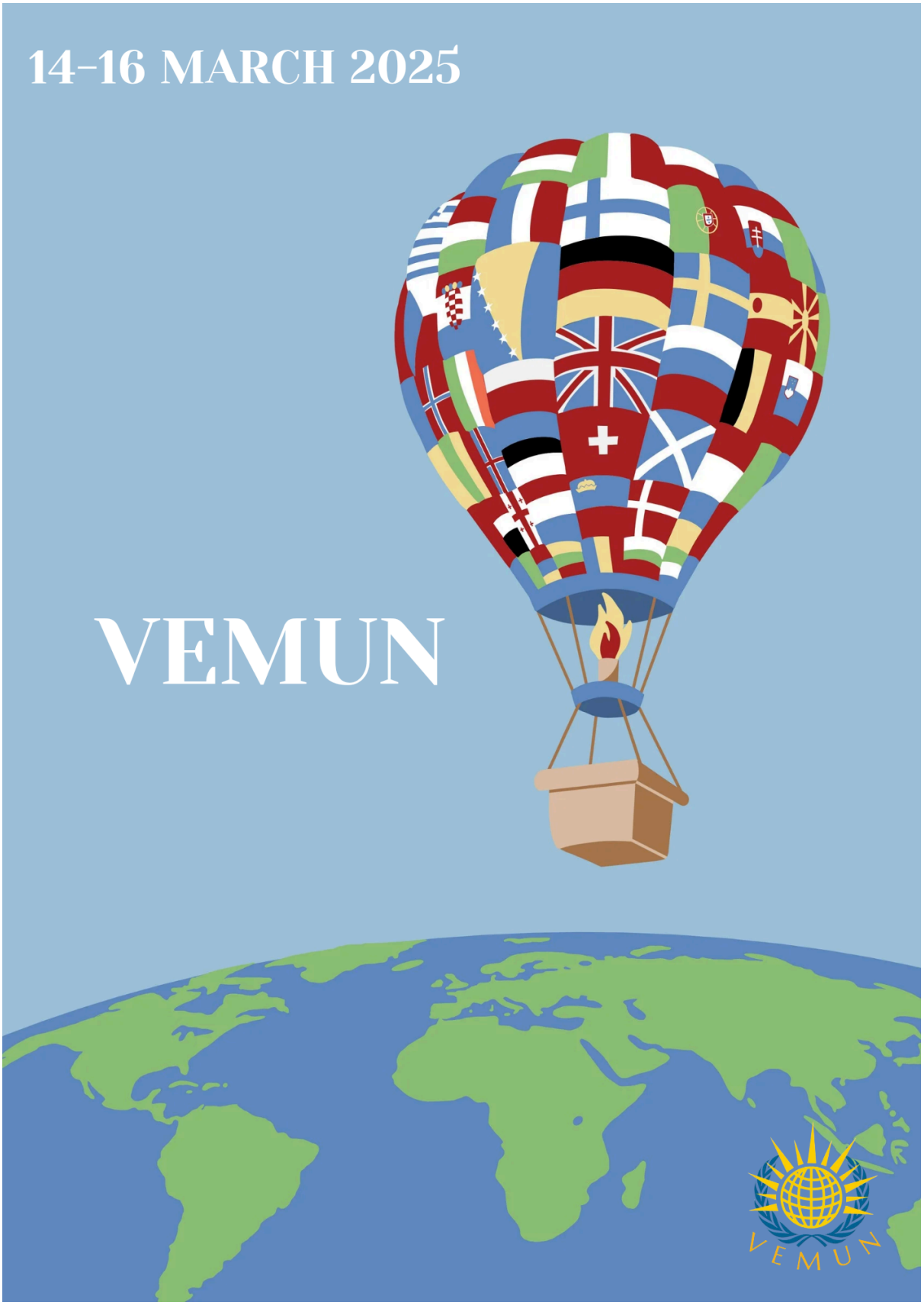
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Issue: The Question of Nuclear Disarmament

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Introduction

"Nuclear war is a mathematical certainty". This statement has often been voiced by scientists of the twentieth and twenty-first century. The only way to foil this probability is "if each year, we manage to reduce [the risk] to only 80% of what it was the previous year"

according to Richard Gavin, the creator of the hydrogen bomb, a goal which in the current state of the world seems categorically unachievable. However, there is a silver lining, since the detonation of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War, countries have been increasingly worried about the proliferation of weapons of such power, leading to extensive negotiations to create numerous treaties. Furthermore, the question of nuclear disarmament has been repeatedly evoked by the UN in its negotiating body, the conference on disarmament. However, progress is slow due to nuclear weapons states' unwillingness to give up their coveted weapons. Robert Oppenheimer, the leading scientist behind the Manhattan nuclear project confessed to the US president of the time after the detonation of nuclear bombs in Japan that he felt like he had "blood on his hands". Such guilt will potentially be indirectly shared by future diplomats unless they double their efforts in order to find new solutions, more adapted to the current world order, to limit the risk of a nuclear war.

