



The First Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): what was its impact upon negotiations for Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty?

Keiko Nakamura (Associate Professor, RECNA)

The First Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was convened in Vienna, Austria, from May 2 to May 12, 2017. H.E. Henk Cor Van der Kwast, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Disarmament Ambassador at large, acted as Chair-designate at the meeting, which drew participants from 111 nations. On the final day, the Chair-designate took on the responsibility of presenting the 136-point factual summary, after which the meeting was concluded.

Through the two weeks of meetings, although all the speakers from participant nations were in accord with regard to the importance of the NPT system, once again we clearly saw the all-too-familiar specter of the age-old conflict structure bubbling up to the surface, the structure consisting of dissatisfaction with the plodding progress of nuclear disarmament on the part of the non-nuclear states, and the unpredictable future of the Middle East problem, which was a factor leading to the fissures in the previous Review Conference. In the midst of this situation, the cause of the disparity in the perceptions between nations that stood out most concerned the relationship between the NPT and a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty. Negotiations about a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty started in New York this March.

The various nations had starkly contrasting interpretations according to their various positions about the discussions surrounding the problem of the legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons, and what sort of impact this nascent treaty would have upon the NPT. The nations supporting the treaty consider it to dovetail perfectly with the NPT, and argued that it would tie-in with the execution of Article 6 of the NPT, in which the obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament is stipulated. On the other hand, the nuclear states and the nations reliant on nuclear deterrence contended that a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty that does not follow an approach based on consensus would lead to fragmentation among its signatories, weaken the NPT itself, and therefore make the realization of nuclear disarmament an even more remote prospect.

During the discussions at the recent Preparatory Committee too, the nuclear states and nations reliant on nuclear deterrence complained about this perceived ill-



Venue: United Nations Office at Vienna

Photo by RECNA

effect in the most acrimonious manner, with the U.S. Ambassador Robert Wood commenting acidly on May 4 that the moves towards enacting a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty were “unhelpful, unproductive, and a temporary delusion.” However, there has still yet to be any concrete explanation of in exactly what way any nuclear-weapons-ban treaty would actually weaken the NPT, neither were any new suggestions made about pushing ahead with nuclear disarmament. The meeting ended with mere reiterations of the efficacy of “step-by-step” and “progressive approaches.”

A similar sense of inadequacy lingered on after the Japanese government’s proposals. No doubt what was hoped of the Japanese government – which has turned its back on the nuclear-weapons-ban treaty concept and exposed itself to much criticism from the places that fell victim to nuclear weapons and further afield – was that it would at least play the role of a conduit between the nuclear and the non-nuclear nations. However, the proposal of the one and only Japanese Cabinet-level member attending the Preparatory Committee, Fumio Kishida, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was that a so-called “eminent persons group (EPG)” consisting of knowledgeable people should be established. This paltry suggestion can be interpreted only as a case of putting the problem “on ice” again for the time being. Precedents for such EPGs in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation do exist, such as the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) set up as a joint-initiative between the Japanese and Australian governments in the year 2008, and while the results of this initiative have

had a degree of influence on the actual policies of the two nations, the bulk of its recommendations have not been adopted. Obviously, the Commission is easily swayed by whoever are chosen as members. Nonetheless, if this proposed EPG proves to be a body that performs the role of putting forward a specific process for gaining the involvement of the nuclear nations and a treaty to prohibit the nuclear umbrella then it will indeed be welcomed.

The next meeting of the Preparatory Committee will be held in Geneva from April 23 to May 4, 2018, and there

is a high probability that it will be the first to be held since the formal establishment of a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty. The nations that have failed to sign and ratify the treaty will be under increasing pressure to explain the reasons; there will also be demands placed upon the pro-treaty nations for new tactics and persuasive speech as the execution of the obligation for nuclear disarmament looms closer with a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty as the source of leverage. It is hoped that a fresh breeze will blow away the musty air of the business-as-usual discussions that we have become used to.

"Research Group for Nagasaki Atomic Bombing and Post-War History" was founded.

Taeko Kiriya (Visiting Researcher, RECNA)

In FY2017 RECNA launched a research group on the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and post-war history.

I have thus far been involved in the reappraisal of the "recovery" of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the perspective of the hibakusha. This is a theme that I first encountered as a graduate student studying in Hiroshima, stemming from the shock I felt when I heard from various hibakusha who I had become acquainted with about their uneasiness at the concept that the two cities had "recovered." When I lived in Hiroshima I initially felt a sense of admiration about the "miraculous recovery" of the city. However, I came to realize that the recovery as perceived by the hibakusha was something quite different to what I could see. As a researcher living in the same day and age as the hibakusha I started to examine afresh the concept of recovery from their point of view, and pursued my research with a sense that something significant still remained.

