

RENMUN VIII

The Restoration of Serenity



March 4th & 5th 2023

Chair Report

Chair Introduction

Greetings Delegates!

We are Walter Cheung and James Zhang, G11/Y12 students studying at Diocesan Boys' School and Chinese International School respectively, and we are beyond excited to be serving as your chairs of the International Atomic Energy Agency for RENMUN VIII!

Established in 1957 as part of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation when it comes to nuclear science, and is responsible for ensuring the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology. While not featured often in MUN conferences in Hong Kong, the issues it covers are highly pertinent to international relations in the status quo as well as the scientific and social development of humanity, two things the UN has consistently been involved in.

Being an intermediate committee, we hope to provide a welcoming and professional atmosphere not only for delegates getting accustomed to the intricacies of MUN, but also more experienced delegates trying to experiment with different approaches to MUN and in transition to becoming seasoned MUNers. Nonetheless, we expect all delegates to have comprehensively researched the two topics with means including but not limited to the chair reports. Preparations aside, we also hope for you to enjoy yourselves as you engage in riveting debates with other delegates, all while making lasting memories along the way.

Once again, we look forward to hearing your insightful speeches and nuanced ideas on the topics we'll be discussing during the conference, and feel free to reach out to either of us via email should you have any enquiries. Thanks and best of luck with your preparations!

Best Regards,

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Evaluating and improving current approaches on nuclear proliferation

Ever since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 marking the end of WWII, the world has been well aware of the irrevocable impacts the use of nuclear weapons can bring. Following almost a century of developments in nuclear science and international relations, the world is now seeing various countries with the capabilities to use nuclear weapons but fearing the possibility for mutually assured destruction. While the UN has traditionally denounced all instances of nuclear proliferation, the current political situation in the world calls for new approaches on tackling the phenomenon.

There are numerous ways in which countries can tackle the issue of nuclear proliferation, but all of them must involve a coordinated effort by governments and international organizations alike in order to be effective. Being 'the world's center for cooperation in the nuclear field', the International Atomic Energy Agency ought to create an effective yet lasting solution to the aforementioned issue.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Nuclear proliferation (horizontal proliferation) Note: For this committee, delegates are expected to discuss BOTH horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation.	The 'manufacture or acquisition of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices by countries that do not already possess them'. In other words, the spread of nuclear weapons between countries, often from a country in possession of nuclear weapons (often referred to as a 'nuclear state') to another without such possession (often referred to as a 'non-nuclear state').
Nuclear proliferation (vertical proliferation)	The development or increase in stockpiles of nuclear weapons by countries that already possess them (nuclear states). This also refers to improving the technical sophistication and reliability of existing nuclear weapons and the innovation of new ones.
AUKUS	Short for 'Australia, UK and US', a trilateral

	<p>security pact between the aforementioned countries aimed at enhancing their defensive capabilities and technological cooperation. One of its most controversial actions is its direct involvement in helping Australia acquire nuclear-powered submarines.</p>
<p>Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)</p>	<p>The principle of deterrence based on the theoretical idea that a nuclear attack by a state is bound to result in collateral damage and the elimination of both the attacker and defender. This is theorized to be caused either due to the overwhelming destructiveness of the nuclear weapon used or a potential counterattack by the defending state.</p>
<p>Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ)</p>	<p>An area that prohibits the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear power in general. Countries hence commit themselves to refrain from manufacturing, storing or testing nuclear weapons in such regions.</p>

