

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNGA-DISEC

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Honourable member state representatives

It is with great pleasure that we invite you all to the simulation of United Nations General Assembly-Disarmament and International Security at Legge Rhythms International Model United Nations.

Preparation is a paramount to a exciting and successful model united nations. This guide is designed to give you a description of the topics and the committee.

We encourage and expect each delegate to fully explore the topics and be able to analyse the intricacies of the issues. All the delegates are expected to come prepared from the perspective of your country, the topic, and the UN system for a truly rewarding experience.

We look forward to seeing you at the conference.

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ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

United Nations General Assembly-Disarmament and International Security

(First Committee)

The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.

Source: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/>

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

Nuclear proliferation is a term used to describe the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons applicable nuclear technology and information, to nations which are not recognized as “nuclear weapon states” by the treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT.

Since the development of nuclear weapons, the UN has taken steps to halt the production of this weaponry. The UN began creating Nuclear Weapon Free Zones in the 1960s, as a way of curbing the threat of nuclear technology. NWFZs designate specific regions as free from the weaponisation of nuclear technology, meaning that these areas are cannot house or create these weapons. Many regions have already expressed support for NWFZs beginning with a establishment of a NWFZ in the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. This treaty sought to regulate the use and the ownership of Antarctica in the cold war, and declared the zone demilitarized and weapon free to minimise of any chance of conflict.

Since then, the first committee has been in charge of facilitating and creation of these comfort zones.

Nuclear Non – Proliferation Treaty

In 1968, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed. It currently comprises 189 signatory countries, among them the Big Five, the collective name for the five countries that are recognized by the NPT to legally harbour nuclear weapons. Countries noticeably absent from the NPT include Pakistan, Israel, India, and Iran, which harbour, claim to harbour, or have sought to obtain nuclear weapons and technology. Also notably absent from the NPT is North Korea,

which was formerly a member but later absconded and is currently suspected of possessing or researching nuclear weapons and technology. The success of the NPT can be measured by the signatory nations that have formerly possessed nuclear weapons but have since disbanded them. These nations include South Africa and Belarus.

The NPT operates on three core concepts. Non-proliferation is the first concept. This concept states that signatory nations will take measures to prevent and stop the spread of nuclear weapons and technology from parties that have nuclear capabilities to parties that do not. This agreement goes both way: signatory parties that do not have nuclear capabilities may not obtain nuclear weapon capabilities. The second pillar is disarmament; the success of the NPT can be seen in countries that have had nuclear technology or nuclear weapons and have since disarmed themselves willingly. And the third pillar is the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Countries that wish to pursue peaceful nuclear energy and nuclear technology should be permitted to do so under their sovereign rights. However, some nations have used this mantra as a curtain under which to hide the development of nuclear weapons for non-peaceful purposes.

NPT and IAEA

The watchdog of the NPT is the IAEA, or International Atomic Energy Agency, which was established independently of the UN by the IAEA Statute. The IAEA works with the General Assembly, Security Council, and signatory countries through its regular inspections program to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and deter the military use of nuclear power. Although the IAEA works closely with the UN, the IAEA is an autonomous organization.

The IAEA operates several programs. One such program is regular inspections of nuclear facilities of signatory states to guarantee compliance with the NPT. Furthermore, the IAEA also serves as a forum for nuclear scientists to share research around the globe to further the non-military use of nuclear weapons. The IAEA offers numerous other programs and services, whose purposes range from deterring signatory states from misusing nuclear technology and materials, to developing peaceful applications for nuclear technology, to promoting nuclear safety and nuclear security standards

The treaty works in the tandem with the IAEA, which is responsible for safeguarding the articles of NPT. States declare their nuclear capabilities to the IAEA and work cohesively with the agency to verify states continuing compliance of the NPT.

For example, the IAEA monitors uranium levels to ensure that continued nuclear development is only for peaceful purposes. These safeguards were created specifically to help enforce the treaty and are an example of true effectiveness when making sure that countries are actually undergoing non-proliferation treaty.

THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST BAN TREATY

The second major non-proliferation effort was the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). As hostilities were beginning the end of thaw after the cold war, the UN founded the conference on Disarmament (CD), a committee that works closely with DISEC and began discussing the CTBT in 1992. The CD began addressing nuclear non-proliferation efforts to begin regulating all weapons of mass destruction. The international treaty prohibits the nuclear explosions on earth and established a global monitoring system to track any nuclear explosion whether in air, land, or underground.

Passing the CTBT was a positive sign that the international community could work peacefully towards stemming nuclear-proliferation. Negotiations on this treaty continued from 1994-1996, and it was finally submitted to the General Assembly and opened for signing on the 1996.

STEPS TAKEN BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR PROMOTION OF NPT

In 1973, the United States and the Soviet Union began the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) that led to a bilateral Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which limited each party to 100 anti-ballistic missiles and two anti-ballistic missile production facilities. The treaty was in force until June 2002, when the United States withdrew.

In 1993 the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) continued on the foundation that SALT built. Another bilateral agreement between Russia and the United States, the treaty put hard limits on the number of multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles, or MIRVs (An MIRV is a type of missile capable of releasing multiple warheads at multiple, independent targets, essentially allowing one missile to wipe out three or more missile silos).

In 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted by the UN General Assembly. It strengthened the NPT by prohibiting the development and testing of nuclear weapons, in any environment, for either military or civilian purposes.

Also, over the past 50 years, many regions have established nuclear weapons free zones (NWFZs), which prohibit all countries and territories in that zone from possessing or utilizing nuclear weapons and sometimes nuclear technology, such as nuclear power or nuclear waste. These regions notably include territories of nuclear powered states, such as the British Virgin Islands, which exists in a NWFZ and abides by its rules, even though its protectorate, the UK, is a nuclear power.

In 2004, Resolution 1540 was adopted by the United Nations Security Council. This resolution bound all member nations to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction by any means necessary. The Security Council has utilized UNCS 1540 to deter members and non-member nations from proliferation nuclear materials or using nuclear weapons. The resolution also pushed its members to prevent the unsafe distribution or acquisition of fissile materials by establish an international set of standards related to nuclear safety and security.

In 2009, Resolution 1874 was passed by the Security Council as a reaction to a nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The resolution essentially reiterated the points of UNCS 1540, as well as urging the cooperation of the international community in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and technology, pushing for a more rigorous framework under which to test nuclear facilities for NPT compliance, and most importantly, reinforcing the solidarity of the international community in their stance against nuclear proliferation.

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that only two nuclear weapons were ever used in combat, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is one of the

highest priorities on the international disarmament agenda. However, while trying to prevent terrorists from attaining nuclear weapons, persuading nuclear weapon states to give them up and discouraging non-nuclear weapon states from acquiring them, one also has to allow for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, while equally accounting for the risk it poses as well. When dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, there are three different approaches that work together: nuclear disarmament, which is the elimination of existing nuclear warheads; arms control, which is the regulation of weapon commerce and the reduction of existing stockpiles; and nuclear non-proliferation, which aims to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to new nuclear powers or non-state actors.

The General Assembly can provide key incentives and establish norms to deal with the topic at hand, however, it has also been criticised for being stuck in repetitive arguments and reiterating the same resolutions year after year.

QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:

- ❖ Differentiate between the current requirement of the treaty vs the previous requirement of the treaty.
- ❖ What according to the international law must be the ideal nuclear energy holding threshold?
- ❖ How can the NPT play a major role in the general proliferation of the chemical weaponisation?
- ❖ Compare and analyse the financial assistance needed by small nations for proliferation.

FURTHER LINKS:

- 1) Nuclear Files: <http://www.nuclearfiles.org/>
- 2) The Nuclear Threat Initiative: <http://www.nti.org/>

- 3) UN Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA):
<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/>
- 4) Security Council Committee 1540 on the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons:
<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/>
- 5) Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: <http://www.cnduk.org/>
- 6) Global Policy Forum: The Security Council and Nuclear Weapons:
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/185/41129.html>
- 7) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):
<http://www.iaea.org/>
- 8) Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty:
<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml>