

FORUM: Disarmament and International Security

ISSUE: Nuclear Disarmament

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POSITION: Deputy Chair

Introduction:

Nuclear weapons have been at the forefront of global politics since their secret development and shocking use on Japanese cities during the Second World War. As nuclear weapons have got more powerful and have begun to spread around the world to different global actors, nuclear disarmament has been a huge global priority for nations of all sizes, and for NGOs working to foster global collaboration.

Disarmament campaigns have met with considerable success since the 1960s. In 1963, the USA and USSR signed the first of many agreements limiting nuclear testing, and in 1968, 189 member states signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty limiting the spread of weapons globally. During the 1970s and 1980s, the US and USSR imposed bilateral limits on the size of their own nuclear arsenals in a series of SALTs (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties) and later STARTs (Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaties). Even after the USSR collapsed, Russia and the USA continued to pursue these treaty ambitions, President Obama signing the New START in 2010. As well as bilateral talks, the UN, with pressure from a very strong peace movement globally, has adopted treaties effective worldwide, such as the INF that bans short range weapons, and the CTBT that completely bans nuclear tests above surface level.

However, the present nuclear stasis is threatened. The US, China, and Russia have all refused to sign the latest treaty, the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. President Trump has criticised the New Start and has declared his intention to withdraw from the INF. For an issue as important as nuclear weapons, the UN has a huge responsibility to try and foster the global cooperation required to keep the world safe, and faces a huge challenge in trying to give the US and Russia reasons to negotiate. If successful though, the world could be a much safer place

Definition of Key Terms

Nuclear Weapons

A weapon of mass destruction that uses atomic fission or fusion to generate huge amounts of energy in war. They can be in the form of bombs, or as warheads on missiles, and have only been used twice in history, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II

Atomic Weapons

These weapons use nuclear fission to generate energy. By provoking nuclear fission in a mass of fissile material, commonly Uranium or Plutonium, the atoms split into atoms of lower mass,

emitting energy and toxic radiation that poisons victims. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were atomic bombs.

Thermonuclear Weapons

Otherwise known as the H-Bomb, the H-Bomb uses a small fission explosion that triggers a fusion reaction, fusing isotopes of hydrogen with a massive release of energy. They have significantly more energy output than regular atomic bombs, and have never been used in war.

ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles)

Missiles designed to enter the atmosphere and reach long distances around the world. Countries possessing these missiles can strike almost the entire globe, meaning any nuclear conflict knows nearly no limits.

TBMs (Theatre Ballistic Missiles)

Including both short range and medium range missiles, these missiles are more accurate than ICBMs and more capable of hitting tactical priorities as opposed to hitting big cities.

Dirty Bomb

A bomb that incorporates radioactive material, which doesn't cause a nuclear reaction but emits radiation. The radiation poisoning, and their ease of construction, make them potentially dangerous weapons that terrorist organisations could feasibly construct

Nuclear Powers

Countries with nuclear weapons. USA, Russia, China, the UK, France, India and Pakistan, and (allegedly) Israel and North Korea

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

A fundamental treaty on responsible nuclear behaviour with three main aspects: first, that weapon states are forbidden from disseminating weapons to other states or other actors; second, that parties should undertake multilateral disarmament negotiations; and third, that peaceful use of nuclear energy should be permitted and allowed. As yet, only Israel, India, Pakistan and South Sudan have not signed the treaty.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)

This bilateral US-USSR treaty bans Intermediate Range Nuclear weapons that were not covered in treaties on Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. This prevents the construction of weapons to be used at a close range, so means nuclear weapons can not be used in a tactical, frontline context. President Trump announced he was withdrawing the US from this treaty in 2018

New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)

A treaty reducing capping the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the US at 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers. Signed by Presidents Obama and Medvedev in 2010, the treaty has recently been criticised by President Trump as “one of several bad Obama deals”

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

A treaty adopted by the UN in 1996 completely outlawing nuclear testing under international law because of the health and environmental risks it poses. The treaty is not yet in force, as many countries, including the US and China, have not ratified it.

Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty

Adopted by the UN general assembly in 2017, this Treaty seeks to ban nuclear weapons and pressure weapon holders to transparently negotiate their disarmament. However, all nuclear weapon powers and all NATO members except the Netherlands did not vote, and all of them have neither ratified or signed the treaty, and is not yet in effect due to lack of ratifications.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

The idea that if a war will cause massive destruction for both parties, neither party is incentivised to declare that war. The theoretical basis for nuclear deterrents, recently questioned by the seemingly irrational foreign policy of North Korea.

