A Call to End Arms: The Jakarta Declaration on Nuclear Weapons

By Gareth Evans

In August, a group of influential former senior political, diplomatic, military and scientific leaders from across Asia came together at a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network. Its mission is to inform and energize public opinion, and especially high-level policymakers, to take seriously the very real threats posed by nuclear weapons and work towards their elimination.

The result of the meeting was a new call to action, the Jakarta Declaration on Nuclear Weapons. Here we reproduce the text, with an introduction by APLN convenor and former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

IF THERE IS ONE THING on which every global policymaker ought to be able to agree, it is that a nuclear war can never be won, and must never be fought. Nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminately inhumane ever devised, and any nuclear exchange — whether triggered accidentally or by design — would be catastrophic for life on this planet as we know it. In today’s world, the risks associated with the possession of these weapons — including access to them and to weapons-grade material by terrorists — far outweigh any deterrent utility they may have had in the past.

But more than 16,000 nuclear weapons remain in national stockpiles, and the United States and Russia — which together hold 95 percent of them — have, with relations now paralysed over Ukraine, stopped any co-operation over their reduction. In the Asia-Pacific region, the numbers of such weapons are growing, not diminishing, with India, Pakistan, China and North Korea all adding to their arsenals. And so long as any state retains nuclear weapons, claims of non-proliferation on security, others will want them: perceived double standards by the nuclear-armed states continue to make almost impossible buy-in by others on long-needed measures to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.

To shake policymakers out of their complacency on these issues is the core mission of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN), whose most recent attempt at a wake-up call is the Jakarta Declaration on Nuclear Weapons, published this month after a recent meeting in Indonesia, and set out below.

Formed in 2011, and now comprising more than 40 former senior political, diplomatic, military and scientific leaders from around the region — from South Asia to East Asia and Australasia — APLN’s objective is to inform and energize public opinion, and especially high-level policymakers, to take seriously the very real threats posed by nuclear weapons, and do everything possible to achieve a world in which they are contained, diminished and ultimately eliminated.

The APLN is modelled on a recently established European counterpart (the European Leadership Network, or ELN), convened by former UK Defence Minister Des Browne, which has already been active and visible in calling for urgent changes to NATO nuclear policy. A Latin American Leadership Network (LALN), based in Buenos Aires, has now been launched and efforts are being made, led by the US-based Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), to develop a fully co-ordinated worldwide network-of-networks.

APLN members contribute to the nuclear debate by making public statements from time to time, engaging in direct advocacy with regional governments as both public and private opportunities arise, commissioning research and hosting regional seminars and conferences as resources permit, and maintaining an active website (www.a-pln.org) through its Secretariat based at the Australian National University in Canberra (http://cnnd.anu.edu.au/).

The Jakarta Declaration on Nuclear Weapons recommends action on many fronts, across the whole spectrum of disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear security concerns, including, importantly, the development of a “Next Generation Network” — identifying and mentoring future opinion leaders on nuclear issues to ensure that the work of the “formers,” the present APLN members, is carried on.

The declaration urges, in particular, that three immediate confidence-building steps towards disarmament be taken — none of them easy, but all achievable in the short to medium term — by each of the nuclear-armed states in the region: the US, Russia, China, India and Pakistan, as well as the breakout state of North Korea.

• First, it urges all nuclear-armed states (and allies such as Japan, South Korea and Australia, who rely on their nuclear protection) to commit to “No First Use” of nuclear weapons, and calls for a Convention to be negotiated making that commitment universal and binding.
• Second, recognizing that Asia is the only region in the world where nuclear stockpiles are growing, it urges at least a freeze on present arsenals, and their transparent reduction over time to the lowest levels consistent with maintaining minimum effective retaliatory capability.
• Third, it urges all nuclear-armed states to take nuclear weapons off high operational alert, to avoid their forward deployment and to separate warheads from land and air-based delivery vehicles.

The reality is that nuclear weapons are not yesterday’s problem but today’s. The deteriorating security environment in a number of volatile regions makes it more critical than ever to recapture a sense of urgency about the scale and gravity of the risks posed by the world’s enormous remaining stocks of nuclear weapons and fissile material.

APLN leaders have shown the way in this very strong and sharply worded statement. We are not naïve about the difficulties involved in moving quickly to a nuclear-weapon-free world, but realistic steps can be taken immediately to significantly reduce nuclear risks. It’s time for leaders to listen, and act.

