Committee: Disarmament & International Security (GA1)
Agenda Item: Strengthening International Regulations on the Creation and Use of Nuclear Weapons in the Current Political Environment
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Introduction

The world has witnessed two world wars with millions of people dying from weapons such as knives, guns, bombs, bullets and mine fields. Since the technology has developed through the years, it's certain that the next world war may be with nuclear or atomic weapons. The world experienced extraordinary developments in conflict resolution, transportation, and communication technologies. The atomic bomb was perhaps the most important, if equally devastating, weapon created during this period. The development of nuclear weapons have consistently represented an existential danger to international peace and security. Efforts to prevent spread and maintain ethical management of these destructive weapons are complicated by the current political climate, which is defined by increasing tensions between established nuclear powers, emerging nuclear states, and non-state actors. Furthermore, the strategic logic regarding the use of nuclear weapons and warfare is changing due to improvements in aerospace technology, cyber abilities, and artificial intelligence, creating new problems for arms control. Nuclear-armed nations use their weapons to defend their rights and make strong arguments in international negotiations. However, these days, there are numerous cases where nations with nuclear weapons start to manipulate their positions, which might harm other nations and international security.

A number of significant issues resulting from changing geopolitical and technological situations in 2025 are at the root of the most recent international legal gaps on nuclear weapons laws. New nuclear hazards connected with growing technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) used in nuclear command and control systems causes difficulties for both ordinary international law and established treaties like the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT). NPT encourages the use of nuclear energy as a form of energy but only under strict limits. Because of its lack of enforcement, the NPT hasn't been very helpful given the current condition of world affairs. These developments have created legal problems about governmental control, accountability, and the possibility of unintentional or unapproved nuclear strikes caused by AI.

In the face of decreasing diplomatic confidence and a lack of openness among nuclear-armed nations, the international framework faces issues with security and collaboration. A lack of agreement and consistent law is seen in the differences between nuclear and non-nuclear states, especially with respect to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The legal system as a whole is weakened and cooperative disarmament efforts are impeded by this conflict.

Definition of Key Terms

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): The NPT is an international agreement aimed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This deal required countries that already have nuclear weapons to work towards decreasing them and even avoid creating any new ones.

Nuclear Weapon: A nuclear weapon is a device that uses nuclear fission, nuclear fusion, or a combination of the two processes to release energy in an explosive way.

Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones (NWFZs): These are areas in which governments have agreed upon to not build or store any nuclear weapons. These zones can help reduce tension in the region and urge other countries to promote global non-proliferation. NWFZs are typically created or developed in areas that are considered as neutral and where numerous international debates take place.

International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards: IAEA safeguards confirm that states cooperate with nuclear agreements, ensuring that civilian nuclear activities are not used for weapons. They provide transparency and build trust in a world with growing technological proficiency and regional tensions.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT): The CTBT bans all nuclear explosions and has developed a global standard against testing, supported by an international monitoring system. It is essential for limiting new arms races and limiting the development of advanced nuclear weapons.

Disarmament: Reducing weapons, weapon materials and weapon delivery systems in order to improve security, peace and human survival.

Major Actors Involved

United States of America (USA)

The United States plays a number of responsibilities in strengthening international regulations related to the development and use of nuclear weapons. The United States continues to uphold the three fundamental principles of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The United States works to encourage disarmament, sets strict nonproliferation standards, and promotes international approval of agreements that increase nuclear safeguards, such as the Additional Protocol with the IAEA.

Despite current geopolitical challenges, USA also aims to engage diplomatically with other nuclear-armed countries, including China and Russia, in order to manage nuclear risks and establish frameworks for arms control after 2026.

Still, the United States is improving its nuclear weapons and maintaining an effective defense posture, demonstrating a balance between threat and arms control goals. The current political situation is defined by difficult relationships with certain nuclear powers, which means that diplomacy will continue to be emphasized while preparing for future nuclear dangers, including strong opposition to nuclear proliferation in nations like Saudi Arabia and Iran. In order to stop the transfer of nuclear weapons and stop harmful nuclear operations around the world, the United States also supports enforcement actions.

China

China plays an important part in the development of nuclear weapons. China has maintained that its nuclear weapons are defensive since its first nuclear test in 1964, even in the face of later geopolitical shifts. However, discussions about China's nuclear modernization strategy have been formed by its changing threat views, which have been shaped by security incidents, regional proliferation, and policy changes of other nuclear weapon states. This has probably resulted in a significant rise of China's strategic capabilities. China has two sorts of security concerns at the nuclear and strategic level: regional nuclear proliferation and the weakening of NWS's nuclear policies. Regarding the former, Russia almost soon (in 1993) reversed the No-First-Use (NFU) policy that the Soviet Union had previously announced upon its collapse. Anything similar to No-First-Use policy was also rejected by United States governments following the end of the Cold War.

In its 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, George W. Bush administration reportedly considered lowering the threshold of nuclear use and went so far as to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). By taking this path, they support the worldwide disarmament of nuclear weapons while also expressing alarm over the large arsenals of other nations.

