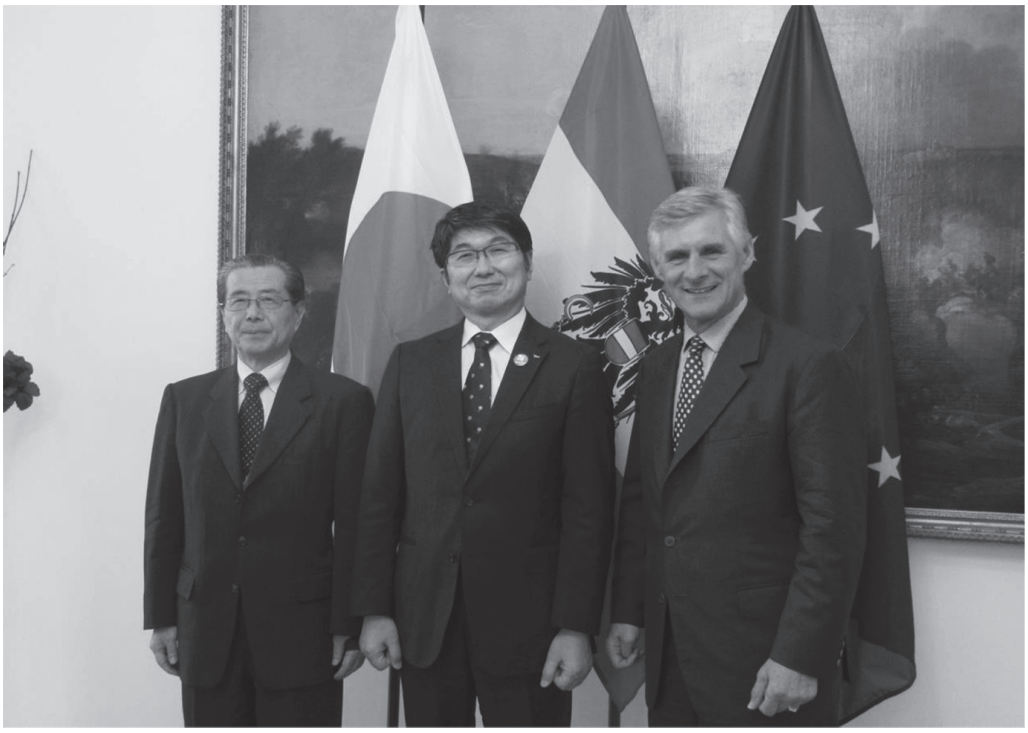
atom bombing. Their testimony has been extremely important to keep the memory of the terrible tragedy alive, inspiring the international efforts to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. Everybody who makes him- or herself familiar with the record of that humanitarian catastrophe comes to the deeply felt conviction that never again humans must suffer what has been suffered by the people of these two Japanese cities.

Slide 2 Mr. Michael Linhart, Secretary General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Mr. Yasuyoshi Komizo, Secretary General of Mayors for Peace, and Mr. Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki



Meeting of Secretary General Linhart with Yasuyoshi Komizo, Secretary General of „Mayors for Peace“ (left) and Mayor Taue of Nagasaki (centre), Vienna, May 4, 2017

This picture shows the Secretary General of Mayors for Peace, Mr. Yasuyoshi Komizo, and the Mayor of Nagasaki Mr. Tomihisa Taue at a meeting with the Secretary General of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Michael Linhart on May 4, 2017. The photograph illustrates that Austria and Japan have been working together closely on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We look forward of course to continuing this cooperation for the sake of international peace and security in the future.

Unfortunately, more than seventy years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons still exist, and with them the risk to be used again.

The crisis around the nuclear and ballistic missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has recently reminded the world that the danger of a nuclear confrontation is not a concern of yesterday. It is still with us today.

Austria has been consistent in condemning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile tests. These actions represent a serious threat to international peace and security, which is a cause for concern for everybody on this planet. Therefore we are very supportive of the current diplomatic activities being undertaken to find a peaceful and lasting solution to this issue. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to follow up the recent announcements regarding denuclearization with concrete, irreversible and internationally verified steps towards a complete dismantlement of their nuclear weapons, and a return to full compliance with applicable international law.

