

# JAPAN & NUCLEAR WEAPONS: A COMPLICATED TIMELINE

Japan is the only country to have suffered a nuclear attack, its people first-hand witnesses to the widespread devastation these weapons can cause. But when it comes to making sure it never happens again, Japan's position on nuclear disarmament is not as clear-cut as you would expect.



## 1945: 2 NUCLEAR WEAPONS DETONATED

Little Boy, uranium, Blast Yield: 15kt  
Hiroshima, August 6th, 8:15am



Combined explosive power of **36000 tonnes of TNT**.  
6.7km<sup>2</sup> of the city leveled and  
ground temperatures of **4000 °C** in Nagasaki

Fat Man, plutonium, Blast Yield: 21 kt  
Nagasaki, August 9th, 11:02am



**210,000 dead** by the end of the year.  
90% of doctors and nurses killed or injured and  
**42 out of 45 hospitals destroyed** in Hiroshima.

## ONE CRY: NEVER AGAIN

## 1960-1975: CIRCLING THE US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA

A nuclear umbrella arrangement is one where a state that does not have nuclear weapons depends on a state that does have them, for protection.



**1960**

Under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation & Security, Japan secretly agrees to be placed under the US umbrella and allow US warships to transit its waters carrying nuclear weapons



**1967**

Japan adopts a non-nuclear weapons policy through its "Three non-nuclear principles":

- non-possession
- non-production
- non-introduction of nuclear weapons on its territory



**1968**

Japan joins the Non-Proliferation Treaty



**1975**

Japan officially positions itself under the US nuclear umbrella

## 2010-2018: CONTRADICTION WORDS, LITTLE ACTION

**2011**

Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba:  
*"Japan must play a leading role in the international community's discussions of nuclear disarmament ... aimed at **the realisation of a world free of nuclear weapons.**"*

**but**

Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba:  
*"I don't think Japan should have nuclear [weapons]... at the same time, Japan can make them whenever we decide."*



**Japan's Plutonium Stockpile (47 tonnes) is enough to make 6000 nuclear weapons**

**2013**

Japan and the US declare that they both remain committed to the security of Japan:  
*"through the **full range of US military capabilities including nuclear and conventional.**"*

**2016-2018**

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe claims Japan will never possess or consider possessing nuclear weapons

**while**

Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba says that Japan should debate the third principle of non introduction of nuclear weapons and **Japan does not join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.**

**IT'S TIME FOR JAPAN TO TAKE ACTION FOR A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.  
IT'S TIME FOR JAPAN TO SIGN THE #NUCLEARBAN**

## Summary information

Alliance with nuclear weapon state	Yes (United States)
Uranium enrichment capacity (tSWU/yr)	1150 <sup>1</sup>
Plutonium stockpile	47 tonnes <sup>2</sup>
Party to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty	Yes
Party to the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons	No

## NUCLEAR POSTURE AND DECLARATORY POLICY

Japan, as the only state to suffer a wartime nuclear weapon attack on its territory, might have been expected to wholeheartedly endorse the TPNW. But this has not been the case. Although Japan cites the current threat from the North Korean regime as well as from China as excuses not to adhere to the Treaty, in fact it has openly positioned itself under the US nuclear umbrella since 1975. At the first session of the UN Diplomatic Conference that negotiated the TPNW, Toshiki Fujimori, Assistant Secretary-General of the Japan Confederation of Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) and a *hibakusha* told the Conference that: “Nobody, in any country, deserves seeing the same hell on earth again.”<sup>3</sup>

Although it does not itself possess nuclear weapons,<sup>4</sup> Japan is covered by the United States (US) nuclear umbrella in accordance with the principles underpinning the bilateral 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. No nuclear weapons are stationed on Japanese territory, although Japan and the United States, following the negotiation of the 1960 Treaty, reached a secret unwritten understanding whereby Japan would not object to US warships carrying nuclear weapons in Japanese territorial waters.<sup>5</sup> To considerable government embarrassment, there was public disclosure in 2010 of the agreement (which had been concluded in 1969).<sup>6</sup>

In 2013, the Governments of the United States and Japan issued a joint statement declaring they remained committed to the security of Japan “through the full range of US military capabilities, including nuclear and conventional.”<sup>7</sup> Japan’s National Security Strategy of December 2013 states that “with regard to the threat of nuclear weapons, the extended deterrence of the U.S. with nuclear deterrence at its core is indispensable. In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the extended deterrence, Japan will work closely with the U.S., and take appropriate measures through its own efforts, including ballistic missile

<sup>1</sup> International Panel on Fissile Materials, “Facilities: Enrichment Plants” (accessed 7 June 2018).

