

Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Issue: The Question of the Possession of Nuclear Weapons in a Shifting Political Landscape

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Position: Co-Chair

Dear Delegates,

My name is Nicholas Papandreou and it is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the 5th annual session of the Campion School Model United Nations. Currently, I am a 17-year-old student headed to IB2 at the Hellenic American Educational Foundation, with the prospect of studying International Relations.

I started MUN almost two years ago, and have participated in conferences both here in Greece and abroad. Throughout these two years, Model United Nations has kept reinforcing itself as an essential part of my life. It has even become the career I want to pursue, that is becoming a delegate in the United Nations. CSMUN will be my 7th conference and my second-time chairing. In the Political Committee, we are expected to solve issues that are vital to today's politics and international relations. During these two days, we will have to come up with solutions to problems of today's world that will make our planet a better and safer place. Zisis, Dioni, and I will make sure to make this conference an unforgettable experience.

The first step in order for that to happen is to make sure that every one of us has gathered enough knowledge on each specific subject so as to be able to present feasible solutions in the resolutions that we will debate on. This study guide will act as a guideline for your research, defining the key terms of the topic as well as presenting useful information that will make you familiar with the issue of "The Question of the Possession of Nuclear Weapons in a Shifting Political Landscape". However, this guide is merely a guideline. It is highly advisable for you to conduct your own research as well, diving deeper into the issues and stances of your countries regarding this topic. Nevertheless, should any issues arise and need any help prior to the start of the conference, please do not hesitate to send me an email at nickpapandreou2@gmail.com. I am always at your disposal and will do my best to assist you. I wish you a pleasant & unforgettable conference!

Sincerely yours,
Nicholas Papandreou

INTRODUCTION

From their conception, nuclear weapons have been the source of an abundance of problems that plague, and are a risk for, humanity. The first atomic bomb used for a purpose other than testing was the “Little Boy”, a uranium bomb dropped in 1945 in the city of Hiroshima, Japan. This was quickly followed by “Fat Man” a plutonium bomb dropped just days after “Little Boy” in the city of Nagasaki, Japan. The result of the drop was the unconditional surrender of Imperial Japan to the allied powers, officially marking the end of WW2. Following the end of WW2 and the beginning of the Cold War with the division of Berlin, the Soviets also started developing their own nuclear weapons, surpassing the number of US weapons. In today’s world, efforts have been made by individual countries and the United Nations to reduce the number of nuclear weapons on earth, most of which were built during the Cold War. The problems with disarmament are mainly two;

Firstly, nations use nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war. Nuclear weapons possess massive destructive capabilities, often able to kill thousands of citizens during the explosion, with many more following due to radiation. In order to avoid this, wars have become scarcer, with none being waged between two countries that possess nuclear weapons. An example of avoiding conflict is the Cuban Missile Crisis, where President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev established a hotline between Moscow and Washington D.C. to avoid a confrontation.

The second issue are countries like the DPRK, which are aggressive and will never enter negotiations of disarmament, threatening other countries that may disarm. Despite all these problems, however, nuclear power has been quite beneficial to humanity, powering many of the houses of big countries like the USA, France, and Germany. However, to understand how we got here, it is imperative to take a look at the origins of nuclear weapons.

These countries have come together in the UN to all the above issues, and the actions taken look promising. However, although restrained, the DPRK continues some of its actions that cause world tension to rise. The political Committee of the CSMUN is tasked with de-escalating the situation in the 5th annual session.



Image 1 - Kennedy and Khrushchev in the Vienna Summit 1961

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Nuclear weapon

An explosive device that releases energy after the fusion or fission of the nucleus of an atom. Fusion occurs when smaller particles get together, forming another, bigger, particle. Fission occurs when particles split to many smaller particles. Nuclear weapons are divided into two categories. Atomic and Hydrogen. Atomic weapons release energy with fission, while hydrogen bombs use fusion. Both, however, release massive amounts of energy.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

A term that refers to the definite destruction of both parties involved in a nuclear war. A nuclear war never has a winner and both sides will be left destroyed.

Disarmament

The effective destruction or dismantling of a type of weapon, making it unable to be utilized.

Nuclear Proliferation

A term that describes the wide spread of nuclear missiles and weapons in general, and information that relates to nuclear technology to states that are not recognized by the UN and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as Nuclear States.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The concept of using nuclear power as a weapon started in the early 1940s. The famous Manhattan project¹ was a government-funded research and development project which was tasked to create the first nuclear weapons. Although the project started small, it ended up costing the US government over 27 billion dollars, in today's money. The rationale for this project came after intelligence reports showed that the Nazis and the British were also tackling the problem of manipulating atom energy to create a weapon. The scientist tasked with the project was J. Robert Oppenheimer, a German-American nuclear physicist. The program produced three atomic bombs by the end of WW2, one of which was a test bomb and the other two were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as mentioned previously. After seeing the results of their work, most of the scientists that participated in the project regretted having been part of the Manhattan Project.



