

Forum: 1st committee: Disarmament and International Security

Issue: Working Towards International Nuclear Disarmament

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Description of Issue:

Nuclear disarmament has been a priority of the United Nations since the very beginning of its existence. Yet 75 years after the founding of the UN and since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki the world continues to live in the shadow of nuclear catastrophe. Some states view nuclear weapons as vital to national security and survival others see them as a threat to humanity's existence.

Nuclear weapons continue to pose a great threat to international peace and security. The UN has been working hard attempting to lower the risk of a nuclear disaster. The longer the United Nations wait, the bigger the probability of backsliding. Growing distrust and tensions between states that possess nuclear weapons have increased nuclear risks. Parties are withdrawing from nuclear-related agreements and others are set to expire. Some member states have threatened to restart nuclear testing.

We must focus on returning to the common goal of a world that is risk-free of nuclear weapons. That way we may return to practical realizable goals and take action. In this regard, the UN draws its attention to the two documents that have been available to help us reach this goal.

Background Information:

For over 50 years, the United States and the Russian Federation (formerly the Soviet Union) have engaged in a series of bilateral arms control measures that have drastically reduced their strategic nuclear arsenals from a peak of around 60,000. The most recent of those measures, the New START Treaty, limits the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons to 1,550 per State. New START is scheduled to expire on 5 February 2021; should it expire without a successor or not be extended, it will be the first time that the strategic arsenals of the United States and the Russian Federation have not been constrained since the 1970s.

“The Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” that was adopted in 2017 is the first legally binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years. The TPNW prohibits state parties from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, 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, state parties cannot allow the stationing, installation, or deployment of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices in their territory.

“The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” has been the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. 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 nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

As of the latest news, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has successfully tested its train-based ballistic missile as well as a submarine-launched ballistic missile which North Korea declared to be "the world's most powerful weapon." This system allows North Korea to launch Nuclear bombs from constantly moving bases. While before the nuclear missiles could be detected and eliminated, now thanks to the moving platform, it would be harder to detect, let alone shoot down a missile. Kim Jong-un has promised to expand the country's military power and nuclear arsenal, outlining a list of desired weapons. Despite being subject to economic sanctions, North Korea has managed to advance its nuclear arsenal.

This and other factors make up for the growing tensions between countries. The topics that might be addressed during the meeting are as follows:

- Tests of new nuclear missiles
- Using nuclear weapons as threat to other countries
- Extension of already existing nuclear restriction
- Creation of new nuclear restrictions policies

Starting from the time of the first nuclear bombs that came to be, and up to now, more and more countries have become in possession of the nuclear warheads. Together there are 9 countries which claim or actually own a nuclear bomb. These nuclear owners are divided into groups for understanding of the political situation. There are 5 recognized nuclear weapon states:

- Russian Federation (former USSR) with a total of 6,257 nuclear warheads and a leader in numbers.
- United States of America with a total of 5,550 nuclear warheads in second place.
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with 225 total warheads.
- French Republic with 290 nuclear warheads
- People’s Republic of China with 350 warheads

These five states are known to have detonated a nuclear explosive before 1 January 1967 and are thus nuclear weapons states under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons. There are also non-NPT nuclear powers, which are countries that have never signed the treaty or that have withdrawn themselves from it but have claimed or hinted at their nuclear possession. These countries are:

- the Republic of India - 160 nuclear warheads
- the Islamic Republic of Pakistan - 165 nuclear warheads
- the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - 45 nuclear warheads
- the State of Israel - 90 nuclear warheads

Indeed in spite of the fact that Israel is on the list, it has not recognized its atomic strengths. It had "simple, but deliverable," atomic weapons accessible as early as 1966. Israel locks in strategic ambiguity, saying it would not be the first nation to "introduce" nuclear weapons into the region, but refuse to confirm or deny a nuclear weapons program or arsenal.

#### Measures taken by UN:

***START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)*** - a bilateral treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction and the limitation of strategic offensive arms. The treaty was signed on 31 July 1991 and entered into force on 5 December 1994. The treaty barred its signatories from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads and a total of 1,600 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and bombers

***Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*** - 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 nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

***Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)*** - is a treaty that prohibits "any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion" anywhere in the world.

#### Key Terms:

***Disarmament*** - is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. Disarmament refers to a country's military or a specific sort of weaponry in general. The term "disarmament" is frequently used to refer to the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons.

***A ballistic missile*** - a missile that follows a ballistic trajectory to deliver one or more warheads on a predetermined target. These weapons are guided only during relatively brief periods - most of the flight is unpowered.

***Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)*** - is a space rocket that can launch a destructive device on top and carry it from one nation to another in a high arc. Short-range ballistic missiles stay within the Earth's atmosphere, while ICBMs are launched on a sub-orbital trajectory. As of 2018, the US has about 400 ICBMs with warheads and 400 more missile-ready warheads in storage, while Russia has 318 ready-to-launch ICBMs and 1,138 total missile warheads; some missiles carry more than one.

Countries and Organizations Involved:

**Key countries:**

- United States of America
- Russian Federation
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- French Republic
- People's Republic of China
- the State of Israel
- the Republic of India
- the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

**Links:**

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/>

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/>

<https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons/>

<https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml>