

The New UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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122 States have adopted a "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" which can be seen as supplementing and following on from the "Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty". This new text clarifies how states are actually behaving: all the States who have signed the first Treaty are actually trashing it and have refused to sign the second.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (hereinafter, "The Treaty"), adopted by the vast majority of the United Nations, on 7 July, is a landmark event, clearing out of our minds any debris of denial that a nuclear war would have catastrophic consequences for the whole of humanity. On the basis of this knowledge, the 122 states that have voted for it, undertake to neither produce nor possess nuclear weapons, nor to use them nor threaten to use them nor to receive them directly or indirectly. This is the key selling point of the Treaty that aims to create "a legally binding instrument for prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination".

The Treaty will enter into force on 20 September, once it has been signed and ratified by 50 states. While we fully back the urgent need for this treaty, we must not and cannot fail to acknowledge its limitations:

- First: the Treaty, which is only legally binding on states party to it, will not prohibit them from being part of military alliances with states possessing nuclear weapons.
- Second, each state party to the Treaty, "has the right to withdraw from this Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of the Treaty have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country ". A vague formula that permits each state party at any time to tear up the agreement, shirk off the obligations imposed by it, and equip itself with nuclear weapons.
- The third and biggest limitation is the fact that not one State possessing nuclear weapons is party to the Treaty: the United States and the other two Nato nuclear powers (France and Great Britain) that hold an aggregate of around 8,000 nuclear heads; Russia which has even more; China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea, with minor arsenals but which are not for this reason alone, negligible.
- Fourth: the non-nuclear members of Nato have not signed up to the Treaty. Note in particular, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Turkey all of which host US nuclear bombs. Holland, after participating in the negotiations, expressed a contrary position when the time to vote came. A total of 73 UN member states are not party to the treaty, including the US/Nato's principal partners: Ukraine, Japan and Australia.

This means that the treaty is not capable, in its current form of slowing down the race to nuclear weapons; a race that is becoming even more dangerous especially from the qualitative angle. At the head is the United States that using revolutionary technology has launched the modernization of its nuclear force: this is what Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists reports; for this “triples the destructive power of the existing US ballistic missiles”, as if the US is planning to have “the capacity to fight and win a nuclear war by disarming the enemies with a surprise first strike”. A capacity that also includes the “anti-missile shield” to neutralize enemy reprisal, such as that lined up by the United States in Europe, against Russia and in South Korea against China. Russia and China are also undertaking the modernization of their own nuclear arsenals. In 2018, Russia will line up a new inter-continental ballistic missile, the Sarmat, with a range up to 18,000 km, capable of transporting 10-15 nuclear heads that, by entering the atmosphere at hypersonic speed (more than ten times the speed of sound), manoeuvre to dodge the interceptor missiles piercing the “shield”.

Among the countries that are not party to the Treaty is Italy, tripping over itself to follow the United States. The reason is clear. If Italy signed up to the Treaty, it would then have an obligation under international law to divest itself of US nuclear bombs lined up on its territory. The Gentiloni government, while defining the Treaty “as strongly divisive instrument”, concedes that it is committed to “apply every aspect of the Non Proliferation Treaty”, which is the cornerstone of disarmament”. This NPT is a treaty that Italy ratified in 1975 but is constantly violating. For the NPT binds every state that is militarily non-nuclear “not to receive from anyone nuclear weapons, nor to control such weapons, directly or indirectly”. Instead, Italy has made its territory available to the United States to install at least 50 B-61 nuclear bombs at Aviano and 20 such bombs at Ghedi-Torre; the US has also trained up Italian pilots to use them. From 2020, the B61-12 will be stored in Italy: a new US arm for a nuclear first strike. In this way, Italy, formally a non-nuclear country, will be transformed into the front line for an increasingly dangerous nuclear confrontation between USA/Nato and Russia.

So that the Treaty adopted by the United Nations (but ignored by Italy) is not limited to paper, we are forced into claiming that Italy will observe the NPT defined by the government as the “cornerstone for disarmament”. By this declaration, we are calling for the complete de-nuclearization of our national territory.

Translated from Italian to English by [Anoosha Boralessa](#) for Voltairenet

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