

## Book Review

# Peace and disarmament: A world without nuclear weapons

Hannes Swoboda and Jan Marinus Wiersma (eds.)

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The edited volume *Peace and Disarmament: A World without Nuclear Weapons* by Hannes Swoboda and Jan Marinus Wiersma is a compilation of papers from conferences organized by the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. The volume is an academic and official book, and, as the President of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, notes ‘we also need a shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons’ and the EU can play a role to support a world without nuclear weapons. The book attempts to address the risk of the nuclear proliferation and develop a new consensus on how international community is to tackle the nuclear proliferation. Using an interdisciplinary approach to explore the common challenges and threats, the contributors range from leading experts, politicians and civil society organizations from around the world, the United States to Europe and Russia, and presents the viewpoints of policymakers with a convincing background on armament and disarmament subjects. In addition to this, the book clearly accentuates the basis for the security guarantee needed to counter the nuclear proliferation effectively. The first three chapters discuss the role of Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the studies toward disarmaments, the European proposals for strengthening disarmament and the concept of ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ countries in relations to nuclear weapon holders.

The next five chapters set the agenda for nuclear disarmament, which is discussed in diverse settings such as the new policy and the NATO’s nuclear deterrent strategy. These five chapters are mainly based on the idea that fewer nuclear weapons mean a safer world. Furthermore, these chapters suggest that the solutions to address the proliferation of nuclear capability must reach across the globe and look at the new ways of thinking. Turning to an alternative, and possibly more practical, solution to nuclear weapons, Rebecca Johnson and Volodymyre Yelchenko examine the role of political decisions and the need to manage security without nuclear weapons. Notably, Yelchenko casts crucial light on the importance of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Dominique Lalanne and Kate Hudson pick up the narrative by arguing that to free the world of nuclear weapons by 2020, the heads of states, local, regional and representatives at all levels should show the will for the new opportunity and negotiations for the nuclear weapons conventions. The final two chapters explore the importance of nuclear issues in the twenty-first century and for the role of the promotion of the multilateral nuclear arrangement beyond the European Union. Some contributors make an appropriate reference to NATO’s nuclear deterrence, and engage in dialog with existing



literature such as the US policy on nuclear threats. However, the ways in which the European Union can progress toward a constructive role on nuclear arrangement by examining the recent case of nuclear threat states are not discussed.

In summary, 19 contributors provide a multilayered picture of disarmament. More precisely, the utmost intention of contributors, is the link between the growing interest in nuclear energy, and the strengthening of the global non-proliferation regime.

Inevitably, in any edited volume, there are some variations in the quality of the contributors. In addition, the book suffers from the lack of a clear International Relations theory. For example, Swoboda and Wiersma among other contributors go through the various solutions for disarmament, and the ways for reducing nuclear weapons. However, these illustrations do not provide strong evidence of International Relations theories. Viewed in this way, the desecuritization<sup>1</sup> process as one example among others, might be a possible means to trace how the threat of nuclear weapons might be reduced in the future. Swoboda and Wiersma's volume does make a valuable contribution to the ongoing academic debate regarding the peace and disarmament. Although on its own the volume may not apply an International Relations theory, it nevertheless provides a basis from which to further investigate the global threat of the nuclear weapons through other research approaches.

## Note

- 1 According to Buzan and Wæver (2003), desecuritization represents the process by which a political community ceases to treat something as an existential threat to a referent object and reduces calling for urgent measure to deal with the threat (p. 489)

## Reference

- Buzan, B. and Wæver, O. (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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