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**Nuclear Disarmament**

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**Issue:** The issue of a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament

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## Introduction

Nuclear weapons first emerged as a result of the Manhattan Project that was under the United States' military's jurisdiction. The project brought about the nuclear age of man. The first nuclear weapon was used by the US as a result of the project, showcasing catastrophic results worldwide after the bombings on Japan.

The rise of the nuclear age caused the emergence of the cold war as both the USSR and the US could not afford a global war with the possibility of bringing down nuclear winter onto the world. Rising tensions resulted in negotiations on both sides to start disarmament as the increase in nuclear weapon wielding states, and nukes in general served as a wild card in global clashes of interests, increasing the chance of nuclear war.

The destructive nature of nuclear weapons is not caused only by the high amounts of condensed energy that is released which causes the infamous mushroom cloud explosion but also by the less evident radioactive side effects. Combined with the pure explosive energy and radiation, nuclear weapons pose a threat to the continuity of our species in the case of war.

Conferences on the topic of nuclear disarmament have been called for since the first use of nuclear weapons, slowly trying to ease the tense atmosphere that has been born because of the sheer destructive nature of nukes.

As a result, nuclear-free zones started emerging, regions that have been defined to host nations that have signed and vowed to never test nuclear weapons, research them, or host them on their soil. To this day, the issue on nuclear disarmament continues to be in large debate worldwide with conferences and seminars still being held frequently to discuss about not only the dangers of nuclear weapons but about nuclear energy as a whole.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Nuclear Weapon** – A bomb which uses the explosive power of uranium's radioactive breakdown into smaller particles. This is called a decay chain. The energy created by this reaction powers the warhead, the tip of the bomb that contains the explosive. As such, a nuclear weapon's destructive energy stems from this reaction.

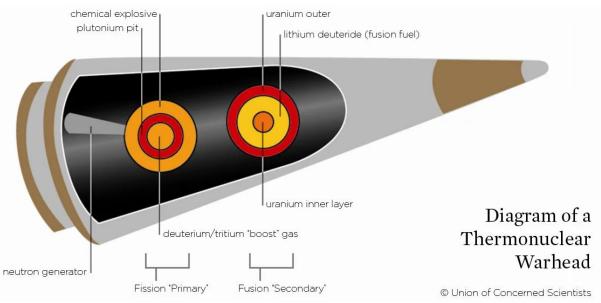


Diagram of a Thermonuclear Warhead  
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**Radiation** - Radiation is energy that comes from a source and travels through space and may be able to penetrate various materials. Atoms with unstable nuclei are said to be radioactive. In order to reach stability, these atoms give off, or emit, the excess energy or mass. These emissions are called radiation. This is the type of radiation present in nuclear weapons.

**Mutation** – A mutation is defined as changes in the DNA that were not naturally a product of genetic variation, mostly caused by radiation.

**Arsenal** – A storage of weaponry. In the case of nuclear weapons, nuclear arsenals are where nukes are kept out of the eyes of the public.

**ICBM** – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. This weaponry has the ability to deliver nuclear weapons in a minimum range of 5,500 kilometres.

**Arms Race** – A competition between two nations militaristically in terms of weaponry.

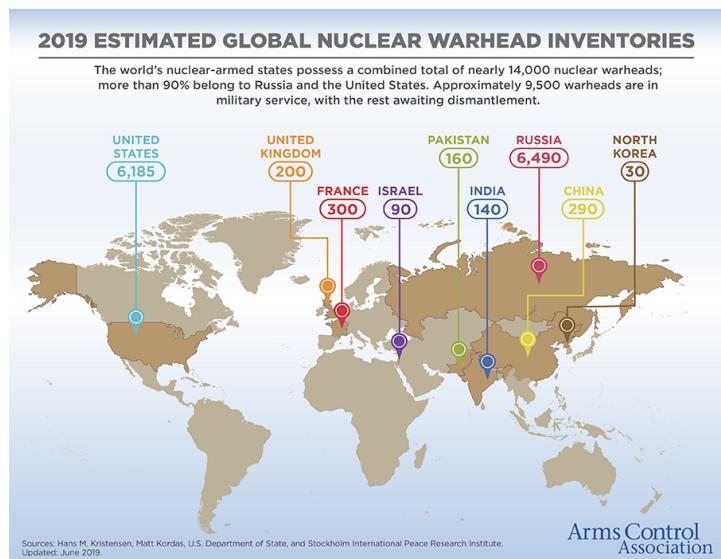
**Nuclear Proliferation** – The process in which a nation gets a hold of a nuclear weapon.

**Nuclear Disarmament** – To start de-militarizing in terms of nuclear weaponry by containing the nuclear weapons and destroying them in safe conditions.

## General Overview

As a result of the Manhattan Project conducted by the United States during World War II, Nuclear Weapons were developed by utilizing uranium. The first nuclear weapon used was in New Mexico on July 16, 1945. The field test was successful, prompting for the US to deploy warheads for warfare.

Being the first nuclear weapon to be used in warfare, Little Boy operated as a result of shooting a hollow uranium-235 cylinder at a target “plug” of the same material. Nuclear weapons were hailed by the US as the primary weaponry that helped end the



savagery of the Second World War by exerting dominance over Japan and this brought a tense state in global politics as an unknown factor had entered the world: the destructive power of the atom.

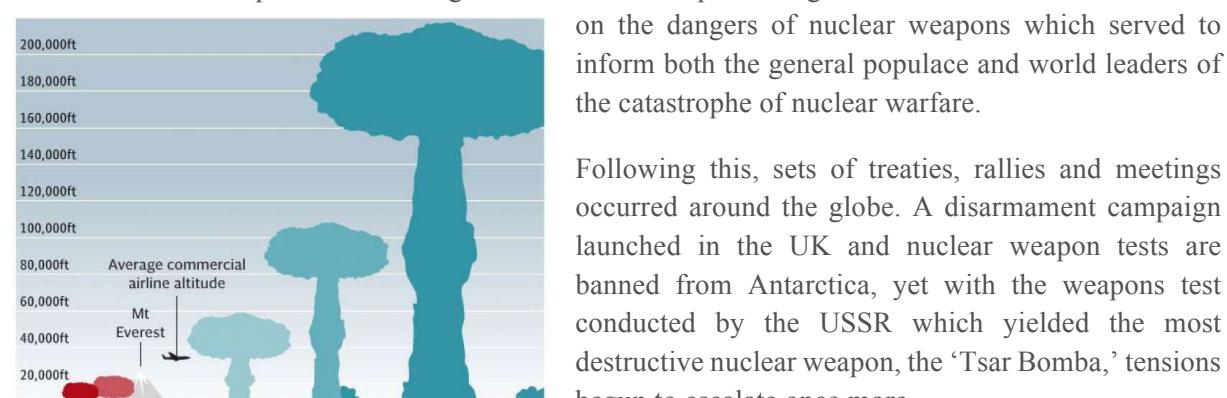
After the end of the Second World War, the world entered a divided state between the USSR and USA under the Warsaw Pact and NATO respectively. Due to the fact that the world had been divided economically, militaristically, and ideologically as a result of WWII, both sides started an arms race to overpower the latter, strengthening their ideology and removing opposition.

The UN, upon witnessing the destructive nature of nukes called for an elimination of atomic weapons on 24 January 1946, and set up a commission to oversee their mission.

However, as tensions rose with the arms race during the Cold War, both the US and USSR had reached the highest accountable nuclear weapon count. The US holding 31,255 warheads during 1967, its peak time, and the USSR holding 45,000 nuclear warheads during 1986. As the nuclear arsenal count increased so did global tensions escalate, foreshadowing a possible nuclear war that could result in a nuclear winter with the potential to wipe-out most life on Earth or cause them to mutate to drastic extents, destroying biodiversity.

As the UK also begun nuclear weapon tests, the political landscape entered a state of chaos as the possibility of every world nation hosting nuclear warheads was becoming a prominent issue. The first act that started to dispel the increasing tense state was the publishing of the Russell-Einstein manifesto

on the dangers of nuclear weapons which served to inform both the general populace and world leaders of the catastrophe of nuclear warfare.