Image 2 - 1st Nuclear Device Test - Operation

¹ "Manhattan Project." Encyclopædia Britannica.

After WW2, the United States started becoming more estranged with the USSR. In 1947, the then President of the US Harry Truman authorized the Truman Doctrine, a program to aid the anti-Communist forces fighting in Greece and Turkey, in their respective civil wars. Later on, President Truman expanded the policy to provide aid to any nation that the US government considered was being threatened by the expansionism of the Soviets. This policy is known worldwide as the "Containment Doctrine". To respond to the isolationist US policy, the Soviets detonated their own atomic bomb on the 29th of August 1949, ending the US monopoly over nuclear weaponry. What followed was the well-known "Arms Race", which marks the launch of the Cold War.

Tensions escalated when in 1954 the then Secretary of State John Dulles announced that the US would retaliate with a massive nuclear response to any major Soviet attack. Because of this policy, the ICBM was born. The InterContinental Ballistic Missile was, as the name suggests, a missile able to carry a bomb over massive distances, across continents. Nuclear bombs were never used in the Cold War. They were merely used as a means of intimidation between opponent nations. This was done through tests that were conducted with these bombs.



Image 3 - President Truman

The most serious confrontation between the USA and the USSR during the Cold War, which almost resulted into an all-out war and mutually assured destruction, happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis² of October 1962. Prior to 1962, the United States had placed nuclear missiles on Turkey, a position that allowed them to fire to any location in the Soviet Union, including the capital Moscow. Thus, Moscow wanted to respond to such an action with a move of the same calibre. Thus, in 1962 Nikita Khrushchev decided to deploy Russian nuclear missiles on Cuba. Prior to the deployment of the missiles, in 1961, the US had embarrassed itself with the invasion of the Bay of Pigs, where a highly trained CIA force was defeated by Cuban militia. Khrushchev thought that the then President John Fitzgerald

² "The Cold War." The Cold War - Nuclear Arms Race.

Kennedy was unable to lead well. This perceived inability of JFK to lead led Khrushchev to believe that JFK would not react to the missile deployment.

However, when the missiles were deployed, the United States Armed Forces rose their alert status to DEFCON 2 (DEFense readiness CONdition), meaning that the Armed Forces were ready to deploy and engage the enemy in less than 6 hours. The next step was DEFCON 1, meaning that the army was in maximum readiness, with nuclear war being imminent. The situation was very serious and dangerous and a wrong handling of it would lead to nuclear annihilation. The US had never been to DEFCON 2 before, and never reached such a level after the Cuban Missile crisis. The world reached a very critical stage during the CMC.

In order to avoid an all-out war, a world-first development was achieved. The ambassadors of the two countries were given authority to carry out the negotiations to end the Cuban Missile Crisis, with the orders given to them by their respective governments. The USA wanted the dismantling and disarmament of the weapons based on Cuba, while the Soviets wanted the USA to remove their missiles from Turkey. However, the USA did not want to publicly state that missiles were in Turkey and that a deal had been made to remove them. They told the Russians that the deal was to contain such a removal as a secret clause. The Cuban crisis ended with this deal. Following that, President JFK and Premier Khrushchev agreed to establish a hotline between the White House and the Kremlin through which all future negotiations between the two countries have been carried out. The line is still in place today.



Image 4 - Cartoon Related to the Cuban Crisis

Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cold War began to fade out and negotiations started to dominate the stage. The testing of nuclear weapons spiked in 1962. However, slowly but surely, efforts were made to reduce the testing of nuclear weapons and for countries to switch to alternative uses of nuclear power, with France, China, and the UK entering the field of nuclear testing for energy production. These three countries develop nuclear power as well as they were being developed during the time after 1962, but the vast majority of their uranium and plutonium is used for energy production to this date. It is important to note at this stage that Germany is a country banned from producing any nuclear weapons.

Following the Cuban Crisis, the UN also started to become actively involved in disarming the world from nuclear weapons. These efforts came to be in 1968, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons/Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed. The aim of this treaty, which exclusively concerned nuclear weapons, was to prevent nuclear weapons and technology from spreading to countries other than the officially recognized nuclear states, to promote cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to push forward the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. Under the treaty, only the USA, UK, China, France, and Russia are states allowed to possess their own nuclear weapons, while some states in the NATO pact are allowed to share nuclear weapons with

the USA. However, there are states that the treaty does not allow them to have nuclear weapons but they are believed to possess them, such as India, Pakistan, Israel, and the DPRK.