Russia

Russia holds about half of the world's nuclear warheads and sees those weapons as the main guarantee of its security, its great power rank plus its ability to pressure opponents. Moscow's written rules for nuclear use have changed, the latest version says the state may launch nuclear arms not only after an enemy nuclear strike but also after large scale conventional attack that endangers the state's survival. Officials now speak more aggressively and the lower threshold for use increases the chance of misjudgment. On 21 February 2023 Russia suspended its part in the New START Treaty, the last active arms control pact between the United States besides Russia. The treaty had set equal ceilings on deployed warheads but also delivery vehicles and had allowed on site inspections. After the suspension, the two largest nuclear powers work without agreed limits, the global arms control structure weakens.

Russia also sends nuclear warnings, it holds exercises, deploys missiles that can carry either conventional or nuclear payloads and makes public threats. Those signals aim to keep Western states from deeper involvement in the Ukraine war as well as to remind the world that Moscow remains a central strategic player. Even under strain, Russia still sits in some international meetings and says it could accept future arms control deals if those deals cover missile defense systems or new technologies. Yet Moscow treats nuclear arms as routine tools of political pressure, serious negotiation remains hard.

United Kingdom

The NPT has five nuclear-weapon nations, including the United Kingdom. The UK maintains a stockpile that it views as the basic minimum for defense and deploys a fleet of submarines for at-sea deterrent.

Concerns about global challenges, especially in Europe, have caused the UK to increase its warhead limit recently. To improve safeguards and encourage states to sign the Additional Protocol, UK works closely with the IAEA and supports international non-proliferation treaties. In order to maintain stability, lower risks, and promote arms control efforts, the United Kingdom also holds diplomatic discussions with other nuclear-armed nations. While maintaining its defense commitments, the United Kingdom continues to place a high priority on long-term non-proliferation.

France

France is a significant nuclear power whose strategy is predicated on sufficiency, meaning that it merely maintains the amount of nuclear weapons required to ward off serious threats. France has an effective deterrent policy by using a combination of air and submarine nuclear weapons, with an estimated 290 warheads. France has presented itself as a capable nuclear player. It closed its facilities for highly enriched uranium and plutonium in the 1990s, making it the first nuclear-weapon state to permanently cease producing fissile material for weapons. France is a firm supporter of arms control measures, particularly the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). These pledges support France's desire for balanced and verifiable disarmament. France is another important supporter of the IAEA, offering financial, technical, and political support for stronger safeguards. They continuously support the Additional Protocol as a crucial standard for verification. Because it feels that national deterrence is essential to its sovereignty, France strategically determines its own nuclear decisions. Additionally, its diplomatic leadership supports efforts to strengthen international non-proliferation organizations and reduce the risk of nuclear war.

DPRK

North Korea endangers the entire non proliferation system. It joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, later left and built nuclear weapons in open breach of the treaty. It detonated multiple devices and worked on many kinds of missiles. Because it refuses IAEA inspections, it now faces large problems in storing material plus in keeping production lines running. Pyongyang claims that outside threats force it to keep nuclear arms for regime survival. That claim leads it to reject full denuclearization even under heavy sanctions. It treats the program as a bargaining chip - it offers partial steps or short freezes when it wants political favors or economic relief. This tactic has let it enlarge its stockpile step by step despite outside pressure. Recent launches test long range missiles that appear able to reach South Korea, Japan and the United States - the tests have raised regional tension. By leaving the treaty and gaining bombs without punishment, North Korea weakens the credibility of the global rules. The dispute over its weapons remains one of the hardest obstacles to strengthening worldwide nuclear controls.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The International Atomic Energy Agency plays a significant role in ensuring that nuclear material is only used for peaceful purposes globally. The agency maintains an eye on nuclear facilities, inspects them, and makes sure that governments follow the NPT's safeguards rules. The IAEA also promotes transparency and supports countries in using nuclear energy responsibly to prevent nuclear technology from being abused.The agency is able to increase inspections and confirm that there are no unreported nuclear activity thanks to the Additional Protocol. The IAEA produces assessments that assist diplomatic efforts and direct international decision-making in nations with significant proliferation threats, such North Korea and Iran. Its impartiality and technological know-how make it crucial for preserving state-to-state confidence even if it lacks enforcement authority. The agency is a vital player in international nuclear governance as it is anticipated to play a significant role in confirming upcoming arms control agreements and nuclear arsenal reductions.

General Overview of the Issue

Current Regulations on the Use of Nuclear Weapons

Laws and regulations regarding the use of nuclear weapons are usually determined by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) with treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this treaty was adopted in 2017. Participation in any nuclear weapon-related activities is strictly forbidden by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). These include agreements to refrain from developing, testing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, using, or threatening to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also forbids the use of nuclear weapons on domestic territory and helps any state in engaging in actions that are forbidden. Any action prohibited by the TPNW carried out by individuals or on territory under their authority or oversight must be prevented and destroyed by state parties. All nuclear test explosions, whether for military or civilian reasons, are prohibited by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In order to promote international efforts in non-proliferation and disarmament, the Treaty was made available for signing in 1996. It aims to prevent the development of new nuclear weapons and the improvement of current ones. The Treaty has significantly improved global peace and security even if it has not yet come into effect. It has increased trust that any nuclear test explosion would be effectively detected and contributed to the establishment of a strong international standard against nuclear testing.