Following this, sets of treaties, rallies and meetings occurred around the globe. A disarmament campaign launched in the UK and nuclear weapon tests are banned from Antarctica, yet with the weapons test conducted by the USSR which yielded the most destructive nuclear weapon, the 'Tsar Bomba,' tensions began to escalate once more.

The most infamous nuclear weapons crisis occurred when the USSR stationed nuclear weapons in Cuba stating that their intentions were to protect Cuba, offsetting the Cuban Missile Crisis. The US, in response to the missile crisis stationed their own nuclear warheads in Turkey, escalating tensions with the USSR.

The crisis was resolved by removing nuclear warheads from both Turkey and Cuba, but the damage had already been done: global tensions had spiked.

Looking at the issue today, the number of nuclear weapons in the world has been reduced from 70,000 in 1986 to around 14,000 today in total. This showcases that a path towards a nuclear free world seems possible, yet the UK, France, Russia, and the US continue to develop nuclear technology even though the amount they have has decreased.

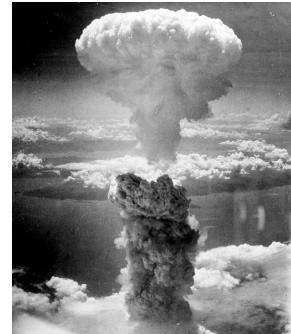
The most recent event in terms of nuclear energy and warheads occurred when the US, under President Trump, withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, stating that Iran's nuclear energy program was a guise used for developing nuclear weapons in opposition of international law.

Currently tensions keep on increasing worldwide as more countries begin to gain nuclear power.

## Major Parties Involved

### USA

Being the first nation to develop a nuclear warhead, the US is one of the leading nuclear powers in the world as of today. The total nuclear warheads in the world belong to mostly the US and Russia, approximately 92 percent of global warheads. One of the reasons that the US has maintained its strength as a superpower is its ability to manufacture and stockpile nuclear warheads, an interest that is vital for the political landscape of the United States of America.



Recently the US has adopted many commitments to diminish its nuclear arsenal. According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), it has condensed its arsenal size from 31,255 warheads, its highest count during the Cold War, to the current stock of 5,800 operational and reserved warheads.

To this day, the US has taken actions to reduce global nuclear warheads by hosting conferences, agreements, and signing new documents with leading nuclear powers such as the Russian Federation, yet it has expressed its reserved manner in signing papers to completely abolish their nuclear stockpile.

### Russia

The Russian Federation has signed and ratified many past treaties concerning this issue, starting with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); moreover, it has reduced its nuclear arsenal size massively from its 45,000 nuclear warheads. Russia has remained actively seized with The United States of America upon the nuclear disarmament matter even though it is the largest stockpiler of warheads, yet alongside the US, Russia has been lenient in letting go of its stockpile.

### The UK and France

The UK and France became nuclear states after the Second World War, dedicating research into the development of nuclear warheads. Both had their first nuclear tests in Australia and the Sahara respectively. Both the UK and France voted against a resolution in the UN titled “Nuclear Disarmament,” creating further complications to the matter.

### Israel

Israel’s nuclear program was started in secret by its first prime minister with the intention of stockpiling nuclear power to ensure their longevity in the Middle East as they were surrounded by Muslim nations. The secret Israeli nuclear program was, however, leaked by the media, forcing Israel to reveal its nuclear program. Israel’s nuclear arsenal is portrayed to be vital for its existence in the Middle East as it is pressured from all sides. Israel has not expressed any intentions of demilitarizing in terms of nuclear warheads, underlining the pressure it might receive from its neighbouring nations.

## DPRK

In 2003, North Korea withdrew from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and later revealed in 2006 that it had conducted nuclear weaponry tests that were deemed to be successful. Being a fairly isolated country under the iron rule of Kim-Jong-Un, North Korea's possession of nuclear warheads makes it a wildcard in global politics. It is infamously known that the DPRK has even threatened other nuclear powers with their own nukes in an act to strengthen themselves in international politics.



