

**Forum:** MS United Nations Security Council

**Issue #1:** Measures to address the spread of nuclear weaponry

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### Guiding Questions as you Read

Why is the spread of nuclear weapons a concern for international safety?

What are some past efforts done in order to promote international safety, and how have these efforts helped the issue?

What role do countries play in the spread of nuclear weapons, and what actions have they taken to address the issue?

## Introduction

### Key Terms

Nuclear tests  
Nuclear  
proliferation  
NWFZ  
NPT

Nuclear weapons are the deadliest weapons on the planet. These types of weapons can kill millions of people, destroy cities, and even endanger the environment. Nuclear weapons were created during World War 2 by the United States. Nuclear bombs have only been used twice in war, and to this day 13,400 nuclear weapons continue to exist while over 2,000 nuclear tests have been done. Although the number of nuclear weapon possession has decreased after the Cold War, these weapons continue to be a threat to humanity. The worst accidental nuclear disaster that has ever happened to this day has been Chernobyl, when a nuclear power plant exploded in 1986. The worst incidental nuclear disaster was when an atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima, Japan by the United States in 1945 during World War 2. Many treaties and approaches have been made to stop nuclear proliferation in order to strengthen global non-nuclear proliferation, international peace, and security. Treaties such as the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZ) and the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) all have been established ever since the first nuclear weapons were invented.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Nuclear tests:** process of testing a nuclear weapon in order to determine its effectiveness.

**Nuclear proliferation:** the spread of nuclear weapons or nuclear technology to countries that don't have them already.

**Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (NWFZ):** specific countries that promise not to

manufacture, buy, or test nuclear weapons.

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):** international treaty with the objective of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, signed by 191 states.

**Nuclear arsenal:** a large collection of weapons and military equipment held by a country.

**Nuclear deterrence:** belief and military strategy referring to the idea that the possession of nuclear weapons by a country prevents others from attacking it because the fear of using nuclear weapons would discourage the attacking country from taking aggressive action.

**Radiation syndrome:** an illness caused by the exposure to penetrating radiation in a very short period of time.

## Current Situation



### *The role of nuclear weaponry in Russia-Ukraine war*

The conflict in Ukraine has been the first war since WWII in Europe that has been involved with nuclear threats. The Russian Federation has the largest nuclear possession in the world and they use this to their advantage in order to invade and threaten enemies. Attempting to create nuclear deterrence strategies that were convincing enough to prevent the enemy from making a surprise attack has been the best way of controlling potential nuclear development throughout the years.

### *Nuclear powers*

Nuclear powers are countries that own nuclear weapons and continue to grow their

stockpile. The nuclear powers as of 2023 include countries such as the United States, Russia, France, China, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, Israel, and North Korea. As each nuclear power continues to grow their nuclear arsenal, raises the risk of a nuclear war happening.

### ***Impact of nuclear weapons on health***

Nuclear weapons create many consequences that affect the health of citizens. The blast, heat, and instant radiation from nuclear weapons all produce death and injury. Radioactive substances and human exposure to them play a significant role in health effects. Immediate reactions are caused by the destruction and collapsing of buildings/structures or heat and fire created by nuclear weapons such as bombs. Exposure to radiation creates illnesses such as radiation syndrome and many other deadly diseases. Because the exposure to radiation leads to destruction of health care devices, no treatment or care would be provided for the people affected.

### ***Balance of terror***

Balance of terror is the idea that since political leaders are scared of nuclear war, they will never use nuclear weapons or attack. Nuclear powers are powerful enough to provoke other countries, being capable of destroying each other and the world. Because of mutual fear and distrust, each country continues to increase its power but does not go to war. During a situation like this peace is still unbroken, but it is a different and more dangerous type of peace because the only reason why it is not destroyed is because of fear and terror.

### ***Nuclear safety***

Nuclear security (also known as nuclear safety) focuses on protecting people, society, and the environment from the dangerous risks of nuclear weapons and radiation. Not only does nuclear security work to prevent risks, but it also works in order to prevent and detect cruel acts that involve any types of nuclear substances. Any nuclear or radioactive material needs to be secure, whether it's in storage or in transport, because it could be used as a way to harm and ruin the world. Nuclear security is very important because it also protects the world from cyber-threats or just protecting the environment

against attacks in general.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### Russia

