ETMUN

Unraveling the Domino Effect

Committee: United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

Topic: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Letter from the President:

Dearest delegates of the UNODA committee,

My name is Jude Al-Masri, a 12th grader at IEC Schools. It is with great enthusiasm that I take on the role of your committee president for this year's ETMUN conference. This being my first time presiding over a committee, I can't help but reminisce about my first experiences as a delegate. I remember feeling like I was the only one who didn't know what to do or say. It took me a while to get the hang of it, but by the third day, I had begun to find my footing, and ever since then, I have continued to be inspired by the boundless potential that MUN conferences offer. Whether you're setting foot in an MUN committee room for the first time or you're a seasoned delegate, my hope is that this conference serves as an opportunity to step out of your comfort zone, challenge your perspectives, and create lifelong memories.

During our time at this conference, we will be diving into important global issues, with a focus on disarmament and weapons control. These topics are more relevant than ever in today's world, and I'm excited to see your innovative ideas and solutions. I am committed to making this conference a memorable experience and I can't wait to meet each and every one of you.

Best of luck in your preparations, and get ready for an incredible conference!

Jude Al-Masri

Definition of Key Terms:

Arms control:

The international efforts and agreements aimed at limiting, reducing, or regulating the production, possession, deployment, and use of weapons.

Dual-Use technology:

Refers to technologies that have both civilian and military applications. These technologies can be used for peaceful purposes and can also be adapted for military purposes.

Illicit trafficking:

The illegal trade, transfer, or movement of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, as well as their components and related materials.

Export controls:

Government regulations and policies that restrict or regulate the export of specific goods, technologies, or information that could be used in the production of WMDs, from one country to another.

Proliferation pathways:

Proliferation pathways are the different methods or routes through which countries or entities can obtain or develop weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). These pathways include indigenous development, illicit procurement, state-sponsored programs, dual-use technologies, technology transfer, and involvement of non-state actors.

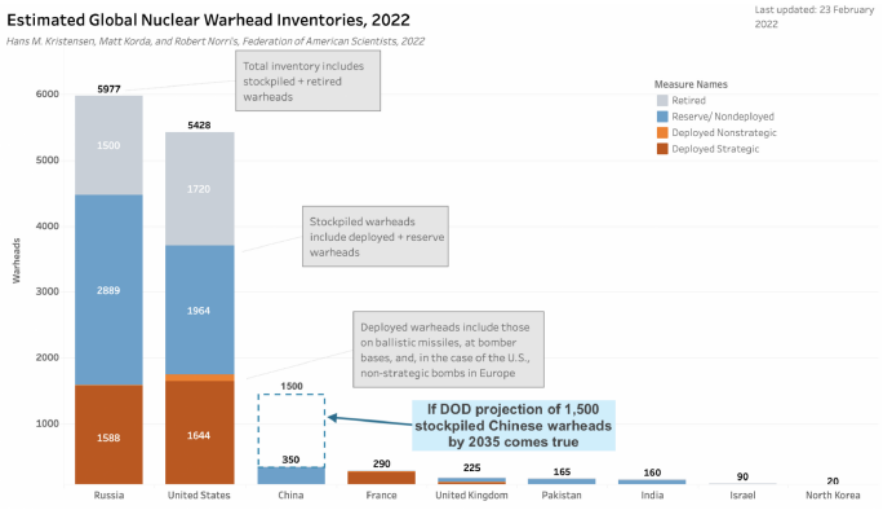
Nuclear triad:

The nuclear triad is a military strategy that involves the possession and operation of three components for delivering nuclear weapons: land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and strategic bombers. This strategy ensures a nation's ability to launch nuclear strikes from land, sea, and air, enhancing the deterrence and flexibility of its nuclear arsenal.