Slide 3 Alexander van der Bellen, Federal President of Austria

Federal President of Austria Alexander Van der Bellen receives ICAN Director Beatrice Fihn (background center) and ICAN Austria Director Nadja Schmidt (background left), Vienna, February 1, 2018

This picture shows the Federal President of Austria, Alexander van der Bellen, speaking at a meeting with representatives of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on February 1, 2018.

As is stated in the current Work Programme of the Austrian Federal Government, the government it is committed to continue in a consistent way its initiatives in the area of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and its advocacy of a nuclear weapons free world.

This attitude has been long standing. Austria renounced the possession of nuclear weapons already in the State Treaty of 1955 restoring its sovereignty after the second World War, and then again by acceding to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a Non-Nuclear Weapon State in 1970. Austria has been an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). As the host state of both the IAEA and the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, we do our best to support these international organizations in the conduct of their work. Besides, Austria is a member of a number of other international initiatives promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Most recently, Austria has been among the most active supporters of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. to which I will return in a few minutes. According to the latest edition of the Hiroshima Report, of 36 states surveyed in 2017, Austria has come out top (ex aequo with New Zealand) when it comes to active promotion of nuclear disarmament.

Austria views nuclear disarmament primarily from the humanitarian point of view. The destructiveness of nuclear weapons is much greater than that of any other weapon. Indeed, it is out of proportion with any conceivable political or military objective. Remember that when we talk about thermonuclear (hydrogen) bombs, there is virtually no physical limit to the amount of explosive energy which can be created. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The destructiveness of the bombs used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki was small in relation to that of the nuclear warheads which are available today. As the world had to witness in 1945, the immediate impact of a nuclear explosion is overwhelming. In addition, secondary effects like the dispersion of radioactive particles lead to significant long term damage far beyond the zone of immediate destruction. This explains why a nuclear war involving a series of nuclear explosions threatens the survival of humankind as a whole. Nuclear war is the number one existential threat humanity is facing today.

