General Assembly 1: Disarmament and International Security Committee
Regulation and non-proliferation of nuclear weapon tests

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Regulation and Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon Tests

Introduction

Seventy years after their development and their first use in war, nuclear weapons continue to be the basis for some states' national security policies. Nuclear weapon tests are experiments which are aimed to determine the effectiveness, yield, and explosive capability of nuclear weapons. Over the years, since the beginning of the usage of nuclear weapons, most nations who created them have tested them. Testing of nuclear weapons provides information about how they work, especially under specific conditions. Since nuclear weapons testing began on 16 July 1945, nearly 2,000 have taken place. Early on, having nuclear weapons was seen as a measure of scientific sophistication or military might, with little consideration given to the devastating effects of testing on human life, let alone the dangers of nuclear fallout from atmospheric tests.

Frigate Bird nuclear test explosion is seen through the periscope of the submarine USS Carbonero (SS-337), Johnston Atoll, Central Pacific Ocean, 1962. Nuclear weapons have been tested in all environments since 1945: in the atmosphere, underground and underwater. Tests have been carried out onboard barges, on top of towers, suspended from balloons, on the Earth’s surface, more than 600 meters underwater and over 200 meters underground. Nuclear test bombs have also been dropped by aircraft and fired by rockets up to 320 km into the atmosphere.

Since this test has started there has been many proposed actions concerning anti-nuclear explosion treaties. However, United Nations Member States were not able to unite in one single decision. Many countries today keep using this test in a non-healthy way. What the Disarmament and International Security Committee should be tackling is that what kind of regulations this tests must contain, or should they even be allowed as it threatens international peace and security, as well as it threatens environmental conditions. Proliferation has been opposed by many nations with and without nuclear weapons, the governments of which fear that more countries with nuclear weapons may increase the possibility of nuclear warfare. United Nations was not yet able to address this problem efficiently since the aims of the UN Member States were apart from each other. What we know is that a more effective idea must be implemented for the sake of future and for the sake of people who were affected by its outcomes.

Key Vocabulary

**Nuclear weapons**: It is the name given to Weapons of mass destruction that are powered by nuclear reaction. Types of nuclear weapons include atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, fission bombs, and fusion bombs.
Nuclear weapon tests: tests done by the nations who developed Nuclear weapons to determine the capacity and the effectiveness of them. Nuclear testing has often been used as an indicator of scientific and military strength, and many tests have been overtly political in their intention; most nuclear weapons states publicly declared their nuclear status using a nuclear test.

Disarmament: Disarmament is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. Disarmament refers to a country's military or a specific type of weaponry. Disarmament is often taken to mean total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear arms.

Nuclear Proliferation: Nuclear Proliferation is a term used to describe the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons-applicable nuclear technology and information, to nations which are not recognized as “Nuclear Weapon States” by the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. One critique of the NPT is that it is discriminatory in recognizing as nuclear weapon states only those countries that tested nuclear weapons before 1968 and requiring all other states joining the treaty to forswear nuclear weapons.

General Overview

Nuclear weapons can be count as one of the biggest threats to international peace and security, which was decided to be the aim of the United Nations ever since it was established in 1945. Currently, the number of the developed nuclear weapons which are capable of destroying the world is over 22,000. And yet there are still many states who are determined to refuse to give up their nuclear weapons even though the United Nations have made many decisions and efforts to tackle the issue from its roots.

The end of World War II marked the beginning of the atomic age when some states launched the nuclear arms race. Initially, in the synergistic context of Cold War geopolitics and the lack of effective international disarmament policies, countries like the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, France, and China became nuclear powers during 1945–1964. During this period, a large number of nuclear tests were conducted in all global environments (atmosphere, underground, and underwater).

