

Preface

This updated edition of the NPT Briefing Book is released to coincide with the 2026 NPT Review Conference. Designed as a comprehensive reference guide, it serves diplomats, academics, and civil society members engaged in the NPT and its review process. Since its inaugural edition, produced in 1990 by Professor John Simpson at Southampton University, the Briefing Book has been regularly updated with new documents and sources ahead of every session. It has become a fixture of NPT meetings, structured to be accessible to both seasoned experts and newcomers alike.

In editing this edition of the Briefing Book, I have accumulated many debts of gratitude. I am deeply grateful to John Simpson, whose foundations and insights continue to guide this project. I would also like to thank the excellent team at King's College London for their vital roles in this production, specifically Aleksina Kallunki, Michael Abrahams, Isabel Lucio, Marcia Clough, Kieran Bird, Ralph Parfect, Ross Peel, and Chris Hobbs. My thanks also go to our partners at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, particularly Jean du Preez and Bill Potter. I extend my appreciation to Mark Smith and Wilton Park team for providing a crucial platform to discuss NPT issues, which helps inform the Briefing Book. Finally, I am very grateful to Jana Eggers-Dymarski and Darius Rahimi from the German Federal Office for their steadfast support.

NPT Briefing Book 2026 Guide

This edition of the Briefing Book is divided into two parts. Part I opens with an updated introductory guide to nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. It then provides a summary of the evolution of the NPT and its review process. Separate sections provide a factual summary account of the proceedings and outcomes of preceding NPT review cycles. In this edition, a summary of the last NPT Review Conference in 2022 has been added, as well as summaries for the three PrepCom sessions held in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Part II contains reference documents, both old and new, organised in thematic chapters. Each chapter is assigned a separate alphabetic code. The documents come from a variety of sources, although priority is given to official documents from international organisations and governments. In cases where a document belongs to two sections, it is kept only in one, and a reference to its location is inserted in the other. Not all documents are included in full, as some include just relevant excerpts. In such cases, the marker '[Eds . . .]' has been used to show where text has been omitted.

The content of the chapters is organised as follows:

Chapter A – The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) This chapter contains the full text of the treaty and the status of signatures and ratifications. The treaty has 191

States Parties, including North Korea, whose withdrawal in 2003 remains legally contested. Palestine was the last state to accede to the treaty, doing so in 2015.

Chapter B – Materials related to the 2026 NPT Review Conference This chapter is divided into three sections.

Section 1 starts with the procedural elements for the 2026 RevCon agreed upon in the 2025 Prepcom. This includes the provisional agenda, the allocation of items to the Committees, and the rules of procedure.

Section 2 brings together insights from the chairs of the three Prepcoms. None of the three PrepComs in 2023, 2024, and 2025 agreed on substantive outcomes.

Disagreements in 2023 meant that even the chair’s factual summary, contrary to precedent, wasn’t included in the official documentation as a working paper after objections from Russia and Iran. From the 2023 PrepCom, the section includes the working paper by the chair of the working group on strengthening the review process of the Treaty. The working group, established by a decision from the last RevCon, was unable to reach consensus on its outcomes, but the paper captures some of the key ideas proposed. The section also includes reflections by the chair of the 2024 PrepCom session issued as a working paper. It also includes the final procedural report of the entire PrepCom with all three sessions, as well as the 2025 Chair’s elements paper on strengthening the review process, particularly aiming to make it more interactive, efficient, and transparent. A draft decision was circulated based on the elements paper, but it didn’t achieve consensus and was not adopted.

Section 3 includes some noteworthy joint statements from the 2025 PrepCom that reflect evolving positions on key topics. This includes a joint statement delivered by Norway, on behalf of 30 states, on the principle of irreversibility. Joint statements on irreversibility were also presented in the 2023 and 2024 Prepcoms. It includes a joint statement delivered by Japan on disarmament and non-proliferation education that was supported by 94 states. The Philippines delivered a joint statement on reducing the risk of nuclear conflict supported by 35 states. Ireland, supported by 58 states, delivered a joint statement on NPT transparency and accountability. Austria delivered a joint statement on New START, supported by 24 states, that called for the immediate commencement of negotiations for a successor agreement.

Chapter C – Materials from previous Review Conferences This chapter collects some of the key outcome documents from previous Review Conferences. As the last two Review Conferences in 2015 and 2022 did not produce a substantive outcome document, a short excerpt from the procedural report for each is included. The section also includes the decision from the Tenth Review Conference on the next review cycle.

It also includes excerpts from the Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. It also includes the three decisions and the resolution on the Middle

East agreed upon in the 1995 Review and Extension Conference as part of the indefinite extension package.

Chapter D – Materials related to the establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East This chapter contains documents reflecting historical and more recent developments on the WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East issue. It is divided into three sections.