This point illustrates the important fact that the humanitarian approach

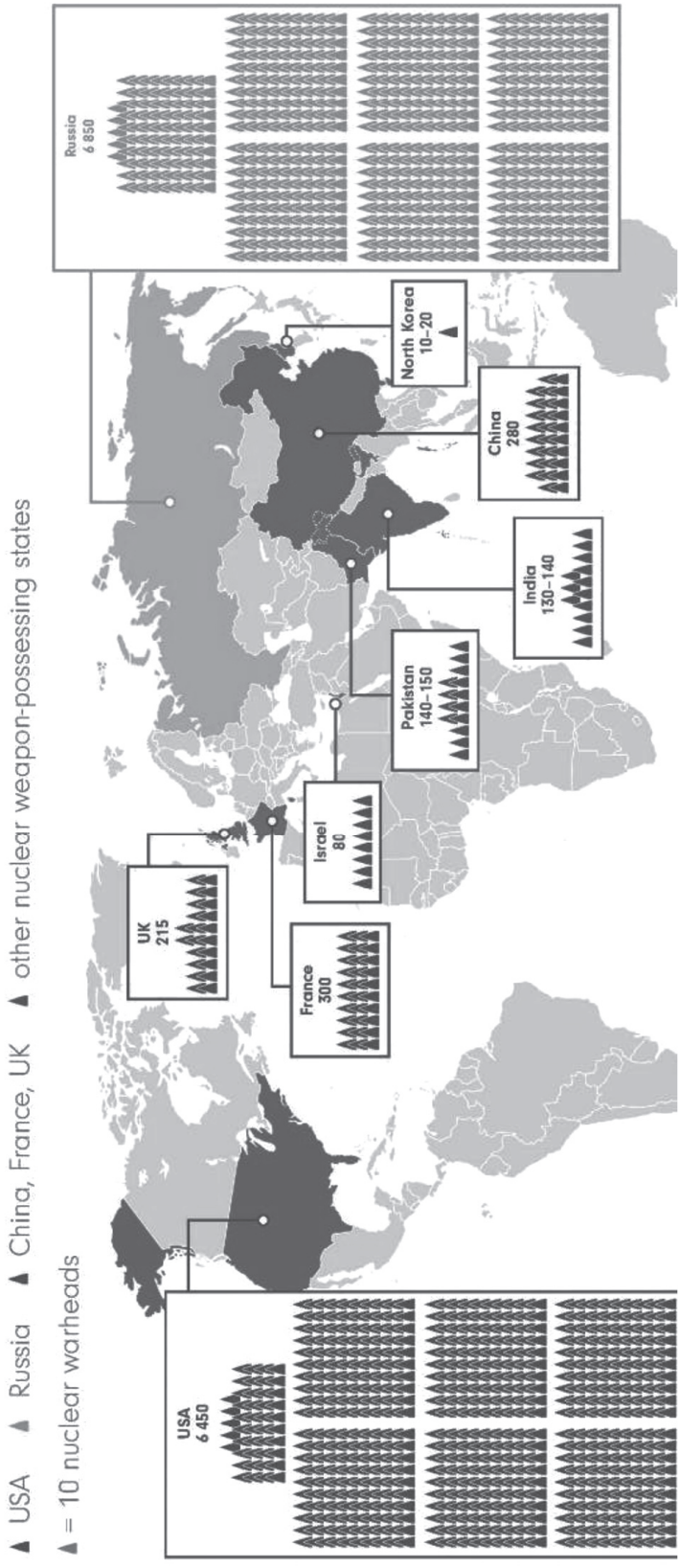
to nuclear disarmament is fundamentally about security. The security of a state is ultimately the security of its people. These two dimensions: human and state security, cannot be seen in isolation from each other. Should a state decide to use nuclear weapons against another state, some of the grave consequences will inevitably fall back on its own population, through nuclear retaliation, through wide area secondary effects like radioactive contamination, or in other ways. From this point of view, nuclear weapons are not a security asset, but rather a security liability. Notwithstanding the fact that some states continue to rely on nuclear weapons for their security: The world and we all would be much safer without them.

Slide 4 global stocks of nuclear weapons 2018

As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of nuclear war remains. This risk is represented by currently approximately 14.500 nuclear weapons globally, held by nine states. The picture shows which states hold how many nuclear weapons at the beginning of 2018. The Bulletin of American Scientists recently assessed that today, the danger of a nuclear confrontation is higher than it has been for decades.

As the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shows, in order to contain the risk of a use of nuclear weapons one urgent necessity is that we all must work much harder to prevent further states from acquiring nuclear weapons in the future. It is clear that risk increases with the number of actors. This is why non-proliferation is a top priority on the international agenda.

While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea still has to deliver substantive steps towards denuclearization, there is another recent case where important progress on the ground has already been achieved. I am referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) concluded with Iran in Vienna in 2015. The JCPOA is designed to make sure that the Iranian nuclear programme serves exclusively peaceful purposes. The agreement provides, in our view, a solution for a specific proliferation concern, as well as a model for dealing with other such situations. With regard to the regrettable decision of one of the partners to the JCPOA to withdraw, Austria fully supports the efforts of the remaining partners to continue its implementation. In particular, we call on Iran to continue to honour its commitments under the deal, as the country has been doing so far, according to the authoritative judgment of the IAEA. Upholding the JCPOA is crucial for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons in that region of the world, which is already now plagued by tension and conflict more than many other parts