There has been invented few if any, weapons as powerful and destructive as the nuclear bomb. The first time a people saw a nuclear weapon being used was on August 6, 1945, during World War II, when American pilots dropped one atomic bomb, dubbed Little Boy, on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, they dropped the second one, dubbed Fat Man, on Nagasaki, Japan. Casualties range from 150,000 to 200,000. The injuries and scars of that destruction are still in evidence today, both in the memories of its victims and the cancers they have developed.
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By the end of World War II, the governments, as well as the people of the nations, had seen the heavy effects of the aforementioned nuclear weapons and their dangerous outcomes. On January 1, 1967, The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty went into effect as the landmark of the actions taken concerning this issue. At that time, only five countries had tested and manufactured nuclear weapons. They were United Nations Security Council permanent members who are Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and the US. All the other countries who have signed the NPT agreed not to pursue nuclear weaponry, instead focusing on the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has spearheaded the movement to establish a nuclear-weapon-free regime, and its aim was to deter states and organizations that have nuclear arms or capabilities from transferring its nuclear weapons or capabilities to states or organizations that do not. To enforce and monitor the NPT, the treaty calls upon the actions of the International Atomic Energy Agency, an international agency that works primarily by inspecting nuclear facilities.

Ever since, other countries that were also involved in the development and testing of nuclear weapons were India, Pakistan, and North Korea while Israel and Iran may or may not secretly harbour nuclear devices and technology. Some countries, most of the signatory to the NPT, have possessed or technology but have since destroyed or surrendered them, such as the former Soviet Union republics Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

The permanent five countries initially built nuclear weaponry for a powerful offence, but most of them have since repurposed them for violent defence under the term of nuclear deterrence. Countries now recognize that any nuclear strike will leave the offending country vulnerable to nuclear retaliation, either from the defending country or its nuclear-capable allies. The result of such an eye-for-an-eye mentality would be mutually assured destruction. To this end, countries seeking to protect themselves from aggressors began amassing nuclear weapons to deter hostile countries from attack.

Major Parties Involved

United States

Between 16 July 1945 and 23 September 1992 the United States of America conducted by official count 1054 nuclear tests, and two nuclear attacks. The number of actual nuclear devices tested, and nuclear explosions are larger than this but harder to establish precisely.

Some devices that were tested failed to produce any noticeable explosion, other tests were actually multiple device detonations. It is not clear whether all multiple device tests have yet been identified, and enumerated. Although the United States has not set off a nuclear bomb since 1992, it still is the nation who tested the most nuclear weapons in the history so this issue highly concerns them.
**Russian Federation**

Russia became the world's second nuclear weapon state after it tested its first device at Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan on 29 August 1949. Today it is one of the five recognized nuclear weapon states under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a status which was gained as the legal successor of the Soviet Union. Beginning in June 2014, the State Department has declared that Russia produced and tested a missile which was a violation of the 1987 INF Treaty and Russia has responded with its own allegations of U.S. violations. Russia also completed destruction of its chemical weapons, as obligated by the Chemical Weapons Convention in September 2017.

**International Atomic Energy Agency**

The watchdog of the NPT is the IAEA, or International Atomic Energy Agency, which was established independently of the UN by the IAEA Statute. The IAEA works with the General Assembly, Security Council, and signatory countries through its regular inspections program to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and deter the military use of nuclear power. Although the IAEA works closely with the UN, the IAEA is an autonomous organization.

**United Kingdom**

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was ratified by the UK in April 2015 and entered into force on 24 December 2014. For the treaty to have maximum impact, major exporters like the UK need to set an example and implement the ATT to a high standard.

However, there are growing concerns, which the UK's conduct with regards to arms sales to states with bad human rights records is undermining the treaty. Moreover, the United Kingdom is the only nuclear weapon state (NWS) with a single weapon system and is the NWS with the smallest nuclear arsenal.

**France**

President Hollande rules out using nuclear weapons as battlefield weapons and adds that nuclear deterrence has no place in offensive manoeuvres and is purely defensive. Nuclear weapons should only be used if France’s vital self-interests are threatened. Consequently, French officials have expressed support for the eventual aim of complete nuclear disarmament but have been quiet to push for multilateral negotiations.
People’s Republic of China

China actively pushes forward the conclusion of a multilateral treaty on the mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons. In January 1994, China formally submitted a draft treaty on the No-First-Use of Nuclear Weapons to the United States, Russia, France and Britain and suggested a consultation between the five nuclear-weapon states at an early date. China also agreed not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China has always kept its nuclear force to the minimum necessary for self-defence.