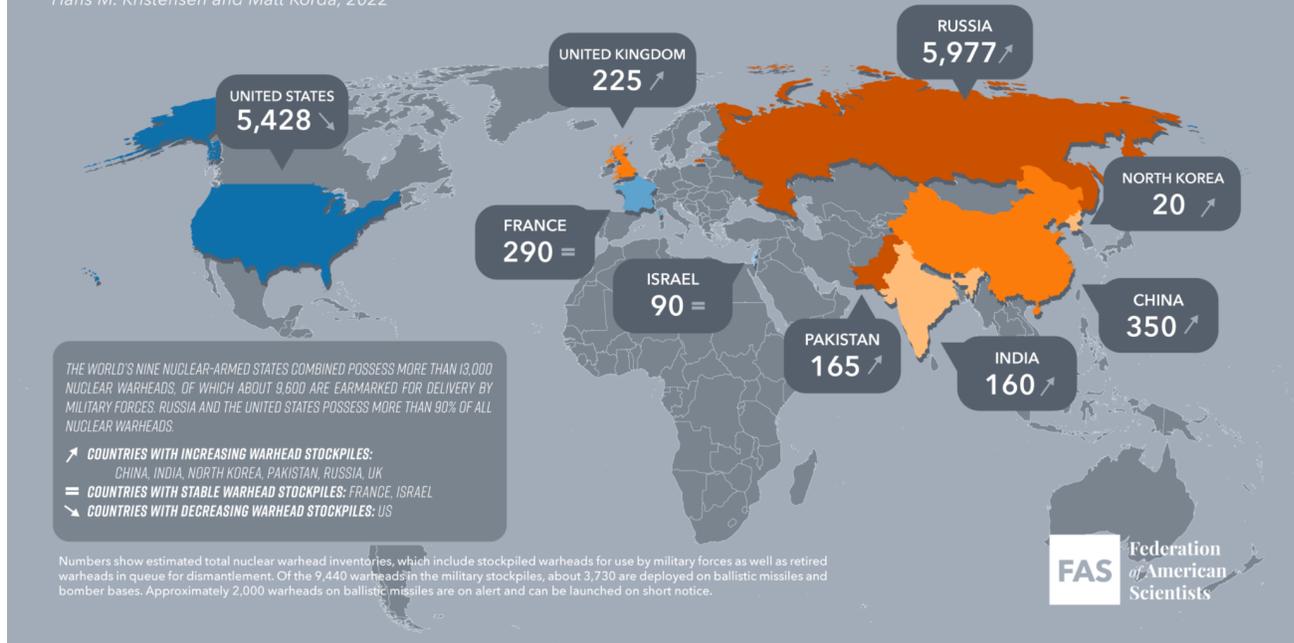
Background Information

Current international situation regarding nuclear weapons

Despite international efforts to ensure that a nuclear war is not fought on the global stage, many developed countries (and some developing countries) are still in possession of nuclear warheads. Although most are built for defensive purposes, their existence poses immense risks to international security and well-being. Delegates may refer to [this website](#) and the map below to gain an idea about the nuclear situation of the world in the status quo.

ESTIMATED GLOBAL NUCLEAR WARHEAD INVENTORIES, 2022

Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, 2022



Source: Federation of American Scientists

As seen in the map above, developed nations like the US and Russia own more than 90% of the world's nuclear weapons, and other developed nations like China, UK and France have a few hundred at their disposal. The 5 aforementioned countries (who are also the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) are currently the only countries classified as 'nuclear weapon states' under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and are also signatories to it. The other four countries (i.e. Israel, Pakistan, India and North Korea), while also classified as nuclear states, are not signed to the NPT. Besides, it is worth noting that the map above does not include countries that have the resources to produce nuclear weapons but aren't doing so, or simply have ambitions in acquiring them.

How nuclear proliferation came to be

With the possession of nuclear weapons being a significant asset for a country's defense and leverage on the international stage, many countries strived to develop nuclear weapons for themselves. The former was often achieved either by building nuclear facilities or with the help of allied nations (particularly nuclear states), which count as vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation respectively. This has led to constant distrust and tensions between countries in possession of nuclear weapons, especially among neighboring states in poor terms with each other. This topic will hence focus on improvements in international efforts in approaching nuclear proliferation and ensuring the legitimate use of nuclear energy. Delegates may refer to the list of notable instances of nuclear proliferation below to have an idea about the issue as a whole:

Cases and potential instances of nuclear proliferation

Iran

Being a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Iran was subject to international scrutiny when her intentions in building nuclear facilities in 2002 were questioned, particularly due to the potential use of nuclear resources for non-peaceful means. While the IAEA and UNSC made binding resolutions like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015 to limit Iran's capabilities at nuclear proliferation, the country has swiftly accumulated nuclear stockpiles following the withdrawal of the US from the plan in 2018. Iran now has enough material to build a nuclear weapon in less than a month's time. This is a prominent example of vertical proliferation happening within countries, and hence Iran could pose a threat to geopolitical stability in the Middle East, hampering international efforts at tackling nuclear proliferation.

AUKUS

One of the more recent yet contentious issues about nuclear proliferation, the AUKUS Submarine Deal (see AUKUS in definitions) had the United States and United Kingdom assist Australia with developing a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for its security in the Asia-Pacific Region. Whether this is considered nuclear proliferation is still up for debate (as the NPT doesn't safeguard naval reactors, yet the construction of concerned submarines did involve the use of nuclear energy), but it goes to show how current standards set on the matter have loopholes that should be corrected.

North Korea

North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003 to develop nuclear weapons herself, which is exacerbated by North Korea's isolationist policy when dealing with foreign relations, making the monitoring of her nuclear situation remain a difficulty even for the UN.

