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**BASIC**

# The Nuclear Responsibilities Toolkit

A Practical Guide for Thinking,  
Talking and Writing

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# The Authors



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## BASIC

BASIC is a London-based think tank that promotes meaningful dialogue amongst governments and experts in order to build international trust, reduce nuclear risks, and advance disarmament. We have a global reputation for convening distinctive and empathic dialogues that help states overcome complex strategic and political differences. Our established networks and expertise, developed since 1987, enable us to get the right people in the room and facilitate effective, meaningful exchange between siloed and often hostile political communities.

## Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security

The Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security at the University of Birmingham adopts a multidisciplinary approach to global security challenges to create innovative research, education, and training in conflict and cooperation in world politics. Its key strategic priorities are: (i) to sustain and advance a culture that enables world-leading research; (ii) to generate impact with practitioner communities; (iii) to be the destination of choice for students seeking knowledge and skills about global security challenges; and (iv) to inspire meaningful engagement with real-world issues.

## Acknowledgements

Creating the Nuclear Responsibilities Toolkit has been possible thanks to the contributions of a great many people who have been involved with the Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities since its inception in 2016. Many of the dialogues and consultations that have fed into its development have been held in private, so it is not possible to thank everybody by name.

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# Introduction

**The Nuclear Responsibilities Approach is a way of reframing how we think, talk and write about nuclear weapons: one that puts stakeholders' responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons at its centre.**

Adopting the Approach means reflecting on and adapting the mindsets and conceptual models we use to assess nuclear weapons policies and practices, as well as the language we use to explain and justify these policies and practices in our dialogues and our publications.

This means shifting the focal question away from how certain policies and practices might meet certain *national interests* or fulfil a particular stakeholder's *rights* in relation to nuclear weapons, towards asking what a stakeholder's *responsibilities*

in relation to nuclear weapons are, how they are being fulfilled, and how they interact with the responsibilities of others.

In doing so, the Approach aims to provide an alternative vocabulary and model for exchange that can stimulate new thinking and research, and reinvigorate dialogue on one of the world's most intractable issues. While the Approach is highly adaptable, we focus in this Toolkit on how it can operate at three main levels.

## 1

### National Level

At the national level, the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach offers new conceptual tools to shape internal debates and deliberations over nuclear weapons policy and planning. We contend that developing robust and ethical policies and practices in relation to nuclear weapons starts with a rigorous, bottom-up assessment of nuclear responsibilities, and this Toolkit provides a Responsibilities Framework with which to do this.

## 2

### Regional Level

At the regional level, the Approach offers a means to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on common security concerns. The Approach opens up new pathways to reduce distrust between nuclear possessor states, as well as between nuclear possessor and non-nuclear possessor states, leading to the development of new trusting relationships that can promote effective cooperation across regional security institutions.

## 3

### International Level

At the international level, the Approach is offered as a new language and collective guiding principle that can help transcend the chronic blame game at the heart of international nuclear politics that stymies dialogue, cooperation, and trust.

# The Purpose of this Toolkit

**This Toolkit provides a conceptual and practical guide to policy communities who would like to experiment with the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach. It offers three central contributions:**

1. A new policy exploration tool called the Responsibilities Framework (Part B).
2. A model three-stage process for dialogue on nuclear responsibilities (Part C and Annexes).
3. Advice and inspiration for research and writing on nuclear responsibilities (Part D).

Each of these contributions are related, but each also stands on its own. For this reason the Toolkit can be useful to multiple audiences. The Toolkit will assist:

- **Policy makers and influencers** in thinking holistically and systematically about their state's nuclear responsibilities and those of others: by providing a new Responsibilities Framework that they can use to structure their deliberations.
- **Convenors of dialogues** on nuclear weapons and other security challenges at the national, regional and international levels: by providing a three-stage Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process that can be followed.
- **Parties to dialogues** on nuclear responsibilities: by setting out some key considerations and answering some key questions that often come up in such dialogues.
- **Researchers** looking for relatively unexplored frameworks for analysis, critique, and policy engagement.

The ideas contained throughout this Toolkit are based on our own experiences as researchers and practitioners. The Toolkit has been developed based on the learnings of the Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities, run jointly between BASIC and the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS) at the University of Birmingham. Between 2016 and 2021 we have pioneered the Approach through a series of dialogues, interviews, focus groups, and research pieces. While many of the theoretical ideas are distilled from a longer report by Brixey-Williams and Wheeler, *Nuclear Responsibilities: A New Approach for Thinking and Talking about Nuclear Weapons* (2020), this Toolkit deepens and translates them into a more practice-oriented format for official and non-governmental audiences.<sup>1</sup>

The Toolkit follows a number of principles. First, by creating this Toolkit we aim to make the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach *open source and accessible*, such that anyone can understand what it is for and how it can be used, and that by doing so people will feel able to trust in the Approach. Second, the Toolkit is *non-prescriptive and flexible*, in the sense that it aims to provide a 'compass rather than a map' by offering questions and prompts, in order to equip readers to utilise the tools in their own ways. Third, the Toolkit is *modular*: as with any toolbox, readers are invited to pick and choose the tools contained herein that are most helpful for their circumstances. Fourth, it is *non-exhaustive*, and readers may well find or create their own tools that fit their circumstances better. Finally, the Toolkit is *evolving*, and as time goes on the Toolkit may be updated to reflect new insights.



# Who can use this Toolkit?

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## Government Ministers

You are the new minister in charge of reviewing your state's policies in relation to nuclear weapons, and you're looking for a holistic and systematic way to approach this task within the Ministry. The framework outlined in this Toolkit is perfectly placed to support you and your colleagues through the process. You are also in charge of fostering dialogue with allies and adversaries on nuclear issues, and you are looking for a way to make this as constructive as possible. Stimulating a conversation about your shared responsibilities might be an insightful way in.

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## National Policy Officials

You have been tasked by a government minister to review your state's policies in relation to nuclear weapons, and you want to thoroughly explore your state's responsibilities in more depth before starting to draw up specific policies.

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## Global or Regional Security Institution Officials

You are an official of a security institution looking to reduce nuclear risks in the world/your region, and you are looking for a way to frame a dialogue on this issue in an inclusive, effective, and non-confrontational manner.

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## Scholars and Researchers

You are looking for a way to better understand or critique a state's policies and practices in relation to nuclear weapons, many of which have been left deliberately ambiguous on national security grounds. By investigating how the state talks about its responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons, both domestically and internationally, you can glean new insights into what it deems to be acceptable behaviour and draw conclusions about how these normative standards might be borne out in policies and practices.

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## Civil Society and the General Public

You're looking for an opportunity to participate in debates over government policy on nuclear weapons more closely. This Toolkit will strengthen your assessment of the current state of policy, and help you think of new angles to frame your engagement.

# Contents

The Toolkit is organised in four sections. Each section stands alone, and readers are invited to read the Toolkit non-linearly, using whatever sections are most relevant to their needs:

PAGE 9

## Part A: Key Concepts

Key Concepts sets out definitions and answers often-asked questions about the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach.

PAGE 17

## Part B: *Thinking about Nuclear Responsibilities*

Thinking about Nuclear Responsibilities provides the Responsibilities Framework, which you can use to think systematically about a stakeholder's nuclear responsibilities. This will be useful if you are looking to review nuclear weapons policies and practices, or looking to engage in dialogue using the Approach.

PAGE 26

## Part C: *Talking about Nuclear Responsibilities*

Talking about Nuclear Responsibilities offers a model three-stage process that you can follow to facilitate successful dialogue about nuclear responsibilities, at the national, regional, and multilateral levels. This process has been designed based on our experience of hosting nuclear responsibilities dialogues and drawing upon the feedback provided by numerous policy professionals, international relations scholars, and track two practitioners. It also contains an overview of the general practices, learnings, potential traps, and their mitigation strategies that are relevant to dialogue on nuclear responsibilities.

PAGE 35

## Part D: *Writing about Nuclear Responsibilities*

Writing about Nuclear Responsibilities offers practical advice on how to engage with nuclear responsibilities at the written level, with examples of where others have done so.

### ANNEX 1

Annex 1 provides instructions for hosting a nuclear responsibilities dialogue at the national level.

### ANNEX 2

Annex 2 provides instructions for hosting a nuclear responsibilities dialogue at the international level.



The background is a complex, abstract texture in shades of blue, purple, and indigo. It resembles marbled paper or a microscopic view of a mineral surface, with swirling patterns and speckled details. A prominent, darker, almost black, irregular shape is visible in the lower-left quadrant, partially overlapping the text area.

PART A

# Key Concepts



Here, we define some of the key concepts associated with the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach. These concepts may be familiar to some readers, but may be useful to revisit in the context of the Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process explained in Part C.

## What are Nuclear Responsibilities and who has them?

Nuclear responsibilities are the responsibilities of states and other stakeholders in relation to nuclear weapons. These can be both *claimed by* stakeholders in relation to nuclear weapons and *conferred on* these stakeholders by virtue of their participation in the rules, norms, and institutions of international society. The definition of responsibilities, which can have different cultural meanings, is left deliberately open in order to encourage engagement with the Approach.

The Nuclear Responsibilities Approach defines a stakeholder as any actor that can in some way influence nuclear weapons futures. The state is the most obvious actor, but there are a number of other actors at the international, transnational, national, and domestic levels that may influence nuclear weapons futures.

***The Nuclear Responsibilities Approach defines a stakeholder as any actor that can in some way influence nuclear weapons futures.***

Stakeholders do not all share the same responsibilities. To express this principle, the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach proposes that stakeholders should consider themselves to have ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ in relation to nuclear weapons, drawing upon language used in the climate change regime.<sup>2</sup> Responsibilities of different actors can be differentiated according to a range of metrics, including their military power, financial and

technical capabilities, legacies, and willingness to play a leadership role. The Approach makes no claims about hierarchies of these responsibilities or the stakeholders who possess them.

The five recognised Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) have claimed, and are recognised as having a ‘special responsibility’ for reducing nuclear risks and for disarmament. This special responsibility is enshrined in Article VI of the NPT that requires all states to pursue ‘good faith’ measures towards nuclear and conventional disarmament. Special responsibilities can be distinguished from common responsibilities, such as adherence to and promotion of non-proliferation and the reduction of nuclear risks, which are shared by everyone albeit to differing extents.

## Is There Such a Thing as a ‘Responsible Nuclear Weapon State’?

Whilst all of the declared nuclear possessor states have in the past declared themselves to be ‘responsible nuclear weapon states’ (or an equivalent form of wording), the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach advocates against the labelling of states as ‘responsible’ or ‘irresponsible’.

