

## Report on Roundtable on Global Security and Catastrophic Risks

Caen, Normandy, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022

Co-hosted by Strategic Foresight Group, Geneva Centre for Security Policy and  
Region Normandy – Normandy for Peace



### BACKGROUND

Strategic Foresight Group, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and Region Normandy co-convened a roundtable of P4 experts for their Normandy P5 Initiative on Global Security and Catastrophic Risks on the background of deteriorating geopolitical and strategic environment.

It was initially planned to convene the roundtable in 2021, and early 2022, but the roundtable had to be postponed due to the Covid Crisis and the war in Ukraine. In particular, the war in Ukraine made it impossible to invite experts from Russia to the roundtable. Therefore, experts from China, France, UK and the US participated in the roundtable.

Prior to the roundtable, the convenors had held consultations with Disarmament Ambassadors of all the P5 countries based in Geneva to secure their perspectives on the subject of the roundtable.

Following the discussions at the diplomatic level, the roundtable of experts was held in Caen and hosted by Region Normandy, coinciding with the Normandy Forum for Peace.

Mr François - Xavier Priollaud, Vice President of Region Normandy delivered the welcome address. Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Director of Geneva Centre for Security Policy delivered the keynote

address. Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President of Strategic Foresight Group presented the theme paper of the roundtable.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Thomas Greminger warned that the nuclear threat was real. It not only emanated from the Russian President, implicitly threatening the use of nuclear weapons, but also from North Korea passing a law to make pre-emptive nuclear attack legal, and other geopolitical developments. He warned that the use of artificial intelligence was decreasing the role of humans in the chain of command. Since machines have no moral compassion, AI can have a dangerous impact. It was in this context that catastrophic risk to global security had to be examined. Ambassador Greminger explained that it was important to assess the global security paradigm with a focus on the five permanent members of the Security Council, commonly known as the P5, due to the leadership position they have in the United Nations, as well as the architecture of global security.

François -Xavier Priollaud said in his concluding remarks that the world was ending the nuclear order as it had prevailed since the second world war. The world was also seeing the end of P5 group in the UN Security Council due to a split between the 5 members. The world was also ending an age of certainty. At the same time, a new theory of deterrence and a new threat of AI was on the rise. Moreover, the movement of technology using speed that is beyond the capacity of human beings had made our era that of unpredictability.

The key messages are below:



## KEY MESSAGES ON RISK REDUCTION MEASURES

1. There is a complete breakdown of dialogue within the P5 since February 2022, at the official as well as the expert level. We must give top priority to the restoration and sustenance of dialogue between government leaders as well as experts on existential risk posed by weapons of mass destruction and their interface with AI. What looks responsible for one state may be construed as irresponsible by another state. Therefore, it is important to realise that the process of dialogue itself is important, though it may not constantly deliver results. Dialogue should be continuous and not just a reward for good behaviour.
2. The dialogue between states should include communication channels including hotlines, declarations by leaders and statements that remove ambiguities.
3. Dialogue is also important for the de-escalation of the current situation. The civil society could play an active role
4. The Reagon-Gorbachev Declaration on non-use of nuclear war should be reiterated time and again.
5. The renewal of New START Treaty by 2026 is necessary. It is also necessary to begin thinking about arms control beyond 2026. In particular, it will be useful to think about the revived New START Treaty further reducing the number of weapons allowed to be deployed. If the New START Treaty and particularly verification measures prove difficult to seek the approval of the Senate in the US and Duma in Russia, then another form of working agreement rather than a treaty can be negotiated.
6. Since the New START treaty is between the US and Russia, it is necessary to have a separate strategic arms control regime between US and China.
7. We need to urge leaders to look at the arms control regime, including the treaties that have been abandoned.
8. The P5 states can take unilateral measures without always seeking reciprocity.
9. States need to rely on multiple sources of information.
10. The gap between actual and perceived capabilities increases risks. We need measures to reduce such gaps.
11. The P5 countries should negotiate phasing out of low yield nuclear weapons.
12. Codes of Conduct on responsible behaviour in cyber-space and outer space are required.
13. The dialogue mechanism which currently exists among the P5 members, but has been dysfunctional since February 2022, does not include the interface between AI, cybertechnology and nuclear weapons. A priority should be given to examining these linkages and identifying norms for their regulation in the official P5 deliberations. Experts should urge the officials to place such linkages on the intergovernmental agenda with a sense of urgency.
14. Efforts should be made to keep “human in the loop” and not hand over important nuclear related decisions to AI.
15. LAWS, drones and cyberweapons can emerge as a new form of WMDs and therefore human control on such weapons has to be consciously increased.
16. Some of the lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), particularly unpredictable and anti-personnel AI weapons should be completely banned, while others should be highly regulated.