Russia

Not only is Russia the country holding an overwhelming majority of the world's nuclear stockpiles, its current tensions with the west concerning Ukraine make it increasingly likely to object to complying with non-proliferation regulations. It's also said to have supplied nuclear resources to various states of concern regarding proliferation such as Iran and Syria.

Potential Clashes

Effectiveness of current measures on nuclear non-proliferation

As mentioned in the 'past actions' section of this chair report, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the single most significant form of international action aimed at deterring nuclear proliferation, but the effectiveness and ethicality of it remains a subject of debate. At the forefront of this issue lies the possibility for countries to circumvent regulations set by the treaty due to its loopholes. One of the most significant issues pertaining to this is the ambiguous line drawn between nuclear energy's 'peaceful applications' and nuclear weapons, which is evidently seen by how the AUKUS Submarine Deal is not seen as a breach of the NPT.

The treaty's content is also strictly limited to horizontal proliferation as it does not address the issue of nuclear state signatories like Russia developing its nuclear weapons, which is one notable instance of vertical proliferation going under the radar of the NPT. This means that nuclear states can expand their arsenal of nuclear weapons as much as they wish. Extending on the aforementioned issue, delegates should consider the implications of definitions set by the treaty like the line drawn between a 'nuclear state' and 'non-nuclear state', and what they mean states are entitled to do or not do. For instance, the current NPT (as well as other international or regional treaties) involves regulations specifically directed towards nuclear states and non-nuclear states, which shapes the way they deal with nuclear weapons in the status quo and the future.

Finally, the treaty has notably failed to provide any solutions when it comes to nuclear disarmament or arms control. Delegates are therefore encouraged to propose new solutions in the above regards, be it via reforms to the NPT or otherwise.

Dealing with countries unsigned to the NPT and other measures on nuclear non-proliferation

While countries under the NPT are mostly regulated from nuclear proliferation, some nuclear states are not restrained by such regulations and are currently developing their own nuclear programs. Countries like Israel, India and Pakistan, all of which started developing and possessing nuclear weapons in the 1990s, remain unsigned to the NPT. For the cases of India and Pakistan, signing the treaty means that they would have to terminate their current nuclear programs, which they find to be against their own interests on security. Meanwhile, Israel has not signed the treaty in accordance with her policy of 'deliberate ambiguity', and the situation in North Korea continues to raise international concern. As existing treaties are unable to keep these countries in check, delegates will need to consider alternative methods to prevent nuclear proliferation by these countries and ensure that nuclear weapons are used peacefully.

This is also where the question of sovereignty comes into play. Given that these countries are unlikely to cooperate with international non-proliferation efforts and mostly unwilling to be transparent about their internal nuclear situation, most possible solutions concerning checks and balances on them would involve interventions in their internal affairs and governance, which by extension, would most likely infringe on their sovereignty. Delegates should therefore consider the degree to which a country's sovereignty should be respected on the matter and how it applies to approaching the issue of nuclear proliferation.

Potential necessity of nuclear weapons

Given the current international situation, some may support a more realist approach to dealing with nuclear proliferation and let countries do what they wish with nuclear weapons. This is contingent on the theory of Mutually Assured Destruction (see definitions), as it theorizes that countries would be deterred from using nuclear weapons due to the immense collateral damage it'd bring to themselves or from counterattacks by other nations. While this approach is unorthodox to how the world has been attempting to tackle the issue of nuclear weapons, delegates can take into account this perspective when considering what possessing nuclear weapons means for a state and coming up with directions in which the IAEA should be headed towards when dealing with nuclear proliferation.

Feasibility and implications of disarmament

Disarmament is commonly seen as the most effective way to prevent nuclear proliferation such that some regard it as the 'only guarantee against nuclear proliferation'. However, many concerns could arise following its implementation- apart from serving a direct purpose of defending countries from possible threats, countries often view their possession of nuclear weapons as a form of reassurance for their security. The act of disarmament can therefore be seen as an infringement on concerned countries' sovereignty, something that would likely lead to pressure from different political parties from concerned countries. Besides, countries often devote a majority of their defense on nuclear resources, and disarmament could make them particularly vulnerable in terms of security.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
United States of America	Although the US is one of two global superpowers in possession of the majority of the world's nuclear warheads, she has taken efforts in reducing her warhead stockpiles and remains

