



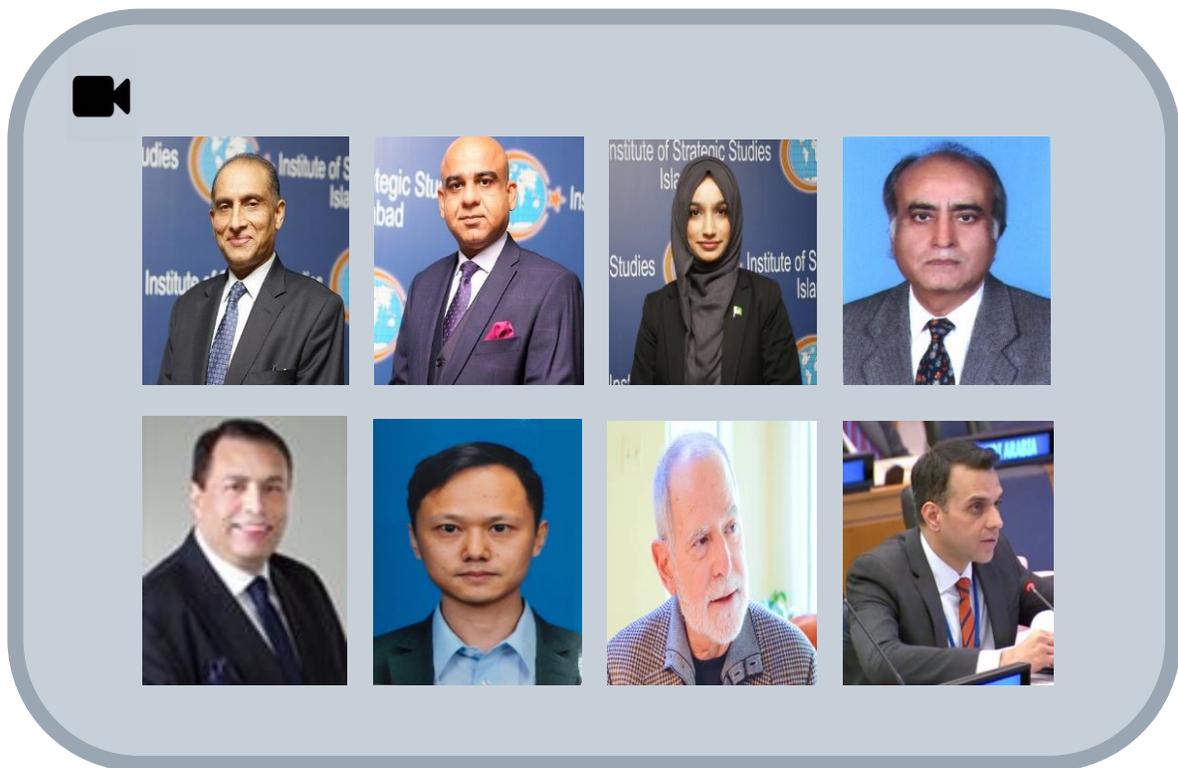
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*Report – Webinar*

# **“Changing Global Arms Control Norms: Prospects and Challenges”**

**July 21, 2020**



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The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a webinar on “Changing Global Arms Control Norms: Prospects and Challenges” on July 21, 2020. The webinar brought together distinguished national and international speakers and experts on the issue.

### **Introductory Remarks by Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI**

During his introductory remarks, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI, enlightened the audience about the vision behind the establishment of ACDC. The centre was established on October 30, 2019, with an objective to contribute focused research, quality policy input, in-depth analysis, and dialogue on the issues of arms control, disarmament, nuclear safety and security, nuclear deterrence, emerging technologies, and challenges to global peace and stability. While highlighting the significance of webinar, he said that the world is witnessing a shift in global arms control norms and the existing arms control mechanisms are being termed as “outdated” and “exhausted.” Some believe that the arms control structure which once enjoyed a splendid “Golden Age” has come to an end.

As new arms races at regional and international levels are picking up pace, states have started to increase their military spending to modernise their nuclear and conventional weapon capabilities. Even major powers are indicating the resumption of nuclear testing. As the reliance on nuclear weapon use is growing, states are constructing warfighting doctrines around these weapons. Some major powers have already rolled out of key bilateral and multilateral arms control treaties and agreements. They are developing new and advance weapons along with their delivery systems. In addition, states are investing in emerging technologies. They are deploying lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). This new technology-driven competition has even dominated the cyberspace.