Global stocks of nuclear weapons at the beginnng of 2018, source: SIPRI

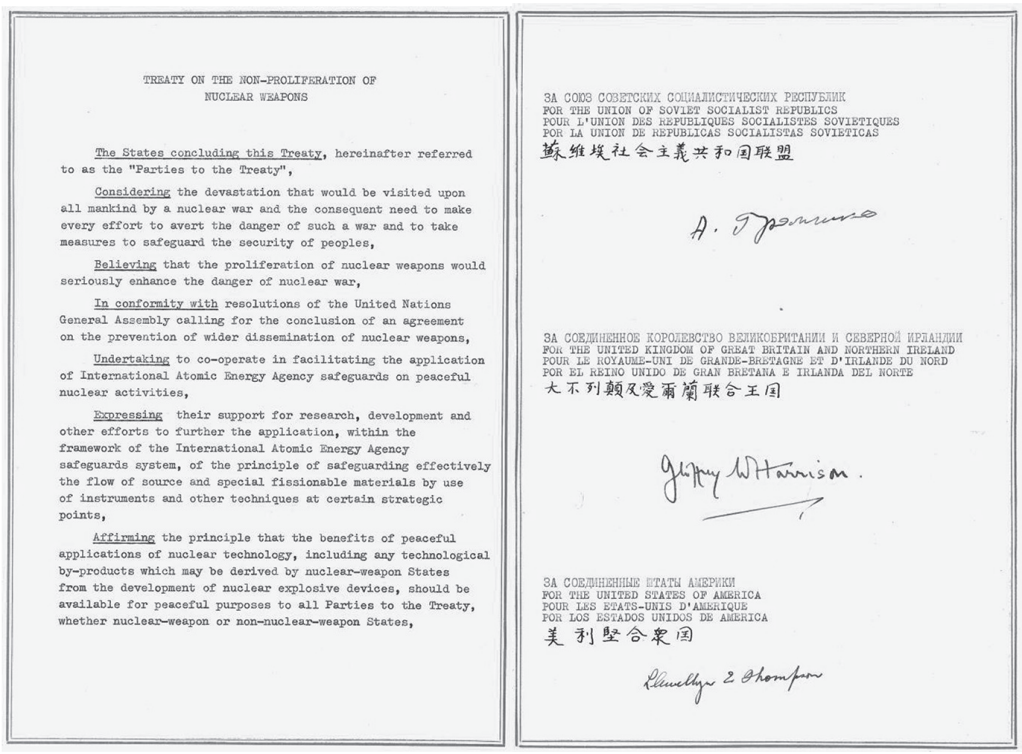
of the world.

All states currently possessing nuclear weapons certainly want to avoid using them. The awareness is high that any use would inevitably have grave consequences not only for the target, but also for the author of an attack. But this does unfortunately not exclude that nuclear weapons may be used nevertheless. A fatal miscalculation or an accident can never be ruled out. Let me illustrate. About a year ago, in Russia a man called Stanislav Petrov passed away. One night back in 1983, Petrov happened to be the duty officer at a military surveillance station in the vicinity of Moscow, when the radar suddenly reported that the US had launched a nuclear attack against the USSR. According to his instructions, Petrov should have immediately reported to his superiors, who would then most likely have ordered retaliation. Luckily, Petrov decided that the alarm was false, and did nothing. As it turned out later, the radar had indeed mistaken sunlight reflected by clouds as US missiles. Had Petrov acted according to the rules, we all would probably not be here today. There were other similar incidents in the past where nuclear war almost broke out although nobody wanted it. Who can guarantee that there will not be similar incidents in the future? Missiles travel very fast. When decision makers receive the first warning of an attack, reaction time is desperately short, so the risk to commit a fatal mistake is high.

Another risk is the possibility that non-state actors might acquire nuclear weapons, or access to them for instance by hacking into the electronic command and control systems. Today, despite significant non-proliferation achievements, both the nuclear material and the technical knowledge to build a bomb have become widely available. Unlike states, terrorists are likely to be unimpressed by possible retaliation, and therefore less restrained to actually use these weapons, should they get their hands on them.

So the overall conclusion remains: A considerable risk is inherent in the very existence of nuclear weapons. The only way to remove it is complete nuclear disarmament.