In our experience, the labeling of states and their behaviours as either ‘responsible’ or ‘irresponsible’ feeds the culture of blame that the Approach seeks to move away from. And, many of the stakeholders in the international community argue that the possession of nuclear weapons is inherently irresponsible given their unacceptable humanitarian costs. For these stakeholders there can simply be no such thing as a responsible nuclear weapon state. Using the ‘responsible nuclear weapon state’ label therefore serves only to



# Example Stakeholders



States &  
state leaders



International  
organisations



Regional  
organisations



Alliances



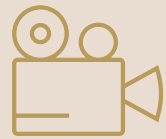
Think tanks



Track two  
networks



Universities



The media



Politicians



Private sector  
organisations



Scientists &  
technologists



Civil society &  
transnational  
advocacy groups



widen the divide between nuclear possessors and non-possessors, and can further stifle the chances of developing empathy for each other's positions.<sup>3</sup>

## What is Empathy?

Empathy has been defined by Roman Krznaric as 'the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that to guide your actions'.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis here is on the development of mutual understanding. As Ralph White reminds us, empathy 'does not necessarily imply sympathy, or tolerance, or liking, or agreement' with the other, 'but simply understanding'.<sup>5</sup>

Claire Yorke explains that this practice of empathy 'is important for the light it sheds not only on the interests or thoughts of others, but also on the role that emotions and feelings play in shaping and driving people's different views of the world'.<sup>6</sup> For Yorke, emotions cannot be ignored in strategic theorising. She writes:

*People are inherently emotional beings, responding not only to ideas of reason or logical interests, but to feelings such as pride, grief, shame, or hope, and to recognition by others of these experiences. Emotions, such as fear or joy, tend to govern what it is one values and the decisions that follow.*<sup>7</sup>

Through a greater understanding of one another, the exercise of empathy can serve to reduce the risks of inadvertent escalation by uncovering and attempting to correct dangerous misperceptions. For such reasons, empathy is increasingly recognised as a useful tool in conflict resolution.

It should be noted that empathy is not a panacea. It is not guaranteed to uncover positive intentions, build trust, or lead to positive outcomes. In cases where actors perceive malign or hostile intent, it can still be useful as a way of understanding how best to deter and defeat an adversary's strategy.<sup>8</sup> Cultivating empathy is a key goal of the BASIC-ICCS Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogues, and the type of empathy the Approach seeks to develop is what has been called 'security dilemma sensibility'.



## What is Security Dilemma Sensibility?

Security dilemma sensibility (SDS) is a particular form of empathy which Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler define as:

*an actor's intention and capacity to perceive the motives behind, and to show responsiveness towards, the potential complexity of the military intentions of others. In particular, it refers to the ability to understand the role that fear might play in their attitudes and behaviour, including, crucially, the role that one's actions may play in provoking that fear.*<sup>9</sup>

The concept of security dilemma sensibility is predicated on the idea that some conflicts may be driven, at root, by misperceptions and misunderstandings. Where both sides have peaceful intentions, inadvertent spirals of security competition can still arise when parties fail to appreciate the security concerns of others. Security dilemma sensibility therefore involves 'putting oneself into the shoes of another and genuinely listening to their concerns'.<sup>10</sup>

The exercise of security dilemma sensibility can serve to mitigate the risk of inadvertent spirals by promoting greater awareness of how certain capabilities, doctrines, or actions may be perceived by others. Security dilemma sensibility is also considered as critical to the development of trust.<sup>11</sup> As with other forms of empathy, the exercise of security dilemma sensibility is only appropriate under certain conditions; namely, when both parties are committed to mutual security. Security dilemma sensibility cannot flourish when actors hold negative perceptions of one another's intentions (see 'What are Enemy Images?' below), and breaking down those perceptions is a key challenge if trust is to develop between adversaries.

## What is Trust?

Trust can be defined as 'the expectation of no harm in contexts where betrayal is always a possibility'.<sup>12</sup> When thinking about trust it is useful to think about the relationship between trust, distrust, and mistrust. Distrust is 'the active belief that another actor cannot be trusted because their past and current behaviour is perceived as untrustworthy'.<sup>13</sup> Mistrust, on the other hand, can be defined as a situation where 'actors are uncertain about the motives and intentions of others. They lack the information and knowledge to decide that others should be distrusted, but nor do they have the positive expectations to take on the vulnerability required for trust'.<sup>14</sup>

The Programme makes a key distinction between trust, mistrust, and distrust between stakeholder parties (such as interstate trust between states) and the same between individuals (interpersonal trust). Dialogues may lead to the growth of social bonds and trust at the interpersonal level, but this has to be translated into concrete policies and strategies of distrust reduction, nuclear risk reduction, and perhaps trust-building at the interstate level. The Toolkit has drawn on a Problem-Solving Approach in developing its dialogical approach to trust-building as shown in the design of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Process in Part C.

## A Problem-Solving Approach to Trust-Building?

Trust is both an important aspect in determining the success of facilitated dialogues as well as a desirable outcome of such dialogues. Trust in the other participants and the facilitators is required if participants are to allow themselves to speak openly about their fears and insecurities, and to make new proposals that might advance the goal of reducing the risks of nuclear and conventional conflict. But as Peter Jones, a highly experienced track two facilitator, argues it is also an objective of

dialogue 'that the participants should bond and come to trust each other'.<sup>15</sup>

The problem-solving approach is a type of conflict resolution method developed and practiced predominantly by John Burton and Herbert Kelman in the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Kelman describes problem-solving workshops as providing an opportunity for 'exploratory, problem-solving, trust building, and relationship-forming interaction' in a non-binding manner.<sup>17</sup> It is this 'unofficial, non-binding character of problem-solving workshops' that 'clearly distinguishes them from official negotiations'.<sup>18</sup>

***Trust in the other participants and the facilitators is required if participants are to allow themselves to speak openly about their fears and insecurities, and to make new proposals.***

The problem-solving approach has strongly influenced Peter Jones' track two diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific in the form of the Ottawa Dialogue.<sup>19</sup> According to Jones the purpose of these small group meetings, brought together by a third party facilitator, is not to rehearse 'official' positions, but to see if new joint understandings can emerge around the table that can lead to new approaches being developed to conflicts and disputes.<sup>20</sup> The problem-solving approach depends upon all parties engaging with a genuine intent to find common ground and explore the possibility of empathy with the other parties present. A major obstacle to the development of such empathy is the presence and persistence of enemy images.

## What are Enemy Images?

An 'enemy image' exists when an actor attributes malign intent to another that has the capabilities to harm them. The challenge with enemy images is that once they are formed, decision makers will often assimilate new evidence, whether ambiguous or not, to support this hostile image of the other.<sup>21</sup> As Ole Holsti explained using his idea of 'an "inherent bad faith" model', negative images of the other block decision-makers from interpreting any conciliatory gestures and moves as evidence of peaceful intent. Instead, there is a tendency to accept only selective information that confirms the enemy image of the other.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler introduce the concept of 'ideological fundamentalism' whereby actors are assigned enemy status based on their political identity rather than how they actually behave.<sup>23</sup>

## What is Nonviolent Communication?

Nonviolent communication (NVC) is a process of communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg that encourages compassion and an empathic way of understanding each other and ourselves. NVC seeks to dismantle old patterns of negative communication, such as blaming, defensiveness or judgement and instead asks actors to focus on empathic listening and honestly expressing (a) what is being observed, (b) what is being felt, (c) what needs are or are not being met and (d) what we want from the other participants.<sup>24</sup> By doing so, NVC moves us away from blame and animosity, into a space where empathy and compassion become possible. NVC thus emphasises deep and active listening, respect and empathy and is widely recognised as an effective method for interpersonal conflict transformation applicable at all levels of communication.<sup>25</sup>



## What is Active Listening?

Active listening involves giving your full attention to the speaker, focusing on both what is being said and the way that it is said. As opposed to passive listening, in which the listener responds to the speaker using non-committal acknowledgements and asks open ended questions, active listening requires the listener to feedback to the speaker the emotions and feelings that were expressed in their narratives to both ensure that their interpretations are correct and that the speaker feels heard.<sup>26</sup>

Active listening techniques include 'responding with understanding, probing or questioning, and summarizing or paraphrasing'.<sup>27</sup> The practice of active listening is central to most mediation programmes and a crucial part of developing empathic understanding.



# Tips for Active Listening



Ensure that you are in a distraction free environment.  
Put away your phone/ computer and give your full attention to the speaker.



Demonstrate that you are listening to the speaker by using culturally-appropriate non-verbal cues (e.g., smiling, nodding, making eye contact, and continuing to face them).



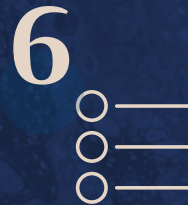
Ask the speaker further questions either out of interest or for further clarification.



Reflect back to the speaker what has been said using language like 'what I am hearing is...'.  
.....



Avoid defensive or judgemental responses.



Summarise the main points at appropriate times in the conversation.



Do not interrupt.



The background is a complex, abstract texture in shades of deep blue, indigo, and purple. It has a grainy, almost crystalline appearance with some lighter, glowing areas that suggest a nebula or a microscopic view of a mineral. The overall effect is ethereal and scientific.

PART B

# Thinking about Nuclear Responsibilities

A FRAMEWORK



**There are many ways to approach thinking about nuclear responsibilities, which is to say that there is no definitive approach. How each of us imagines and conceptually organises our responsibilities in the world differs depending on who you ask.**

The Nuclear Responsibilities Approach is partially a mindset, and each of our minds are different. To some extent, the main thing is to start, by using whatever approach makes most sense. Forming a habit demands that we begin somewhere.

Our experience in developing this Approach shows that groups, in particular, benefit from having a clear framework to provide uniformity and structure. Having a specific framework does not mean that nuclear responsibilities cannot be explored in other ways, but it does provide one way of engaging in this kind of exploration.

***Thinking holistically about nuclear responsibilities requires a number of key questions to be answered, and this guidance is designed to help you carry out a systematic assessment.***

The Responsibilities Framework outlined in this section is offered to individuals or groups to structure their thinking about the nuclear responsibilities of a given stakeholder (or group of stakeholders). Thinking holistically about nuclear responsibilities requires a number of key questions to be answered, and this guidance is designed to help you carry out a systematic assessment.

The Framework is intended to be curiosity-provoking and challenging, opening up new insights and perceptions that can influence policy-making processes and engagement with others. It is explained on the pages that follow, and then summarised in a table on page 25.

## Getting Started

The Responsibilities Framework is a flexible tool, designed to be useful for a range of circumstances. For the purposes of this Toolkit it is offered as a way of thinking about nuclear weapons, but its design is generic and could be adapted to think through responsibilities in relation to many subjects, whether in relation to security (for instance, responsibilities in relation to space or cyber technologies) or other areas of government policy altogether (e.g. climate change, transport, etc).

The Responsibilities Framework can be used to explore any stakeholder's nuclear responsibilities, including yourself, your institution, the policy community that you represent, or another actor altogether – it is up to you where you draw the boundaries. It is often by looking at the interplay between different stakeholders that the most interesting results will emerge, and the dialogue process in Part C aims to facilitate this kind of exploration. The Framework can be used to think widely about responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons, or with a narrower focus, such as responsibilities in relation to nuclear safety. We invite you to be explorative and open-minded about its end uses.









The most important thing is to explore the Framework with honesty and a willingness to challenge cherished beliefs and positions; it is a tool to help you expand your horizons of possibility. We would encourage you to give special attention to those questions that feel most unfamiliar or uncomfortable, as they may well be the most important ones to explore.

Although the Approach is flexible, the order of the questions in the Responsibilities Framework is deliberately chosen and somewhat path dependent, so it is recommended that they be followed in the order in which they are presented. If you are doing this as an individual exercise, we have found that it works best if you use a table to capture your answers, based on the table on page 25. You can download this table's template here: <https://bit.ly/3cyO58X>.<sup>28</sup>

If you are using the Responsibilities Framework as a group, you may want to create a physical table on a large piece of paper or a shared electronic document that you can all edit at once. However, filling out the table should be of secondary importance, insofar as it should not detract from the quality of the conversation. In such cases, it may be helpful to appoint one member who is familiar with this Toolkit to guide the process; a separate person might be elected penholder. A Facilitator's Guide for one form of dialogue is provided in Annex 1.

## Principles

Thinking about Nuclear Responsibilities should be:

 <b>Honest</b>	 <b>Holistic</b>
 <b>Systematic</b>	 <b>Curious</b>
 <b>Open-minded</b>	 <b>Creative</b>
 <b>Playful</b>	 <b>Practical</b>
 <b>Engaging</b>	 <b>Incremental</b>
 <b>Experiential</b>	



# The Responsibilities Framework: A Policy Exploration Tool

The Responsibilities Framework comprises twelve steps. Steps 1 to 3 are designed to set the parameters of your exploration. Steps 4 to 8 invite you to draw continuous causal lines between your chosen stakeholder's beneficiaries, responsibilities, policies, and practices, in order to encourage joined-up, bottom-up thinking and advance policy making. Steps 9 and 10 invite you to explore the conflicts between how your stakeholder implements their responsibilities, also between how others implement theirs, based on your perceptions of their responsibilities. Steps 11 and 12 are more forward facing and invite you to explore opportunities for your stakeholder to better manage these tensions and communicate their responsibilities.

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## STEP 1

### Identify your Stakeholder

Before you begin, it is essential to define the stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) you are exploring. This can be any actor that has nuclear responsibilities i.e. has the ability to influence nuclear weapons futures.

If you are exploring the responsibilities of a state, ask yourself if you are treating it as a unitary actor in the international system, and if so, which official, semi-official, and non-governmental actors does that include or exclude? You might also ask whether it would be better to split it at the sub-national level by exploring, for instance, the responsibilities of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs separately. Alternatively, you could explore the responsibilities of an individual – say, the Head of State or a Minister – or a constituency within the state, such as journalists. Going to the other extreme, you could explore the responsibilities of an alliance or grouping of states, or even the international community as a whole.

You should select the stakeholder that makes most sense to you. Your chosen stakeholder can of course be yourself or the institution you represent, but it is just as important to be clear of the boundaries in this case as any other. If you elect to investigate more than one stakeholder, you should repeat the process for each in sequence and on separate tables.

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## STEP 2

### Choose your Subject of Enquiry

Just as important as identifying your stakeholder is to decide what you are exploring responsibilities in relation to. The default answer of this Toolkit is 'nuclear weapons', but as noted above, you can be more or less specific and you will get different answers. Keeping a broad scope has the advantage of enabling a holistic policy review, so we would encourage doing this before moving on to more specific assessments, but it is up to you.

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## STEP 3

### Clarify your Position

This framework can be explored either descriptively normatively, or both. If you are taking a descriptive approach, aim to answer as you perceive your stakeholder thinks *already* and consider how responsibilities are framed in *existing* policy. If you are taking a normative approach, answer more imaginatively, based on what you believe the answers *should* be or what responsibilities *could* look like. Responsibilities that you think your stakeholder should recognise (but currently do not) would be recorded in a normative, but not a descriptive, approach. Both approaches have value, but it is important to declare your position before starting, especially if working as a group. Once you have been through the process one way, it may be useful to repeat the process the other way and compare the results, or alternatively find a way of noting which answers are descriptive / normative as you go.

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## STEP 4

### Map Beneficiaries

The main part of the Framework begins by inviting you to brainstorm and map the beneficiaries of your chosen stakeholder's nuclear responsibilities. In other words, who or what does your stakeholder have responsibilities to? The rationale for starting here is to put the 'end users' of your stakeholder's responsibilities front and centre of the analysis.

It is helpful to approach this task non-judgmentally, with the objective being to gather as many ideas as possible, particularly if working as a group. Answers can be reviewed later. Extra efforts should be undertaken to record beneficiaries that are more often overlooked in policy making or decision making processes. These might include marginalised groups or even beneficiaries that cannot speak for themselves (e.g. the living world), but who are nevertheless affected by decisions. They may also include strategic competitors and adversaries, for whom you might have a different set of responsibilities.

It is also important to consider beneficiaries both in the past and into the future; those impacted by past decision making and those who will be impacted in years to come, possibly even a long way into the future. Such beneficiaries can sometimes be consciously and/or unconsciously ignored in the policy making process. Resist the temptation to rank beneficiaries at this step of the process – take a holistic approach.

In order to keep the process streamlined it will be useful to comprehensively explore this step of the framework before moving onto the next one, although you can always come back to it at a later stage if new beneficiaries come to mind. Be patient and reflective – some insights might surprise you. If you're having trouble, an alternative way to approach this question and others in the framework may be by inverting it: who or what does the stakeholder *not* have responsibilities to, and why?

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## STEP 5

### Connect Responsibilities

In this step you identify the responsibilities that your chosen stakeholder has to each of their beneficiaries. This step is likely to be the most time intensive in the Framework and deserves a thorough exploration.

If working descriptively, it will reflect your perception of your chosen stakeholder's perspective. How do you determine how your chosen stakeholder perceives their responsibilities? Two main research methods can be used: (i) applying a detailed and critical discourse analysis of official publications and statements – as well as surrounding non-governmental analysis – in order to 'read between the lines' of existing written material, and (ii) talking to or interviewing officials and non-governmental experts in the policy community. If working normatively, this step will likely reflect your own or your group's ethical perspective.

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***Be patient and reflective – some insights might surprise you.***

It is probably easiest to approach this by exploring one beneficiary at a time. Mind mapping can be a useful tool to do this quickly. It may also be helpful to design your own sub-framework for thinking about the different categories of responsibility that exist in relation to nuclear weapons, which could include but are not limited to: general; diplomatic; disarmament; doctrinal; education; environmental; humanitarian; legal; non-proliferation; risk reduction; nuclear safety; and nuclear security responsibilities.

You should aim to be as specific as you can about the responsibilities that your chosen stakeholder has, and critically self-examine as to why you see things in this way. For this reason, it is important to explore this step at the same time as Step 6, which asks about the sources of these responsibilities.

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## STEP 6

### Reference Sources

Responsibilities are based on underlying legal and normative sources. With this in mind, the process of identifying responsibilities (Step 5) should be carried out at the same time as that of identifying these sources (Step 6).

Identifying exactly the source of a stakeholder's responsibilities can be quite a difficult task, so it is important to take a persistent and reflective attitude. At the individual level, fundamental perceptions of responsibility can be formed early on in life and shape moral beliefs in profound ways. Similarly, strategic cultures within states are heavily shaped by and can enforce collective normative beliefs. Sources may be numerous and interwoven in complex ways, and known at both *conscious* and *unconscious* levels.

It is difficult to provide a comprehensive list of indicative sources of responsibility, since they are highly culturally dependent. One important source is law, which is often divided between national law (e.g. legislation, court decisions) and international law. Non-legal or normative responsibilities can precede and underpin, but also reinforce, legal responsibilities. These can come from a far wider range of sources that might include political philosophy, philosophy, ethics, morality, religious teaching, norms, soft law and more. Normative responsibilities can often provide the more fruitful body of ideas to explore.

### Article 38 of the International Court of Justice Statute recognises four sources of international law:

- 1 international conventions, whether general or particular, establishing rules expressly recognized by the contesting states;
- 2 international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted as law;
- 3 the general principles of law recognized by civilized nations;
- 4 subject to the provisions of Article 59, judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists of the various nations, as subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law.<sup>29</sup>

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## STEP 7

### Locate Expressions in Policy

What good are responsibilities if they are not subsequently expressed in policy? At Step 7, you are invited to consider whether, and how well, responsibilities translate into the policy sphere. If you are taking a descriptive approach, consider how responsibilities translate into existing policy. If taking a normative approach, think about what policy *could* or *should* look like.



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## STEP 8

### Implementation in Practice

What good is policy if it is not implemented in practice? This step pushes you to consider whether and how practice and behaviour reflects stated policy.

#### **The Relationship between Beneficiaries, Responsibilities, Policies and Practices**

**Behind every perceived responsibility lies at least one beneficiary, and it is important to recall that responsibilities are not owed abstractly to nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons practices in themselves. For instance, there is no responsibility towards nuclear deterrence *as such*, so it cannot be a beneficiary. Nuclear deterrence is also unlikely to be a responsibility, but rather a policy and practice that could help *fulfil* one or more responsibilities (e.g. to provide national security or safeguard sovereignty). Often, responsibilities are quite simple concepts. It is important to actively tease out distinctions like this as you move through the process.**

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## STEP 9

### Assessing Conflicts between Responsibilities

Does the implementation of your responsibilities internally conflict with the implementation of another of your responsibilities? Step 9 invites you to take a step back and look at how your answers interact with one another. The purpose of this step is to draw greater attention to the inherent tensions between different policies and practices, and add clarity to the necessary process of balancing them.

It is important to note that this question asks about the *implementation* of responsibilities, rather than the responsibilities themselves. A key question for the parties to explore when going through the Framework is how far responsibilities *themselves* are in conflict, as opposed to how far conflicts emanate from how the responsibilities are expressed in policy and implemented in practice. You should also consider conflicts with the implementation of responsibilities outside your subject of enquiry, such as other areas of government policy and ministries.

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## STEP 10

### Assessing Conflicts between Two or More Stakeholders

If Step 9 invites you to look at inherent tensions *within* your chosen stakeholder, Step 10 invites you to explore conflicts *between* the implementation of one stakeholder's responsibilities and another's implementation of theirs.

This step is more 'optional' than the others and only needs to be undertaken if you have been through Steps 1-9 for more than one stakeholder (see below), but it can draw attention to situations, for example, where stakeholders who imagine themselves to have the same responsibilities might conflict in the implementation of those responsibilities.



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## STEP 11

### Managing and Resolving Conflicts

Step 11 invites you to reflect on the conflicts identified in Steps 9 and 10 and consider opportunities to mitigate their risks, manage them more sustainably, or resolve them. The questions to be asked here are: can you imagine new approaches to implementation that better manage or resolve these conflicts, and based on these options, what specific recommendations would you make to your chosen stakeholder?

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## STEP 12

### Communicating Responsibilities

The final step invites you to explore how your stakeholder can better communicate or signal its perceptions of its responsibilities. Our advice is to produce a communications strategy that clearly draws the causal relationships between the beneficiaries, responsibilities, policies, and practices. This strategy, like all communications strategies, will need to be tailored according to the audience.

Step 12 should be explored only after Steps 9-11 have been fully examined and, where relevant, any changes to policy and practice agreed.

### Exploring Multiple Stakeholders

One of the opportunities thrown up by the Responsibilities Framework is that you can explore it in relation to multiple stakeholders, and then look at the conflicts that might emerge between them. For example, you may explore your state's nuclear responsibilities first, and then start the process again by thinking about those of potential or actual nuclear-armed adversaries, before looking at the convergences and divergences of belief, and the conflicts between implementation.

In such cases, it is important to remember that you are always working with your (or your group's) *perceptions* rather than objective fact. This is why working in a group *may* be able to provide greater critical challenge and therefore confidence in your collective perceptions, although it is also worth being alert to 'groupthink'.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while the use of the Responsibilities Framework in this way may help structure analysis, it is important to complement the exercise with dialogue directly with the other stakeholder to test your findings.



# The Responsibilities Framework

As you explore the Responsibilities Framework, you may choose to build up a table like this one.

 [Click here to download the blank template](#)

<b>1. CHOSEN STAKEHOLDER</b> Whose responsibilities are you exploring and how are you defining them?	Define your stakeholder. e.g. a state, an institution, a national policy community, a transnational advocacy campaign
<b>2. CHOSEN SUBJECT OF ENQUIRY</b> What are you exploring responsibilities in relation to, and how are you defining it?	Nuclear weapons, although could be narrower (e.g. nuclear safety), broader (e.g. security), or other (e.g. space technologies)
<b>3. POSITION</b> Are you taking a descriptive or normative position?	If descriptive, you're describing things as you perceive them to be. If normative, how you wish them to be.

