

# The First General Assembly

## Developing effective actions towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons

MODEL UNITED NATIONS
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## Introduction

Ever since the Trinity Bomb Test took place in 1945, citizens of all United Nations (UN) member states have lived in fear of a nuclear apocalypse possibly affecting or even ending their lives. In order to fully understand the reasons why preventing the production of nuclear weapons and eventually eliminating them is so incredibly important, we must look at the origins of the nuclear bomb; this also being the origin of fear towards the nuclear bomb. We will be reviewing the key turning points in the Cold War, the first war in history, in which nuclear weapons were present from the start. And we will be examining dysfunctional or vague treaties that have failed to eliminate nuclear weapons in a definitive manner.

As well as the past, we must understand the present: we must understand the reasons why states have recently shown an increasing reluctance to give up their nuclear weapons, and why other states have even started development on new nuclear weapons. We will see some more recent treaties, and as we are reading them, we will realise that history simply repeats itself, and these current developments on (the elimination of) international nuclear policy must be eradicated.

Without comprehending the significance of these two elements, past and present, it is simply impossible to create long-lasting multilateral agreements that are effective in their goal of eradicating nuclear weaponry.

These upcoming chapters will impart the knowledge necessary to grasp the most important pieces of information to understand the two main points named above.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Arms Race

A recurring pattern in which (multiple) countries acquire weapons competitively, resulting in a more hostile relation between all countries involved in the arms race.

### ICBM

Inter Continental Ballistic Missile, long range missiles that can travel up to 5,600 km. The United States of America (USA), the Russian Federation, as well as the People's Republic of China (PRC), have ICBMs in their nuclear arsenal. ICBMs are held in silos on land, and cannot be moved from their place.

### Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

A doctrine (ideology) that bases itself on the premise that if a country attacks another country with nuclear weapons, and the attacked country also holds (a similar number of) nuclear weapons, the retaliation would be so harsh, that both countries would be assuring their destruction

### Nine Nuclear States, The

The nine states in possession of nuclear weapons, those being; the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan, Israel, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

### Nuclear Warheads/Weapons/Weaponry/Missiles

A bomb consisting of two components, one is a rocket or propeller for transportation, as well as an explosive component, using radioactive materials (often enriched Uranium or Plutonium) to cause the explosion itself.

### NWFZs

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) are a regional approach to deterring nuclear weapons in which the countries involved, prohibit each other from using, acquiring, or assembling their own nuclear weapons.

### Radiation

The long lasting release of energy or particles from radioactive materials as a result of fallout. This can often cause long term negative health effects on people in the vicinity of such radioactive materials.

### Ratifying a treaty

After a treaty is written up by a group of delegates, a member state may ratify a treaty, stating that they recognise the treaty, and agree on the terms. When ratifying a treaty, a state expresses its consent to be bound by the treaty, therefore, ratifying a treaty is legally binding for the state(s) that ratified.

### Signing a treaty

After a treaty is written up by a group of delegates, a member state may sign a treaty, stating that they recognise the treaty, and agree on the terms. When signing a treaty, a state may be willing to comply with the written terms, signing a treaty however, is not officially binding

### SLBM

Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile, long range missiles that are held in submarines. SLBMs in the 60s were less accurate than ICMBs, but now they are, in fact, more accurate, so SLBMs are now more widely used.

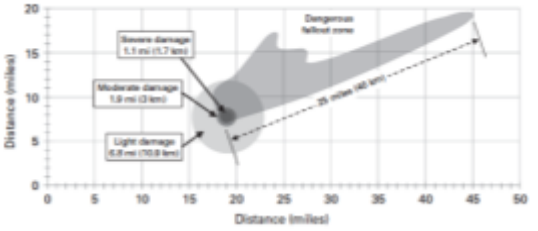
## General Overview

### Beginnings of the Nuclear Age

The use of nuclear weapons in warfare began all the way back in 1945, the end of World War II (WWII), when the USA concluded their tests and on nuclear bombs in the Los Alamos laboratory, and dropped a bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on the 6th and the 9th of August (1945) respectively.  President Harry S. Truman made the decision to drop these two bombs on Japan, but in the making of this decision, he has received constant criticisms. The reasons for these criticisms are as follows;

Nuclear missiles are some of the most destructive weapons in the world (see image below), and have devastating effects on the world both in the short term, and the long term. The people

affected by just a single missile such as in Hiroshima are countless. While estimates on the number of people killed in Hiroshima lie around 45,000 to 70,000 dead victims, most sources do agree that the following months the bomb claimed 90,000 to 170,000 lives, due to long term side effects of the bombing and nuclear radiation. Later on, the USSR and the US got into what is widely known as the Cold War, in which the two parties got involved in an (nuclear) arms race to become the more powerful state.




