



## IPI MEETING BRIEF

### Global Governance and the State of Nuclear Weapons

The nuclear status quo is not sustainable. Regulating and containing the world's supply of nuclear weapons continues to be a major challenge in global governance today. While there have been pockets of progress made, largely rhetorical or symbolic in nature, significant gaps remain. These were just a few of the conclusions offered at a roundtable discussion, hosted by the International Peace Institute, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations, at IPI on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Ramesh Thakur, Director of the Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (CNND) at the Australian National University, shared key findings from the recently published report entitled "Nuclear Weapons: The State of Play." Discussants Jayantha Dhanapala, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and Ward Wilson of the British American Security Information Council, also contributed their thoughts.

The following insights emerged from the discussion:

- Global governance, in the context of nuclear weapons, is a two-tier system of the "haves and the have-nots." The world must ensure that the structure is abolished in order to work toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.
- More than \$100 billion dollars is spent every year in maintaining and modernizing nuclear weapons. The report finds that modest progress has been made on nuclear arms reduction. Russia and the U.S. have made cuts to their stockpiles under the START treaty, while France and the U.K. have met their disarmament objectives. However, no progress has been made in reducing the high launch-alert status of 2,000 American and Russian weapons. The report argues that nuclear-armed states pay merely lip-service to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and continue to place nuclear arms in their security policies.
- Some progress has been made on the global nuclear architecture and on efforts towards reducing proliferation risks of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, international standards, accountability, transparency, and the means to judge whether commitments are being met are lacking.
- Civil society and non-nuclear armed states can play an important role in nuclear arms reduction. The disinvestment campaign, recently released by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), targets banks, pension funds, and insurance companies with substantial investment in nuclear arms production. In addition, nuclear modernization efforts can also be discouraged by civil society groups.

The *Global Observatory* interview with Ramesh Thakur can be found [here](#).

-Nadia Mughal