Therefore, keeping in mind these emerging trends and shifts in global arms control norms, the ACDC has organised this webinar. The purpose of this webinar was to identify the dynamics of ongoing changes in the global arms control regime. Is this global order will witness a great power completion or it is going to increase the prospects of engagement and cooperation? How this shifting arms control normative order is going to impact the South Asian strategic landscape? What are the prospects and challenges for Pakistan due to this emerging shift?

## **Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI**

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, stated that a lot is happening in the domain of arms control at the global level. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) has collapsed. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as Iran nuclear deal is in doldrums because of the US pull-out. Iran and Israel have launched their own military and spy satellites respectively. Furthermore, the US and Russia have agreed to start talks on New START and if they do not succeed, the treaty could expire in 2021, which could be a severe blow to efforts for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons especially when Washington has been talking of a possible resumption of nuclear testing. The resumption of nuclear testing by the US could be followed by India. In these are unsettling times, there is a need to reflect on what all the existing arms control regimes have achieved and where have these failed.

Expressing his thoughts on the larger picture of global arms control normative order, he said that the global order is transitioning from essentially bipolar to multipolar with an asymmetric distribution of power. A sustainable arms control order for the 21st century must accommodate this changing global power dynamics. Yet, many reject the notion that a new order is needed. Regardless of that debate, every nuclear state would need to work out how to adapt nuclear arms control regimes to which they are parties to new realities. These are tough times for the arms control regime. But the international system has gone through tough times before. “In the past, states concluded landmark agreements with political will, resilience, patience, determination, and commitment. Let’s see if we can rise to the occasion this time when unilateralism is on the rise and multilateralism on the retreat,” he said.

## **Briefing by Ms. Aamna Rafiq, Research Associate ACDC-ISSI**

In her briefing, Ms. Aamna Rafiq, Research Associate ACDC-ISSI, said that every nuclear state would need to work out how to adapt arms control regimes to new realities. So, it is crucial to discuss what are these new realities? Re-emerging Great Power Competition: The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review is fixated on Russia. The National Security Strategy, as well as the National Defense Strategy, indicates that the US is refocusing on strategic competition among major powers – the US, Russia, and China.

While talking about the new and dangerous wave of military modernisation and emerging technologies, she said that advancement in military technologies is closely linked with the arms control. In the past, technological development and military modernisation have paved the way for various bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements. The Nixon Administration used the “Trident System” to get the SALT-I agreement and technological advancement played a decisive role in this case. However, great powers are cherry-picking norms when it comes to different technologies. The US desires to negotiate new nuclear arms control agreements but wants to keep up existing arms control norms and treaties in the cyber domain. On the other side, Russia is ready to extend New START and China want to stay on the sidelines of the nuclear arms control process but both want new norms in the cyber domain. Interestingly, the US and China do not currently support a ban on LAWS and the US even submitted a white paper on the “Humanitarian Benefits of Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons.”

She agreed with the view that the current strategic climate indicates mistrust and lack of political will on part of the US and Russia for finding a plausible solution and they might lose the last bilateral nuclear arms control agreement. However, it is difficult to perceive that if the US and Russia let the New START expire then the entire arms control structure will breakdown. Currently, great powers are trying to maintain their technological competitive edge and starting a new arms race to gain strategic superiority to renegotiate nuclear arms control agreement on new terms and conditions. Lastly, this transitional phase of massive military modernisation at the global level will also affect the peace and stability in South Asia. Military spending by India grew by 6.8 per cent to \$71.1 billion in 2019. India is massively expanding its conventional and nuclear weapons. Such a shift will greatly impact regional deterrence stability.

### **Remarks by Mr. Tariq Rauf, former Head VSPC, IAEA**

Mr. Tariq Rauf, former Head of Verification and Security Policy Coordination, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), expressed his views on “Changing Global Arms Control Norms: Chances of Great Power Competition?” He provided a comprehensive and critical analysis of different views regarding the future of global order and its relevance to the current setting. Francis Fukuyama believed that the old rivalries and traditional competitions will

collapse with the end of the Cold War. However, this End of History never happened and the global system is witnessing a great power competition and rivalry all over again. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union also led to the hypothesis of unipolar world order or Pax Americana. This unipolar moment does not exist anymore since the US is facing economic, strategic, and military challenges at a great power level. The failure of the “War on Terrorism” that was unleashed after September 2001 has led to more terrorism in other parts of the world. The current orthodoxy is the Thucydides Trap that war is inevitable between the rising power like China and established or slightly declining power like the US. However, Mr. Tariq views this trap as imaginary or a fallacy. He backed up this argument with concrete historical examples. There was no war when the Soviet Union was rising and the US emerged after World War II due to weapons monopoly. Likewise, there was no war in Europe and other parts of the world during robust cold rivalry.