Definition of Key Terms

Disarmament

The act of taking away or giving up weapons. In this case referring to the disarmament of nuclear weapons.

Conference on Disarmament (CD)

Sole negotiating body for multilateral nuclear disarmament. This assembly consists of 65 member states. Questions have arised on its productivity as this assembly still follows a consensus rule meaning that any member states has a veto power. This leads to a constant stalemate where the Conference on Disarmament is left inefficient to try and tackle the case of nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons refer to devices, such as bombs or warheads, that generate immense destructive power through the release of energy from nuclear reactions. Examples include the atomic bomb, hydrogen bomb, fusion bomb, nukes, and atomic warheads. Since the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, over 2,000 nuclear detonations have occurred, primarily for testing or demonstration purposes. Only a limited number of countries currently possess such weapons.

WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction)

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are tools of warfare capable of causing significant harm to both civilian populations and military forces. This category includes nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, each with the capacity to endanger large numbers of lives and inflict severe damage on infrastructure and ecosystems.

Non-Proliferation

Non-proliferation refers to efforts aimed at curbing the spread or increase of something, particularly the dissemination of nuclear weapons among nations. It encompasses measures to prevent new states from acquiring these weapons while also reducing the stockpiles held by existing nuclear powers. This concept closely aligns with the principles of nuclear disarmament.

NWS (Nuclear Weapon States)

Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) are nations officially recognized under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as possessing nuclear weapons. These states include China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. When the NPT was signed in 1970, only the United States, United Kingdom, and Soviet Union (now Russia) had nuclear arsenals. These five nations also hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council, often referred to as the “P5” or “powerful five.”

NWFZ (Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone)

A Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) , as defined by the United Nations, is an area where nuclear weapons are entirely prohibited. This includes the implementation of procedures to define the boundaries of the zone and establish an international verification and compliance system to ensure adherence to these prohibitions. Conference on Disarmament (CD) Sole negotiating body for multilateral nuclear disarmament. This assembly consists of 65 member states. Questions have arised on its productivity as this assembly still follows a consensus rule meaning that any member states has a veto power. This leads to a constant stalemate where the Conference on Disarmament is left inefficient to try and tackle the case of nuclear disarmament.

General Overview

Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons

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. The Treaty represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. Opened for signature in 1968, the Treaty entered into force in 1970. On 11 May 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely. A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the Treaty's significance

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Based in Vienna, Austria, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was created in 1957. It promotes the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear technology in health, energy and environmental sectors rather than as a weapon of mass destruction around the world. For example, the IAEA has been increasingly present in Iran to monitor the state's nuclear program and their development of nuclear reactors. The EU is a major contributor to the IAEA's work, both in terms of financing and technical expertise.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal being their total elimination. It was adopted on 7 July 2017, opened for signature on 20 September 2017, and entered into force on 22 January 2021. Sixty-nine nations did not vote, among them all of the nuclear weapon states and all NATO members except the Netherlands. For those nations that are party to it, the treaty prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance and encouragement to the prohibited activities. For nuclear-armed states joining the treaty, it provides for a time-bound framework for negotiations leading to the verified and irreversible elimination of its nuclear weapons programme.

Countries having signed the Treaty:
https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVI-9&chapter=26

The International Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons (ICAN)

ICAN is a broad, inclusive campaign, focused on mobilizing civil society around the world to support the specific objective of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons. The ICAN international structure consists of partner organizations, an international steering group and an international staff team. They won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Major Parties Involved

IAEA: See III. Overview

European Union

According to the European Union, the EU promotes peace by restricting the spread of weapons worldwide such as nuclear weapons. The EU states that it helps enforce any treaties in the world that ban nuclear weapons via diplomatic and technical support and by cooperating with international agencies and countries to reduce the presence of nuclear weapons in the world. Despite these measures, most states of the EU have yet to sign the TPNW as many member states host nuclear weapons or are a nuclear power (France).

Nuclear Weapon states

United States, Russia, United Kingdom, China:

Nuclear-weapon States parties under the NPT are defined as those that manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device before 1 January 1967. These states are all parties of the NPT but not part of the TPNW. These countries justify their possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent which is condemned by many states, for example Zambia which spoke out on this subject saying that “as long as these nuclear States continue holding on to their nuclear weapons, there is a “probable risk” that humanity may be subjected to a nuclear war.”