Gareth Evans is Convenor of the APLN, Chancellor of The Australian National University and was Australian Foreign Minister from 1988 to 1996. He co-chaired with Yoriko Kawaguchi (former Japanese Foreign Minister and also an APLN member) the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICCND), on the work of which APLN builds.
The Jakarta Declaration on Nuclear Weapons

September 2014
We the undersigned members of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN),

Acutely conscious that the world’s more than 16,000 remaining nuclear weapons are strongly concentrated in the Asia Pacific region, with the US and Russia having over 90 percent of the world’s stockpile and major strategic footprints here, China, India, and Pakistan all having significant arsenals, and the break out state of North Korea continuing to build its capability,

Noting with grave concern that the number of nuclear weapons in the Asia Pacific is growing, substantial modernization programs are occurring and reliance on nuclear weapons in national security policies is not diminishing,

Noting further that most of the projected world growth in civil nuclear energy — with all the proliferation, safety and security risks associated with such energy production unless it is closely and effectively regulated — will occur in the Asia Pacific,

Profoundly conscious of the grave risks posed to life on this planet as we know it by any use of nuclear weapons, the most indiscriminately inhumane ever invented, and the inevitability of their use deliberately, or by accident or miscalculation, so long as any exist,

Believing that the risks associated with the possession of nuclear weapons in today’s world far outweigh any deterrent utility they may have had in the past or continue to have,

Noting the importance of the growing international movement, at both government and civil society levels, to recognize and respond to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,

Recalling and reaffirming our strong continuing commitment to a world and Asia Pacific region free of nuclear weapons, as expressed in our Ho Chi Minh City Declaration on Disarmament of October 2013, and expressing our strong continuing support for national, regional and global efforts to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons and improve nuclear security and safety,

Reiterating our strong belief that a world free of nuclear weapons is achievable through a step-by-step process, and that such steps should not await efforts to improve regional and global security but be pursued in tandem with them,

Recognizing, nonetheless, that it will be difficult to make significant progress on nuclear issues without peace, stability and trust among the major state actors, and the critical need accordingly for high priority to be given to confidence-building measures including regular, sustained and serious high-level dialogue on strategic issues, bilaterally and through regional dialogue processes; increased military transparency; and the establishment of hotlines, codes of conduct and other arrangements for the management of disputes and crises,

Emphasizing that regional organizations and mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum and the Six Party Talks have a vital role to play in addressing both regional security generally and nuclear risks in particular,

Call upon policy-makers in the Asia Pacific region to re-energize the nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and security agendas, and to act accordingly as follows:

ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Nuclear Doctrine
1 As a first major step towards nuclear disarmament all states, including nuclear-armed states and allies and partners relying on their protection, should support changes to nuclear doctrine and posture which dramatically reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security policy, on the basis that this promotes confidence-building, strengthens the norm of non-use of nuclear weapons, reduces the risks of accidental and unauthorized use, and counteracts crisis instability.

2 All nuclear-armed states should, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, accept that their sole purpose is to deter nuclear war, embrace the principle of “No First Use” in their respective nuclear doctrines, and reinforce this by:
• taking nuclear weapons off high operational alert status,
• avoiding forward deployment of nuclear weapons, and
• separating warheads from land and air-based delivery vehicles and storing them physically apart in disassembled state.

3 All states should support the negotiation of a global Convention enshrining the principles of sole purpose and No First Use, as a step towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention ultimately completely banning the use and possession of nuclear weapons.

Other Steps
4 All states that have nuclear weapons should provide unconditional negative security assurances that they will not threaten to use, or use, such weapons against states that do not have them.

Russia and the US should continue to abide by and implement all existing bilateral and multilateral agreements and understandings, including the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and negotiate a follow-on agreement to New START to reduce dramatically the number of all nuclear weapons in their stockpiles.

Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, the acknowledged nuclear-armed states should commit not only to not increasing their nuclear weapon stockpiles, but to reducing them to the lowest levels consistent with maintaining minimum effective retaliatory capability, and provide sufficient transparent information to give the international community confidence in these commitments.

To help to create the conditions for reducing nuclear weapons numbers, those states pursuing advanced conventional capabilities, including missile defense and long-range precision strike, should make special efforts not to let these capabilities impede progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

ON NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

5 NPT States Parties should work energetically and constructively at the 2015 NPT Review Conference to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation as well as disarmament regime, including by universal adoption of the IAEA Additional Protocol.
Welcoming the signatures of all nuclear-weapon states of the protocol to the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, all such states should also accede to the protocols of the other relevant regional nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ) and, where outstanding issues prevent this, work with NWFZ parties to find solutions.