ESTABLISHING BASELINES					MANAGING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE IMPLEMENTATION			RECOMMENDATIONS	
4. BENEFICIARY	5. RESPONSIBILITIES	6. SOURCES	7. EXPRESSIONS IN POLICY	8. IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE	9. ...OF YOUR STAKEHOLDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES	10. ...OF YOUR AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES (OPTIONAL)	11a. MANAGEMENT OPTIONS	11b. ...FOR BETTER EXPRESSION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES	12. ...FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES
Who or what does your chosen stakeholder have responsibilities to?	What responsibilities does your chosen stakeholder owe to each beneficiary?	What are the sources of those responsibilities?	How do these responsibilities translate into general policy positions?	How are these general policy positions operationalised in specific practices?	Does the implementation of your responsibilities conflict with the implementation of another of your responsibilities?	Does the implementation of your responsibilities conflict with another stakeholder's implementation of their responsibilities?	Can you imagine new approaches to implementation that better manage or resolve these conflicts of implementation?	Based on these options, what recommendations would you make to your chosen stakeholder on the expression in policy and/or implementation in practice of their responsibilities?	Based on your reflections, what recommendations would you make to your chosen stakeholder on how they might better communicate their responsibilities?
Beneficiary 1	Responsibility a	Source i, source ii, source iii	Policy expression i	Implementation i	e.g. Implementation of responsibility a vs responsibility b	e.g. Stakeholder 1 vs stakeholder 2	Brainstorm proposals	Select recommendations from brainstorm	Recommendation 1, recommendation 2
	Responsibility b	Source i, source iv	etc.						
Beneficiary 2	Responsibility a	Source i, source ii	etc.						





PART C

# *Talking about Nuclear Responsibilities*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIALOGUE



**Reframing nuclear weapons policies and practices around nuclear responsibilities has to start by reflecting on our mindsets and cognitive habits. It means learning to adopt a nuclear responsibilities lens, and ‘strengthening the muscle’ by using it.**

Part B has provided some principles for thinking about nuclear responsibilities, and a Responsibilities Framework that you can use to practice this Approach by systematically exploring one or more stakeholders’ responsibilities.

Deeper possibilities open up when *talking with others* about nuclear responsibilities. Talking about nuclear responsibilities enables stakeholders to better understand one another’s perceptions of their responsibilities, generates opportunities to clarify misperceptions and miscalculations, and creates a space to reduce distrust and build trust. It may also offer an opportunity for the development of new shared understandings of responsibilities to form. Responsibilities become most meaningful when they are considered, accepted, and sustained by a community. The development of shared visions of responsibility offers enormous potential as a means to (i) transcend the blame culture that blights the contemporary global nuclear landscape; (ii) reduce distrust in adversarial contexts, thereby making possible new policies and strategies of nuclear risk reduction; and (iii) as a result of i and ii, renew the agenda of regional and global non-proliferation and disarmament regimes.

Even where new cooperative policies cannot be agreed, a dialogue on nuclear responsibilities can help to reduce misunderstandings and misperceptions, thereby reducing the dangers of miscalculations in times of crisis.<sup>31</sup> Where the expression or implementation of nuclear responsibilities at the levels of policy and practice conflicts with the policies and practices of others, a dialogue on nuclear responsibilities can draw attention to the normative ideas that underpin them and offer room for a constructive discussion about how they could be expressed or implemented in other ways. A dialogue should not be seen as a one-off opportunity to talk. Rather, progress will depend on the process being an

iterative one, with each round potentially deepening empathy and trust between the dialogue participants.

These dynamics can play out in two broad types of dialogue. The first takes place in relation to a single stakeholder, where a nuclear responsibilities dialogue can help crystallise beliefs at the collective level (see Stage 2: Collective Introspection below). Where that stakeholder is the state, for example, an inclusive national-level dialogue can bring together divergent perspectives from within the state and offer an opportunity for them to be investigated. This may allow them to coalesce, or may only clarify their distinctions, but both outcomes are valuable. In the same way, alliance-level discussions could convene alliance member states for equivalent deliberations.

***A dialogue on nuclear responsibilities can help to reduce misunderstandings and misperceptions, thereby reducing the dangers of miscalculations in times of crisis.***

The second type takes place between multiple stakeholders, such as state-to-state discussions (see Stage 3: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue below). In such dialogues there may be greater misperceptions or even distrust about the other’s normative understandings, and stronger perceptions of conflict between how their policies and practices are implemented. In this event, a nuclear responsibilities dialogue may offer all parties the opportunity to delve deeper into the underlying normative and security drivers of their statements and behaviours.

Where states are nuclear-armed, a nuclear responsibilities dialogue can add an additional dimension to discussions of doctrine, allowing parties to learn not only *what* each others' policies and practices are, but also more clearly *why* they are the way they are. Policies and practices can be 'joined up' to the perceptions of responsibility and the beneficiaries they are owed to. But states need not be nuclear-armed to profit from engagement in these kinds of discussions: responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons extend far beyond those that surround doctrine. Dialogues between possessor and non-possessor states can build assurance and cooperation, and explore topics such as non-proliferation, improving diversity in the field, or nuclear weapons education.

A nuclear responsibilities dialogue can take place without each party to the dialogue having been through a systematic process of thinking about responsibilities – for instance, by using the Responsibilities Framework. A conversation might start the thinking process, after all. But in most cases, the dialogue will be stronger if each party has given their responsibilities, or those of the stakeholder in question, some thought before they arrive. Participants are therefore encouraged to engage in a process of exploration of their responsibilities, and whoever else's responsibilities will be discussed, before they arrive.

## Principles

Talking about nuclear responsibilities should adhere to the principles of:



**Respect**



**Plurality**



**Honesty**



**Empathy**



**Inclusivity**



**Confidentiality**



**Active listening**



**Interactiveness**



**Collective  
problem-solving**



**Nonviolent  
communication**



# A Model Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process

Anybody can convene a dialogue centred on nuclear responsibilities, and this Toolkit aims to provide sufficient guidance to support those aiming to do so. In our view though, influenced by the ideas and work of John Burton and Herbert Kelman discussed in Part A, the most productive nuclear responsibilities dialogues are those that are facilitated by a neutral third party who is seen as a 'repository of trust' by all the parties and charged with the authority to ask searching questions, challenge assumptions, and generally advance the conversation. That facilitator would be well versed in the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach and the Responsibilities Framework, and would use their position not to lead parties in a particular direction but to help them discover the answers for themselves.

BASIC and the ICCS are well placed to provide that facilitation, and with this in mind we have designed a three-stage facilitated dialogue process, each stage of which represents a small process in its own right. This model provides an intuitive structure for constructive interaction and exchange on nuclear responsibilities involving a range of defined stakeholders. The three stages are outlined below.

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## STAGE 1 Familiarisation

The Familiarisation stage is designed to acquaint and build the capacity of a range of individuals within a community with the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach. The Familiarisation process stage is open-ended in time scale and the main activities would be briefings, bilateral conversations and group-level discussions, which can be done as much as is needed. The facilitator's role here is to foster interest, build understanding,

This process updates and supersedes what we previously called the 'Nuclear Responsibilities Method' in Brixey-Williams and Wheeler (2020), which had only two stages. The feedback we received after sharing a draft of this process in three focus groups with experts in this space was that we should subdivide the first stage of the original method called 'Critical Introspection' into two: this has led to the creation of a first stage called 'Familiarisation' and a second stage that we are now calling 'Collective Introspection'. We also chose to rename 'Empathic Dialogue' to 'Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue' in order to adjust the focus, and replaced the word 'Method' with the word 'Process' to make it feel less formal and prescriptive.

answer questions, and encourage and support self-led exploration of the Responsibilities Framework. All stakeholder parties to be convened in Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues (see Stage 3) should have an opportunity to take part in the Familiarisation process.

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## STAGE 2 Collective Introspection

The Collective Introspection stage brings together some or all the individuals engaged at the Familiarisation stage for a facilitated group-level dialogue in relation to a single stakeholder (for instance, national-level dialogue in relation to a state). The purpose is to stimulate and facilitate a respectful exchange of views about nuclear responsibilities within a diverse group, in order to contest normative ideas, build mutual understanding, and shape consensus. Working through an adapted form of the Responsibilities Framework collectively, and reflecting on the

answers as they go, provides a structure for the meeting. A facilitator's guide to convening a Collective Introspection dialogue is included in Annex 1.

## STAGE 3

### Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue stage brings together two or more stakeholder parties to exchange their perceptions, explore possibilities for reaching new shared understandings, and identify practices that could enable the parties to reduce distrust, and potentially build trust, leading to the reduction of strategic risks. We recommend that this takes place only after each stakeholder party has had the opportunity to engage in the Familiarisation and Collective Introspection stages.

As well as taking place at different levels, the main distinction between the Collective Introspection and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue stages is that the latter includes an exercise designed to build empathic understanding. In this exercise, stakeholder parties

are invited to reflect on the extent to which they think that the other stakeholder parties perceive their responsibilities in the same way that they do. By doing this exercise first in stakeholder groups, and then in mixed stakeholder groups, and finally together, the stakeholder parties are able to jointly explore the convergences and divergences between their perceptions and work together to develop new ideas for resolving conflicts. Throughout, the parties are invited to 'sit on the same side of the table', treating the question as a shared puzzle to be solved, drawing upon the Problem-Solving Approach explained in Part A. During this process it is essential that the stakeholder parties involved are considered and treated as equals, regardless of the perceived power relations existing outside of the dialogue.

The diagram below illustrates the three stages from left to right: first, individuals or groups of individuals have the opportunity for familiarisation, before being brought together for Collective Introspection, before each stakeholder party is finally convened for a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. A facilitator's guide to convening a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue is included in Annex 2.

