

# COUNCIL OF COUNCILS

An Initiative of the Council on Foreign Relations



Policy Prescriptions for Discussion

## *The Future of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime*

Council of Councils Sixth Virtual Conference

September 6, 2022

Please find a list of proposed policy prescriptions for discussion. They are loosely categorized and ranked in no particular order.

### **The United States and Russia**

1. Washington and Moscow should resume strategic dialogues and work to resolve the differences blocking the resumption of New START inspections and begin negotiations, without conditions, on new arms control arrangements to replace New START.
2. Washington and Moscow should ensure that while New START inspections are temporarily suspended, other confidence-building measures and notification exchanges should continue to be preserved.
3. Washington and Moscow should aim to make progress on binding executive agreements, similar to the first U.S.-Soviet arms control deals, instead of formal treaties that require approval by the U.S. Senate and Russian Duma.

### **Risk Reduction**

4. All countries, but particularly nuclear weapons states, should identify and support risk reduction measures that enhance stability, contribute to crisis management, ease tension, and avoid miscalculation. These include tools such as National Risk Reduction Centers, the Hague Code of Conduct, Prevention of Incidents On and Over the Waters Outside the Limits of the Territorial Sea agreements, and other confidence- and security-building measures.
5. The United States, China, and Russia should establish trilateral strategic stability talks.
6. The United States, China, France, India, Pakistan, Russia, and United Kingdom should establish strategic stability talks. Discussions could start on reaffirming and extending the norms of the non-battlefield use of nuclear weapons, non-testing of nuclear weapons, and nonproliferation and work toward finding common ground on an approach that could involve reducing the size of their arsenals as they modernize.
7. Nuclear weapons states should work together to distinguish between “irresponsible” offensive nuclear threats and “responsible” nuclear threats for “defensive” purposes of their own nations.

8. Nuclear weapons states should update their 1995 negative security assurances and jointly or individually affirm that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear weapons states that are party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).
9. Nuclear weapon states should adopt no use, no first use, or sole purpose doctrines.
10. Nuclear weapons states should unilaterally pledge not to increase the size of their arsenals.

### **Multilateral Discussions**

11. The United States, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.
12. A supermajority of NPT states should seek to advance the NPT's objectives through a joint declaration at future NPT Review Conferences, given the growing difficulty of finding consensus on a final document.
13. Multilateral nuclear arms controls should focus more on stabilization—qualitative aspects of the competition and the way nuclear weapons are deployed—not just the number of weapons.
14. Nuclear weapons states should expressly and publicly recognize the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons' (TPNW) contributions to the NPT regime. This could take the form of a joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear weapons states.
15. TPNW member states and global civil society networks should not lose their momentum and continue to advocate for global nuclear disarmament.

### **United Nations**

16. The UN secretary-general should convene the nuclear weapons states, without any preconditions, to lay the foundation for future sustained dialogues on the criticality of arms control.
17. UN General Assembly members should consider proposing a “uniting for peace” resolution in response to the immediate threat of nuclear use. It could recall the assembly's declaration of November 1961 that said that “any state using nuclear...weapons is to be considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and as committing a crime against mankind and civilization;” declare that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is contrary to international law and mandate negotiations on legally binding security guarantees against unprovoked attacks from states possessing nuclear weapons; or mandate that any state that initiates a nuclear attack shall be stripped of its voting privileges at the United Nations and recommend collective measures to restore the peace under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

### **New Technology**

18. Nuclear weapons states should seek an agreement on transparency measures or verifiable limits, or both, on hypersonic cruise missiles and glide vehicles that are mounted on ballistic missiles.
19. The next NPT Review Conference should address new developments in space and cyber technologies, missile defenses, the development of hypersonic delivery systems, and conventional prompt global strike capabilities, which are generating new complexities and blurring the dividing line between nuclear and conventional use on a battlefield.
20. All states should refrain from developing and deploying nuclear-armed cruise and hypersonic missiles, as well as other new types of nuclear warheads and nuclear delivery systems, and refrain from cyber offensive infiltrations against each other's nuclear weapons command and control and

communications systems.

### **The United States and Iran**

21. The United States and Iran should restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and all NPT member states should work toward universalizing some provisions of the deal.

### **North Korea**

22. NPT member states should reaffirm that the denuclearization of North Korea is a priority. If dialogue with North Korea resumes, member states could propose initial caps on parts of North Korea's programs of concern—including its nuclear and missile programs—before a long-term move toward reductions and, eventually, elimination.

### **Other**

23. The West should work with like-minded allies and friends around the world to push back against revisionism and aggression, and restore deterrence against nuclear threats. This will involve, in some cases, controlled military build-ups to fill vacuums that currently exist.
24. States should consider for a future in which a country that endeavors to obtain nuclear weapons is prevented from doing so by force.