He holds the view that the same will happen in the current case of China and the US. At this time, states are witnessing an emerging G-0 World, where there will not be a dominant single power but there will be rivalry and competition. In a recent strategy review, the US has openly called China as a strategic competitor along with Russia. Moreover, the statements of the current administration in Washington signals that the US will prevent the rise of peer military power and compete against China from becoming the number one economic power. The Cold War international system is now becoming obsolete and dysfunctional. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and other institutions no longer reflect the current distribution of power. The world is witnessing a rise of nationalism and tribalism. This shift is visible in the responses towards coronavirus pandemic where some states are buying up the entire stock of personal protection equipment and masks. The nation-building in the Middle East is in shambles.

While talking about the future of arms control regime, Mr. Rauf said that the arms control architecture of the Cold War has almost collapsed. The emerging military technologies like artificial intelligence, cyber technologies and hypersonic weapons are extremely difficult to capture in the traditional framework of the eroding arms control and disarmament regime. There is a reluctance on the part of the US to reaffirm the Reagan-Gorbachev understanding that nuclear war cannot be won, therefore, it should never be fought. Currently, only one nuclear arms control treaty exists between Russia and the US and it does seem likely that the US would

agree to renew it. However, if it expires in February 2021, then for the first time in the history of Russia-US arms control arrangements, there will be no treaty between the two sides. With the collapse of New START, the arms control regime will lose inspections, notifications, and information exchanges.

All the multilateral forums on nuclear arms control are in deadlock. There is confusion, overlapping efforts, and complete lack of direction as to where to head with regard to nuclear disarmament at the global level. Currently, there are multiple competing proposals and initiatives for nuclear disarmament. The Non-Align Movement still supports its three-phased time-bound plan of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, some Western states are still in favour of the Step-by-Step Approach where the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) is a logical next step. There is another initiative by the seven countries called the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) which talks about the building blocks for nuclear disarmament. The New Agenda Coalition talks about taking a forward position on nuclear arms control and disarmament. These agenda discussions indirectly resulted in the humanitarian initiative which led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Sweden is a proponent of the Stepping Stone Approach and issued a declaration in February 2020. This declaration called for further arms reduction which in fact only focused on nuclear risk rather than actual reductions.

Mr. Rauf extensively talked about the US initiative titled “Creating Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND)” in the context of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the preparatory meeting in March 2018. He said that this initiative did not play very well because the US cleared the taboo that came with a *tabula rasa*. There is a rollback regarding the outcomes of the three agreed NPT Review Conferences. They eliminated all the agreed measures from 2010, 2000 and 1995 Review Conferences such as de-alerting, reducing tactical nuclear weapons. While criticising the US initiative, Mr. Rauf said that CEND is just about creating an environment but never disarm. CEND has created three working groups:

1. Working Group on threat perceptions involving nuclear weapons and security concerns (chaired by Netherland and Morocco);

2. Working Group on best practices of international forums to improve the functioning of disarmament and non-proliferation forums (chaired by South Korea and the US);
3. Working Group on nuclear weapon use and risk reduction (chaired by Germany).

Currently, nuclear risk reduction is a big issue in the arms control discourse. In a recent book titled *The Button*, William J. Perry also said that the threat of inadvertent use of a nuclear weapon is now higher than ever during the Cold War. The US Doctrine on Nuclear Operations 2019 clearly proposes using nuclear weapons for creating decisive results in the restoration of strategic stability. In addition, the recent Russian doctrine released by President Putin also envisages the early use of low-yield nuclear weapons during the conventional war where Russia will be on losing end. The US believes firmly that China aims to be the World's dominant military power till 2049.

#### **Remarks by Mr. Zhou Chang, Director and RF, CACDA, China**

While speaking on “Changing Global Arms Control Norms: Prospects of Engagement” Mr. Zhou Chang, Director and Research Fellow, China Arms Control & Disarmament Association (CACDA) highlighted current challenges to the arms control regime. He mentioned the great power rivalry as a major challenge to the arms control and disarmament regime. Some states are trying to contain others to achieve military superiority which has not only affected an international discourse on arms control and non-proliferation issues but also multiplied the risk of confrontation. The second challenge is the collapse of bilateral arms control agreements between the US and Russia. For a long time, this bilateral arms control arrangement was considered as the hallmark of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The end of this bilateral arrangement might trigger a chain reaction in other parts of the world. It will also hamper the progress on international treaties especially the NPT and acerbate distrust between non-nuclear and nuclear states. Lastly, the advancement and complexity of military technologies in cyberspace, outer space, and biological domains have begun to produce a profound impact on global security and strategic stability by creating incentives for a new arms race. He also raised his concerns about the military applications of biotechnologies in the absence of international regulatory mechanisms.