General Overview:

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, poses a significant threat to global security and stability. These weapons have the potential to cause immense destruction and loss of life, making their proliferation a matter of utmost concern for the international community. Disarmament is the best protection against such dangers, but achieving this goal has been a tremendously difficult challenge. Nuclear weapons are perhaps the most well-known and feared category of WMDs. These weapons derive their destructive power from nuclear reactions, either through fission (splitting atoms) or fusion (combining atoms). They are considered the most destructive weapons on earth. One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects. About 13,400 nuclear weapons currently exist in the world, and their existence poses inherent dangers. It is noteworthy that in 1945, these weapons were only used twice, in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nevertheless, over 2,000 nuclear tests have occurred so far. Throughout history, people have used toxic chemicals dispersed in various forms, including gasses, liquids, and solids, to harm or kill others. Although chemical weapons have been around for ages, their use became infamous during World War I, where both sides extensively employed them. To combat the dangers of these weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was formed in 1997 to prevent the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons. The CWC has since overseen the destruction of over 98% of declared chemical weapon stockpiles and been signed by 193 states-parties, biological weapons intentionally use disease-causing microorganisms or toxins in organisms to injure or kill people, animals, or plants. Unlike nuclear or chemical weapons, biological warfare agents can spread among targeted populations, causing widespread illness or death. Their effects can be delayed and they can be spread through air, water or food, making them particularly insidious. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) entered into force in 1975 and prohibits the hostile use of biological agents as well as their production and stockpiling. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction raises major problems, including creating a climate of fear and instability in international relations. This results in increased conflict risks and provides opportunities for terrorist groups to acquire and exploit them. In addition to causing obviously great human suffering and loss of life, weapons of mass destruction can also cause serious environmental damage, including pollution of land, water and air. Nuclear weapons, in particular, can cause radioactive fallout that lasts for years.

Major Parties Involved:



- United Nations: The United Nations enforces non-proliferation through resolutions and sanctions, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is responsible for monitoring and verifying nuclear activities in member states.
- United States and Russia: As the two largest nuclear-armed states, the United States and Russia are key players in efforts to control and reduce their nuclear arsenals. The New START Treaty and other bilateral agreements between these countries aim to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- North Korea: North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles has led to regional and international efforts to curb its nuclear program. Multiple rounds of negotiations and sanctions have been part of these efforts.
- China, France, and the United Kingdom: These countries, along with the United States and Russia, are recognized as the five nuclear-weapon states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They have made commitments to disarmament under the treaty.
- Israel: Widely believed to possess nuclear weapons and faced accusations of developing chemical and biological weapons. Threats by Israel to use nuclear weapons on Palestinian regions.
- Pakistan and India: these countries are one of the few outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that possess nuclear weapons. Their programs have raised stability concerns particularly due to the tensions within each other.

Timeline of Events:

- March 16, 1925: The Geneva Protocol is established, prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare.
- December, 1942: The Manhattan Project is initiated by the United States to develop atomic weapons.
- July 16, 1945: The first successful test of an atomic bomb, codenamed "Trinity," is conducted in New Mexico, U.S.
- August 6 and 9, 1945: The United States drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, leading to the end of World War II.
- August 29, 1949: The Soviet Union successfully tests its first atomic bomb.
- November 1, 1952: The United States detonates the first hydrogen bomb.
- October 30, 1961: The Soviet Union detonated the largest nuclear weapon ever tested, known as the "Tsar Bomba."
- July 1, 1968: The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is signed, with the goal of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.
- April 10, 1972: The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is signed by many nations, prohibiting the development and stockpiling of biological weapons.
- August 6, 1990: UNSC imposed sanction on Iraq
- April 29, 1997: The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) enters into force, aiming to eliminate chemical weapons worldwide.
- September 18, 2001: Anthrax attacks occur in the United States, highlighting the potential threat of biological weapons.
- *August 14, 2002: It is revealed that Iran has been secretly developing a uranium enrichment facility.
- March 20 - May 1, 2003: U.S. and allies invade Iraq, partially due to concerns about WMDs.
- October 21, 2003: Iran signs an agreement with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to suspend its uranium enrichment activities.
- October 9, 2006: North Korea conducts its first nuclear test. UN sanctions imposed.

- July 14, 2015: The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is reached between Iran and the P5+1 countries, aiming to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.
- May 8, 2018: The United States withdraws from the JCPOA, leading to increased tensions and uncertainty regarding Iran's nuclear program.
- November 19, 2022: North Korea test fired Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which is North Korea's biggest missile yet, and is considered the largest road-mobile, liquid-fuelled ICBM in the world.

*Enriched uranium can be used as a component in the production of nuclear weapons such as atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs, which are considered WMDs.