Recognizing that North Korea’s nuclear program poses a serious threat to regional and global non-proliferation efforts and to the peace and stability of this region, all countries concerned should explore all ways and means to advance the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including North Korea abandoning all its nuclear weapons and programs as stipulated by the Joint Statement of September 2005.

The P5 plus Germany and Iran should continue to engage positively on resolving the concerns about the possible weapons dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program and Iran should maintain its co-operation with the IAEA on resolving present and past issues.

Welcoming the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by our host state Indonesia, other states whose signature and/or ratification is necessary to bring that treaty into force should do so as soon as possible, without awaiting such action by any other State Party, and in the meantime maintain a moratorium on all nuclear tests.

Pakistan and all other states should support the urgent commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), preferably within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. Pending negotiation of an FMCT, all relevant states should announce and apply a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and declare their past production of fissile material, including current stockpiles.

All states should implement fully the requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, to prohibit non-state actors developing, acquiring, or transferring weapons of mass destruction, including enacting and enforcing the required legislation and reporting to the UNSC 1540 Committee.

All states should ensure that peaceful nuclear energy programs do not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and do not endanger human and environmental health and safety.

All states should build and sustain strong nuclear security and safety cultures in relation to all fissile material, nuclear weapons and military and civil nuclear facilities, share best practices and take serious steps to strengthen the international nuclear security architecture.


All states should minimize stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and separated plutonium, convert reactor fuel from HEU to low enriched uranium, and support efforts to use non-HEU technologies for the production of radioisotopes.

All states should secure all radioactive sources, consistent with guidance in the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and Nuclear Security Series recommendations.

All states should ratify and abide by the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. They should strive to attain higher nuclear safety standards and disaster preparedness, and intensify the peer review process for nuclear safety.

All states should promote intensive dialogue among and between nuclear industry and government bodies, including national regulators, with a view to improving nuclear safety and safety regulations, regulatory effectiveness and transparency, and, supplementing other mechanisms like South Korea’s proposed North East Asia nuclear safety consultative mechanism, there should be established an International Nuclear Regulators’ Network, focusing on consolidating and sharing best practices in nuclear security.

The East Asia Summit should explore the concept of an Asia Pacific Nuclear Energy Community, which could strengthen nuclear energy governance in the region across all three crucial areas of safeguards, security and safety.

All states should use all tools available to regulate nuclear transfers and counter illicit transfers of nuclear material, including through effective export control arrangements.

ON NUCLEAR SECURITY AND SAFETY

21 All states should cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UNSC 1540 Committee and the IAEA in seeking to achieve those objectives.

22 All states should support the International Nuclear Safety and Security Committee’s recommendations to support efforts to use non-HEU technologies for the production of radioisotopes.

23 All states should implement fully the requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, to prohibit non-state actors developing, acquiring, or transferring weapons of mass destruction, including enacting and enforcing the required legislation and reporting to the UNSC 1540 Committee.

24 All states should secure all radioactive sources, consistent with guidance in the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and Nuclear Security Series recommendations.

25 All states should ratify and abide by the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. They should strive to attain higher nuclear safety standards and disaster preparedness, and intensify the peer review process for nuclear safety.

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27 The East Asia Summit should explore the concept of an Asia Pacific Nuclear Energy Community, which could strengthen nuclear energy governance in the region across all three crucial areas of safeguards, security and safety.

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ON BROADENING APLN AND IDENTIFYING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NUCLEAR POLICY LEADERS

29 The APLN collectively, and its Members individually, will work:

• to increase the pool of leaders and future leaders in Asia Pacific countries with a depth of expertise and knowledge of nuclear issues;

• to expand APLN by broadening its membership to include a wider range of established leaders in the public sector, private sector and research and advocacy communities;

• to identify and mentor future opinion leaders on nuclear issues in each country in the region, and promote nuclear confidence-building in the region.

The real and immediate threat posed by nuclear weapons can no longer be ignored or downplayed by policymakers. The time for serious action on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, security and safety is now.

SIGNED

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Nobuyasu Abe (Japan), Former United Nations Under-Secretary General for Disarmament

Hasmy Agam (Malaysia), Former Ambassador to the United Nations

James Bolger (New Zealand), Former Prime Minister

Aiko Doden (Japan), Former United Nations Under-Secretary General for Disarmament

Aikooden (Japan), Senior Commentator, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)

Malcolm Fraser (Australia), Former Prime Minister

Robert Hill (Australia), Former Defence Minister

Kuniko Inoguchi (Japan), Former United Nations Under-Secretary General

Kishore Mahbubani (Singapore), Former Ambassador to the United Nations

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Rakesh Sood (India), Former Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

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