France:

France is a member of NATO and the only nuclear weapon state in the EU. It is part of the NPT but is not a signatory on the TPNW. The French president Emmanuel Macron and Joe Biden jointly stated that the treaty does not "reflect the increasingly challenging international security environment and is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture" in 2022. This statement expresses the French position regarding this treaty and underlines its desire to keep hold of its nuclear weapons and its deterrence capabilities.

Other states with nuclear weapons or presumed to have nuclear weapons

India, Pakistan, and North Korea:

These states are nuclear powers but are not considered as such under the NPT as their nuclear power has risen after the establishment of the treaty. These states are not parties to either the NPT or the TPNW and have very often voted against the adoption of the treaty at annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

NATO and CSTO states that share nuclear weapons:

Italy, Turkey, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Belarus:

These countries host either US or Russian nuclear weapons (Belarus) often under the policy of "nuclear sharing" in organizations such as NATO and CSTO. These countries are not part of the TPNW and also voted against the adoption of the treaty at annual UN General Assembly resolutions. However, as of recently, many countries' parliaments have encouraged the State Government to try and find measures to approach the TPNW. These measures are often futile as these countries are encouraged to vote against UN resolutions encouraging the adoption of the treaty.

States of Immediate Proliferation Concern

Iran:

Although part of the NPT, Iran has been known to illicit nuclear activities such as a nuclear weapon program according to the IAEA. It has developed the necessary capabilities to build nuclear weapons. It is not part of the TPNW and has threatened to leave the NPT if Teheran deems it in their interests following the ongoing conflict with Israel.

Nuclear weapon endorsing States in the EU

All of the EU excluding Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta:

These are the EU states that are members of NATO. This leads these countries to have a common nuclear policy centered on the principle of nuclear deterrence. These countries are party to the NPT but not the TPNW, underlining how all these countries express their attraction to nuclear disarmament without wanting to hinder their national security and their relationship with NATO.

Non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as think tanks, advocacy groups, and private individuals or corporations play a significant role in promoting nuclear disarmament on a global scale, although they do not own the formal decision-making power of nation-states (and often lack extensive funding). Their essential contributions to the matter include:

- A key NGO contribution is advocacy and awareness. These actors mobilize public opinion through campaigns, protests and educational initiatives, pressuring and influencing governments to prioritize disarmament. These organisations' determined efforts ensure that nuclear disarmament remains a global issue.
- Technical expertise and NGO research further support nuclear disarmament. For instance, think tanks and private organizations provide data on essential factors such as nuclear stockpiles, verification technologies, and policy recommendations. These contributions help bridge divides in international negotiations by providing actionable and realistic solutions, based on comprehensive research data.
- Non-state players also facilitate multilateral engagement. Non-governmental organizations as well as private actors frequently host forums or conferences, establishing opportunities for stakeholders to negotiate outside of formal, politically charged settings. Such initiatives pave pathways for international agreements on the matter of nuclear disarmament.
- Legal and normative efforts play an essential role in promoting international agreements and treaties such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW → see page 5). By highlighting the humanitarian impact of nuclear arms, NGOs are reframing the debate by shifting from a focus on national security to one centered on worldwide, global security. This approach further strengthens disarmament norms in society.

NGOs helping tackle the question of nuclear disarmament include (but are not limited to):

- The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), that led to the acceptance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW → see page 5).
- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) offers rigorous analysis on the control of nuclear arms.
- The Pugwash Conferences also promote informal diplomacy on the matter;
- while the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) implements verification measures as well as risk-reduction mechanisms.
- Grassroots groups such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) assist powerful public awareness (thus encouraging immediate and collective action for nuclear disarmament).

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
July 1945	The world's first atomic bomb test is conducted in New Mexico
August 1945	Dropping of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States
August 1949	The Soviet Union tests its first atomic bomb
March 1950	The Stockholm Appeal is published by the World Peace Council calling for an absolute ban on nuclear weapons.
March 1954	First US hydrogen bomb test.
April 1956	The Soviet Union announces it has a hydrogen bomb.
February 1960	France conducts nuclear testing in Algeria.
October 1962	Cuban missile crisis – a month-long confrontation during the Cold War between the US and Soviet Union, which many believe to be the closest the world has come to a nuclear war.
October 1963	Partial Test Ban Treaty – prohibiting nuclear tests anywhere but underground – starts being enforced
October 1964	China joins the nuclear weapon race by testing its first atomic bomb
July 2, 1966	France conducted its first nuclear test in the Pacific at Mururoa Atoll. This began a series of atmospheric nuclear tests.