Section 1 focuses on key developments in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, established by a UN General Assembly decision in 2018. The key outcomes of the past six conferences, all held in New York in November, are included.

Section 2 addresses recent resolutions linked to the zone proposal, either from the last session of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly or from the most recent IAEA General Conference.

Section 3 includes historical documents on the fate of efforts to implement the 2010 NPT Action Plan on the Middle East. These efforts are still significant given the 2010 Action Plan remains the last substantive NPT outcome document. The section includes a 2012 press release by the Finnish facilitator on the postponement of the conference, called for by the 2010 Action Plan. It also includes submissions by Arab states, Israel, and Iran, each reflecting their positions on the proposal.

Chapter E – N5/P5 Conferences This chapter combines recent and historical documents on the N5/P5 process. This process began in 2009 under UK leadership (the chair is held in rotation) to provide a discussion forum on confidence building and nuclear disarmament for the five nuclear weapons states under the NPT. The process managed to issue regular joint positions until 2016. More recently, it has been unable to do so.

The first section shows a selection of documents reflecting some activities under the UK (two meetings), Chinese (meeting in Dubai) and Russian leadership (meeting in Riyadh and Geneva) chairs. It is notable that, under the Chinese chair, the P5 focused on discussing nuclear doctrines, a focus that continued under the UK in addition to discussions on perceptions of strategic risk. France will follow the UK as the next chair of the P5 in the summer.

The second section lists historical joint statements and positions since 2009 when the process started. The last agreed joint statement was in 2022 ahead of the last RevCon, reaffirming that ‘a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought’.

Chapter F – Declared Nuclear Policies by NPT-recognized NWS This chapter includes a selection of public announcements on nuclear doctrine by the five NPT nuclear-weapon states (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US, listed

alphabetically). This chapter has seen some significant updates since the last edition of the Briefing Book, with several states updating or changing their nuclear posture.

For China, the section includes the relatively old but still most recent defence white paper titled 'China's National Defense in the New Era' that was released in 2019. More recently, in 2025, China released a new white paper with a focus on arms control titled 'China's Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation in the New Era'. Relevant excerpts from the paper linked to Chinese nuclear doctrine are included in the chapter. This paper updates an earlier Chinese paper on the topic that dates back to 2005.

For France, it includes excerpts from the French 2025 National Strategic Review that address nuclear doctrine. It also includes a recent speech from March 2026 by the French President that he dedicated to French nuclear deterrence policy. Noteworthy in that speech is the emergence of a new concept of 'forward deterrence', opening up the possibility of French nuclear deployments in Europe. The speech also announced an increase in the French arsenal and a change in policy about the public disclosure of stockpile figures.

For Russia, the chapter includes 'Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence', which was produced in 2024 and influenced by the developments in the Ukraine war. It replaces the earlier 2020 document and is noteworthy for lowering the declaratory threshold for nuclear weapon employment and codifying the extension of Russia's umbrella to Belarus.

For the UK, the chapter includes relevant nuclear excerpts from the 2025 Strategic Defence Review that opens the door to expanding the UK's potential nuclear delivery methods alongside its traditional submarine-based forces.

For the US, the current administration has suggested it won't undergo a nuclear posture review, so elements from the 2018 review under Trump's first administration were reproduced here. In addition, nuclear-relevant excerpts from the US National Security Strategy released in 2025 are included.

Chapter G – Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons This chapter addresses key developments and background linked to the TPNW and is divided into three sections.

Section 1 includes the text of the treaty, which entered into force in 2021, and updated information on its signatures and ratifications, which now sits at 95 signatories and 74 ratifications.

Section 2 is dedicated to Meetings of States Parties (MSP), three of which have taken place. Their outcome documents in the form of declarations and decisions are included, giving a broad overview of the debates and activities undertaken in these meetings. The first TPNW Review Conference is scheduled for later in 2026.

Section 3 includes historical documents that reflect key positions following the conclusion of the treaty in 2017, including those of the five NPT nuclear states, NATO, the initial sponsors of UN Resolution 73/48, and a 2020 open letter by several former world leaders in support of the Treaty.

Chapter H – Documents related to the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons This chapter contains some of the key documents produced in the four Humanitarian Impact Conferences, the latest of which took place in Austria in 2022. It also includes some statements reflecting key positions on the humanitarian debate, most notably by Austria and Australia, each on behalf of different groups of states, in the 2015 RevCon.

Also noteworthy is the UN resolution in 2024 titled ‘Nuclear war effects and scientific research’ that established an independent scientific panel to study the global effects of nuclear weapons, spearheaded by Ireland and New Zealand. This would be the first such study under the UN umbrella to study the global effects of nuclear war since 1988. In 2025, the UN Secretary-General announced the composition of the panel, which will convene until then and is expected to present its report in 2027.