	<p>a firm supporter of nuclear non-proliferation. While not a signatory of the TPNW, the White House has affirmed that ‘a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought’, and consequently has committed to using nuclear weapons only for defensive and deterrent purposes. However, it is questionable as to whether the US’ track record of anti-proliferation would last, especially given recent controversy on the AUKUS nuclear submarine situation and political developments on the international stage.</p>
<p>Australia</p>	<p>As a member of the AUKUS trilateral alliance, Australia has been a major beneficiary in the proliferation of nuclear-powered submarines by the US and UK. However, she is a firm supporter of nuclear non-proliferation and is a signatory of the NPT. Whether the recent nuclear developments by AUKUS contradicts their aforementioned stance remains a topic for debate.</p>
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>The UK has greatly supported the NPT since the end of the Cold War and has been increasingly transparent about her nuclear situation. However, the UK does not have a policy of ‘no-first use’, which is contrary to NATO’s general deterrence doctrine regarding nuclear weapons. She is also involved in AUKUS’ investment in constructing nuclear-powered submarines for Australia, although the exact stance and role of the UK on this project remains extremely unclear.</p>
<p>Russia</p>	<p>Russia is the only one of five nuclear states recognized by the NPT that is currently increasing her nuclear stockpiles instead of cutting down on them. She’s agreed to abide by the regulations set by the NPT, but recent Russian aggressions in Ukraine and her track record of allegedly supplying nuclear resources to states with ambitions for nuclear projects</p>

	<p>suggest that Russia might not be as supportive of nuclear non-proliferation as she appears to be.</p>
Pakistan	<p>A nuclear state that remains unsigned to the NPT partly due to her past conflicts with India, Pakistan has been developing her nuclear arsenal since becoming a nuclear power in 1998. Unlike other nuclear powers like India and China, Pakistan refuses to adopt a 'no-first use' doctrine, meaning that she is not above launching nuclear weapons even if the country which the weapon is targeted at did not use such weapons first.</p>
Iran	<p>With the decline of the Iranian nuclear deal, Iran is once again reaching the nuclear threshold with incremental steps being made towards higher levels of uranium enrichment. The IAEA has determined that Iran has enriched uranium up to a level of 60% and has continued to install centrifuges to increase its enrichment capacity. Iran's relationship with the IAEA and the rest of the international community has hence become a lot more contentious than before as she continues to be uncooperative regarding investigative measures and abiding by agreements set under the IAEA like the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.</p>
Israel	<p>Israel is the only country in the Middle East that has not signed the NPT, and retains a policy of 'deliberate ambiguity' (sometimes referred to as 'nuclear opacity') when it comes to their nuclear situation. This means that Israel never confirms the existence of a nuclear program and deliberately refrains from being transparent about any possession of nuclear resources. There is therefore little, if any Information about her stockpile of nuclear weapons available. While doing so is claimed to be integral to Israel's national security strategy, it is subject to criticism by many countries that uphold</p>

	transparency when dealing with nuclear weapons.
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	While North Korea signed the NPT as a state party in 1985, she withdrew from the treaty in 2003, stating that it wanted to acquire nuclear weapons as a means of preserving its national security. While it is known that the DPRK is in possession of nuclear weapons, exact information about her nuclear situation remains primarily unclear.

Possible Solutions

Reforms for the NPT

As mentioned in the key clashes, an overarching problem when it comes to nuclear proliferation lies in loopholes present in the NPT. Some parts of the treaty can also be seen as outdated, particularly when it comes to the definitions of various terms and the aspects of nuclear proliferation it covers. Delegates are therefore advised to formulate solutions aimed at either updating the NPT in accordance to the current international situation or create new regulations and ideas to address the problem.

Denuclearization

Defined as the disarmament of nuclear weapons in a country, denuclearization is a sure-fire way to ensure that a country is unable to launch or test nuclear weapons, especially when the situation of just a particular country or two is to be addressed. However, the process of doing so involves a lot of complications such as the extent to which a country should be disarmed, the long duration needed for the denuclearization to take effect and the political implications it brings. Should this solution be used, delegates are reminded to outline courses of action regarding disarmament carefully for it to be effective and of minimal impact to stakeholders involved.

Defensive measures against the possible use of nuclear weapons

Although partly due to the fact that there has not been any instance in which defensive measures have to be used against nuclear weapons, the reliability of defensive systems for nuclear weapons (particularly nuclear missiles) remains unknown. Nonetheless, delegates ought to include measures to defend against or mitigate damage from nuclear weapons should they be used in the future. However, do note that it is very difficult to intercept nuclear warheads, let alone the very short time frame for interception given the speed in which missiles move. In addition, constructing defense systems against nuclear weapons can amount to billions of

dollars spent by a country, which would place a burden on less economically developed countries.