17. We need a lot more transparency with regard to LAWS and hypersonic missiles. Also address the dual use, and clearly denominate what is a nuclear system
18. It is necessary for scientists and officials to explore how to increase decision-making time in conflict management with a clear policy of reducing reliance on automation. We need a better de-escalation system in conflict management. We need to reduce systems on high alert and the number of committed land-based ICBMs.
19. There is a need for inter-disciplinary experts on AI related issues. There should be dialogue including weapons designers and other relevant scientists to the risk reduction processes.
20. The writers of AI algorithms should meet and challenge each other to find solutions for de-escalation and share knowledge.
21. A charter of good governance in AI should cover the use of AI in command and control of nuclear weapons.
22. We need to develop communication systems to prevent data poisoning, which is in the interest of all P5 countries.
23. There is a need to share datasets from experiments made in the 1960s and 1970s to train algorithms to create scenarios for the future.
24. Automation should be kept away from nuclear command, control and communication (NC3).
25. We need to create physical barriers in hair trigger alert in order to prevent the launching of missiles in haste and without due negotiations. We need better de-escalation systems.
26. While on the one hand it is necessary to focus on obligations of the P5 countries, it is also necessary to provide a voice to non-nuclear weapon states and other countries as nuclear weapons will have adverse consequences for all states including those which may not be direct targets in warfare. Therefore, it is important to involve the UN General Assembly in the deliberations on global security.
27. The General Assembly should take up the breach of negative security guarantees by nuclear weapon states.
28. We need a new framework for global security. In the immediate future, we need a regime of strategic risk reduction which can be acceptable to all nuclear powers. In the long run, we need to look at revolutionary treaties such as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

## List of Participants

### Co-Hosts:

- Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President of Strategic Foresight Group and Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflicts at Oxford University
- Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Director of Geneva Centre for Security Policy, former Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Mr François Xavier Priollaud, Vice President of Normandy Regional Government and Mayor of Louviers (Normandy Region)

### UK

- Mr Paul Ingram, Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, Academic Programme Manager and Senior Research Associate, Cambridge University
- Dr Rebecca Johnson, AIDD Director (Acronym Inst. for Disarmament Diplomacy), ICAN Steering Group (2017 Nobel Peace), CND Vice President
- Dr Dave Webb, Vice President, International Peace Bureau, chair of the UK Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the Convenor of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. Emeritus Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Leeds Beckett University (previously Leeds Metropolitan University).
- Dr Sebastian Brixey-Williams, Director, BASIC, Gender Champion in Nuclear Policy, an ELN Mentor, and a member of the Younger Generation Leadership Network on Euro-Atlantic Security. N Square Fellow working to improve the sustainability of the nuclear policy field (2020-2021).

### USA

- Ms Lynn Rusten, Vice President, Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative. Former senior director for arms control and non-proliferation on the White House National Security Council staff, Department of State including chief of staff for the Bureau of International Security and Non-proliferation and senior advisor in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC), where she led the interagency backstopping process supporting the negotiation and ratification of the New START Treaty.
- Prof Anthony Aguirre, Co-founder of the Future of Life Institute. He is Professor of Physics at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he holds the Faggin Presidential Chair for the Physics of Information. He is the Associate Scientific Director of the Foundational Questions Institute.

## France

- Dr Nicole Gnesotto, Professor at Conservatoire national des arts et métiers, holder of the European Chair, Vice-President of the Institut Jacques Delor. First director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies. Former deputy head of the French Foreign Ministry's Centre d'Analyse et de Prevision and is the author of many publications on strategic issues and European security.
- Dr Benjamin Hautecouverture, Senior Research Fellow for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament issues at the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS).
- Dr Héloïse Fayet, Research Fellow at Ifri's Security Studies Center. Her research focuses on proliferation and dissuasion issues, military forces' capacities analysis and strategic anticipation. Before joining Ifri, she spent three years at the French Ministry of Defense as an analyst on the Middle East.

## China

- Prof Li Bin, Professor of international relations at Tsinghua University. He previously directed the arms control division at the Institute of Applied Physics and Computational Mathematics, where he also served as executive director of the Program for Science and National Security Studies.
- Dr Qi Haotian, Assistant Professor at the School of International Studies of Peking University, Secretary General of the Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding (iGCU) of Peking University.
- Dr. Tianjiao Jiang, Associate Professor at Fudan Development Institute. He also works as assistant director at Center for BRICS Studies and Cyberspace International Governance Research Institute, Fudan University.

## Coordinators

- Ms Adriane Bajon, Normandy for Peace Initiative, Region Normandy
- Ms Alexandra Matas, Geneva Centre for Security Policy
- Ms Ilmas Futehally, Strategic Foresight Group

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