***Dangerous fallout zone for a 10-kiloton detonation. The pattern will vary depending on wind speed and direction, and the zone will shrink substantially over a day or so.***

"The Devastating Effects of Nuclear Weapons." *The MIT Press Reader*, 11 Apr. 2024

President Truman had started a neverending cycle.

### Mutually Assured Destruction

In the 1960s, the US made great investments in the production of nuclear weapons, causing it to possess over 1000 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) units and several (hundreds) of SLBM units, the USSR was running behind in development and decided it was time to catch up with the US. As a result the two parties realized that they were in a sort of stalemate, in which if one country launched an attack on the other, the attacking country would not be able to escape certain irreparable losses.

This doctrine is called Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), and was identified by Donald Brennan in 1962. Coincidentally, 1962 was the year of the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which it is theorized that the USA and the USSR came to realize that threatening with nuclear weapons was not the most effective, as it would mean suicide for the attacking country itself (this led to the creation of MAD).

### After the 1960s

When president John F. Kennedy averted the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962, civilians thought this arms race had reached the climax, and would only start to calm down from that moment on, and even it is true, in part, the nuclear arms race has never calmed down, and in fact, these last few years have shown a growing trend in the production of nuclear weapons as more states start developing their own weapons.

In 1970, the International Atomic Energy Agency (a UN organization) created the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (widely known as the NPT) in an attempt to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons among other states, in spite of this, the US and the USSR

continued to conduct scientific research in nuclear weapons, and started placing their arsenal on the European continent, in order to be closer to the opponent.

Up until 1991 the US and the USSR made no real efforts to minimize their share of nuclear weapons, however, in this year President George H. W. Bush and the President and General Secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which made demands to minimize the range and capacity of the nuclear arsenal of both parties; consequently, both parties complied. After that, the START treaty has experienced many revisions and additions (ratified by the USA and the Russian Federation), in order to, among other things, improve accountability between the two parties.

### The current state of affairs

Nowadays, the US is still making efforts to reduce their share of nuclear weapons, and despite the fact that the USA and the Russian Federation combined hold approximately 87% of all nuclear warheads, many other countries also possess nuclear weapons, making them just as dangerous to the overall safety of all UN Member States as the US or Russia, due to the sheer destructive power of these weapons, as explained earlier in this overview. And although there are many treaties with concrete solutions for this issue, many of them still lie, waiting to be ratified by the nuclear states (see Appendix I). All in all, the development of nuclear weapons is discouraged amongst member states, and the NPT is still often used in condemning other countries. The NPT, however, has grown weak over time, and leaves much room for interpretation, which is why further action on the matter is needed.

## Major Parties Involved

### The CND

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (not to be confused with the United Nations CND (Commission on Narcotic Drugs, or UNODC)) is a British campaign, pleading for nuclear disarmament across the globe.

### The IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency is a UN organization that was established in 1957, and aims to regulate the use and safety conditions of nuclear power, and additionally researches other use cases of nuclear technology, like various cancer treatments for example.

### Iran

Iran is a country with one of the largest uranium enrichment industries in the world. Currently it is facing criticisms for raising the percentage of purity in their enriched uranium, which for some countries points to possible secret research in the development of nuclear weapons.

### The Nine Nuclear States

All the nine nuclear states hold certain responsibility and authority over the reduction of nuclear weapons worldwide, and without involvement of these states, no productive solutions can be reached.

### Remaining countries with Uranium enrichment facilities

Many countries without nuclear weapons, or even nuclear deposits are in possession of uranium enrichment facilities, the following have the largest uranium enrichment industries: Russia (40%), China (17%), France (12%), US (11%), Netherlands (8%), United Kingdom (UK) (7%) and Germany (6%) (see Appendix II). These countries will also play a key role in hindering the further development of nuclear warheads.