On August 19, 1949, the Soviet Union dropped its first nuclear bomb in Kazakhstan, becoming the first country to successfully develop and test a nuclear drive. Russia has participated in many international conflicts regarding nuclear weaponry, one of them being the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which countries across the world began talking and considering reducing the risk of nuclear catastrophes caused by nuclear weapons such as bombs. Russia has the biggest nuclear inventory in the world and is one of the signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The country also continues to operate under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which limits the use of weapons and also secures more transparency between the world's biggest powers: Russia and the United States. Since the invasion of Russia in Ukraine, it is unsure if President Vladimir Putin will be using nuclear arms at any time. As of 2022, the US has been following the New START commitments and remains to agree with the limits of the treaty. The country has also shown support for the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty and the US policy is still pursuing a step-by-step solution for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

### United States of America

The United States was the first country to invent nuclear weapons through the Manhattan Project and the only country to use any type of nuclear weapon during warfare. After the US bombed Japan, they kept their nuclear arsenal in order to potentially stop any threats from Russia. The USA conducted many nuclear bomb tests, the first one being in New Mexico, then the "Bravo" test in the Pacific Ocean, and the hydrogen bomb in the Marshall Islands. The NPR as of 2022 states that the US will only consider using nuclear weapons in case of extreme circumstances threatening the interests of the country and its allies. The United States signed the NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) and agreed to the START Treaty (New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) along with Russia on February 5, 2011.

## India

India tested its first nuclear device in May 1974 and had a total of three nuclear tests. India owns over 160 nuclear weapons and in 2021 spent 2.3 billion US dollars to build and maintain their nuclear forces. The country has also voted against the annual UN resolution on the adaptation of the TPNW (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons). In addition, India also abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution on negotiation towards the prohibition of nuclear arms and their total elimination.

## United Kingdom

The UK is one of the five countries listed under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty but has not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The country abandoned its chemical and biological weapons program created in 1950. They possess 225 nuclear weapons and have tested 45 nuclear weapons between the years of 1952 and 1963. Publicly, the United Kingdom voted against the UN resolution stating the start of negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and their total elimination. In addition, they have actively discouraged other countries and colonies from supporting this resolution.

## North Korea

In 2020, North Korea voted against the annual UN General Assembly resolution of the TPNW. In 2021, North Korea spent around \$624 million dollars on their nuclear forces, and has been the only country recorded to perform nuclear tests in the 21st century. The United States has tried to limit North Korea's nuclear missile program, but has been unsuccessful in both countries. Developments in the country's nuclear stockpile creates challenges for East Asia. Currently, North Korea has made nuclear attacks on South Korea as a way of protesting against South Korea's "collaboration" with the US military. Kim Jong Un, the president, has been accelerating the weapons development of the country in order to scare the United States.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event	Effect on Issue:
1930's	Scientific discovery of nuclear weapons	Scientists first created nuclear weapons during the 1930's, making it more accessible for other countries. This is when the issue begins.
1942	Manhattan Project	Created by the United States and its allies in order to make sure that their enemies don't make nuclear weapons before them. This was a secret research group in order to develop nuclear weapons for the United States.
August 6, 1945	Hiroshima atomic bomb	The US drops its first atomic bomb in Hiroshima. Created worry in the world because people began to realize the danger of nuclear weapons. Citizens were impacted forever because of the exposure to radiation.
July 29, 1957	IAEA Is Created	The International Atomic Energy Agency was created with the purpose of promoting peaceful and responsible use of nuclear weapons and technology. Members of the agency recognized that nuclear weapons were

dangerous and capable of ending the world.

1968-1975 Nuclear nonproliferation becomes more recognized

During these years, there were many disappointments but a lot of progress was made at the same time. The United Nations creates the first treaty called the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, making the US and the Soviet Union (Russia) limit their nuclear weapons. On the other hand, India finally gets nuclear weapons.

February 14, 1967 First establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone

Latin America is established as the first nuclear-free zone in the world, meaning that countries in this area agree to ban the testing and prohibit owning nuclear weapons.

June 12, 1968 First International Treaty to Prevent Spread of Nuclear Weapons Is Signed

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, signed by multiple countries. Countries who signed agreed to never obtain nuclear weapons. Five major nuclear powers at the time: China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States all agreed and signed, but most have not followed the agreement.

January North Korea withdraws from

North Korea decided to leave the



10, 2003	Non-Proliferation Treaty	Non-Proliferation Treaty claiming that it was getting in the way of the country's protection and security.
July 7, 2017	The UN creates the Nuclear Ban Treaty	122 countries adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, being the first legal permanent treaty for nuclear disarmament. Countries that signed agreed that it is important to eliminate nuclear weapons. Countries that own nuclear weapons did not sign, meaning that the effectiveness of the treaty is unclear.