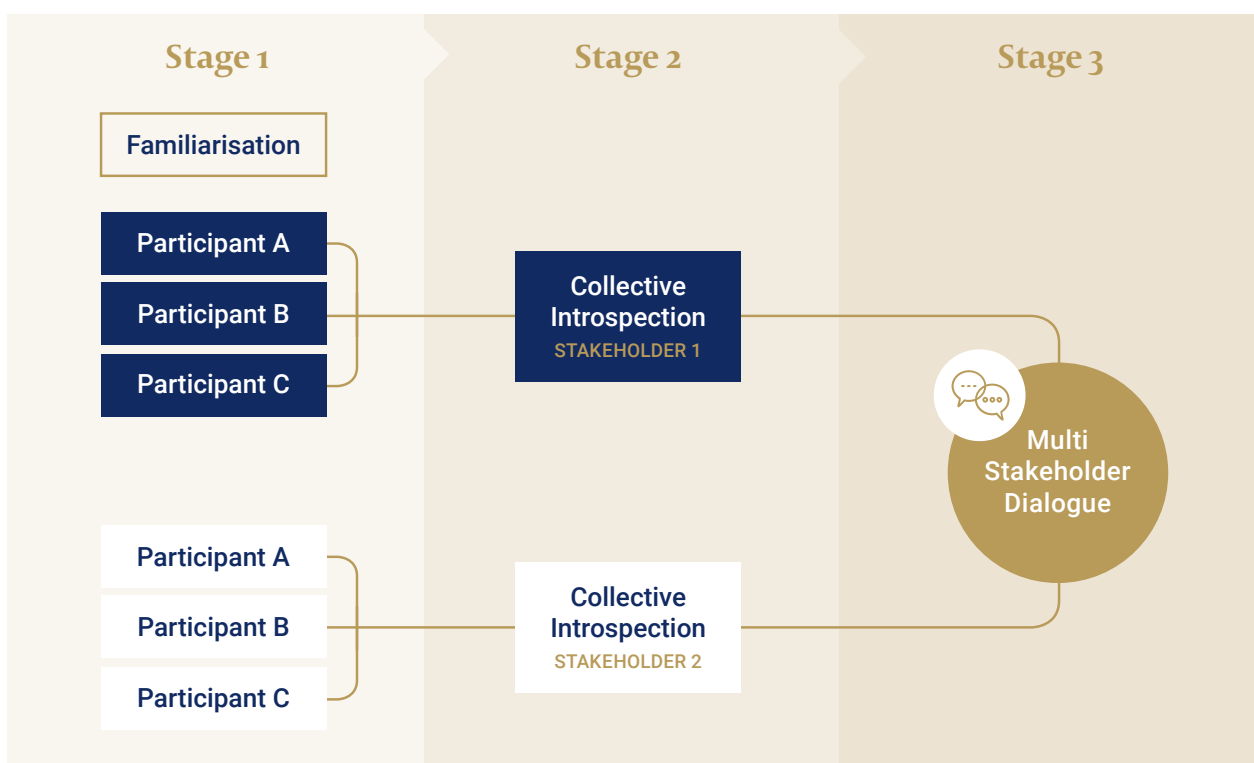


Figure 1. A Model Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process



# Convening a Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process

## Who Should Attend?

Nuclear responsibilities dialogues can take place in any track within a multi-track diplomacy framework (e.g. track one, track one and a half, track two, etc).<sup>32</sup> The type of conversation within each track will vary according to who is 'in the room' and the extent to which each individual feels comfortable engaging in an introspective process that, particularly in the case of officials, may require

them to set aside predetermined positions. It may be beneficial to start by familiarising the non-governmental community, then move on to a sequence of dialogues at the track two level, before gradually expanding into the track one level.

We recommend that nuclear responsibilities dialogues be inclusive, exhibiting strong demographic and cognitive diversity. This includes ensuring broad gender, racial and next generation representation, but also inviting individuals with a wide range of perspectives on the legitimacy and effectiveness of nuclear weapons in order to stretch and challenge the dialogue. There is strong evidence that diverse teams are more creative and can produce more tested conclusions.<sup>33</sup>

## Running an Inclusive Dialogue

Thinking of running a nuclear responsibilities dialogue? Here are some things to consider to ensure your event is both inclusive and accessible.

1

### How representative is your participant list?

Try to agree a minimum quota for how many women, non-binary people and people of colour should be included in the dialogue before inviting participants.

2

### Is the timing and location of your event practical for all?

Avoid early mornings or late evenings in consideration of those with caring responsibilities. Think about how easy to reach and accessible your event location is.

3

### Do your participants feel heard and supported?


Consider offering coaching to the dialogue facilitator to ensure all participants are equally included in the dialogue. When opening the floor to participants it can be beneficial to call on a woman first to encourage other women to join the discussion.

The guidance offered here is drawn from the *Gender, think-tanks and international affairs* toolkit: a comprehensive handbook that encourages more gender-sensitive approaches across all areas of think tank work. If you are planning a nuclear responsibilities dialogue of any kind we invite you to explore this resource.<sup>34</sup>

## Where and When should it Take Place?

Dialogues, where the objective is to discover new meaning and build interpersonal trust, are generally most effective when they are carried out in person. This is especially important where parties distrust one another or come with radically different points of view. In person meetings allow body language and other non-verbal cues to be read more easily, and create opportunities for side conversations around the refreshments table, over dinner, or on cultural site visits.

Nevertheless, it may be necessary to host nuclear responsibilities dialogues virtually, whether due to the global health situation or distances. Such meetings can be valuable in their own right, particularly if they enable the same group to come together on multiple occasions.



***The facilitator should refrain from offering too many substantive proposals of their own, but should have the permission of the groups to challenge and stimulate the discussion.***

A period of time should be left between each stage of the process, to allow individuals to reflect on the last discussion but not so long that they forget what was discussed.

## What is the Facilitator's Role?

In all three stages, the facilitator's role is to ensure understanding of the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach, promote adherence to the principles of nuclear responsibilities dialogue, preserve respect between competing perspectives, and channel the flow of discussion towards constructive outcomes. The facilitator should refrain from offering too many substantive proposals of their own, but should have the permission of the groups to challenge and stimulate the discussion. They should encourage participants to explore their questions fully, but also be ready to move the dialogue forward if it has got stuck on a particular point.

The facilitator should read the mood of the room carefully to create opportunities for side discussions, breaks, and trust-building, and also be equipped with ice breakers, insights, and strategies to de-escalate empathic failures and diffuse negative atmospheres. The facilitator should be particularly ready to catch accusations of irresponsibility before the dialogue descends into mutual blaming, while at the same time being cognisant that such conversations can occasionally 'relieve the pressure' in the dialogue.



# Process Ownership

A key lesson learned from the BASIC-ICCS Programme on Nuclear Responsibilities' engagement with a number of stakeholders in developing this Toolkit is that there is no 'one size fits all' approach. The most appropriate way of running a nuclear responsibilities dialogue may well differ from country to country.

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## Co-Design

We advise working closely with expert partners *within* the country or region to co-design a dialogue process best suited to the local context. External facilitators should avoid assuming that their way of approaching a dialogue is the best or most appropriate and instead should consult trusted individuals with local knowledge

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## Capacity building

Some stakeholders will require more capacity building (familiarisation) than others. Work with experts within the country or region in which you are hosting a dialogue to determine the appropriate type and amount of capacity building.

Participants are therefore encouraged to make the process work for themselves and those interested in hosting a dialogue are tasked with facilitating a sense of ownership of the process among participants.

Some important considerations include:

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## Structure

Different stakeholders may benefit from different levels of structure. The model agendas in the Annex demonstrate a fairly structured approach, but facilitators are free to develop their own agenda reflecting the most appropriate level of structure for the stakeholder. Some stakeholders may find it beneficial to engage in a series of trust-building or ice breaker activities, whilst others will prefer to dive straight into the dialogue.

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## Cultural sensitivity

Allowing space for cultural specificity and being aware of cultural approaches to communication are important considerations for facilitating the most effective dialogues. For example, different stakeholders will have different communication norms. It may also be that certain stakeholders are more comfortable with different terminology/language to that proposed.

# Nonviolent Communication & Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue

A key recommendation for a nuclear responsibilities dialogue is the practice of nonviolent communication (NVC), which is defined and explained in Part A, along with some of the other terms below.

Dialogue parties are invited to respond to one another with mutual respect, empathy, and curiosity, and exclude the use of language that implies blame, anger, or accusation.

## Do

Try to reflect on the responsibilities of the parties in the dialogue yourself before engaging with others, in order to approach the conversation with self-knowledge. The Responsibilities Framework in Part B offers a good way to kickstart this thought process.

Engage with others with empathy, specifically by exercising security dilemma sensibility by imaginatively stepping into the shoes of others, in order to better understand their perceptions.

Demonstrate respect and a growth mindset, by practicing active listening when engaging with others who have different perspectives.

## Don't

Foster an atmosphere of blame or accuse your interlocutors of being 'irresponsible' (although you can ask them to explain how their perceptions of their responsibilities might differ from yours).

Assume that everybody shares your perceptions or be dismissive of alternative points of view.



The background is a complex, abstract texture in shades of deep blue, indigo, and purple. It has a grainy, almost crystalline appearance with some lighter, glowing areas that suggest a nebula or a microscopic view of a mineral. The overall effect is ethereal and mysterious.

PART D

# *Writing about Nuclear Responsibilities*





**The natural partner to talking about nuclear responsibilities is writing about them. Like talking, writing builds understanding, contests ideas, and shapes opinion in the policy discourse.**

Writing will be a necessary component of producing a sustainable culture of thinking and talking about nuclear responsibilities, and of recording its conclusions.

As for the earlier sections, this Toolkit is not prescriptive about the form or tone that writing about nuclear responsibilities should take. Again, to some extent the best thing is just to start. Below we offer three forms of writing that you might like to explore.

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## **FORM 1**

### **Exploring Nuclear Weapons and Responsibility through Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is a methodological tool for exploring the way language and text is used and functions in order to produce meaning.<sup>35</sup> For our purposes, discourse analysis enables exploration

of how, for what purpose, and to what effect the language of responsibility ('responsibility talk') is invoked in relation to nuclear weapons.

***Academic and non-governmental expert commentary can sometimes elucidate concise official writing or outline counter-narratives.***

A range of sources can provide answers to these questions. If the chosen stakeholder is a state, critically analysing official publications and statements for responsibility talk provides an obvious starting point. Ask yourself: when does the state draw attention to its responsible behaviours and/or its responsibilities, and what role is that serving in policy justification and legitimation? What information, ideas, and practices is it privileging by doing so, and what has been



excluded and silenced in the discourse? Alternatively, how does that state frame *other states'* policies and practices in relation to responsibility? Are there particular behaviours that it points out as 'irresponsible' in others? Academic and non-governmental expert commentary can sometimes elucidate concise official writing or outline counter-narratives.

An example of this methodology at work can be found in Section 2 of *Nuclear Responsibilities: A New Approach for Thinking and Talking about Nuclear Weapons* (2020).<sup>36</sup> This section starts with a broad survey of how responsibility talk has been invoked and functions in international nuclear politics, noting for instance how the claim on the part of the Nuclear Weapon States that they have 'special responsibilities' in relation to nuclear weapons has been used by the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) to hold them accountable for what they perceive as failures to live up to their promises in Article VI of the NPT. The section goes on to explore how the language of 'shared responsibilities' in the Preamble to the NPT has been invoked by a range of stakeholders (official and academic) to argue that nuclear disarmament and the upholding of global non-proliferation norms must be a joint endeavour of both the NWS and the NNWS.

Section 2 also explores the emergence of the idea of a 'responsible nuclear weapon state' in the years that followed the Cold War, a phrase first used by India and Pakistan in the aftermath of their nuclear tests in 1998. This language has now been used by all eight declared nuclear possessors (Israel remains a non-declared nuclear armed state) to legitimise their possession and modernisation of nuclear weapons. Finally, to illustrate how discourse analysis can deepen understanding at the national level, this section of the report delves into how responsibility talk functions in official and academic discourse in the United Kingdom.

## Selected Writers Analysing Responsibility Talk in Nuclear Weapons Discourse

- **Karthika Sasikumar** has tracked India's strategy of 'constituting itself as a responsible nuclear power' after the 1998 nuclear tests.<sup>37</sup>
- **Kate Sullivan de Estrada** and **Nicola Leveringhaus** have both individually and jointly explored how China and India have aimed to frame themselves as 'responsible nuclear powers' in their discourse.<sup>38</sup>
- **Nick Ritchie** has explored the United Kingdom's 'regional self-identity [... as] a responsible and leading defender of Europe [...which] cannot conceive of leaving "irresponsible" France as Europe's sole nuclear weapon state or accepting a position of military inferiority to Paris.'<sup>39</sup>
- **William Walker** has explored how the 'British government has, through steps taken over many years, sought to position the UK as the most responsible of all nuclear-armed states'.<sup>40</sup>

## FORM 2

### Championing Existing or Proposing New Responsibilities

The Nuclear Responsibilities Approach relies on individuals making normative proposals about what should or should not be considered a responsibility. Only by doing this and exploring these ideas together will new understandings start to emerge. BASIC and the ICCS have largely withheld from making such normative proposals (though individuals working on the Programme have written in an individual capacity on these issues) in order to maintain the two organisations' status as a strictly neutral third party that can facilitate nuclear responsibilities dialogues, but others should take up this challenge.