Major Organisations Involved

The ATOM Project

A non-profit that seeks to build support for a global ban on Nuclear Testing through petitions and research

Global Zero

International group of 300 world leaders that aims for the denuclearisation of the US and Russia over a 20 year period through lobbying, research and campaigning

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)

An organisation that seeks to build consensus for pacifist aims within the medical community across 63 countries

Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)

An international alliance of 88 nations set up by President Bush and President Putin to combat the risk of nuclear terrorism by strengthening nuclear security and establish information sharing to track the flow of nuclear material.

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

A charity set up to coordinate research and campaigning about the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons, with 532 partner organisations worldwide, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017

UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

A UN office that runs projects and programs to tackle nuclear threats worldwide a push for increased nuclear disarmament

Timeline of Events

1945 – The USA drops two atomic bombs on Japan, ending the WWII and killing at least 130,000 people

1949 – The USSR tests Joe-1, an implosion atomic bomb that marks the successful test outside of the USA

1952/1953 – The USA and USSR test their first thermonuclear bombs respectively, vastly increasing the nuclear power of both states, and the UK becomes the third great power to build a nuclear weapon

1963 – The Cuban Missile crisis brings the the world to the brink of nuclear conflict after the USSR stations nuclear weapons on Cuba. The US and USSR sign the first major nuclear weapons treaty, banning all nuclear tests above ground

1968 – After years of campaigning, the Anti-Nuclear movement succeeds in organising the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that bars the spread of nuclear weapons and regulates the spread of civilian nuclear technology

1972 – The US and USSR negotiate the first Strategic Arms Limitation treaty, limiting their stockpiles

1986 – At the Reykjavik Summit, Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev negotiate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, making significant progress in shrinking nuclear arsenals

1990 – After a significant international campaign, South Africa becomes the first country to voluntarily give up its nuclear arsenal and signs on to the Non-Proliferation Treaty

1991 – The USSR breaks up into its constituent parts, depositing nuclear weapons across its former territory. The international community works to make sure exclusively Russia inherits the USSR's nuclear stockpile

1995 – Kazakhstan transfers 1,500 nuclear warheads back to Russia, making a great success for international work against nuclear proliferation

1996 – The UN passes the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, barring nuclear tests, the culmination of years of international lobbying

2006 – North Korea tests its first nuclear weapon

2010 – The US and Russia sign the New START treaty, renewing efforts to disarm their Cold War arsenals

2017 – The UN adopts the Nuclear Weapon Ban treaty, despite the opposition of all nuclear powers and NATO members. President Trump criticises the New Start Treaty.

2018 – The President of Israel claims evidence of an Iranian nuclear program, whilst the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) maintains their program is shut down. President Trump announces the US will leave the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Questions to Consider

- **How can we track where Uranium is to make sure no terrorist organisations become nuclearised?**
- **How can we make sure nuclear countries keep their nuclear stockpiles secure and out of terrorist hands?**
- **How can the UN provide a platform for countries to disarm when it is seemingly against their individual interests?**
- **What incentives can we give countries to disarm?**

- **How should the international community respond to treaty violations?**
- **How can we get the US, China and Russia to remain invested in nuclear disarmament?**

Ideas Possible Solutions

- **More Reviews by the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)**

More reviews will allow us to understand better where uranium is, how safely and securely it is stored, and therefore respond better to terrorist threats. In countries without nuclear weapons, increasing the budget of the IAEA could allow more openness about their nuclear programs and the way in which they could be violating treaties, allowing faster sanction responses

- **Create a UN Body to Facilitate Bilateral Agreements**

Having a UN body set up to facilitate bilateral agreements would pressure more countries into making disarmament agreements, and gradually over time this could decrease nuclear stockpiles and create a healthier nuclear world

- **Require More Transparency and Openness**

Requiring Transparency not only allows the US to see what's going on, it allows other countries to see what's going on, so they are more likely to trust you will hold up a nuclear agreement if they know you are true to your word. In the long term this could mean disarmament agreements are negotiated in better faith

- **Fund Research into Anti-Nuclear Technology**

Technology like Israel's 'Iron Dome' has the capability to apprehend missiles before they do damage to cities and troops. Funding the development of these technologies and giving them to countries around the world would mean there is less of a benefit to having nuclear weapons, and mean they are no longer necessary for peace via mutually assured destruction.

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