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

DPRK repeatedly violated the NPT from its accession in 1985 until its withdrawal in 2003. The United Nations Security Council has issued several resolutions (USNCRs 1718, 1874, 2094, 2270 and 2321) condemning North Korea’s nuclear tests and imposing sanctions in response.

It is an important issue to point out that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is the only United Nations Member State that still tests nuclear weapons, and their tests have caused escalating tensions between them and the United States. Their most recent nuclear test was on September 3, 2017.

Israel

Israel has signed the CTBT but has not ratified the treaty. It is the only non-NPT nuclear possessing state to sign the CTBT. Prime Minister Netanyahu met with Dr. Lassina Zerbo, the executive secretary of the CTBT Preparatory Organization, and indicated that Israel would ratify the treaty at some point in the future. Since 1963, Israel has agreed to "not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East." which is interpreted to mean that Israel will not test or publicly declare the existence of its nuclear weapons.

Previous Actions Taken Concerning the Issue

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

In 1968, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed. It currently comprises 189 signatory countries, among them the Permanent Five that are recognized by the NPT to legally harbour nuclear weapons. The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. The Treaty represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. On 11 May 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely. A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five
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nuclear-weapon States. More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the Treaty’s significance.

**Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a multilateral treaty that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments.

Widely considered to be a milestone towards nuclear disarmament, the CTBT would prohibit all nuclear testing. Nineteen years after it opened for signature the CTBT has yet to enter into force. Entry into force of the CTBT requires ratification by all states with nuclear power reactors and research reactors (in 1996), known as Annex II states. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 1996 but has not entered into force, as eight specific states including the United States and China, have not ratified the treaty.

**Proposed Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty**

After the failure of states parties to the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach consensus, many countries sought to press forward the nuclear disarmament agenda in the United Nations General Assembly. Over the course of three sessions in 2016, an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) of states recommended that the UN General Assembly convene a conference in 2017 to "negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading toward their total elimination." On 27 October 2016, The First Committee of the UN General Assembly voted to adopt the resolution to convene the nuclear ban conference, and the full UN General Assembly followed suit on 23 December 2016. The first round of negotiations was held at the United Nations in New York from 27 March - 31 March 2017, with a second round scheduled from 15 June 2017 - 7 July 2017.

**The Conference on Disarmament (CD)**

The Conference on Disarmament, established in 1979, is the multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. The CD and its predecessors have negotiated many multilateral arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements. The CD was formed in 1979 as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community after the agreement was reached among the Member States during the first special session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) devoted to disarmament (1978).
Points to Consider

Delegates should approach the issue of nuclear disarmament on three grounds: nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, and nuclear energy. The issue of nuclear non-proliferation will only become more pressing as nuclear weapons become easier to manufacture, conceal, and distribute. Furthermore, while a majority of the international community is on the same page regarding nuclear nonproliferation, many hostile non-state parties are not, and these parties do not always abide by international law. Delegates should be prepared to propose solutions that would deter countries from acquiring or developing nuclear weapons. These solutions must also deal with the possibilities of militant, non-member nations that possess the technology, the material, and the willingness to use nuclear weapons. Specifically, what measures will these solutions take to prevent the illegal distribution of nuclear weapons? What will your solution do in the case of a nuclear threat? How would these solutions be enforced? Monetary and non-monetary guarantees may or may not be effective, depending on your country’s resources. Delegates should also consider bilateral, economic, or political agreements that would reign in nuclear proliferation among violating countries and violate non-state parties. Another issue delegates must address is disarmament. The United States and Russia currently lead the world regarding nuclear weapons available, but other nuclear-capable countries have much colder relationships. What can be done to build trust among nuclear-capable nations, and what concessions must be granted to reduce the nuclear stockpiles of these nations? Even in the event of a nuclear disarmament agreement, delegates must address how this agreement would be enforced. The IAEA can only inspect the nuclear facilities it knows about; how can countries be transparent in the disarmament process? Finally, delegates must address the lure of nuclear energy. Nations have a right to pursue nuclear power, but solutions must be found to keep nuclear power peaceful. What guarantees can be made? Who can enforce them? When does nuclear power become a nuclear menace?

Bibliography