In addition to the experience of the atomic bombing itself, there is with regard to post-war history too a huge, deep and unbridgeable gap between the people who actually experienced the bombing and those who did not. However, this vast gap is something that is hard to perceive for the people who did not experience the bombings.

In the year 2065, in a world in which 120 years have elapsed after the atomic bombings and none of the hibakusha is left alive, how will we be talking about the experience of the atomic bombings, how will we be communicating the history of the years after the bombings? Looked at in this way, there is an array of issues that we have to deal with right now. Surely there must be some way that the numerous records and research of the past 72 years can be regarded as a part of mankind's intellectual heritage, born in the bombing sites, and examined by the hibakusha and citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through mutual discussion. It is this awareness of issues that lies in the starting point of the research group, and the origins of the activities are the voices of those who were exposed to nuclear weapons, not the arguments of those who dropped them.

The research group will act as a practical forum where researchers and citizen activists involved in the Nagasaki issue, as well as various experts will be invited, reports listened to, and open debate held among the participants. Through this work, the group aims to clarify what issues from the atomic bombings and post-war history should be conveyed to future generations who have not experienced the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, and what the significance of these issues are.

At the first meeting of the research group, held on June 2, 2017, Shinji Takahashi, formerly a professor at Nagasaki University and a specialist who has spent nearly half a century pursuing the theme of "Philosophizing in Nagasaki" was invited to participate. Professor Takahashi was given the opportunity to deliver his report on the issues of the "life and death" of hibakusha, the responsibility of Japan before the war and for subsequent peace, and the "nuclear violence" following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Around 25 people including researchers, journalists and experts participated in the group, and there was a lively debate between Professor Takahashi and the participants. In particular, there was an extensive discussion about evaluations of the Christian Takashi Nagai's interpretation of the atomic bombing that suggested Urakami [in the center of the bombing site] was a "sacrificial lamb" and its link to the concept that "Hiroshima rages, Nagasaki prays" as well as the "two-tier structure" of Nagasaki. In addition, the "Mitsubishi problem" in Nagasaki was raised, and identified as a theme that will be addressed in future meetings of the research group.

The term of the research group's activities will run for two years, FY2017 and FY2018, and it is planned that it will be convened twice a year. The next meeting has been slated for December 2017.

Activities of the Nagasaki Youth Delegation in Vienna

Nine members of the Fifth Nagasaki Youth Delegation participated in the First Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna from May 2 to May 12 this year. While in Vienna the Delegation listened to the proceedings of the Review Conference, held an autonomous workshop at the UN headquarters in Vienna in collaboration with university students from South Korea, a visiting lecture to the Japanese School in Vienna (Japanische Schule in Wien), visited international institutions located in the city, and exchanged opinions with diplomats gathered at the Review Conference, NGO stakeholders and other young people. The delegation spent each day energetically on their various activities. Please take a look at the following blog for more details of the activities: conducted.



Blog URL:

<http://www.recna.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/recna/youth-blog-2017>

Reaffirming the importance of education

Hanako Mitsuoka (4th year student, Faculty of Education, Nagasaki University)

On May 5 we held a visiting lecture at the Japanese School In Vienna. The audiences for the lectures were split into two groups: 19 1st to 3rd grade elementary school children and 21 children from the 4th grade of elementary school to the third grade of junior high school. I delivered the lecture to the younger group. I tried to get across to the children the message that nuclear weapons are not some old story from the past but something that is still relevant to all us today, in the hope that they would feel something.

They all listened studiously while I spoke, and made me feel that I had to put every ounce of my energy into interacting with them when I saw the way these pure-hearted children looked at me. It reaffirmed within me a sense of mission, a sense that wishing for a better future is certainly not just for we adults, but out of consideration for all of the children sitting before me.

I was reminded again of the importance of education; because it is education that will be a paramount factor in whether or not these children will be able to go on to build a peaceful world.

Having gone through this experience I now think that I would like to found an organization that will carry out this work for more and more children, and provide this education for a wider sphere of people. I have been stimulated by meeting many people who still firmly believe that some time a world free of nuclear weapons will arrive, have kept up their hopes and continued to act accordingly. I hope that in the near future I too will be able to become a person who can have an influence other people.

Feeling a world movement at first hand

Tamaki Sakai (2nd year student, Department of Comparative Culture, Faculty of Humanities, Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University)

Having spent some time in Vienna, listened to the pro-

ceedings of the Review Conference and taken part in various side events what I feel is that I have grown as a person through “encounters” with many different people. How many people did I meet at the United Nations headquarters in Vienna? In addition to actually listening to the proceedings of the Review Conference and gaining an immediate feeling for the opinions of the various countries, during our two weeks or so in Vienna I met a vast number of people including government officials, the personnel of international organizations and NGOs, as well as university students of the same age and high school students. This has enabled me to widen my own international perspective and grow even more as a person.

Of all the events I attended, the one that remains most clearly etched upon my memory was the short briefing of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Thanks to the help of numerous people on this visit I was able to see and experience things that it would normally be impossible to be a part of.

