**Disarmament: Past, Present and Future [Slide 1]**

**Introduction**

1. Disarmament is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. [**Slide 2**] Although, it generally refers to a country’s military or specific type of weaponry, it *can be achieved only internationally*, i.e. involving at least two or more nations. As an idea and practice, it is a recent phenomenon, which became popular after the horrifying experiences of all-embracing devastations across the globe during the Second World War [**Slide 3**]. Thus, the concept and processes of disarmament cannot be understood without the context of modern warfare.
2. By trying to limit the various types of armaments, disarmament tends to minimise the devastations of war, and thereby, it is a very important step towards world peace. However, to understand the present-day efforts for disarmament and its future directions, we must acknowledge the past efforts (although not in a great scale), which also sought to limit armaments between the warring parties. And since, the process works through various international treaties and institutions, the history of disarmament is also the history of these treaties and institutions.

**Historical Background**

1. War has been a crucial part of human history since time immemorial, especially, following the emergence of various forms of states. Several authors from ancient China, India, Greece and Rome to medieval and modern times have written on the history, philosophy, art and science of war. Among them, Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) [**Slide 4**] Prussian General and war-theorist saw war as basically a political act.
2. In his posthumous book, *On War* (1832), he famously wrote: “War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.” From a realist position Clausewitz also described war as *“*an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.” Disarmament seeks to reduce the violence and direct and indirect losses of war following certain rules agreed upon internationally by some treaties among sovereign states and international organisations.

Lieber Code, 1863

1. From this stand point, we can identify the ‘Lieber Code’ drafted during the American Civil War as a pioneering departure which *set out regulations for behaviour in times of martial* law; protection of civilians and civilian property and punishment of transgression; deserters, prisoners of war, hostages, and pillaging; partisans; spies; truces and prisoner exchange; parole of former rebel troops; the conditions of any armistice, and respect for human life; assassination and murder of soldiers or citizens in hostile territory; and the status of individuals engaged in a state of civil war against the government. It was drafted by a German-American jurist, gymnast and political philosopher, Francis Lieber (1800-1872). [**Slide 5**] The Code was signed and issued by US President Abraham Lincoln to the Union Forces of the United States on 24 April 1863, during the American Civil War. Later, the Lieber Code became the basis of The Hague Conference of 1899 and 1907.

The Hague Conventions, 1899 & 1907

1. The Hague Conventions [**Slide 6**] of 1899 and 1907 are a series of international treaties and declarations, negotiated at two International Peace Conferences at The Hague in the Netherlands. Along with the Geneva Convention, the Hague Conventions were among the first formal statements of the laws of war and war crimes in the body of secular international law. A third conference was planned for 1914 and later rescheduled for 1915, but it did not take place owing to the outbreak of  World War I.

Treaty of Versailles, 1919

1. The Treaty of Versailles [**Slide 7**] was the most important of the peace treaties that brought World War I to an end. The Treaty ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers. It was signed on 28 June 1919 in Versailles. The other Central Powers on the German side signed separate treaties. Although the armistice signed on 11 November 1918, ended the actual fighting, it took six months of Allied negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference to conclude the peace treaty. The treaty was registered by the Secretariat of the League of Nations on 21 October 1919.

Kellogg–Briand Pact, 1928

1. The Kellogg–Briand Pact [**Slide 8**] which is also known as Pact of Paris and officially *General Treaty for Renunciation of War* as an Instrument of National Policy is a 1928 international agreement in which signatory states promised not to use war to resolve “disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them”. However, there were no mechanisms for enforcement. Parties failing to abide by this promise “should be denied of the benefits furnished by [the] treaty”. It was signed by Germany, France, and the United States on 27 August 1928.

World Disarmament Conference, 1932-34

1. Between 1932 and 1934, a conference took place in Geneva. It was officially known as The Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, and also as the World Disarmament Conference or the Geneva Disarmament Conference. However, it was a failed effort by member states of the League of Nations, together with the United States, to accomplish disarmament, especially of Germany, Italy and Japan.

**Post World War II Politics**

1. World War II was a watershed in human history. It surpassed all the past records of destructions and devastations of human lives, property, economy and society. Millions of people became homeless/refugees. Although the atom bomb attacks on Japan in Hiroshima and Nagasaki islands [**Slide 9**] by USA ended the war in favour of Allied Powers, it also shocked the whole world by the capacity of destruction [**Slide 10**] of this new armament (i.e. atom/nuclear bombs). A new world organisation United Nations Organisation (UNO) replaced the previous League. The aftermath of the war also saw a territorial, political and military divisions of the world in two major camps or ‘poles’ [**Slide 11**] – the USA led (non/anti-communist) western world and the Soviet Russia led (the communist party ruled) east European countries.
2. The Western powers feared that after the war and with the decimation of Germany, the USSR might invade the west European countries. This polar division and conflict take a sharp turn after the USSR also successfully made atom bomb. A new phase in world politics began, which is known as ‘cold war’ [**Slide 12**]. It was *cold* because despite all the components ready for the beginning of another war – *no direct war* happened actually. In this atmosphere of utter distrust, many treaties were signed, institutions built among the members of these separate camps. It was also the time of the liberalisation of former European colonies. Many new states emerged in the world map especially in Asia and Africa. Some of these states, and also some the states of Latin America followed either of these two camps. However, an alternative ‘middle path’ was struck by some of these states (led by India, Egypt and former Yugoslavia) and refused to identify with any particular bloc and remained “Non-aligned” [**Slide** **13**]. After continuing for more than four decades, ‘cold war’ came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European pro-Soviet regimes in early 1990s.
3. We have to understand the courses of *disarmament* of this phase in this context. Since that time and with some developments that took place afterwards, the present focus is on *three categories* of weapons: a) Weapons of an indiscriminate effect, such as cluster munitions and landmines; b) Biological and chemical weapons and c) The (non-) proliferation of nuclear weapons (nuclear disarmament). Among these three, the last one, i.e. Nuclear Disarmament is the most important form of disarmament, which besides official international efforts (mainly by treaties and strong institutions) has been a concern of every peace movement of the globe. Let us also focus on it.

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

Many major, middle range and local efforts and treaties took place, and are still taking place. We will only focus on the major/game-changing treaties.

Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)

1. The Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, popular as The Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) was signed in 1963 [**Slide 14**]. It prohibited all test detonations of nuclear weapons except for those conducted underground. The PTBT was signed by the governments of the USSR, the UK, and the USA in Moscow on 5 August 1963 before it was opened for signature by other countries. The treaty formally went into effect on 10 October 1963. Since then, 123 other states have become party to the treaty. Ten states have signed but not ratified the treaty.

Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

1. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT [**Slide 15**], is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. Between 1965 and 1968, the treaty was negotiated by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, a UN-sponsored organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. Opened for signature in 1968, the treaty entered into force in 1970. As required by the text, after twenty-five years, NPT Parties met in May 1995 and agreed to extend the treaty indefinitely.

SALT I

1. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) were two rounds of bilateral conferences and corresponding international treaties involving the USA and the USSR, the Cold War superpowers, on the issue of arms control. The negotiations commenced in Helsinki, Finland, in November 1969 and finally signed on May 26, 1972 by Leonid Breznev and Richard Nixon in Moscow [**Slide 16**]. SALT I led to the Anti-Ballistic-Missile-Treaty and an interim agreement between the two countries.

 SALT II

1. SALT II was a series of talks between United States and Soviet negotiators from 1972 to 1979 which sought to curtail the manufacture of strategic nuclear weapons. It was a continuation of the SALT I talks and was led by representatives from both countries. SALT II was the first nuclear arms treaty which assumed real reductions in strategic forces to 2,250 of all categories of delivery vehicles on both sides. An agreement to limit strategic launchers was reached in Vienna on June 18, 1979, and was signed by Leonid Breznev and Jimmy Carter [**Slide 17**] at a ceremony held in the imperial Hofburg  Palace in Vienna. Six months after the signing, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. In the light of this development, President Carter withdrew the treaty from consideration in January 1980 so that it was never ratified by the US Senate. Its terms were, nonetheless, honoured by both sides until 1986.

**Post Cold War Period**

START I & II

1. The SALT I & II talks led to the STARTs, or **St**rategic **A**rms **R**eduction **T**reaties, which consisted of START (a 1991 completed agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union) [**Slide 18**] and START II [**Slide 19**] (a 1993 agreement between the United States and Russia, which was never ratified by the United States), both of which proposed limits on multiple-warhead capacities and other restrictions on each side's number of nuclear weapons. A New START was proposed and was eventually ratified in February 2011[**Slide 20**].
2. START I was a bilateral treaty between the USA and USSR on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. The treaty barred its signatories from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads atop a total of 1,600 inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICMBs) and bombers. START negotiated the largest and most complex arms control treaty in history, and its final implementation in late 2001 resulted in the removal of about 80 percent of all strategic nuclear weapons then in existence.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test–Ban Treaty (CTBT)

1. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test–Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a multilateral treaty that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments. Historically in 1954, following the Castle Bravo test, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru issued the first appeal for a "standstill agreement" on testing, which was soon echoed by the British Labour Party. However, the principal nuclear powers agreed to PTBT not comprehensive test ban. Finally, it was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 September 1996 but has not entered into force, as eight specific nations have not ratified the treaty.

**Towards an Uncertain Future**

1. The preservation of the nuclear order will not succeed without the type of dedicated and visionary leadership that led to post-World War II arrangements. Although near-term prospects are dim, a reinvigorated nuclear order will require current and emerging global powers to create a renewed consensus that addresses the challenges to the deterrent order and the non-proliferation order. In broad strokes, this new consensus includes a widened circle of nuclear non-proliferation state-leaders to reflect changing power dynamics, a renewed and more credible commitment to reducing nuclear dangers, and strategic dialogues to reduce risk and mitigate conflict among nuclear weapons possessors.
2. A sustainable nuclear order for the 21st century must accommodate changing global power dynamics. Based on economic projections, China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia are anticipated to be among the top powers by 2050, with India and China expected to surpass the United States by gross domestic product by 2030. Emerging powers should be invited and encouraged to assume leadership roles within a renewed non-proliferation order. In a renewed non-proliferation consensus that brings India into the leadership of the non-proliferation order, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan should be included in meetings and discussions as nuclear weapons possessor states.
3. These tasks are immense. A world with multiple rising powers, a declining superpower, and influential civil society activists is one in which new political bargains will be difficult to forge. Even the most compelling leaders will be challenged by these order-sustaining projects. Yet, not taking up the challenge to adapt the nuclear order to new political realities means an increasingly nuclear-armed world in which nuclear war and nuclear accidents become more likely.

  Further Readings

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Richard Dean Burns, *The Evolution of Arms Control: From Antiquity to the Nuclear Age*, Rowman & Littlefield, USA, 2013

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