The Russian Federation and the USA have, to this day, disarmed more weapons than the rest of the world combined. The USA have managed in 30 years to reduce the number of their nuclear warheads from almost 25,000 to 5,000, with the greatest reduction happening during the dual term of George H. W. Bush. The Russian Federation has followed a more aggressive reduction program, reducing its disarmament from 40,000 warheads to 5,000, with the greatest reduction happening under President Yeltsin.

Finally, a special mention has to be made to the Iran Deal, struck under 44th President of the United States of America Barack Obama, trading the lifting of sanctions to Iran with the complete dismantling of the Iranian Nuclear Program. The deal included clauses according to which the dismantling of the program of Iran would be monitored by the International Community. This



Image 5 - John Kerry and Hassan Rouhani

deal has been heavily criticized by the 45th and current President of the USA, Donald Trump.

Having established the history behind nuclear weapons and the actions taken by the international community, let's take a look at the shifting political landscape that is now shaping the possession, and the dangers, of nuclear weapons. Very recently, in July 2017, the state of the DPRK announced to the world that it had managed to successfully launch and detonate its first ICBM missile, meaning that the DPRK is now able to target almost any nation on earth from Pyongyang. This was met a response with the now US President Donald Trump that he will be considering and might even use military action against the DPRK, if the situation leads him to do so. This causes an abundance of problems and instability, as the

DPRK is suggested to be in the possession of nuclear weapons, and, if it were attacked, could use them to defend itself. Part of the reason no nation has tampered with the DPRK was that if that happened, a nuclear war would take place. Seeing that the situation is so, the requests for action to be taken have multiplied. There are many courses of action the world can take to establish a safer world. Politics have to shine at this moment to reach a solution via diplomacy.



Image 6 - Nuclear Weapons Being Shown During a Parade in Pyongyang

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America

The United States is one of the two main players in the field of nuclear weapons and the first and only country to use them in the offense. After that attack, however, and the end of the Cold War, the US was the main party that worked towards disarmament. The problem is that policy towards nuclear weapons really depends on each president. For example, Barack Obama did not really lead any effective efforts towards disarmament but was completely against the use of nuclear weapons. His successor, Donald Trump, proposes nuclear rearmament and may even be the one to commence action against the DPRK.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation came later to adopt nuclear weapons. However, it was the one that really pushed to construct a lot of weapons, reaching 40.000 warheads at its peak. Nikita Khrushchev was the one to begin communication with the USA after the Cuban Crisis, but Mikhail Gorbachev really pushed forward with the policy of Glasnost (dialogue/diplomacy) and conducted effective disarmament.

France

Another country that possesses nuclear weapons but mostly uses its nuclear power for energy production, with close to half of its energy coming from nuclear power.

United Kingdom

The now negotiating-for-Brexit country is very close to France in the matter of nuclear weapons. However, the Conservative government of the UK under Theresa May recently voted for the extension of its Trident program, a program regarding development of nuclear warheads and the means to deliver them. The UK relies on its Trident program to deter attacks towards the UK. In order to achieve that, always one of the four Trident-capable submarines are at sea, armed with 8 Trident warheads. This was met with stiff opposition from the Labour party, which gained support during the June election, depriving Mrs. May a parliamentary majority.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Kim Jong-Un has led an extensive nuclear program in his country, despite efforts by the international community to stop him. Even continuous sanctions have proven ineffective. After an abundance of failed tests, North Korea has finally successfully tested an ICBM. This has significantly worried the international community, since North Korea's leader is believed to be trigger-happy and that he is against anyone that is not an ally to him.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS³

Date	Description of event
August 1942	The US establish the Manhattan Project, aimed at producing the world's first atomic bomb
July 16, 1945	The first nuclear weapon test is conducted in New Mexico, code-named "Trinity". This date marks the beginning of the nuclear age.
August 6, 1945	The USA drop their first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
August 9, 1945	The USA drop their second atomic bomb on Nagasaki.
January 24, 1946	The UN passes its first resolution, Resolution 1 (I), calling for disarmament of nuclear weapons.
August 29, 1949	The Russian Federation tests its first nuclear bomb.
October 3, 1952	UK tests its first nuclear bomb.
February 13, 1960	France tests its first nuclear bomb.
October 30, 1961	The largest bomb ever constructed to date, the Tsar Bomba, is detonated over Novaya Zemlya off northern Russia.
October 16-29, 1962	The Cuban Missile Crisis occurs.
October 16, 1964	China tests its first nuclear bomb.
July 1, 1968	The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is signed.
May 18, 1974	India tests its first nuclear bomb.
October 11-12, 1986	President Reagan and Premier Gorbachev discuss nuclear weapon abolition and on December 8, 1987 the two countries ban their Intermediate-range missiles.
October 9, 2006	North Korea conducts its first nuclear test.
Match 27, 2017	Negotiations for the Nuclear Ban Treaty begin.