Mr. Chang put forward a set of possible solutions for the mitigation of these challenges. He said that the concept of common and cooperative security should be promoted instead of unilateralism. This year marked the fifth anniversary of JCPOA which was considered a successful treaty because it addressed the legitimate security concerns of all parties and promoted regional peace and international stability. However, the US withdrawal obstructed the implementation of the agreement. Making collective efforts to maintain, utilise and improve the existing arms control framework is crucial as these agreements take years to accomplish but could be abandoned easily. Moreover, the periodic dialogue among P-5 has played a significant role in safeguarding the NPT. The objective understanding among P-5 could be utilised to take strategic initiatives like nuclear crisis and risk management mechanisms. Lastly, the international arms control community must prioritise the establishment of arms control norms for emerging military technologies while respecting the right of peaceful use.

### **Remarks by Mr. Michael Krepon, Co-founder, Stimson Centre**

In his remarks, Mr. Michael Krepon, Co-founder and Distinguished Fellow, Stimson Centre mainly focused on two fundamental norms of the global arms control regime. The first and most relevant is the norm of ‘no-battlefield use’ of nuclear weapons. Mr. Krepon is of view that states no longer use nuclear weapons in a fashion they were used last time in 1945 when approximately 50 million people died. Even without any international treaty that prohibits the use of nuclear weapons, the norm of ‘non-battlefield use’ has survived for seventy-five years. Despite various accidents and terrible crisis situations, states never used nuclear weapons against each other. During Truman and Eisenhower’s Administrations, this norm could have been broken but the US exercised restraint. This norm lies at the core of contemporary global nuclear security and should be protected vigilantly. Every crisis that passes without nuclear weapon use makes it harder for any political leader to cross the established threshold. He warned that if states broke this norm anytime in the future then it would be extremely difficult to avert further usage.

The second extremely important norm is the ‘no testing of nuclear weapons.’ Nuclear weapons are stigmatised to the extent that nations have not tested nuclear weapons since the 1990s. Every day that passes without nuclear testing strengthens this norm. States are testing every other battlefield weapon and conducting experiments in laboratories but they never conducted nuclear

tests expect North Korea. Any further testing by North Korea will strengthen its position as an outlier and other states will not follow the suit. He assured that the US will never be the first country to resume nuclear testing as the Congress would never allow this to happen.

He put emphasis on the inadequacy of global arms control norms due to deterrence. The dangerous nature of deterrence is pushing states to further strengthen it even without testing nuclear weapons. Deterrence is intensifying security dilemma among states. States are building up deterrence by producing more threats as deterrence needs reassurance. While describing a linkage between deterrence and arms control, Mr. Krepon stated that the US and Russia have used arms control treaties as a form of reassurance. So as to provide that reassurance the US and Russia need new arms control treaties. In the US, an international treaty requires a two-third majority from Congress. Presently, the political landscape of the US is polarised to an extent that it is difficult to envision a treaty reaching that standard unless negotiated by a Republican President. However, the next US President could extend the New START. Therefore, in the absence of treaty-based reassurance, the arms control regime will move back to the norms of ‘no-battlefield use’ and ‘no-testing of nuclear weapons.’ Lastly, he stressed the need to strengthen national security through ways other than deterrence like diplomacy.

### **Remarks by Mr. Usman Iqbal Jadoon, Director, MOFA**

Mr. Usman Iqbal Jadoon, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Pakistan expressed his views on “Changing Global Arms Control Norms: Prospects and Challenges for Pakistan.” Norms are a general standard or trend that emerges from repeated use and behaviour without any formal legal sanction. Norms can be prohibitive in terms of dissuading certain conduct and can also be permitted in terms of normalising certain behaviours as acceptable. This distinction is mandatory here because arms control can evolve in both directions. Mr. Jadoon identified four arms control trends/norms in the realm of nuclear weapons and provided a comprehensive analysis of their impact in the South Asian context. He also linked them with the diplomatic engagements and strategies of Pakistan.