Past Actions

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (link to the treaty [here](#))

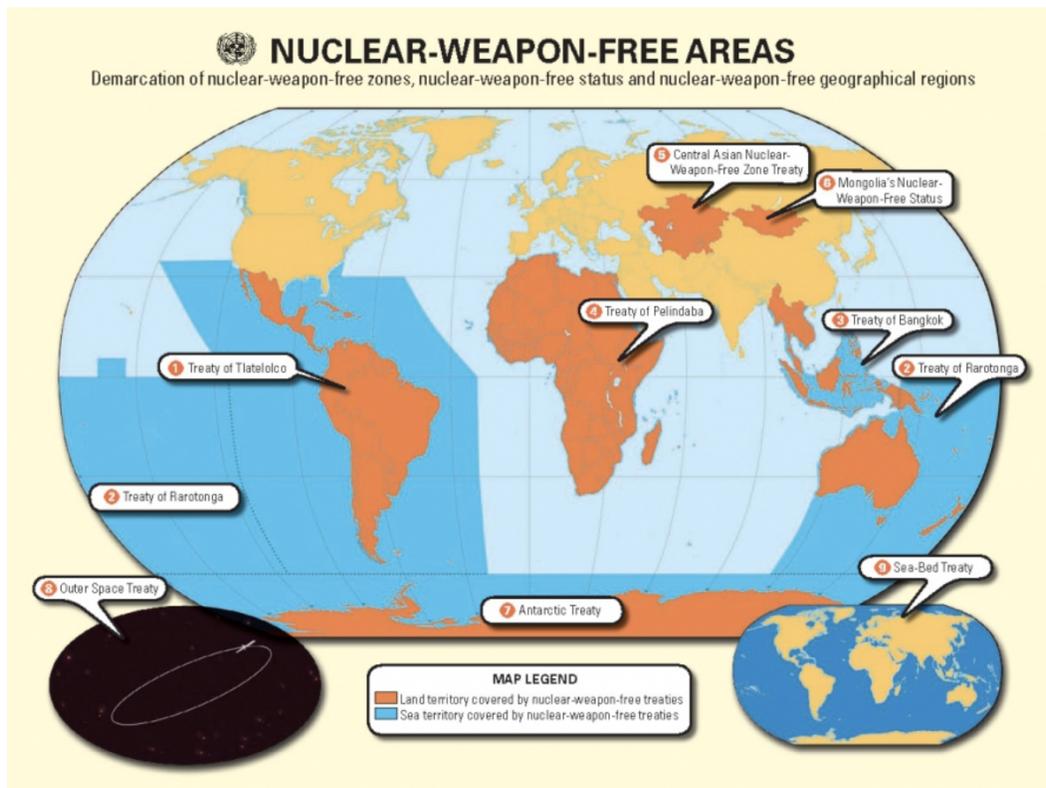
The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is one of the most prominent international treaties aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, with 191 states signed to it and 5 of which being nuclear states. Its first two articles prohibit nuclear weapon states from transferring nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states and calls for non-nuclear states to refrain from receiving any such transfers. However, it does not affect countries' rights to 'develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty.'

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) (link to the treaty [here](#))

Unlike the NPT, which focuses on horizontal proliferation, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons involves a set of regulations prohibiting countries from participating in nuclear weapon activities themselves. In other words, it mainly concerns vertical proliferation. Apart from banning countries from developing, testing, producing and stockpiling nuclear weapons, it mandates state parties to declare their respective nuclear situations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and aims at facilitating the 'total elimination of nuclear weapons'. Like the NPT, it still respects the right of member states to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, many nations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (including the US, France and the UK) as well as China and Russia are not signatories to this treaty, likely due to the existence of nuclear weapons serving a deterrent purpose for security.

Establishment of 'Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones'

As of now, there have been five NWFZs established predominantly in the Southern Hemisphere and Central Asia (see map below), with five regional treaties governing each of them. Apart from prohibiting countries from manufacturing, storing or testing nuclear weapons in these regions, legally binding agreements are also made for nuclear weapon states to refrain from using/threatening to use nuclear weapons that are within these zones.



Visual illustration of the nuclear-weapon-free zones

Image source: UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

Guiding Questions

1. To what extent is the possession of nuclear weapons necessary given the current state of international affairs?
2. What does the ownership of nuclear weapons mean for a country?
 - a. Should countries be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons if they were to only be used for defensive purposes?
 - b. How does a country's sovereignty apply to the ethics behind taking measures on their nuclear activities?
 - c. To what extent is the IAEA justified in deliberately disarming nations' nuclear resources for the sake of international security?
3. What improvements are there for the current NPT?
 - a. How can loopholes in the current NPT be corrected?
 - b. Is the current NPT being discriminatorily strict/lenient to particular nations?
4. How far should countries be allowed to go when it comes to developing nuclear technology?
5. How should the IAEA deal with countries who aren't signatories to the NPT?

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