For instance, in *Improving Nuclear Strategic Stability Through a Responsibility-Based Approach*, Rear Admiral John Gower proposes a '10-point Code of Responsible Nuclear Weapon Capable States' which are 'designed to maintain or reduce the tensions from capabilities, policies or posture which weaken [nuclear strategic stability]'.<sup>41</sup> This code can be read alternatively as proposing that possessor states have ten responsibilities, and throws down a useful normative gauntlet that can drive dialogue forward. A successor paper, co-authored with Christine Parthemore, seeks to place the Code within a strategic framework and includes 21 steps to aid its enactment.<sup>42</sup>

Responsibility proposals can take myriad forms, but perhaps the most naturally suited is the op-ed: short form, opinion-based writing. Ramesh Thakur's 'Sovereignty as Responsibility and The Ban Treaty' and Salma Shaheen's 'Responsibility and Deterrence in South Asia' provide two such examples.<sup>43</sup>

### Selected Examples of Writers Championing or Proposing Nuclear Responsibilities

- **Amelia Morgan and Heather Williams**, in *Nuclear Responsibility: A New Framework to Assess U.S. and Russian Behaviour*, evaluate whether a state is demonstrating 'nuclear responsibility' based on three criteria: a state's observation of legal obligations; adherence to accepted norms; and the pursuit of risk reduction.<sup>44</sup>
- **Michael Krepon** calls attention to and lists 'norms of responsible nuclear stewardship,' which can 'transform a dangerous deterrence-based system by championing norms that, over time, make nuclear weapons increasingly peripheral and less valuable'.<sup>45</sup>
- **Nina Tannenwald** has called for a move 'toward a global regime of nuclear restraint and responsibility' in 'the form of reciprocal commitments and unilateral measures to avoid an arms race and reduce nuclear dangers' to supplement formal arms control. For Tannenwald, responsibility means recognising that security cannot be achieved unilaterally, that all nuclear-armed states need to be included, and that every person and every state in the world is a stakeholder.<sup>46</sup>
- **Robert S. Norris, Hans M. Kristensen and Christopher E. Paine**, writing back in 2004, outlined several requirements for the United States to adopt a 'responsible nuclear policy for the 21st century'.<sup>47</sup>
- **Scott Sagan** proposes that the possessor and non-possessor states should adopt shared responsibilities that include 'designing a future nuclear-fuel-cycle regime, rethinking extended deterrence, and addressing nuclear breakout dangers while simultaneously contributing to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons'.<sup>48</sup>



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**FORM 3**

## Advancing the Theoretical Frame

More can be done to advance the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach at the theoretical level, and we encourage others in the academic community to take up the mantle here. Doing so could also de-Westernise the Approach, giving it a greater sense of relevance and ownership in different parts of the globe. This process is just getting underway, with a number of articles under review at the time of publication, and we invite new writers to get in touch if they would like to discuss these ideas further.





# Conclusion

This Toolkit has offered three ways to engage with the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach: through thinking, talking, and writing. We hope that the Framework and the Dialogue Process support you in your endeavours to explore nuclear responsibilities. However, these categories are not exhaustive, and nor are the ideas contained in each section. As stated at the start, the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach is conceived as an *open source* approach, and you are invited to adapt it in a way that you find most useful. We look forward to seeing where it takes you.



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ANNEX 1

# Collective Introspection

GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS

# Summary

**Collective Introspection describes the process by which a stakeholder group jointly explores its own responsibilities and its perception of the responsibilities of the other parties that will take part in a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue.**

The purpose is to stimulate and facilitate a respectful exchange of views about nuclear responsibilities within a diverse group, in order to contest normative ideas, build mutual understanding, and shape consensus.

This Annex provides practical instructions and guidance for facilitators of a Collective Introspection dialogue. Collective Introspection is the second stage of BASIC and the ICCS's model three-stage Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process outlined in the Nuclear Responsibilities Toolkit, following the Familiarisation process (Stage 1) and preceding the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (Stage 3).

For the purposes of this guide, we assume that each stakeholder is a state, and therefore that the Collective Introspection process takes place among a national policy community.

The Collective Introspection process is based on an adapted form of the Responsibilities Framework, and progresses in six phases that are explained below. In each case, we explain the phase's objective and the facilitator's role, offer facilitator tips, and supply the list of questions to be explored. The structure is designed to enable the conversation to gradually advance in complexity and to invite participants to critically reflect on their existing positions, creating opportunities for transformation of beliefs.

## The Collective Introspection Process

Phase 1	Individual Preparations
Phase 2	Dialogue Opening
Phase 3	Your State's Responsibilities (General)
Phase 4	Your State's Responsibilities (to the Other Parties)
Phase 5	The Other States' Responsibilities
Phase 6	Collective Reflections



## The Facilitator's Role

As discussed in the Nuclear Responsibilities Toolkit, the role of a third party facilitator is critical to the success of the Collective Introspection process (see Section A and 'What is the Facilitator's Role?' in Section C). In practical terms, the facilitators will explain and unpack the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach, and encourage participants to proceed in a manner conducive to the spirit and purpose of the process. Provided they have been given the authority by the parties, neutral third party facilitators are uniquely positioned to foster discussion, disentangle debates, and encourage critical reflection.

In the model process offered here, we imagine co-facilitation between a pair or small team of facilitators. One facilitator comes from the state at hand, while another facilitator is an outside party (such as a member of staff from BASIC).

The facilitators' main objectives are as follows:

1. Select participants who will engage in the dialogue constructively and in good faith.
2. Familiarise participants with the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach.
3. Ensure all participants agree to and respect the principles of the dialogue.
4. Preserve neutrality between competing perspectives.
5. Stimulate and channel the flow of discussion in creative directions.
6. Refrain from offering substantive proposals of their own (except to stimulate discussion, when it should be done lightly).
7. Identify key insights.

## Materials

The facilitator might want to provide large pieces of paper, white boards, or a laptop and projector screen upon which participants can record their answers. If the dialogue takes place in a virtual setting, a word document on a shared screen may be a good substitute.

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### PHASE 1

## Individual Preparations

In the days leading up to the dialogue, the facilitator should invite each of the participants from the national policy community to individually work through the Responsibilities Framework for their state. The benefit of this is that participants are afforded the opportunity to explore their own understandings of the questions in a safe space, before having the opportunity to probe each others' thinking while looking for a shared position. The confidentiality requirements of the meeting should be clearly stated, with the default position being the Chatham House Rule: what is discussed in the meeting can be shared, but not attributed.

***Many ideas can come up at the dialogue, and it is important that they are well recorded so that they can be discussed at the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, which may take place some time further down the line.***

It is likely that individuals will each complete the Framework in different ways: they may identify different beneficiaries, frame responsibilities differently, or see alternative ways that these responsibilities are expressed in policy or

implemented in practice. It is helpful if some participants are asked to explore the Framework descriptively and others normatively (see Step 3 of the Responsibilities Framework). When they come together in Phase 3, this difference of perspective should be seen as a strength and an opportunity for dialogue. It is helpful if the participants each bring their answers with them to the dialogue to facilitate this exchange of views.

Participants wishing to prepare thoroughly can choose to work through the Framework for the other stakeholder parties too. However, keeping in mind that everyone has busy schedules, it is worth expressing clearly that it is more useful for the participants to explore their own stakeholder deeply than lots of stakeholders in a shallow way.

It is suggested that the facilitator should approach one to two people from within the group to be rapporteurs in advance of the dialogue and ensure that they are recompensed accordingly. Many ideas can come up at the dialogue, and it is important that they are well recorded so that they can be discussed at the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, which may take place some time further down the line.

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## PHASE 2

### Dialogue Opening

As well as explaining more practical things like the day's agenda, the Dialogue Opening establishes the atmospherics and principles of the meeting. An important part of this is to secure the active consent of the participants to adhere to the principles of a nuclear responsibilities dialogue that are set out in the Toolkit. This can be done through a mutual verbal contracting exercise directed both at the facilitator and the other participants.

During this Phase, the facilitators set out the stakeholders (i.e. states) to be explored, the subject of enquiry (i.e. responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons), and the position that the group should

take (i.e. descriptive vs normative, or a hybrid). These are the first three steps of the Responsibilities Framework, and should remain constant throughout the dialogue unless clearly stated.

The participants are also given the opportunity to ask any questions they might have about the process. Time should be built into the agenda to enable these discussions to take place.

The facilitators' role here is to make all the participants feel comfortable, safe, and welcome. The Nuclear Responsibilities Approach might be a little bit different to what some participants are used to, especially for those from official or military backgrounds. It is important that the facilitators project confidence and ease, and believe authentically in what they are setting out to achieve. This embodiment of the Approach will be picked up by other participants.

#### **Participants make a joint commitment to:**

- **Participate with an open mind.**
- **Approach the discussion as a collective problem-solving activity.**
- **Interact with civility and ask questions.**
- **Engage in active listening and not interrupt.**
- **Keep to the spirit of nonviolent communication, eliminating blame, threat, etc.**
- **Agree and adhere to the confidentiality requirements of the meeting.**
- **Approach one another's answers with relativism in mind, recognising that responsibilities are socially-constructed rather than absolute.**



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## PHASE 3

### Your State's Responsibilities (General)

Phase 3 is the first major session of the dialogue, where the participants are invited to explore the Responsibilities Framework using their state as the chosen stakeholder. Depending on the group size, this can be either done at the plenary level or in breakout groups, each with a separate facilitator.

The group(s) should be encouraged to work systematically through the Responsibilities Framework and to interrogate one another's answers in a constructive, problem-solving manner. The aim is to develop a holistic understanding of the state's beneficiaries and responsibilities, how they are expressed in policy and how they are implemented in practice, as well as a sense of the main conflicts between them and, wherever possible, recommendations to help balance these tensions.

The facilitator should guide this process and also be prepared to challenge participants in order to stimulate the conversation, but not be so rigorous that it derails the discussion. They should be prepared for the eventuality that not all of the participants will have had a chance to carry out initial individual preparations (Phase 1).

A member of the group should also self-select as the scribe and note down the answers of the group. The facilitator and group participants should point out insights, areas of convergence and divergence, and new proposed responsibilities for the scribe to note down for later. These can be explored in Phases 5 or 6.

### Proposed List of Questions for Phase 3

- 1 Who or what does your state have responsibilities to?
- 2 What are your responsibilities to these beneficiaries?
- 3 What are the sources of those responsibilities?
- 4 How do those responsibilities translate into policy?
- 5 How are those policies implemented in practice?
- 6 Does the implementation of your responsibilities conflict with the implementation of another of your responsibilities?
- 7 Can you imagine new approaches to implementation that better manage, mitigate, resolve, or at least better communicate the tensions between these conflicting responsibilities?

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## PHASE 4

### Your State's Responsibilities (to the Other Parties)

Phase 4 looks similar to Phase 3, but is more focused: participants should be invited to think deeply about their responsibilities specifically to the other states that will be taking part in the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (Stage 3), treating them as beneficiaries of their state's responsibilities. In other words, this Phase takes as its starting assumption that each of the states in the process have responsibilities to one another, even if their relationships are highly strained.

By the end of this phase, the participants should have a pretty good idea of what they collectively think of as their responsibilities to the other state parties, and where the main conflicts lie between responsibilities and implementation.