Slide 5 Non Proliferation Treaty



TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The States concluding this Treaty, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties to the Treaty",

Considering the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples,

Believing that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would seriously enhance the danger of nuclear war,

In conformity with resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly calling for the conclusion of an agreement on the prevention of wider dissemination of nuclear weapons,

Undertaking to co-operate in facilitating the application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on peaceful nuclear activities,

Expressing their support for research, development and other efforts to further the application, within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, of the principle of safeguarding effectively the flow of source and special fissionable materials by use of instruments and other techniques at certain strategic points,

Affirming the principle that the benefits of peaceful applications of nuclear technology, including any technological by-products which may be derived by nuclear-weapon States from the development of nuclear explosive devices, should be available for peaceful purposes to all Parties to the Treaty, whether nuclear-weapon or non-nuclear-weapon States,

ЗА СОЮЗ СОВЕТСКИХ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ РЕСПУБЛИК
FOR THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
POUR L'UNION DES REPUBLIQUES SOCIALISTES SOVIETIQUES
POR LA UNION DE REPUBLICAS SOCIALISTAS SOVIETICAS
蘇维埃社会主義共和国联盟

ЗА СОЕДИНЕННОЕ КОРОЛЕВСТВО ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ И СЕВЕРНОЙ ИРЛАНДИИ
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
POUR LE ROYAUME-UNI DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE ET D'IRLANDE DU NORD
POR EL REINO UNIDO DE GRAN BRETANA E IRLANDA DEL NORTE
大不列顛及愛爾蘭联合王国

ЗА СОЕДИНЕННЫЕ ШТАТЫ АМЕРИКИ
FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
POUR LES ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE
POR LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMERICA
美利堅合衆国

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, first page and page with the signatures of Foreign Minister Gromyko (USSR) and Ambassadors Harrison (UK) and Thompson (US)

This is of course not a new thought. The need for the elimination of nuclear weapons has long been acknowledged. In a way, these weapons were understood to pose an existential problem even before they were developed. In his novel "The world set free" published in 1914, Herbert G. Wells predicted the atomic age with remarkable political insight. The novel culminates in a catastrophic nuclear war. In the aftermath, world leaders agree that complete nuclear disarmament is the only way to ensure the survival of mankind. The question today is whether we will be wiser than the heroes of that novel and get rid of nuclear weapons before having to go through World War III.

This picture shows the first page of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT) adopted in 1968, as well as the page with the signatures of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, and Ambassadors Harrison of the UK and Thompson of the United States. Importantly, the treaty which is currently adhered to by almost all states, among them five of the nine states possessing nuclear weap-

ons (US, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China), establishes the objective of a nuclear weapon free world in international law, and contains an obligation for nuclear disarmament in its article VI.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is often described as a bargain. One group of states, the majority of the so-called Non-Nuclear Weapon States, renounces nuclear weapons. The other group, the minority of the so-called Nuclear Weapon States, commits to disarmament of their national arsenals. While this notion of a bargain is true in a sense, it may suggest a false dichotomy. Austria, for instance, as a Non-Nuclear Weapon State has never felt that she has sacrificed anything valuable for herself by renouncing nuclear weapons. On the contrary, it is in our own national security interest not to possess them, even in a situation where a number of other states do. Total elimination as the goal is not contested; differences of view persist about how to get there. The issue is to preserve stability during the difficult transition period from the status quo to global zero, and to adapt the international security system to the circumstance that nuclear weapons no longer exist.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty reflects the important consideration that disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are inseparable from each other. In order for states possessing nuclear weapons to disarm it is important that they can be confident that proliferation to additional states does not take place. On the other hand, states currently not possessing nuclear weapons will feel less tempted to acquire them, if the Nuclear Weapon States finally stop justifying their possession with security considerations, and instead start engaging in serious disarmament measures.

This is not to say that in the fifty years since the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, some important progress on nuclear disarmament has not been achieved.

Indeed, since the culmination of the Cold War, the global stocks of nuclear weapons have been reduced from around 70.000 to approximately 14.500, or by roughly 80 percent. These days, two important US-Russian bilateral agreements are particularly often mentioned. One is the so-called new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) which led to a further reduction of the strategic delivery systems of both sides. The other is the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty which had led to the elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons. We hope very much that the important progress achieved by these and other past disarmament agreements can be maintained and expanded. However there is currently reason for doubt on

this count. It is unclear whether the two contracting parties will prolong the new START treaty after its expiry in 2021, or agree on a successor agreement. There have been issues regarding compliance with the INF Treaty, and recently the announcement of one party to withdraw from the treaty. And beyond the US and Russia, there are of course other Nuclear Weapon States which keep building up their arsenals.