Despite the fact that nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare, there are apparently still 12,500 of them in operation today, and more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been carried out. The best defense against such threats is disarmament, but reaching this goal has proven to be an extremely challenging task.

Present Developments in Attempts to Modernize Nuclear Weapons

The efforts of some nuclear-armed nations to increase their current stockpiles have alarmingly increased in recent years, despite long-standing promises to disarm and refrain from spreading nuclear weapons. These modernization initiatives frequently entail upgrading delivery systems, modifying warhead designs, and developing more sophisticated command-and-control systems. Governments often say that these actions are necessary to protect national security, but they go against international efforts to reduce nuclear threats and put decades of disarmament progress at risk. It's very scary that some countries with nuclear weapons have been trying to get more of them in the last few years, even though they've promised for a long time to get rid of their nuclear weapons and not spread them. People often change the designs of warheads, delivery systems, and command-and-control systems to keep up with the times. People often think these things are necessary for national security, but they make it harder for the world to work together to lower nuclear threats and put decades of progress in disarmament at risk. Many countries have begun to modernize their tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, adding systems that are more accurate, mobile, and possibly useful. People who don't have nuclear weapons and want to get rid of them are very worried about this trend because it makes it more likely that regional conflicts will get worse and makes it easier for a nuclear exchange to happen. Modernization makes the goals of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) even harder to reach. This is because better weapons may lead to new tests or activities that look like tests, which goes against the international standard against nuclear explosions. In spite of these problems, the world community is still pushing for better monitoring systems and more productive conversations. Nuclear modernization, according to many experts, endangers international stability by extending the life of nuclear arsenals at a time when disarmament is urgently needed. As modernization accelerates, the discrepancy between disarmament goals and state practice becomes more noticeable, highlighting the ongoing difficulties in establishing long-term international security.

Timeline of Important Events

Date:	Event:
July 16, 1945	Trinity (first atomic bomb test)
August 6, 1945	Atomic bombing of Hiroshima
August 29, 1949	Soviet Union conducts first atomic test (RDS-1 / "Joe-1")
October 3, 1952	United Kingdom conducts first atomic test (Operation Hurricane)
March 5, 1970	NPT entered into force
May 26, 1972	SALT I agreements signed (including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty)
September 10, 1996	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) adopted by the UN General Assembly
June 13, 2002	U.S. withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty
October 9, 2006	North Korea conducts its first announced nuclear test
July 14, 2015	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed (Iran nuclear deal)
July 7, 2017	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted by the UN
August 2, 2019	United States withdraws from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

Related Documents

- https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/41
    - This is a resolution that outlines the shared objective of the international community to completely remove nuclear weapons from the entire world.
- https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n16/466/69/pdf/n1646669.pdf
    - By strengthening diplomatic efforts through cooperation, it highlights the need of resolving nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive, inclusive, and constructive manner.
- https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons/treaty-non-proliferation-nuclear-weapons
    - This is an international legal agreement that aims to promote nuclear disarmament, stop the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, and make it easier to use nuclear energy peacefully.
- https://www.cigionline.org/articles/first-ever-un-security-council-resolution-nuclear-disarmament/
    - This is the first Security Council resolution that addresses nuclear disarmament in particular. It highlights global security, stability, and the need for constant security for all states while underlining the Council's commitment to establishing circumstances for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Past Solution Attempts

The United Nations monitors a number of international treaties related to nonproliferation and disarmament initiatives. The Related Documents and Introduction part of this chair report contains information about these agreements. First of all, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty have all been outstanding attempts to guarantee worldwide disarmament, nonproliferation, and the suspension of nuclear tests. However, certain non-signatories, including India and Pakistan, have not been able to prevent their proliferation. Furthermore, a lack of cooperation and shared distrust among Member States has restricted the scale of disarmament. The decrease in trust brought on by nuclear-armed nations' independent moves, such as the US's departure from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty), which upset important arms control accords like START II. Also, it is crucial to remember that North Korea, a non-signatory, is still conducting nuclear tests, which poses serious risks to the levels of radiation in the world.

Possible Solutions

The world is changing with new technology and findings in science. The development of nuclear weapons cannot be stopped completely but working to ensure safe usage of these weapons can be a solution. Supporting the use of nuclear weapons adoption of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by member states through potential treaty amendments is the number one solution that comes to mind. Building international trust and security through various agreements and regulations to support worldwide disarmament, considering the probability of embargoes and sanctions as a means of dealing with Member States who do not comply can all be effective and peaceful solutions.

One solution that can be a little controversial is to give the International Atomic Agency more power in the decisions of nuclear weapon usage over the Member States as the agency is more likely to be acknowledged about atomic structures and the science behind nuclear weapons.

The theme of this year's IRMAKMUN is “Bona Fides: Upholding International Cooperation Networks in the Face of Rising Authoritarianism”, delegates can focus on finding solutions with sustaining international peace in disarmament.

Useful Links

https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons

https://www.icanw.org/2025_first_committee_briefing_paper

https://www.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons

https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons-glance

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