It is recommended that a long break is taken between Phases 4 and 5, in order to allow the participants' minds to settle. Before Phase 5 begins, participants might also be given around 30 minutes for open discussion to reflect on the morning session, which might include going back to the insights, areas of convergence and divergence, and new proposed responsibilities noted down in Phases 3 and 4.

### Proposed List of Questions for Phase 4

- 1** What are your responsibilities specifically to the other states involved in this Process?
- 2** What are the sources of those responsibilities?
- 3** How do those responsibilities translate into policy?
- 4** How are those policies implemented in practice?
- 5** Does the implementation of your responsibilities to these parties conflict with the implementation of other responsibilities of yours?
- 6** Can you imagine new approaches to implementation that better manage, mitigate, resolve, or at least better communicate the tensions between these conflicting responsibilities?

## PHASE 5

### The Other States' Responsibilities

In Phase 5, the group is invited to step imaginatively into the shoes of the other states in the Process and explore the Responsibilities Framework from their point of view, as they perceive it. Phase 5 is therefore a role reversal of Phase 4, with a final question that encourages the parties to perform a double role reversal (see box below, question 5). The reason for this is to try to trigger an empathic response, and in the case of adversaries, the specific form of empathy called security dilemma sensibility (see Part A).

The objective of this phase is to delve into the group's perceptions of how 'the other' sees its responsibilities. This can be particularly valuable if the opposite state is an actual or potential adversary, where stereotypes and enemy images may make it difficult to imagine how the other state sees its responsibilities. For the same reason, this Phase may be the most challenging for the participants, who may find it difficult to make the imaginative leap or refuse to engage with the idea that 'the other' considers themselves to have responsibilities towards them at all.

It will depend on the dialogue as to whether this is surmountable. The facilitators here need to be particularly alert to maintaining the principles of the dialogue and to encourage the participants to approach the questions with an open mind. This includes keeping a watchful eye on the risk that the dialogue could veer off course and descend into blame and accusations, or present an opportunity for some participants to use prior experience as evidence that underscores reality as they see it. Should some participants seek to insist that their state has no responsibilities to another state in the process, the facilitators should recognise that individual's contribution, but create a space for it to be seen as just one opinion and allow participants to contribute alternative perspectives.



Facilitators should try to ensure that early-career members of the group have a voice and are not subdued by dominant senior figures or peer pressure. To help avoid these possibilities, the facilitator's role is to remind participants of the spirit in which the session is being undertaken, which they agreed to at the start.

Phase 5 should be repeated for each of the other parties in turn, meaning the length of this phase can vary. It may take a whole afternoon, in which case breaks should be scheduled. By the end of Phase 5, the group will have used the Responsibilities Framework to explore their perceptions of every party in the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in relation to one another (including their own).

### **Proposed List of Questions for Phase 5**

- 1** How do you perceive the other state understands their responsibilities to your state and the other parties in this process?
- 2** How do you perceive the other state understands the sources of those responsibilities?
- 3** How do you perceive the other state expresses those responsibilities in policy?
- 4** How do you perceive the other state understands themselves to implement those responsibilities in practice?
- 5** To what extent do you think that the other state perceives your state's nuclear responsibilities in the same way that you perceive them?

## **PHASE 6**

### **Collective Reflections**

The final phase of the Collective Introspection is an open discussion. The facilitators should aim to approach this with a light touch in order to allow the participants to lead the discussion, but should begin the dialogue with a few guiding questions. Phase 6 should aim to draw together the threads of the day, and draw attention to any insights, surprises, revelations, or questions that the sessions raised. The facilitators should aim to ensure participants feel reassured that this exercise invites 'blue skies' thinking and that there are no wrong ideas.

Before the group parts, the facilitators should ask the participants to keep reflecting on their own and their state's responsibilities in a sustained manner, and invite them to stay in touch as a new community of practice. In addition to the appointed rapporteurs, they might also invite the participants to write reflective pieces on their experiences of the meeting.

From a monitoring and evaluation perspective, and if it feels appropriate, it may be useful to circulate surveys at the end of the meeting that ask participants to record how, if at all, their perspectives have shifted.

## Proposed List of Opening Questions for Phase 6

- 1 What were your main takeaways from the day: insights, surprises, revelations or questions?
- 2 Did you find that the dialogue developed a shared understanding of the responsibilities of the different states in the process, or were divergences left unresolved?
- 3 Did you identify situations today in which your state shared the same responsibilities with the other states, but you conflicted over their implementation?
- 4 With this in mind, can you imagine unilateral steps that your state could take in relation to other states in the process that would help you collectively reduce risks, such as by implementing a responsibility differently?
- 5 Alternatively, are there reciprocal responsibilities that you could co-develop with the other states in the process that could help you collectively reduce distrust and nuclear risks, or build trust?
- 6 How might you take thinking, talking, and writing about nuclear responsibilities forward in your work?



# Case Study

*This box explains the whole process using three fictional states: Aplombia, Bulwak, and Cartan.*

Dr Jiff is an academic from Aplombia. She has already spent some weeks engaging with other members of her national policy community to familiarise them with the Nuclear Responsibilities Approach (Stage 1), and she now feels that they would be ready to go through a Collective Introspection process together (Stage 2). Working directly with BASIC, who are to co-facilitate the meeting with her, she carefully selects from amongst the national community a mix of officials and non-governmental experts whom she believes will engage together well in a dialogue. Those who accept her invitation are then invited to explore the Responsibilities Framework on their own in relation to Aplombia (Phase 1) two weeks ahead of the dialogue.

At the dialogue itself, the facilitators welcome the guests and explain the principles of the meeting (Phase 2). Participants also ask a few clarificatory questions to the facilitators. They then get into the first major session of the dialogue (Phase 3), which is to explore Aplombia's responsibilities using the Responsibilities Framework – this time as a group, although drawing upon the work that they conducted individually. The areas of convergence and divergence amongst the group are noted somewhere where everyone can see them, as are normative proposals made by different members of the group. Having been through this process, the range of opinion within the group has become clear.

The group takes a break, and the individuals take the opportunity to get to know each other a bit better. When they come back, there is time for some open discussion to reflect on the morning. Then they are invited to think specifically about their state's responsibilities to the other states (Phase 4) – Bulwak and Cartan – that they know will be taking part in a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (Stage 3) in a few months time. It is explained that the facilitators of equivalent meetings in Bulwak and Cartan will be doing the same for Aplombia and each other in parallel.

Over lunch, the participants get to know each other better, and some of them continue their conversations about the last session. When they come back, they are invited to explore the Responsibilities Framework twice more: the first time answering as if they were Bulwak and the second as if they were Cartan (Phase 5). Where there are divergences of opinion, it is made clear that they need to try to come to a decision as a group and that the facilitators are on hand to help, although major disputes can be noted.

The participants take another break before the last session (Phase 6), which takes the format of an open discussion. During this session, the facilitators are prepared with a set of questions designed to draw out participants' reflections on the exercises that they have been through, and to engender further dialogue. Towards the end of the final phase, the participants are asked whether they can imagine unilateral actions that Aplombia could take that would enable two or three of the states to better fulfil and implement their responsibilities, or reciprocal responsibilities that they might be able to agree with Bulwak and Cartan. Dr Jiff also asks the participants whether anyone might like to write a reflective piece based on their experiences, and two people express their interest.

After the dialogue, Dr Jiff keeps in touch with the participants, asks whether their involvement has led to a change in their thinking, and discusses opportunities for future exploration of nuclear responsibilities. Finally, she and BASIC select a promising segment of those present at the Collective Introspection to 'represent' the state at the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. Ms Keel in Bulwak and Professor Laup from Cartan, who have carried out equivalent Collective Introspection Processes in their respective countries, do the same.

ANNEX 2

# Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS



# Summary

**The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue stage brings together two or more stakeholder parties to exchange their perceptions, explore possibilities for reaching new shared understandings, and identify practices that could enable the parties to reduce distrust and build trust leading to the reduction of strategic risks.**

The essence of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process is that the states parties explain to each other how they view one another's perceptions of their responsibilities, and explore how their perceptions may overlap or differ.

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue is the third and final stage of BASIC and the ICCS's Nuclear Responsibilities Dialogue Process, outlined in the attached Toolkit. This stage follows on from both the Familiarisation process (Stage 1) and the Collective Introspection process (Stage 2).

This Annex provides practical instructions and guidance for facilitators of a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. For the purposes of this guide, we assume that each stakeholder is a state, and

therefore that the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process takes place among a set of representatives from several national policy communities. The dialogue also presupposes that all parties have undergone both the Familiarisation and Collective Introspection stages.

This document outlines the eight phases of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process. In each case, we explain the phase's objective and the facilitator's role, offer facilitator tips, and supply the list of questions to be explored. The structure is designed to enable the conversation to gradually advance in complexity and to invite participants to critically reflect on their existing positions, creating opportunities for transformation of beliefs.

## The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Process

Phase 1	Dialogue Opening
Phase 2	Exchanging Perceptions of Nuclear Responsibilities
Phase 3	Individual State Breakout Groups
Phase 4	Plenary Identifying Areas of Convergence and Divergence
Phase 5	Non-Adversarial Problem Solving in Mixed Break-Out Groups
Phase 6	Reconvening and Reporting Back
Phase 7	Collective Reflections and Closing
Phase 8	Wash Up

# Objectives of a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

The dialogue process is designed to enable parties to:

1. Communicate their perceptions of their nuclear responsibilities to each other, thereby building up a shared understanding that can help contextualise their policies and practices to reduce misperceptions.
2. Collectively identify areas of convergence and divergence, and look for joint opportunities to balance the inherent tensions of conflicting responsibilities.
3. Discuss opportunities to better fulfil responsibilities to one another.
4. Create opportunities to revise existing conceptions of responsibilities, by imagining new ones together.
5. Agree upon new shared responsibilities that might inform new unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral risk-reduction measures aimed at building mutual security.
6. Explore the potential for increased empathy towards the security fears and concerns of others, including an appreciation of how one's own state's actions may have contributed to these fears and insecurity (this is the idea of 'security dilemma sensibility' discussed in Part A of the Toolkit).
7. Create a safe facilitated space in which to develop interpersonal trust such that participants in the process believe each is sincerely committed to the process of dialogue (a variant of Herbert Kelman's idea of 'working trust').
8. Take back new ideas to an ongoing Collective Introspection process.

## A 'Problem-Solving Approach' to Nuclear Responsibilities

The BASIC-ICCS Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process draws on the 'Problem-Solving Approach' (see Part A of the Toolkit) to conflict resolution developed by the former Australian diplomat and peace researcher John Burton, who used it to explore the possibilities for conflict resolution in several conflict situations in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>1</sup> For Kelman, who has developed and applied this approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the last four decades, the 'Interactive Problem Solving Method' allows parties to engage in 'exploratory, problem-solving, trust building, and relationship-forming interaction that is essential for conflict resolution'.<sup>2</sup>

*The 'Interactive Problem Solving Method' allows parties to engage in 'exploratory, problem-solving, trust building, and relationship-forming interaction that is essential for conflict resolution'.*

Our approach differs from Burton's in that we are not seeking to facilitate a dialogue to help resolve a particular conflict. Instead, the process seeks to use the approach pioneered by Burton and Kelman to contribute new ways of thinking and talking about nuclear weapons that might change the existing culture of blame and build new relationships of trust between those representing particular states, thereby promoting new practices of distrust reduction and trust-building at the interstate level.