So past disarmament achievements notwithstanding, large numbers of nuclear weapons still exist today. They continue to be central to the strategic planning of all states possessing them. While overall stocks are significantly smaller than they were at the peak of the Cold War, there are still more than enough nuclear weapons available to wipe out humanity several times over.

Also, we currently observe a slowdown of numerical reductions, along with expensive modernisation programmes being pursued by the Nuclear Weapon States. This trend is worrying as the qualitative build-up of nuclear capacities further exacerbates mistrust between the nuclear powers and puts an additional burden on their relations with each other. Nuclear modernisation is also of concern as an indication that at least in the view of the Nuclear Armed States, these weapons are here to stay. The current trend towards smaller, more usable nuclear weapons undermines the nuclear taboo not to use nuclear weapons in war, which has held since 1945.

This development is driven by the idea that nuclear war can be somehow contained and "won". This is certainly a highly risky assumption, and in our view even a dangerous illusion.

In contrast to these developments, both the grave risks attached to nuclear weapons, and the aspirations and legal obligations enshrined in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty call for much more determined efforts for nuclear disarmament, than are presently being undertaken.

Slide 6 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons result of vote

This is the firm view of Austria but also of a large majority of the world's states. 122 states have voted in favour of the adoption of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. (TPNW). The picture is a screenshot from the vote which was conducted in conclusion of the negotiations in New York on July 7, 2017.

The substantive core of the new treaty is a comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons. Indeed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weap-

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
result of the vote on the negotiated text, New York, July 7, 2017

ons has closed a legal gap by placing them in the same category as other weapons of mass destruction, which have been outlawed for the same fundamental reason. Like chemical and biological weapons, nuclear weapons constitute an unacceptable means of warfare. Importantly, the International Court of Justice found already in 1996 that any use of nuclear weapons would generally violate International Humanitarian Law, providing a solid legal point of departure for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In particular, rules of International Humanitarian Law such as the necessity to spare civilians and civilian objects from the impact of an armed attack, to observe a proportionality between such impact and the military objective being pursued, or to avoid excessive or superfluous suffering, would certainly be violated by any nuclear weapon use, due to the exorbitant destructiveness of these weapons.

Slide 7 Foreign Minister Kurz signs the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz signs the TPNW, New York, September 20, 2017

This picture shows Austria's then foreign minister and current head of government Sebastian Kurz signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in New York on September 20, 2017. The new treaty will enter

into force once 50 states have ratified it. Austria has ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on May 8 this year. Currently we have 69 signatures and 19 ratifications. In view of the fact that the new treaty has been open for signature only for little more than a year now, this is a remarkable pace. As a matter of fact, signatures and ratifications of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons are accumulating faster, than has been the case for other multilateral disarmament treaties.

The broad overall support for the new treaty sends a powerful message where the majority of the world's states stand on the question of nuclear disarmament. This message is essential to create momentum for further nuclear disarmament in a situation where the Nuclear Weapon States unfortunately seem to be moving in the opposite direction.

Slide 8 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to ICAN

Award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Oslo, December 10, 2017,
from left to right: Berit Reiss-Andersen, Chair of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee; Setsuko Thurlow, Hibakusha and Peace Activist; Beatrice Fihn, Director of ICAN International

The significance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has also been acknowledged by the decision of the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize Committee to award the prize in 2017 to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the civil society movement which had been a crucial partner in bringing the treaty into existence. The picture shows Setsuko Thurlow, a victim of the atom bombing and peace activist,

with Beatrice Fihn, director of ICAN international, and with the chair of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee Berit Reiss-Andersen on the occasion of the presentation of the award in Oslo on December 10, 2017.