Attempts to solve the issue:

Various efforts have been made to tackle the problem of WMD proliferation through channels, arms control agreements and Non-Proliferation initiatives. The primary goals of these endeavors were to prevent the spread of these weapons, encourage disarmament and ensure the utilization of nuclear energy. Initiatives aimed at reducing the risks associated with WMDs and curbing their proliferation have played a role in security efforts. These initiatives encompass a range of measures including agreements that incorporate verification processes, transparency measures and confidence building actions. Additionally, steps have been taken to strengthen export controls, bolster border security measures and promote disarmament. However, these initiatives have encountered challenges that limited their effectiveness primarily due to the nature of the global security landscape. The international community consists of states with interests, power dynamics and security concerns. This diversity makes it difficult to achieve consensus on issues related to WMD proliferation. Furthermore, there is also the challenge posed by state actors like terrorist organizations who operate outside traditional diplomatic channels and often hold ideologies different from those of states. Their motivations may not align with deterrence strategies or diplomatic negotiations. Consequently, the conventional methods of thwarting the spread of weapons of destruction (WMD) might prove inadequate, in addressing the danger presented by state entities.

Possible Solutions:

1. Calls upon all Member States to strengthen their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation by pursuing the reduction of their WMD arsenals and enhancing transparency in this regard:
    a. Supporting and adhering to the principles of the NPT, BWC, and CWC, and to consider ratifying and implementing other relevant international agreements
    b. Maintain effective export controls and adopt and enforce national legislation to prevent the illicit trafficking of WMD-related materials and technology.
2. Calling for a robust system for reporting, investigation, and verification of WMD-related activities, which should include provisions for swift, impartial, and comprehensive inspections when suspicions arise.
3. Calls for the establishment of an international monitoring squad agency that will ensure the progress of the NPT and its full application in major party countries.
    a. For ensuring the direct or indirect targeting of civilians, the agency will monitor:
        i. BWC treaty affirmation effectively prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons,
        ii. CWC treaty assurance to ensure a credible, transparent regime to verify the destruction of chemical weapons; to prevent their re-emergence in any member State; to provide protection and assistance against chemical weapons; to encourage international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry.
        iii. TPNW treaty endorsement to prohibit the development, testing, production, acquirement, possession, stockpiling, use or threat to use nuclear weapons
    b. They should be supplemented by export control measures for dual-use materials that ought only to be traded with countries that comply with the respective treaties and allow for inspections.

Guiding Questions:

- How can the international community enhance cooperation and information-sharing to combat the illicit trafficking of WMD-related materials and technology?
- What measures has your country taken to prevent the proliferation of WMDs?
- How can economic incentives or disincentives be utilized to discourage WMD proliferation?
- What actions can countries take to form equilibrium between the rights to peaceful nuclear energy development and the proliferation of WMDs?
- What is the effect of regional tensions and conflicts on the risk of proliferation of WMDs in certain regions?
- How does technological advancement and widespread enhance the formidable threat WMDs pose?
- What are the key motivations for your country to pursue or oppose the development of WMDs?
- How do non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, seek to acquire and use WMDs, and what can be done to counter these threats?
- How can the effectiveness of international sanctions and export controls in preventing the proliferation of WMDs be enhanced?
- What proposals does your nation put forward for countering the potential utilization of WMDs in asymmetric warfare or acts of terrorism?
- How can countries advance disarmament and non-proliferation in regions grappling with ongoing conflicts and security challenges?
- Which diplomatic measures and international accords can be leveraged to confront and diminish the proliferation of WMDs?
- In what manner can countries promote nuclear disarmament while safeguarding their own national security interests?
- What strategies can be initiated to encourage the responsible use of dual-use technologies, which have both civilian and military applications?

Beneficial Sources:

→ Dangers From Weapons of Mass Destruction: Any Different in South Asia (columbia.edu)

→ ABC of conflict and disaster: Weapons of mass destruction—threats and responses - PMC (nih.gov)

→ wmdrisks.pdf (fas.org)

→ Combating the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Success Story for the U.S.-E.U. Partnership - War on the Rocks

→ Stopping spread of weapons of mass destruction | ShareAmerica

→ Preventing the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (un.org)

→ Nuclear Weapons – UNODA

→ Weapon of mass destruction (WMD) | Definition, Types, History, & Facts | Britannica

→ Weapons of Mass Destruction | Homeland Security (dhs.gov)

→ NATO - Topic: Weapons of mass destruction

→ Weapons of Mass Destruction - International Relations - Oxford Bibliographies

→ Arms Control Archives - Federation of American Scientists (fas.org)

→ Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) – UNODA