# The Role of the Facilitator

The third party facilitation role is there to ensure that all parties respect the principles they have agreed to and to help to channel discussion in creative directions. The risk is that if the discussion is not structured in this way, it can all too easily fall back into old patterns of blaming and recrimination. Research comparing problem-solving workshops with and without third party facilitation supports this finding.<sup>3</sup>

Facilitators will be guided by the following key points that draw from Kelman's operationalisation of the method below.

Neutrality is crucial to enable all the parties to trust the facilitators and the process. This is especially true if parties are in a relationship of mistrust or active distrust.

## KEY POINTS

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1

They should not engage in substantive discussions.

2

They should not offer proposals of their own, except to stimulate the discussion.

3

They should not take sides or judge between competing narratives of the conflict.

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## PHASE 1

### Dialogue Opening

As for the Collective Introspection Process, the opening of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue is important for setting the tone and principles of the meeting. The facilitators should aim to create a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of safety from the moment the participants walk through the door.

The Dialogue begins with the facilitators reminding participants of the principles that will guide the dialogue, which have been circulated to obtain their consent in advance. The confidentiality requirements of the meeting should be clearly stated, with the default position being the Chatham House Rule: what is discussed in the meeting can be shared, but not attributed.

The facilitators will then explain that the purpose of the dialogue is to systematically examine how the different parties present understand: (i) who or what are the beneficiaries of their own nuclear responsibilities; (ii) what those responsibilities are; (iii) who or what they perceive as the beneficiaries of the responsibilities of the other parties present, and (iv) what each party perceives the other's conception of its responsibilities to be. By building better shared understandings of each other's perceptions of responsibility, the process is intended to help parties better contextualise one another's policies and practices, and open up possible areas where new shared responsibilities might be imagined or existing ones reimagined in ways that promote mutual security.

### Participants make a joint commitment to:

- **Participate with an open mind.**
- **Approach the discussion as a collective problem-solving activity.**
- **Interact with civility and ask questions.**
- **Engage in active listening and not interrupt.**
- **Keep to the spirit of nonviolent communication, eliminating blame, threat, etc.**
- **Agree and adhere to the confidentiality requirements of the meeting.**
- **Approach one another's answers with relativism in mind, recognising that responsibilities are socially-constructed rather than absolute.**



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## PHASE 2

### Exchanging Perceptions of Nuclear Responsibilities

In Phase 2, a spokesperson from each party makes an opening presentation that covers who or what they see as the beneficiaries of their state's responsibilities, the nature of their responsibilities to these beneficiaries, and what they identify as their responsibilities to the other parties in the dialogue. The purpose of this stage is to help each party better understand each others' perspectives. Each party will present in turn, and parties are invited not to use their time assigning blame, criticising or rejecting positions made by others, or adopting positions of moral self-righteousness.

The third party facilitator has a responsibility to ensure that all parties respect the principles of the dialogue so that the discussion does not fall into one of point scoring and identity blaming. Once all the parties have spoken, an opportunity will be provided for comments and questions from all parties. Again, it is important, in Jones's words, that 'comments about the other side's narrative be reflective and analytical rather than accusatory'.<sup>4</sup>

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## PHASE 3

### Individual State Breakout Groups

The purpose of Phase 3 is to allow participants to meet in their state groups to discuss and draw out key insights from what they have heard from the other parties about their nuclear responsibilities. Given that each party will have worked through this both individually, and as part of the in-country Collective Introspection exercise, this is an important opportunity for each party to test their prior understandings against what they have heard from the other parties in Phase 2. Working with one of the facilitators, the parties will explore how far they see any convergences or divergences between their understanding of their state's

responsibilities and how others have presented their own understanding of that state's responsibilities. At the same time, they will potentially update their own understanding of how others see their own state's responsibilities in the light of the new information and ideas presented in Phase 2. There will be an opening here for parties to potentially reframe their understanding of how others see their own state's responsibilities, recognising how the self-image of one's own state's responsibilities may be quite different to the perceptions held by others.

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## PHASE 4

### Plenary Identifying Areas of Convergence and Divergence.

Phase 4 will bring all the groups back together for a plenary session. Each state group will be invited to report back on any convergences and divergences that have been identified in the breakout meetings. It is hoped that this session will help the participants to identify common ground that could form the basis for further discussions.

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## PHASE 5

### Non-Adversarial Problem-Solving in Mixed Break-Out Groups

The purpose of Phase 5 is to explore further the convergences and divergences over nuclear responsibilities. For this, the facilitators should create mixed breakout groups of all the parties present, each supported by members of the facilitating team. Here, the facilitator will encourage and support participants in engaging in what Kelman calls 'a non-adversarial process of joint thinking',<sup>5</sup> where the question of nuclear responsibilities is treated as a mutual problem that has to be resolved cooperatively. As Kelman expressed it, 'the task is to work together in

developing new ideas for resolving the conflict, or particular issues within it, that are responsive to the fundamental needs and fears of *both* sides that have been identified earlier in the workshop.<sup>6</sup>

This is where the parties will have the chance to engage in an intersubjective dialogue over what might count as *shared* nuclear responsibilities that could lead to the development of new policies that promote mutual security. The policy proposals advanced here might be unilateral ones, aimed at increasing the security of the other states ‘represented’ in the dialogue without decreasing the security of the state taking these unilateral steps. Or, more ambitiously, the proposed policies might involve reciprocated undertakings and commitments that might promote increased security between two or more of the parties present.

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## PHASE 6

### Reconvening and Reporting Back

The penultimate session of the day brings the mixed breakout groups together in a plenary session to discuss the policy proposals and recommendations that have been explored and identified in the breakout sessions. The purpose of this session is to engage in what Kelman calls ‘reality testing’. This is a key part of the process where participants consider the constraints – material and ideational – that might stand in the way of implementing such proposals and policies. Once these constraints have been identified, participants will then engage in another round of ‘joint thinking’ aimed at exploring how these constraints might be overcome.

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## PHASE 7

### Collective Reflections and Closing

In the final session, participants are invited to consider the conclusions of the dialogue and aim to collectively draw out and agree on the common threads. They are also invited to critically reflect on what they have learned over the two days of the dialogue, with a number of key questions. How far has the process of dialogue that has guided the meeting affected their perceptions of their own or their own state’s responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons? How do they see the responsibilities of others in a different way as a consequence? How might any shared concerns or responsibilities that have emerged through the dialogue be taken forward in terms of official policy? Participants will be encouraged to explore the next steps that they might want to take as a group in terms of follow-on meetings and written outputs.

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## PHASE 8

### Wash Up

After the participants have departed, the facilitators get together to discuss the outcomes of the dialogue further. This phase is especially important for identifying what could happen next: for instance, considering ways that perceptions of responsibility might be translated to the level of policy and practice at the participants’ respective national levels, considering proposed reciprocal responsibilities that they could take forward, or selecting topics for future dialogue. The facilitators should aim to write up the participants’ conclusions (and their own, clearly separated) within a reasonable time frame and circulate them back to the participants.



# Case Study

*This box explains the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process using three fictional states: Aplombia, Bulwak, and Cartan.*


Dr Jiff from Aplombia, Ms Keel from Bulwak, and Professor Laup from Cartan have each convened and facilitated Collective Introspection meetings with select members of their national policy communities in their states. The rapporteurs from each of those meetings have written up the findings, which have been circulated back to their respective national groups. The three facilitators have been in touch in advance of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, and have encouraged their respective national groups to keep thinking about the Approach. They have also circulated and obtained consent for the principles for the dialogue among their respective groups in advance.

At the opening of the dialogue (Phase 1), the facilitators (who are joined by neutral third party facilitators from BASIC) aim to make the participants feel comfortable and relaxed. This is particularly important for the participants from Bulwak and Cartan, as tensions between the two countries have ratcheted up in recent weeks over a longstanding dispute and a sense of animosity is in the air. The facilitators restate the dialogue's principles and give an outline of the dialogue and its purpose: to explore each state's perceptions of its responsibilities to the others, and through the insights this generates, jointly look for opportunities to increase mutual security. A round of introductions is made, and each participant is invited to share a short personal story, which has the effect of breaking the ice and humanising everyone in the room.

Participants have the opportunity to ask questions, and then the dialogue begins (Phase 2) with a spokesperson from each state party 'reporting back' from their Collective Introspection dialogue (Stage 2), drawing on what has been written by the rapporteurs. Once every state's spokesperson has spoken, the states are immediately divided into

individually-facilitated breakout groups to collectively reflect on what they've heard (Phase 3). The goal here is to identify commonalities, divergences in perception, insights, surprises, and questions that they can discuss with the other parties. The parties are then reconvened in a plenary session (Phase 4), and a different appointed spokesperson from each group recounts their key insights. The intent is that the dialogue is relatively free flowing rather than overly structured, and that plenty of time is allowed to enable the dialogue to become rich. The aim here, if possible, is to identify the main overlaps and fault lines between the parties' perceptions of their responsibilities.

The participants break for a leisurely lunch, where they can get to know one another better. This enables some trust-building to take place at the individual level, which is particularly important because when they come back together in the afternoon, the parties are mixed up and asked to work together in a problem-solving exercise (Phase 5). Particular care is taken when pairing up participants from Bulwak and Cartan, as there are some strong personalities in the room. During this phase, the mixed breakout groups are invited to consider shared responsibilities that their states could jointly agree to or reciprocal responsibilities that they could undertake in relation to one another, obstacles, as well as the obstacles that might stand in the way and how they might be overcome. The afternoon is taken up in this process, with periodic breaks, and each group is again asked to appoint a spokesperson to share each breakout group's ideas when they come back together. This session is followed by an informal dinner together at a well-known restaurant.



***The facilitators invite the group to reflect on their new perspectives and learnings and how they might apply them to their day-to-day work.***

The morning of the next day, the plenary group is reconvened and the insights of the mixed breakout groups are shared (Phase 6). The dialogue is allowed to resume, and the group collectively aims to draw out the main conclusions and recommendations that have emerged over the past 24 hours. Wherever possible, the facilitators aim to add clarity, maintain the principles of the dialogue, and record progress.

In the closing session (Phase 7), the facilitators invite the group to reflect on their new perspectives and learnings and how they might apply them to their day-to-day work. The group is invited to stay in touch and form a community of practice, and individuals are encouraged to write reflective pieces for publication. The meeting ends with an optional cultural visit to a nearby site of significance, where further opportunities to build trusting relationships are created. There is another dinner in the evening for those who have remained in the country hosting the meeting.

The next morning, the facilitators all get together for a 'wash up' meeting to record their observations of the dialogue and identify opportunities for future dialogue (Phase 8). This strengthens the sense of shared endeavour among the facilitators. Over the next three weeks, a pre-agreed rapporteur among them writes up the dialogue and circulates the notes internally among all of the participants, noting perceptions of shared responsibilities, areas of divergence, surprises, and recommendations.



# References

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1. John W. Burton, *Conflict & Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1969); John W. Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990).
2. Herbert C. Kelman, 'Building Trust Among Enemies: The Central Challenge for International Conflict Resolution', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29, (2005), p.642.
3. Peter Jones, *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), p.88.
4. Jones, *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice*, p.120.
5. Kelman, 'Building Trust Among Enemies', p.642.
6. Kelman, 'Building Trust Among Enemies', p.642.

- BASIC promotes meaningful dialogue amongst governments and experts in order to build international trust, reduce nuclear risks, and advance disarmament.
- The ICCS offers a unique multidisciplinary perspective on global security challenges combining as it does expertise from leading scholars in international relations and political psychology.