With regard to the new treaty, some countries have voiced reservations. Japan is among them. I am not here to lecture other countries, but I would like to use this opportunity to comment briefly on some of the reasons why some states might still be sceptical about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons today.

First of all, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is clear in its rejection of nuclear deterrence. This is not surprising because in a world free from nuclear weapons, which is the overarching objective of the treaty, there can be logically no place for nuclear deterrence. So we may say that a state's attitude towards nuclear deterrence determines to a large degree how this state stands towards the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Let me therefore insert at this juncture a few comments on deterrence.

Slide 9 Pope Francis

Pope Francis (centre) with attendants of the conference „Prospects for a World free from Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament", Vatican, November 10 and 11, 2017

This picture shows Pope Francis together with attendants of the "Conference on the Prospects of a World Free from Nuclear Weapons and on Inte-

gral Development", which was held in the Vatican on November 10 and 11, 2017. On the occasion of the meeting, the Pope assessed nuclear deterrence from the point of view of the Catholic Church. His words may be taken as a reflection of a near universal human sentiment that there is something fundamentally flawed about nuclear deterrence. He said: "International relations cannot be held captive to military force, mutual intimidation, and the parading of stockpiles of arms. Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethics of solidarity".

The sentiment expressed can be substantiated with a number of more specific arguments. One argument looks critically at the view that the absence of military conflict between the US and the USSR during the Cold War is a beneficial result of, and justification for, nuclear deterrence. The objection here is that it seems difficult to think of a positive reason either adversary may have had to attack the other in the first place. Apart of course from the desire to eliminate the nuclear threat represented by the rival. So during the Cold War, nuclear weapons could be seen to have been, in a circular fashion, not only the solution, but also the problem which they were supposed to solve. That is what US president Ronald Reagan meant when he once wondered: "If the only reason for nuclear weapons is to prevent other nuclear weapons from being used, would it not be better if there were no nuclear weapons at all?" The case illustrates the difficulty to prove that nuclear deterrence has actually worked in the sense that it has prevented war. The answer to this open question depends on how one interprets the historical record which is ambiguous on that count.

On the debit side of the balance sheet, there are characteristics and effects of nuclear deterrence which are clearly negative. First of all, there is no conceivable moral justification for killing hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people with a single push of a button. If warfare is to be subject to any ethical standards at all, then not to use nuclear weapons certainly tops the list.

Politicians often feel uneasy about moral arguments. But below the ethical level, additional problems with nuclear deterrence exist. The strategy breeds intense mistrust and hostility between the nuclear armed states. It is thus the major obstacle for the development of friendly and cooperative relations among themselves. Also, nuclear deterrence is inherently instable, despite of it being often referred to as "strategic stability". Instead of accepting to be under the threat of nuclear annihilation, which a relationship

of durable nuclear deterrence would require, states understandably attempt to remove this sword of Damocles hovering over them. For instance by developing missile defence, which in turn prompts the adversary to develop even more powerful missiles to be able to overcome that defence. The result is a vicious circle known as arms race.

Then there is the economic cost of nuclear deterrence. Article 26 of the UN charter recognizes the need to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion of the world's economic and human resources to arms. Holding nuclear arsenals is very expensive. Phasing out nuclear deterrence would free up vast resources for achieving the sustainable development goals agreed at the UN level to which we are all committed. Given that the root of conflict is often a lack of socioeconomic development, spending money on such development would yield a better return on investment also in terms of international peace and security, than investing it in nuclear weapons.

My final remark on the issue of deterrence is that there is of course always the risk that the strategy fails. The downsides of the strategy which I mentioned would not be important if nuclear deterrence provided an absolute guarantee against nuclear war. But it does not. On the contrary. I mentioned the case of Stanislav Petrov earlier. Paradoxically, in that case exactly the application of the logic of deterrence would have resulted in nuclear war. It was by denying this logic, not by accepting it, that Petrov prevented the catastrophe.