## Iran

Iran maintains that its nuclear program is peaceful, but some in the international community have doubted this position, noting that Iran had enriched uranium to far higher levels than necessary, believing that Iran was covering up the development of nuclear weapons.

The revelation in 2002 of undeclared nuclear facilities in Iran led to inspections by the IAEA, resulting in negotiations with France, Germany and the UK. Cooperation broke down in 2005 however, leading to sanctions on Tehran.

Moving on, following intense rounds of meetings, the JCPOA was signed by Iran and the P5+1 in July 2015, with the UNSC approving the deal a few days later.

Yet, in 2018 President Donald Trump withdrew the US from the JCPOA, causing tensions to rise in the middle east, and the world by extent.

## People's Republic of China

China's policy on nuclear weapons undertakes not to use or threaten with nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones at any time or under any circumstances. Moving on, China became the first nation to propose and pledge the "no-first-use" policy when it first gained nuclear capabilities in 1964, stating that "It should not be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances."

## India and Pakistan

Pakistan and India are two of the very few member states that have not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the NPT. India initiated its nuclear program in 1963 expressing that it was for peaceful purposes, while Pakistan started conducting research on nuclear weapons in 1968 stating that it perceived India's nuclear program as a threat.

In 1998, both were officially declared as nuclear powers. Not only have they not signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty but also, they have been expressing leniency in discussing other nuclear disarmament commitments, such as: The Fissile Material Cut-Off treat (FMCT).

Pakistan stated that it would not give up its nuclear weapons until India does too, in the purpose of ensuring its national security. On the other hand, India has been supporting the FMCT but has stated that it will not join it, contradicting global intentions.

### **UNODA (United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs)**

The UNODA promotes contribution by world nations into the mission of eliminating weapons of mass destruction in the world, and one of their main targets are nukes. Furthermore, it releases statistics and announces recent updates on its mission of disarmament, underlining current negotiations, on-going treaties, conventions and resolutions.

### **IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)**

The IAEA is an independent intergovernmental organization that serves as the global focal point for nuclear cooperation. Their mission is to assist its Member States, in the context of social and economic goals, in planning for and using nuclear science and technology for various peaceful purposes. Moreover, they legislate nuclear safety standards and promote the achievement and maintenance of high levels of safety in applications of nuclear energy, as well as the protection of human health and the environment against ionizing radiation. Another one of their responsibility is to inspect Member States to ensure they comply with their commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other non-proliferation agreements.

## **Timeline of Key Events**

<b>When</b>	<b>Event</b>
August 1942	The Manhattan Project kick starts.
16 July 1945	The US's first ever nuclear test conducted in New Mexico.
6 August 1945	The US drops the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.
9 August 1945	The second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, signalling the end of World War 2.
24 January 1946	Upon witnessing the devastating power of the atom, the UN calls for elimination of atomic weaponry.
29 August 1949	The USSR conducts its first nuclear test in Northern Siberia.
3 October 1952	UK tests its first nuclear bomb in Australia, signalling its nuclear program.
1 November 1952	The US tests the first hydrogen bomb, also increasing the rate at which it stockpiles warheads.
1 March 1954	The infamous "Bravo" test is conducted by the US.
9 July 1955	Russell-Einstein Manifesto is published, urging world leaders of the catastrophe that a nuclear winter can bring forth.