The first major trend is the up-gradation of existing arsenals and their delivery systems. This trend is more pronounced in the case of the US and Russia. Maintenance for ensuring safety and reliability was always part of their stockpile stewardship. The large-scale modernisation is not a

new phenomenon but currently, there is a sense of urgency. Despite the aspiration of Global Zero, modernisation and up-gradation are no longer seen as bad. In terms of impact on South Asia, the protagonists in this region are still in the first wave of weaponisation due to operational reasons. They never seized the weapon development to restart the modernisation process. It is a permissive norm as this will lift the pressure from Pakistan in terms of qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons.

Development of new weapon systems is a second major trend which is further divided into two categories. The first category consists of traditional weapons like tactical nuclear weapons of various yields, warheads, hypersonic, cruise missiles, and nuclear-powered cruise missiles. The second category consists of new exotic weapons like cyber weapons, artificial intelligence-powered LAWS and weapons in outer space. The latter category is marked by total lack of legally binding instruments or regulatory regime which makes them different from the first category of traditional weapons. This makes it a permissive norm. In terms of its impact on South Asia, India is actively pursuing both categories. However, India is more interested in the second category as compared to Pakistan because want to beat the international non-proliferation and export control regime which are bound to come at some stage in the future. In fact, India is the only member of a Non-align Movement that opposes a legally binding ban on LAWS. India's hegemonic designs and great power ambitions are on the large display and self-evident. With the support of Western countries, India is building its triad and perfecting its assured second-strike capability. Pakistan must take a cautious approach. Currently, Pakistan should exercise restraint but not at the cost of deterrence capability. Pakistan's calculus can change in response to any degradation in the defensive capability.

The third major trend is the institutional decay in terms of bilateral treaties, plurilateral agreements and general disregard for international norms. This trend has produced the greatest impact on South Asia out of all these four trends. There are no bilateral arms control agreement and only a few Confidence Building Mechanisms (CBMs) exists between India and Pakistan. So, the institution decay in terms of IAEA, CD and NSG has greatly affected Pakistan. From Pakistan's perspective, the rot in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) began during the Obama Administration. The wavier was approved during the Bush Administration but active lobbying was done during the Obama Administration.

The fourth major trend is the lack of disarmament as discussed earlier. There has been significant backtracking from the unilateral declarations and agreed commitments in various forums. Risk reduction and nuclear armament verification emerged as new practical steps while disarmament has taken a backseat. In terms of diplomatic engagements, Pakistan has a principle position based on the principle of equal and undiminished security for all states. He holds a view that trends of institution decay and unilateralism could be reversed. However, the trends of military modernisation and the development of new weapons are irreversible.

### **Q&A and Discussion**

The remarks by the panellists were followed by an extensive Q&A and discussion session. Participants expressed that these negative global trends are already challenging arms control norms and the coronavirus pandemic has further triggered a reversal of institutionalism. Despite great power competition and transition to a multipolar world, the global trends still flow from the US.

### **Concluding Remarks by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI**

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors (BoG) ISSI, said that arms control norms had played a decisive role in achieving international peace and stability throughout history, especially during the Cold War. The two superpowers realized that the balance of terror and confrontation is neither desirable nor sustainable. Therefore, they agreed to codify their shared understanding of arms control and disarmament. They collectively designed the global arms control normative order as an effective risk reduction tool via confidence-building measures, bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements. They not only designed this normative order but also institutionalised it, to ensure verification, compliance and achieve a stable deterrence. This normative order remained intact and effective even in the post-Cold War and post 9/11 eras.

Today, this global arms control normative order is eroding. States are opting out of international arms control treaties and institutions. States that are still party to these arrangements are reluctant to comply with the rules. So, why global arms control normative order has reached to this low point? The major contributing factor is the great power competition. The US decision has

negatively affected the arms control regime e.g. threat to resume nuclear testing, opting out of INF and JCPOA, focus on unilateralism instead of multilateralism, the obsession of making China a party in trilateral arms control agreement and general disregard for international agreements. Besides, states are also apprehensive of the asymmetrical nature of global arms control norms. The realisation that the existing regime is discriminatory has matured among states. Currently, the chances of improvement are bleak. States will continue to invest in military modernisation and new technologies resulting in renewed confrontation and arms race at a global level. While talking about the future of global arms control, he said that continuous alienation between Russia and the West has put global strategic stability under immense strain. In his view, the collapse of INF could have been prevented. The US and Russia can still negotiate to bring back the fundamentals of the INF treaty. However, the new model should take into account the new arms race and new domains of cyberspace and outer space. To strengthen existing norms and meet the challenges of new world order, states should focus on controlling qualitative advancement rather than limiting the quantity of these arsenals.