Chapter I – Bilateral Measures: Russia–United States This chapter captures the deterioration of bilateral arms control between Russia and the US.

Section 1 is dedicated to developments linked to New START, including the 2010 treaty and US and Russian statements about its extension in 2021. In 2022, Russia announced it was stopping inspections under the treaty and issued a statement to that effect by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is included in the chapter. This is followed by a statement reflecting the NATO position. Events took a turn in 2023 when President Putin announced that Russia was suspending its membership in New START. An excerpt from the speech is included. This is followed by a US Fact Sheet showing the countermeasures it was taking in response. Ultimately, the treaty expired in February 2026, and the section ends with two statements by Russia and the US, delivered to the Conference on Disarmament, summing up their positions on the unravelling of the treaty and their approach to the future of arms control.

Section 2 collects some documents that chart key aspects of the bilateral strategic stability dialogue. The Reagan-Gorbachev statement from 1985 has been frequently referenced in more recent debates, so it is included in the section. In 2021, Russia and the US produced a presidential joint statement charting a process for strategic stability discussions. Three meetings were conducted in 2021 and 2022, and three documents in this section chart that journey. The process stalled following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. An excerpt of a press briefing shows the US rationale for stopping the dialogue. In 2023, the US National Security Advisor made a proposal to resume arms control discussions in the Arms Control Association. Excerpts from his speech are produced, as well as an excerpt from a Russian press briefing reflecting their position on the proposal. Ultimately, the process remained stalled.

Sections 3 and 4 reproduce historical documents linked to the INF and Open Skies Treaties, charting their demise in the period between 2019 and 2021.

Chapter J – Resolutions Adopted by the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly This chapter includes a selection of some of the UN resolutions adopted during the First Committee for the 80th ordinary session of the General Assembly.

Of note is a new resolution on the risks of AI on nuclear command and control that was proposed by Mexico and adopted with 118 in favour and 9 against, including France, Russia, the UK, and the US. Also included is a resolution establishing a group of scientific and technical expertise on nuclear disarmament, which was adopted with 170 votes in favour, with the US and Russia voting against. And another on victim assistance and environmental remediation, presented by Kiribati and Kazakhstan, that was adopted with 167 in favour and 4 against (France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and the DPRK).

The section also includes updated nuclear disarmament resolutions that represent different priorities and emphases on the issue, led by Japan, the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), and the Non-aligned Movement (NAM). In addition, resolutions on humanitarian consequences and the TPNW are included. Their voting record shows the landscape of views on these issues.

Chapter K – UN Security Council Resolutions This chapter contains the texts of four relevant UN Security Council resolutions: 1540, 1887, 1977, and 2310. The chapter also includes a Security Council Resolution that extends the mandate of the 1540 Committee for an additional ten years (until 2032).

Japan hosted a high-level ministerial meeting in the Security Council on disarmament and non-proliferation in March 2024, but it didn't produce any statements. The section includes a draft Security Council resolution on weapons-free outer space that was introduced by Japan and the US in April 2024 and aimed at preventing a nuclear arms race in space. It was not adopted because of Russia's veto.

Chapter L – Nuclear Weapons Testing This chapter presents some of the relevant developments relating to the CTBT, which has yet to enter into force despite 178 ratifications. The chapter includes the 'Final Declaration and Measures to Promote the Entry into Force' document produced by the last Article XIV Conference in 2025.

It also includes a press statement by the Russian Duma on de-ratifying the CTBT in 2023. The latest First Committee Resolution on the CTBT is included. This is followed by a group of statements that reflect allegations and counter-allegations of testing by the US and China, with some input from the CTBTO and the Norwegian organisation NORSAR.

Chapter M – Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaties This chapter shows the status of the treaties establishing the various Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs).

The section also includes a 2024 UN resolution that mandated a new study on nuclear-weapon-free zones that is expected to conclude in 2026. The section also includes commemorative statements marking the anniversary of the Bangkok Treaty as well as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Chapter N – The International Atomic Energy Agency: Statutes, Resolutions and Decisions This chapter contains an update on some of the key resolutions and decisions adopted in the 69th Session of the IAEA General Conference, including those on nuclear security, strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of Agency safeguards, implementation of NPT safeguards in the DPRK, and the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East. To note is a resolution on the nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in Ukraine. Iran and AUKUS continue to trigger heated debates in the IAEA, and those are covered in the final chapter.

Chapter O – Safeguards Agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency This chapter provides an update on the status of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol. Since the last update, the number of states with an Additional Protocol has increased to 144, with the number of states that have signed but not yet ratified down to 12. Non-nuclear-weapon states under the NPT that don't have a CSA are down to three: Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, and Somalia.