## Past International Action

**NPT Treaty:** The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was an agreement signed in 1968 by most of the major nuclear and non-nuclear powers including the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union. By signing this treaty they pledged their cooperation in stopping the spread of nuclear technology. Even though the NPT did not prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, the treaty was still a big success for people advocating arms control thanks to the international cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear states.

**The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty:** THE CTBT, opened for signature in 1996, prohibited any nuclear weapon tests explosion anywhere in the world. The treaty established a

global network of monitoring facilities which were used in order to inspect suspicious events. Ever since the conclusion and opening of the treaty, nuclear testing has become very controversial. Even nuclear-armed states that did not sign or ratify the CTBT such as India, Israel, and Pakistan, postponed their nuclear tests. Only one country, North Korea, has conducted nuclear tests in this century. Although the CTBT has not been followed exactly, it has for now achieved its main goal of ending nuclear weapon tests explosions.

**The North Korea nuclear program:** Although there have been multiple efforts to end North Korea's nuclear program, it has still not been possible. The country's nuclear program began in 1950 when North Korea established relationships with the Soviet Union. The program was later interrupted in 2009, but later on recontinued in early 2018. Kim Jong Un stated the advancement of North Korea's missile and nuclear program, outlining his goals for the country. Kim mentioned nuclear tests, while also saying that North Korea was entering the final stage of preparation for the test launch of a new missile.

**The Nuclear Suppliers Group:** The NSG is a group of nuclear supplier countries that contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by carrying out two sets of Guidelines for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports. The NSGG guidelines contain something called the "Non-Proliferation Principle" which was adopted in 1994, authorizing transfers only when it does not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The NSG guidelines are consistent with and help other international treaties in the field of nuclear non-proliferation such as the NPT and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.

**Comprehension Questions:** Should all countries have the right to develop and possess nuclear weapons, or should there be restrictions in place?

## UN Involvement

The UN, ever since the creation of nuclear weapons, has been focused on maintaining international peace and eliminating nuclear weapons. The UN has created many resolutions and treaties in order to keep this issue under control.

The first resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly on this topic was in 1946, establishing a “Commission” to control the discovery of atomic energy making sure that it was only used for peaceful purposes.

In 1959, the United Nations General Assembly created the objective of complete nuclear disarmament. In 1978, the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament took place in which they recognized the importance of prioritizing nuclear disarmament, which is something that every UN Secretary General actively promotes.

Many helping Member States have stated their frustration towards the UN because of how slow reaching total nuclear disarmament has been.

## **Possible Solutions**

It is clear that the spread of nuclear weapons is an issue that threatens countries internationally. Because nuclear weapons are not used in a positive way, one fundamental solution is to create diplomacy between major powers that possess nuclear weapons. By having diplomatic relationships, countries will be able to address the concerns of nuclear proliferation helping prevent major issues that can escalate in the future. Diplomatic relationships can include negotiating disarmament agreements and establishing relationships between states that are both nuclear and non-nuclear. It is important for countries to build trust with one another, as it can ensure that nuclear weapons will not be used during conflicts. Improving international relationships also applies to arms control agreements. Past treaties and international institutions such as the NPT & IAEA could be strengthened with the help of different countries coming together in order to support nuclear nonproliferation. This includes the creation of new establishing transparency in nuclear programs within countries, etc.

Another possible solution would be disarmament, by reducing the number of nuclear

weapons in the world. This step is crucial in order to reach a nuclear weapons-free world, as eventually, it eliminates them. A way to achieve disarmament is by negotiating with other states and reinforcing disarmament treaties. Other measures that could be taken in order to achieve this could be reducing stockpiles and once again, increasing transparency internationally.

## Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

The spread of nuclear weapons connects to SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, because it guarantees peace while combating violence and insecurity on a worldwide level. Nuclear proliferation threatens global peace and security because the possession of nuclear weapons by a country increases the risk of war and aggression. In order to achieve SDG 16, it is crucial to address the issue of nuclear proliferation and work towards creating a nuclear weapons-free world.

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## Useful Links for Research

### I. Country Profile

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>

A. This website is the perfect starting point for getting to know your country. It is great for understanding the way things are done in your country, while also learning more about other countries you will be debating with. Every delegate is encouraged to start their research here.

### II. United Nations Nuclear Weapons

<https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/nuclear/>

A. The following website provides informative background on the topic such as an overview of the definition, different treaties, and UN involvement all relating to the issue.

### III. ICAN Nuclear Countries Profile

<https://www.icanw.org/region-africa>

A. On this website, delegates can find more information about their country

regarding their nuclear position. Delegates can find their countries' position, status, signatories, etc, on nuclear proliferation. This source provides great research and will be very beneficial.