## Timeline of Key Events

| Date | Description of event |
|---|---|
| July 16th 1945 | Date of the Trinity test |
| August 6th 1945 | First Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima |
| August 9th 1945 | Second Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki |
| August 29 th 1949 | First atomic bomb assembled by the USSR |
| May 15th 1957 | First Hydrogen bomb explodes on Easter Island |
| July 29th 1957 | The IAEA is created |
| Throughout October 1962 | The Cuban missile crisis |

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|---|---|
| October 16th 1964 | China's first atomic bomb is exploded |
| April 22nd 1970 | The Non Proliferation treaty is officially enforced |
| July 31st 1991 | The START treaty is signed by the US and USSR, later to be ratified by the US |
| January 10th 2003 | The DPRK announces its withdrawal from the NPT |
| August 26th 2022 | The Russian Federation blocks the review of the NPT |

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

- Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, 24 January 1946, United Nations General Assembly 1 (First ever resolution)
- Partial Test Ban Treaty, 5 August 1963, (A/RES/50/64)
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1 July 1968 (A/RES/2373)
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 10 September 1996, (A/RES/50/245)
- Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, 7 December 2015, (A/RES/70/33)
- Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations , 11 January, (A/RES/71/258)
- Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 7 December 2022, (A/RES/77/54)

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

A great deal of the attempts to solve the issue have been mostly through the UN (as an international body), however, the small amount of attempts that have not come to existence because of UN efforts will be listed here below:

### American - Russian bilateral agreements

- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I)

  The first treaty in the series of bilateral agreements between the US and the USSR to reduce the number of nuclear missiles. The reduction was split into three phases, in which they set a joint deadline to reduce missiles (by a mutually established number), the first deadline being

36 months after the ratification of the treaty, and the second and third deadline being 60 and 84 months after ratification respectively.

- START II

  Is a commitment between the US and the Russian Federation to the further reduction of nuclear weapons, interestingly, this treaty does not have a phased approach like START I, and it is mainly focused on heavy bombers and ICBM silo's.

- START III

  Talks for START III started as soon as START II entered into force. This was a revision of START II that never entered into force, partially due to a loss of interest in the reduction of nuclear arms, and rising tensions between the US and the Russian Federation.

- New START

  The last treaty in the series of US - Russia nuclear treaties and the only being enforced right now, it limits nuclear warheads to even smaller numbers than SORT, and establishes a framework that promotes transparency in the communication between both parties.

### Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

A large part of the UN member states are in nuclear weapon free zones, in which they hold each other accountable in order to prevent the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons in these zones. Although these treaties protect the states from each other in the case of nuclear war, the treaties do not protect the states inside NWFZs from any of the nine nuclear states. The NWFZ treaties are the following ones:

- Treaty of Tlatelolco, 1967
- Treaty of Rarotonga, 1985
- Treaty of Bangkok, 1995
- Treaty of Pelindaba, 1996
- Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, 2006

### The Iran nuclear deal

A deal that encourages Iran to turn away from the development of nuclear weapons, in exchange for the removal of sanctions from western countries. It was originally signed by Iran, Germany, and all the P5 countries (the USA, Russian Federation, China, the UK, and France).

## Possible Solutions

### Phased warhead reductions

Recommend a phased reduction treaty (like START I) in which the nuclear States need to reduce the number of warheads by a set number of months, and create a UN-hosted "Global Nuclear Register" where all nine nuclear States declare warhead numbers, delivery systems, and storage sites, this way we can track progress on the reduction of nuclear arms. Further recommend the UN Security Council to make sanctions snap back into place, when a declared State falls behind its schedule without credible technical delays, sanctions automatically re-apply.

### Strengthening NWFZs

Encourage and financially support new regional zones in the Middle East and Central Europe, closing the biggest gaps in the NWFZ architecture. Fast track Security Council endorsement so that any violation of a zone treaty automatically triggers Council consideration. This will establish the safety of millions inhabitants from various of UN member states, as well as further limit the capabilities of the nine nuclear states.

### Civil Society and Scientific Engagement

Enable civil-society teams to pilot monitoring technologies—ice-drilling probes for buried warhead storage, drone-based thermal imaging, and other scientific developments that could help boost the efficiency of nuclear demilitarization.

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## Appendices

I. List of treaties with the reduction of nuclear weapons as their goal, and a list of countries that have not yet ratified said treaties: cnduk.org/resources/international-agreements-relating-nuclear-weapons/

II.

