

Hiroshima Mon Amour, 2022: A Road Map to Nuclear Disarmament

The nuclear arms race is now at great risk of becoming permanent, especially if the nuclear weapons states continue their nuclear modernization plans. Take the United States as an example. Its \$1.7trillion nuclear weapons modernization program will continue into the 2040s, complete with plans for small-scale nuclear weapons designed for battlefield use. The Pentagon is also planning a new generation of missiles, designed to be useable over the next seventy years. Meanwhile, direct living memory of what it's like to go through nuclear war is fading. The survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have grown old, and will soon pass away. As that happens, the likelihood of nuclear war will increase.

How may we avoid getting lost in the trap? Here's a road map, offered in the hope that others will draw better ones. Any real progress will require the participation of both the nuclear weapons states and the nations which have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, whose signatories have increased with time and is now international law. As the most important nuclear weapons states, the US and Russia must lead. The journey will be hard and long, which is all the more reason to start now.

The necessary foundation is arms control. A good place to begin would be by promoting the TPNW and continuing the START Treaty as vigorously as we can. While it's not in the cards for the nuclear weapons states to ratify the TPNW, at least for now, it might be possible for some of their officials to endorse it in principle, as several members of the US House of Representatives have done already. That at least would start building confidence.

The next step would be to revive and update the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Open Skies Agreement, the Outer Space Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and as opportunity arises, the Iran Nuclear Agreement. That would provide a framework for further progress, reduce tensions, and increase confidence.

With those commitments made, the next steps would be a nuclear freeze, along with rejection of first use and launch on warning, as the Union of Concerned Scientists' Back from the Brink program proposes.

A program of arms reduction would then build on the foundation of arms control. Once again, the Americans and Russians must lead, since they possess the vast majority of the world's nuclear weapons. In this case, they would shrink their arsenals close to the size of those which the second-tier nuclear powers-China, the UK, and France-have so that all five nations would control the process and hopefully motivate the remaining nuclear powers to join in. Meanwhile, the states-parties to the TPNW should recruit more nations to their ranks, thereby strengthening world opinion in favor of disarmament.

Then there's the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been honored more by evasion than observance. Disarmament itself will require strict observance of obligations in the NPT, which

requires serious negotiations towards actual disarmament. As a precondition for trust, an agreed-upon program of inspection under the Authority of the International Atomic Energy or its equivalent would be needed.

Right now, humanity lives on the edge between fear of attack and hope of disarmament, but even part success in the proposal just described would mean a brighter world and better odds of success against the challenges of economic injustice and climate change.

It's time to cast aside the dead weight of the nuclear arms race and throw the fear of wholesale annihilation off our backs. Anything less will only cheat our children and their descendants. They deserve better.