To sum up, Austria believes that the risk inherent in nuclear deterrence is unacceptable in view of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences any use of nuclear weapons would bring. The availability of alternatives is demonstrated by the fact that the large majority of the world's states do not possess nuclear weapons, and apparently do not miss them. Of course, for those states which so far have been relying on nuclear deterrence, to reject nuclear weapons requires a major shift in their security thinking. So while such a change is of course possible in the future, we remain realistic that it will take time to emerge.

Returning now to the discussion about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, this latter argument takes care, to a degree, of the view that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is irrelevant because no state possessing nuclear weapons has indicated so far an intention to accede to it. I agree with the expectation that for this reason, in the short term the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will not as such eliminate nuclear weapons. But the current lively international debate about the

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is proof that the new treaty is not irrelevant at all. Rather it is already doing something very important: it is changing significantly how the world thinks and talks about nuclear weapons. If and when a Nuclear Weapon State will come to the conclusion in the future that it does not need nuclear weapons for its security any more, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will be in place to provide a multilaterally agreed pathway how to disarm.

It is important to point out that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is fully in line with the existing international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at its core. Indeed, the negotiators of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons were very careful to make sure that the new treaty would complement and strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, much in the same way as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty does.

There is also the view that time is not ripe for a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons. That a prohibition should come towards the end and not at the beginning of a comprehensive nuclear disarmament process. Experience has shown, however, that successful disarmament processes have regularly started with prohibitions. Cases in point are the biological and chemical weapons conventions, as well as the conventions against antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions. In all these cases, prohibition treaties were brought into force first, and then the disarmament process was conducted. There is no a priori reason why this successful approach should not be applicable to nuclear weapons as well. Inversely, there is no historical example of any category of weapons being eliminated without the stimulus of a legal prohibition being in place to start with.

Where do we go from here? The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is on its way to entry into force, establishing itself as an important component of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is not the end and not the ultimate solution to the complicated problem of nuclear disarmament. It does not require a State Party unrealistically to disarm completely immediately. Rather, we see the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a first and necessary step of a process of achieving and maintaining a world free from nuclear weapons, which will have to be accompanied and followed by many other steps. In this way, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is fully in line with the philosophy underlying the so-called step by step approach for nuclear disarmament enshrined in the final

documents of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conferences of 2000 and 2010. But the lack of progress in implementing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations and commitments regarding disarmament has discredited the so-called step by step approach as traditionally understood. By putting the legal prohibition upfront, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represents a chance to reset the whole process and make it work.

Another track on which Austria will remain strongly engaged is the review process of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Over the last fifty years, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has made essential contributions to international peace and security. Nevertheless, the treaty is under strong pressure today. One of the reasons for this is of course the lack of implementation of Article VI containing an obligation for nuclear disarmament. We wish to contribute to making sure that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will continue to be the firm core of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime in the future.

Slide 10 United Nations Secretary General Guterres in Nagasaki

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres visits the Atomic Bomb Museum in Nagasaki, August 8, 2018

My last picture shows United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres during his recent visit to Nagasaki. In his disarmament agenda

"Securing Our Common Future" released earlier this year, the United Nations Secretary General has reaffirmed that "the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations", and that he "remains fully committed" to this objective and "calls on Member States to revitalize their pursuit of this goal without delay."

More than seventy years have passed since the catastrophe of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear weapons still exist. But they have not become an accepted means of warfare, and they have spread only to a handful of countries. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the latest proof that the overwhelming majority of states reject nuclear weapons and are not prepared to go along with the status quo. The fact that after 1945 nuclear weapons have not been used is due to the fact that these weapons are cruel and inhumane in the extreme, but also to the recognition that their use would not serve any conceivable political or military purpose. Unfortunately, however, the course of human history has not always been guided by reason and good sense. So the fundamental irrationality of nuclear weapons does not necessarily mean that they will never be used again. On the contrary, the rules of probability suggest that the longer these weapons continue to exist, the greater becomes the risk that they someday will. This is why it is urgent today to draw the conclusions of the atomic age, and to join forces to get finally rid of nuclear weapons once and for all. We owe this to the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as to our children and grandchildren. Austria will continue to contribute to the best of her abilities to this important cause.