We had learned about the IAEA before visiting Vienna, but now I was finally able to see and experience demonstrations featuring the equipment actually used by the IAEA, and I was able to see in a new light the importance of the role played by this international organization.

This was also because during the Review Conference so many nations voiced the opinion that the actions of international organizations including the IAEA are also imperative. And this is why I felt, through our actual experiencing of this sort of work and sometimes asking searching questions, a renewed sense that this job is a vital step in progressing towards non-nuclear proliferation.

We, the members of the fifth delegation, learned and experienced much by meeting such an array of people, and have become able to think for ourselves, with a refreshed sense, about the contemporary nuclear situation. And it is for this reason that I believe the members of the Fifth Nagasaki Youth Delegation will continue its activities enthusiastically and that all its members will seek to further improve themselves as people.

Dispatches from Nagasaki No.20

Global High-level Movement Conference on Nuclear Weapons in Nagasaki

Fumihiko Yoshida (Vice Director, RECNA)

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement co-hosted the Global High-level Movement Conference on Nuclear Weapons in Nagasaki, over a three-day period from April 24 to April 26, 2017. Co-hosted with the Japan Red Cross Society (JRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the event was participated in by the representatives of organizations from 35 nations, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez of Costa Rica (who is the new president of the United Nations Conference to negotiate a nuclear weapon ban), and other diplomats involved in the negotiations.

The Nagasaki conference adopted “the Nagasaki Declaration,” under the title of “Never again: Nagasaki must be the last atomic bombing.” The Nagasaki Action Plan was also formulated in order to back-up the efforts to realize a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty, and it is scheduled that the plan will be formally adopted at the next Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which will be held in Antalya, Turkey, in November this year.

The Nagasaki Declaration demanded the participation of all nations in the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which was scheduled to be held in New York in June and July this year, with the words: “All nations have a responsibility to their populations and to future generations to faithfully use this opportunity to shape the course of history.” Furthermore, it urged that: “We are standing at the brink of what will be the turning point in efforts to end the era of nuclear weapons. By negotiating and adopting a treaty that recognizes the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and contains a clear and unambiguous prohibition, States have the opportunity to ensure that Nagasaki is the last place in history to have suffered the effects of an atomic bombing.”

(http://www.jrc.or.jp/information/170426_004754.html (in Japanese))

The activities guidelines of the Action Plan aim to achieve the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons over the next four years. The rough draft prepared in Nagasaki included the following three goals: 1) the Red Cross societies in each nation will enter into dialog with their respective governments and seek to encourage their participation in the nuclear prohibition negotiations; 2) the Red Cross societies will play a role of encouraging momentum towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty, and 3) support will be provided to enhance the perception of young people concerning nuclear weapons, and activities concerning the abolition of nuclear weapons involving young people.

(<http://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASK4V52CDK4VTOLB00F.html> (in Japanese))

I myself also had an opportunity to give a lecture at the Conference. Ever since the 20th century The Red Cross has made huge achievements in contributing to the en-

actment of international humanitarian legislation. As a player in the movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons too, it has resolutely and boldly argued from a humanitarian stance. Bringing together the leaders of The Red Cross in Nagasaki, the Conference was a precious forum, and the following is what I had to say.

Firstly, I explained that all the hibakusha, the relics remaining on the bombing site and all the people who still live their daily lives there represent a global power that sends out an endless appeal for the end of nuclear weapons to the rest of the world. Secondly, because of this, a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty should be worded either in its main text or related documents in a manner that encourages political leaders and those drafting or making policies to visit the sites of the atomic bombings. Finally, I suggested that even if the Japanese government is yet to participate in the treaty at the signatory stage, the signing ceremony should be held in Nagasaki. The venue was full of personnel from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement who nodded in agreement as I spoke. And seated in the very back row was none other than Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez herself.

Students belonging to the Nagasaki Youth Delegation whose activities are supported by the PCU Nagasaki Council for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (PCU-NC), which was established by Nagasaki Prefecture, Nagasaki City and Nagasaki University, were also present at the venue to help answer questions from participants, listening to and dealing with queries addressed to them in a variety of English accents. I thought that they had taken on a tough job, but they drew a warm round of applause from all those assembled. Even after the end of the conference the students found themselves surrounded by senior figures from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

On the day after the conference had finished, totally out of coincidence many of the guests at the conference were lined up next to me on the aircraft bound for Tokyo. They told me what a valuable experience their visit to Nagasaki had been. At the press conference held on the last day of the conference, Kathleen Lawand, legal advisor to the International Committee of the Red Cross said: “The conference was held at the time of the historic turning point of a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty, with the attendance of the representatives of many nations. It was a truly significant event.” It was no surprise that she left Nagasaki with the comment that “This was a visit that will remain deeply etched on my memory.”

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