Chapter P – Conference on Disarmament This chapter covers key developments in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which continues to be deadlocked without a concrete, viable path forward. The chapter includes recent decisions on the work of the conference. It also includes the last two reports from the conference to the General Assembly that summarise key activities in the CD. In its current session, the CD has not agreed on a decision about a programme of work or subsidiary bodies.

Chapter Q – Security Assurances This chapter contains the texts of two Security Council resolutions on the issue, as well as the texts of some unilateral security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon states. Due to their renewed significance, a subsection within the chapter covers key documents on security assurances to three of the former Soviet republics: Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.

Chapter R – Export Controls This chapter includes documents related to the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This includes the most recent 8th revision of IAEA INFCIRC 539 document that updates the NSG guidelines. An Argentinian statement to the last RevCon and a statement by South Africa, the chair of the last plenary, reflect recent developments. Whereas previously the NSG had agreed to joint statements at their plenary, it has not been able to do so recently due to tensions within the group.

Chapter S – Nuclear Security This chapter includes updates on the status of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, as well as on the status of its amendment, which took effect in 2016.

The chapter also includes the communiqué from the last Nuclear Security Summit in 2016, as well as the Ministerial Declaration of the International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS), organised at the IAEA in Vienna in 2020. The war in Ukraine launched in 2022 has caused concerns about the safety and security of nuclear installations. This amplified tensions in the nuclear security regime. The last ICONS held in 2024 didn't adopt a consensual declaration; instead, the co-presidents issued a statement, which is included in the chapter alongside a joint statement on Ukraine sponsored by a large number of states.

The section ends with a 2024 joint statement reflecting the establishment of a Global Forum to Prevent Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism. This, in effect, assumes some of the functions of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which was under joint US and Russian leadership but became stagnant in the aftermath of the 2022 war in Ukraine.

Chapter T – Miscellaneous Documents This chapter contains five sections.

Section 1 contains documents linked to addressing Iran's nuclear programme. This includes UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that was adopted to endorse the Iran nuclear deal (or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) and dealt with sanctions relief. This is followed by a 2025 IAEA Board of Governors (BoG) resolution that found Iran to be in non-compliance. The section also includes two letters reflecting different views on the snapback mechanism: one by China, Iran, and Russia, and the other by the E3 calling for sanctions to be re-applied. The chapter also includes an IAEA Board of Governors (BoG) resolution on Iran from 27 February 2026, the latest in a string of resolutions on the matter.

In February 2026, Israeli and US attacks on Iran has catapulted this issue to the forefront of global attention. The impact of the attacks on multilateral nuclear fora is yet to be fully discerned. The section ends with Resolution 2817, adopted in March 2026 by the Security Council and presented by Bahrain with 135 co-sponsors. The resolution condemns Iran's attack on Gulf Arab states and was passed with 13 votes in favour and 2 abstentions by China and Russia.

Section 2 includes documents that chronicle the international community's diplomatic and operational response to the severe nuclear safety crisis sparked by the war in Ukraine from 2022 to 2026. This was an issue that had great influence on the outcome of the last RevCon. It includes a series of IAEA Board of Governors resolutions, from 2022 onwards, that capture the deteriorating situation in Ukraine's nuclear facilities. It also contains statements and briefings by the IAEA's Director General that formalised the 'Seven Indispensable Pillars' and 'Five Concrete Principles' framework for addressing the safety and security risks. It also includes a

remarkable 2024 General Assembly resolution calling for the de-militarisation of Ukraine's reactors. More recent reports by the IAEA capture the growing threat from drones and off-site energy infrastructure on the safety and the security of nuclear reactors.

Section 3 addresses the debate on naval nuclear propulsion, particularly as proposed in the alliance between Australia, the UK, and the US (AUKUS). It includes an excerpt from IAEA's latest 2025 report on naval nuclear propulsion in Australia. This is followed by a statement by UK, on behalf of the AUKUS partners, in the IAEA that lays out their joint position. The section also includes a 2025 statement by China, one of the fiercest critics of the arrangement, delivered during IAEA Board of Governors discussion on the issue.

Section 4 is dedicated to developments on the proposal for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). It includes a joint statement from 2024 by the 'Friends of FMCT' which is an initiative spearheaded by Japan and which convened a high-level meeting in 2025 in New York. It also includes a statement by Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands in 2024 explaining why they decided not to field a resolution on FMCT in the first committee reflecting their frustration with lack of progress on the issue and also indicating that other fora, beyond the Conference on Disarmament, could be considered for negotiations.

Section 5 includes the Nuclear Energy Declaration adopted during COP28 (2023), which commits to tripling nuclear energy worldwide and which now has 38 endorsing states. It also includes the declaration from the first nuclear energy summit held in Brussels in 2024. And the chapter ends with recommendations from the Japanese-sponsored 'Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons'.

Hassan Elbahtimy

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