October 1967	The Outer Space Treaty enters into force, banning the placement of nuclear weapons in space.
July 1968	The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is signed. Nuclear-armed states agree to work towards disarmament, while non-nuclear states agree not to acquire nuclear weapons.
March 1970	The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty enters into force.
May 1972	The US and the Soviet Union cooperate to sign the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I).
June 1973	The United States and the Soviet Union sign the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War.
May 1974	India conducts its first nuclear tests underground.
1974	French tests in the Pacific at Mururoa Atoll ended due to international pressure and concerns about radioactive fallout.
1975	France shifted to underground testing at Mururoa and Fangataufa Atolls.
June 1979	The United States and the Soviet Union sign SALT II.
August 1985	The South Pacific is declared nuclear free with the Treaty of Rarotonga

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Since the use of weapons of mass destruction on Japanese soil at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, countries have scrambled to make treaties that limit the access to nuclear technologies for military purposes. These include treaties such as the ones referred to above such as the NPT and the TPNW. Furthermore, regional solutions have been put in place by creating treaties that establish Nuclear Free Zones (NFZs). These zones have been put in place across the globe in regions such as the Treaty of Rarotonga in Oceania and the treaty of Tlatelolco in Latin America. These treaties ban the testing, use and storage of nuclear weapons on the territory and cannot be a plausible solution for worldwide disarmament. However, as tensions rise between Nuclear Powers and nuclear war becomes more and more feasible, Non Nuclear Weapon States fear getting stuck in the crossfire of a nuclear war. These countries now look to global solutions for nuclear disarmament as they pursue international peace regarding nuclear weapons.

Possible Solutions

Creation of an EU NFZ:

Although a NFZ in the EU is unlikely to happen with France being a nuclear power, a Nuclear Free Zone in the EU (excluding France or not) would significantly help nuclear disarmament. Countries such as Germany and Italy would be forced to stop hosting the United States' nuclear weapons which would greatly reduce the risk of a nuclear war especially on EU soil. This solution would however impede on NATO's deterrence policy if nothing is done to limit NATO members' reliance on nuclear deterrence and will potentially be revoked by NATO powers.

Encouraging NWS to increase disarmament negotiations:

Encouraging Nuclear Weapon States such as France to engage in nuclear disarmament negotiations with other NWS would be a big step in the direction of a world without nuclear weapons. This could be done by the EU by taking a firm stance against the use of and fostering of nuclear weapons.

Encouraging the creation of a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty:

This treaty would halt the production of fissile materials and highly enriched uranium and plutonium for nuclear arsenals. Such a treaty has already been evoked many times since 1946 by American presidents such as Roosevelt and Obama. However, these negotiations have never managed to be finalized as they have been blocked by Pakistan with backing from China. Nevertheless, the European Union has 12 mostly been open to negotiations and such a treaty. By encouraging other states outside the EU to engage in negotiations on such a treaty the EU might be able to help humanity make steps in the direction of nuclear disarmament.

Conclusion

Nuclear disarmament remains one of the most urgent global challenges, demanding a united effort and collaboration between nations to reduce the risks of a global nuclear war. While significant progress has been made to address this issue through treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT→ **see page 4**) and weapon control agreements, the threat of nuclear conflict persists especially as new nuclear powers emerge and expand. The history of nuclear weapons, starting with the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki using the

atomic bomb in 1945, has been characterized by a balance between simple threats and the danger of global obliteration. Efforts to control nuclear arsenals, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I and SALT II → **see pages 6 and 7**) have played vital roles in reducing stockpiles globally, yet many nuclear powers remain reluctant to tear down their nuclear arsenals fully. The international community faces the challenge of restraining the development of nuclear weapons development, while also making progress in the disarmament of nuclear-armed states. Global cooperation, with help from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA → **see page 5**), is crucial in achieving progress in this matter and pursuing the United Nation's quest for a nuclearly disarmed world. Only through diplomacy and international cooperation can the risks posed by nuclear weapons decrease, ensuring a safer future for all.

Questions to consider

Here are some questions that you can ask yourself while preparing for debate or making clauses and amendments.

- What is your country's position on nuclear weapons and what is their policy?
- How do national security concerns impact your county's willingness to disarm or commit to not making nuclear weapons? 13
- What roles do the NPT and the TPNW play in your country's disarmament effort?
- In what way could nuclear weapons be regulated more effectively?
- What lessons can you draw from past efforts of disarmament to make better and more effective solutions?
- What steps can be taken to ensure the verifiable dismantling of nuclear weapons?
- Should the risk of an accidental detonation factor into disarmament discussions?
- How can modern technologies aid in monitoring and verifying disarmament agreements as well as the nuclear programs of different countries?
- How can education initiatives promote disarmament goals? How can they help raise public awareness about the risks of nuclear weapons?
- What role do defense contractors, and the military-industrial complex play in maintaining nuclear arsenals and projects?
- How might emerging technologies, such as AI, quantum computing, or hypersonic weapons, affect nuclear disarmament?

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