³ "Nuclear Weapons Timeline." ICAN.

RELEVANT UN TREATIES, RESOLUTIONS, AND EVENTS

[Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons](#)

Signed on the 1st of July 1968, it controls the possession and disarmament of nuclear weapons. Although a non-binding treaty, it proposes the peaceful use of nuclear power, along with the disarmament of nuclear weapons.

[International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation](#)

Established on 25 November 2002 as an arrangement to avoid the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Ballistic missiles pose the greatest threat of all nuclear weapons because they can be launched from almost anywhere and when a nation is warned of their launch, it is already too late

[International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#)

Established on July 29, 1957, it is an autonomous organization that aims to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The IAEA is also tasked with monitoring the current nuclear weapons situation.

[1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons \(NPT\)](#)

The conference, held from April 17 to May 12, 1995, extended the NPT indefinitely.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

As mentioned in the Historical Information part of this Study Guide, the previous attempts to solve the issue are the NPT⁴, the communication line between Moscow and Washington D.C. These efforts can be considered both a success and a failure. On the one hand, the world is now with 60,000 less nuclear warheads compared to the Cold War.

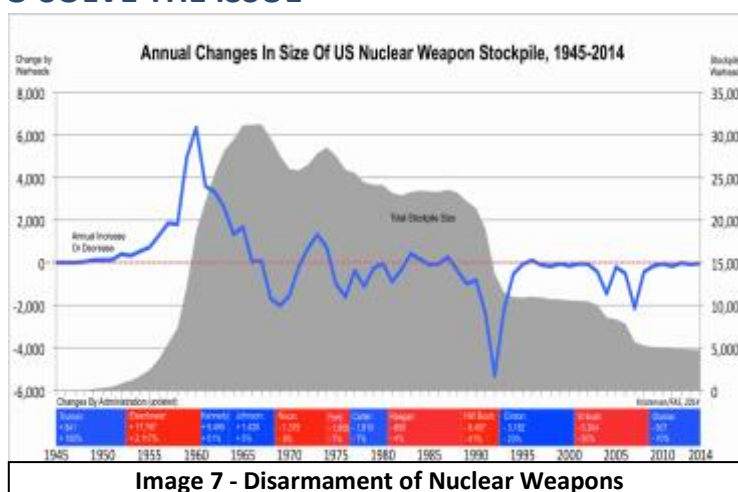


Image 7 - Disarmament of Nuclear Weapons

However, the problem is that both the US and the Russian Federation have 5,000 nuclear warheads left in their arsenals. These weapons are more than plenty to wipe out each respective country, and are capable of multiple times more explosive power than what the missiles during the Cold War were capable of producing. There is a debate between having a lot of nuclear weapons to act as a deterrent, but being able to be used if the situation requires it, or having no nuclear weapons at all, which would make wars much more likely to occur. This dilemma may never even be answered. The issue that arises is that even if one country chooses to possess nuclear weapons, it makes it the first option of the dilemma much more attractive to the rest of the countries.

⁴ "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Complete Disarmament

Complete disarmament from nuclear will be very hard to achieve, especially with nations such as the DPRK, which are aggressive by nature and cannot find another way to equate their power with the P5, other than possessing nuclear weapons. If they were dismantled, the USA and other countries would be able to very easily invade and overthrow the existing government, even without nuclear weapons. However, the DPRK might be able to follow such a measure and the world to disarm completely if the international community is willing to make concessions to the DPRK government, such as removing the sanctions in place and guaranteeing a non-invasion of the country. The rationale behind this is that sanctions and military action was proposed because of the aggressiveness of the country. Kim Jong-Un is aggressive because he fears the outside world of military action. This is a rather simple never-ending circle. If no nuclear weapons exist, then Mr. Un wouldn't fear the outside world, and he wouldn't arm himself, making his state rather safe.

Quota

Another possible solution would be to set a quota of nuclear weapons each country is allowed to possess, a quota that doesn't give each state massive destructive capabilities, but a quota that can act as a disincentive to a potential attacker. However, it is very hard to define which countries would possess these weapons or how they are going to get them. It is even harder to monitor that the quota is respected.

"Free Market"

Finally, a third solution can be to completely remove any intervention from nuclear programs and allow any country to possess as many weapons as it wants. This solution is not recommended and I strongly advise you against it. The rationale behind it is, however, that it takes the idea of disincentives to the next level, with fear dominating the entire world, leading countries to pursue fewer wars.



Image 8 - Nuclear Explosion

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Image 8:

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