

Preface

For a long time, nuclear weapons have been regarded as rendering influence politically and militarily on the international political landscape. This observation is especially salient in the international political science, international relations, and security policy disciplines in which a range of studies have been conducted from various perspectives, not limited to but including, nuclear deterrence, nuclear proliferation, nuclear arms control, nuclear disarmament, and nuclear security. In particular, in view of the global developments related to nuclear weapons, recent years have witnessed a gradually increasing number of studies on the so-called “nuclear age.” Underlying this are the end of the Cold War characterized by the United States and Soviet Union facing off against each other with a formidable nuclear capability that overwhelmed the other; and the shift from the post-Cold War era of “nuclear forgetting,” which began with nuclear arms control and disarmament showing effectiveness, to the rise of new nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism threats, the reemergence of the “long shadow of nuclear weapons” in international politics, and ultimately to an era of intensifying great power competition amid the “revival of nuclear weapons.”

Nowadays, with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, nuclear threats are openly discussed along with attempts to change the status quo by force. Meanwhile, there are growing new expectations and concerns about nuclear deterrence, including the accession of Finland and Sweden to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which has long been a “nuclear alliance.” At the same time, Northeast Asia is home to a nuclear-weapon state and a de facto nuclear power with many transparency issues—China is expected to increase its nuclear warheads significantly and constitute the “three nuclear superpowers” in the 2030s, while North Korea is developing nuclear weapons in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and continuing to engage in military provocations.

Amidst a major upheaval in the international political and security situation surrounding nuclear weapons, the question of what kind of

political and military changes the “nuclear age” will bring in the future and what international security environment it will create is an important one that needs to be revisited today.

This is the second book in the NIDS Perspectives series whose inaugural book was published in 2023. It is a product of research conducted on a specific issue with “nuclear age” as the keyword, not of regional studies which is one of the trends in security research. More specifically, this is an academic work that delves into the contemporary issues and debates surrounding the “nuclear age.” Seven scholars from the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) who specialize in theoretical and policy issues related to nuclear weapons and their intersecting areas held extensive discussions and compiled insights based on their respective areas of expertise. The authors are Ichimasa Sukeyuki (editor), Kurita Masahiro, Motoyama Isao, Ohnishi Ken, Maeda Yuji, Arie Koichi, and Yoshida Tomoaki.

This book deals with the theme of the “nuclear age” that has been covered by a rich body of works and owes much to the extensive intellectual contributions that have preceded it. All of the authors of this book aspired to build on the numerous prior studies and make some academic contribution to the aforementioned issues, with the strong hope that it will offer readers with a new perspective for envisaging the “new horizons of the nuclear age.” We welcome readers to provide critiques and suggestions on the contents.

In writing this book, two intensive workshops were held at NIDS, and advice and peer review were received on the outline and the first draft from two distinguished experts in the field, Dr. Kurizaki Shuhei, associate professor at Waseda University’s Faculty of Political Science and Economics, and Dr. Tosaki Hirofumi, chief managing director of the Japan Institute of International Affairs’ Center for Disarmament, Science and Technology. We are grateful to Dr. Kurizaki and Dr. Tosaki for their assistance. The views expressed in this book are the personal views of the authors formulated in the course of their academic research, and they bear full responsibility for any errors or omissions. This book does not necessarily represent the official position of NIDS, the Ministry of Defense, or the Government of Japan. We would be more than pleased if the discussions in this book contribute to deepening scholarly and policy considerations on the “nuclear age” and to their further development.

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