17 February 1958	UK disarmament campaign launches, serving as an example for worldwide campaigns.
1 December 1959	The Antarctica Nuclear treaty is signed, and as a result nuclear tests are banned in Antarctica.
13 February 1960	France's first nuclear weapon test is conducted in Africa.
30 October 1961	The world witnesses the strongest ever built nuclear bomb, the infamous Tsar Bomba, as a result of the USSR's nuclear tests.
16-29 October 1962	The Cuban Missile Crisis occurs as the USSR places nuclear warheads in Cuba: global tensions escalate to such a scale that a third world war is feared as a possibility.
5 August 1963	Nuclear Partial Test Ban Treaty is launched for signature.
16 October 1964	China conducts its first nuclear weapon test.
14 February 1967	Latin America is declared to be a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFS), serving as the first example of future NWFS's.
1 July 1968	The Non-proliferation treaty opens for signature.
18 May 1974	India conducts its first nuclear test, stating that its mission is peaceful.
22 September 1979	A nuclear explosion occurs in the Indian Ocean.
12 June 1982	A million people rally for nuclear disarmament worldwide as tensions have peaked.
6 August 1985	The South Pacific is declared to be a nuclear-free zone.
30 September 1986	Israel's nuclear program revealed as a result of a media leak.
11–12 October 1986	US and Soviet leaders discuss nuclear abolition as a nuclear winter has been acknowledged to be the worst-case scenario.
8 December 1987	Intermediate-range missiles are banned in warfare to limit possible nuclear warhead delivery.
15 December 1995	Southeast Asia becomes nuclear-free
11 April 1996	Africa becomes a nuclear-free zone
8 July 1996	ICJ Rules on Nuclear Weapons
24 September 1996	Total nuclear test ban opens for signature
9 October 2006	North Korea conducts nuclear test
8 May 2018	US withdraws from JCPOA (Iran Nuclear Deal)

## Previous attempts to resolve the issue

### Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

This treaty aims to prohibit nuclear weapon tests. To this date, the treaty has still not been enacted as three of the 44 mandatory signatory nations have not signed the document. Of the 44 States included in Annex 2 required for entry into force of the CTBT, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, and Pakistan have not signed the treaty, and of the five states who have not ratified the CTBT are China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the United States.

### Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)

The Treaty requires parties to prohibit, prevent, and abstain from carrying out nuclear weapons tests or any other nuclear explosions in the atmosphere, in outer space, under water, or in any other environment if such explosions cause radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits of the State that conducts an explosion.

### Treaty of the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

This treaty states that nations without nuclear weapons will not acquire them, nations with nuclear weapons will pursue disarmament, and all states can access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, under safeguards.

### Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibits States Parties from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, or stockpiling nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Signatories are barred from transferring or receiving nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, control over such weapons, or any assistance with activities prohibited under the Treaty. States are also prohibited from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Lastly, States/Parties cannot allow the stationing, installation, or deployment of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices in their territory. The Treaty was adopted on 7 July 2017, after two rounds of negotiations at the UN General Assembly. Both rounds were boycotted by all nuclear weapons possessing states, most NATO countries, and many military allies of nuclear weapons states.

### Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFS's)

A nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) is a specified region in which countries commit themselves not to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons. Five such zones exist today, with four of them spanning the entire Southern Hemisphere. The regions currently covered under NWFZ agreements include: Latin America (the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific (the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga), Southeast Asia (the 1995 Treaty of Bangkok) Africa (the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba) and Central Asia (the 2006 Treaty of Semipalatinsk).

## Possible Solutions

Looking at the international aspect, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be observed in full and in good faith. Those countries which have not yet acceded to the NPT should do so without delay and without conditions, so as to make the treaty truly universal.

Another point to emphasize is that the states which have not yet signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should do so as soon as possible, so as to promote the early entry into force of the CTBT according to the treaty provisions.

Most importantly, a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) should be negotiated and concluded. A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is a proposed international agreement that would prohibit the production of the two main components of nuclear weapons: highly-enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium.

To ensure that nuclear disarmament begins without any complications the nuclear-weapon states concerned should undertake to withdraw all the nuclear weapons deployed outside their territories.

The USA has a nuclear weapon policy that contradicts some aspects of nuclear disarmament, primarily because the president is the sole-authority in launching nuclear warheads and the US's policy allows them to strike back against the DPRK, PRC, and Russia in the case they are attacked, even if it is a non-nuclear attack, with nukes. A no-first-use policy may be implemented by the UN on the US in order to ensure nuclear wars do not break out in the case the US is attacked. In addition, the nuclear warhead launch authorization can be moved to the congress of the United States to prevent authority abuse.

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