[http://fissilematerials.org/facilities/enrichment\\_plants.html](http://fissilematerials.org/facilities/enrichment_plants.html); Wise Uranium Project, “Uranium Maps and Statistics” (Last updated 18 July 2018). <http://www.wise-uranium.org/umaps.html?set=enr>.

<sup>2</sup> Ten tonnes are reported to be stored in Japan while the remainder of the stockpile is in France and the United Kingdom for reprocessing. S. Ito, “Japan’s growing plutonium stockpile fuels fears”, *PhysOrg* (17 July 2018). <https://phys.org/news/2018-07-japan-plutonium-stockpile-fuels.html>.

<sup>3</sup> “Address by ‘hibakusha’ Toshiki Fujimori at U.N. conference to ban nuclear weapons”, *Mainichi Japan* (28 March 2017). <https://goo.gl/LmE3DY>.

<sup>4</sup> Japan’s Atomic Energy Basic Law of 1955 restricts its nuclear energy use to exclusively peaceful purposes.

<sup>5</sup> H. Kristensen, “Japan under the US Nuclear Umbrella”, *Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability*, 21 July 1999. <https://goo.gl/JpCnd7>.

<sup>6</sup> “Japan confirms secret pact on US nuclear transit”, *BBC News* (21 March 2010). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8557346.stm>.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee Toward a More Robust Alliance and Greater Shared Responsibilities (3 October 2013). <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/U.S.-Japan-Joint-Statement-of-the-Security-Consultative-Committee.pdf>.

defense (BMD) and protection of the people”.<sup>8</sup> In February 2017, President Trump and Prime Minister Abe issued a Joint Statement, in which it was declared that: “The U.S. commitment to defend Japan through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, is unwavering.”<sup>9</sup>

In 2011, Japanese Minister of Defence Shigeru Ishiba said: “I don’t think Japan should have nuclear [weapons]. However, at the same time, Japan can make them whenever we decide — within a year. And this in itself may be a deterrent.”<sup>10</sup> Japan has stockpiles of plutonium said to be sufficient to create 6,000 nuclear weapons.<sup>11</sup>

### ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT POLICY

Japan’s non-nuclear weapons policy, first elaborated in 1967, is known as the Three Non-Nuclear Principles (non-possession, non-production, and non-introduction of nuclear weapons). On 6 August 2016, Prime Minister Abe claimed that Japan would never possess, or even consider possessing, nuclear weapons.<sup>12</sup> In early September 2017, however, set against the backdrop of North Korea’s nuclear weapons programme, former Japanese Minister of Defence, Shigeru Ishiba, said that Japan should debate the abolition of the third principle: on the non-introduction of nuclear weapons on Japanese territory.<sup>13</sup>

Japan continues to support nuclear non-proliferation, but is more hesitant in practice to support comprehensive nuclear disarmament. In 2011, Japan’s then Foreign Minister, Koichiro Gemba, said in the country’s latest disarmament policy: “As the only state that has suffered the horrific effects of atomic bombings, Japan must play a leading role in the international community’s discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, aimed at the realization of ‘a world free of nuclear weapons’.”<sup>14</sup>

### NUCLEAR MODERNISATION AND FINANCING

PAX’s *Don’t Bank on the Bomb* 2018 report found evidence of investment in nuclear weapons by many Japanese financial institutions.<sup>15</sup> Mitsubishi UFJ Financial invests in all 20 nuclear weapons manufacturers, one of the few banks in the world to do so. Sumitomo Mitsui Financial invests in 18 nuclear weapons manufacturers while Mizuho Financial invests in 11. Orix invests in three such manufacturers, while Nomura and Sumitomo Mitsui Trust invest in one each.

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<sup>8</sup> Japan National Security Strategy 2013. <https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryoku/131217anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Joint Statement from President Donald J. Trump and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Issued on 10 February 2017.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/joint-statement-president-donald-j-trump-prime-minister-shinzo-abe/>.

<sup>10</sup> R. Lloyd Parry, “Japan should consider nuclear weapons to counter North Korea threat, says former minister”, *The Times* (7 September 2017). <https://goo.gl/S9FFLX>.

<sup>11</sup> S. Ito, “Japan’s growing plutonium stockpile fuels fears”, *PhysOrg*.

<sup>12</sup> “Nuclear Weapons Program”, *GlobalSecurity.org*, 21 December 2016, at: <https://goo.gl/L8tnB5>.

<sup>13</sup> R. Lloyd Parry, “Japan should consider nuclear weapons to counter North Korea threat, says former minister”, *The Times* (7 September 2017).

<sup>14</sup> *Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy of Japan* (2011).

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/disarmament/policy/pdfs/pamph1103.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Maaike Beenes and Susi Snyder, *Don’t Bank on the Bomb*, Pax and ICAN (2018). [https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018_Report.pdf).