

Heather O'Connell
East Asian International Relations
12 May 2016

Sowing the Seeds for Making the World Nuclear-Free Response

This article is separated into five sections with each section highlighting a different element on the road to making the world free of nuclear weapons.

The first section discusses the developments to the NPT, which include the establishment of a group that negotiates nuclear disarmament, a confirmation that nuclear weapons have far more serious consequences than previously understood, and an acknowledgement of the need to strengthen education for disarmament.

The second section highlights the fact that world opinion and actions against nuclear powers due to the inhumanity of nuclear weapons are growing stronger. Evidence of this is the increase in participants at conferences about nuclear disarmament.

The third section introduces the "Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone" as a method for countries like Japan (who is protected by the nuclear umbrella) for encouraging the restriction of the use, threat, and introduction of nuclear weapons. Taue explains that even if a treaty is established, nuclear weapons will not disappear overnight, such as seen in Latin America's NWFZ which took 30 years to establish.

The fourth section expresses the importance of "small diplomacy," which describes the relationships between countries that grow between cities and citizens rather than "big diplomacy," which happens through the state. Small diplomacy is important because rather than state-controlled diplomacy that is guided by the political climate, exchanges through small diplomacy can continue through times when international relations are at their worst.

The fifth and final section showcases how the young generation is continuing and improving upon their predecessors. This is seen through the fresh-thinking mindset of learning the facts and coming to their own conclusions and holding discussions without preconceived ideas. Taue also mentions a project dedicated to passing down hibakusha's personal stories through family and friends for future generations in order to preserve the strength of first-person narratives.

In my opinion, I think nuclear weapons are an unnecessary evil of this world. If they could all mysteriously disappear tomorrow, I would not mind. However, because they cannot all mysteriously vanish, we must think about how to deal with them, and I have no idea how to convince countries to willingly give up their power, nuclear or otherwise. I also do not understand how a NWFZ works—even if a region declares themselves exempt from the nuclear weapons issue, what is preventing a country with nuclear weapons from harming them?