

# **Critical Issues Forum 2008-2009**

## **Nuclear Disarmament: Challenges, Opportunities, and Next Steps**

### Benchmark III

The Author: Fyodor Serkov

Form 11

School №2

Students

The Advisor: Matasova Irina

Victorovna

School №2

English teacher

Russia, Zarechny

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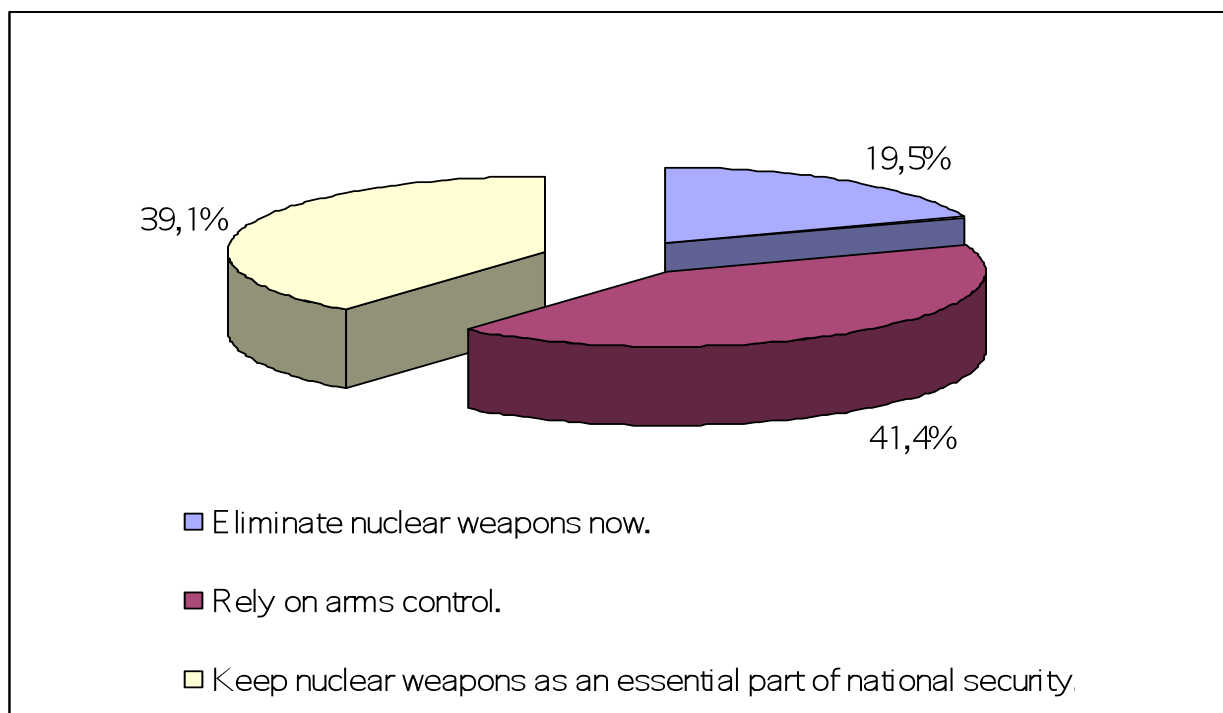
In Benchmark III my task was to evaluate the information I have already gained, to create my own interpretations about world events and to demonstrate an understanding of one of the challenges related to nuclear weapons.

In my opinion, the problem of nuclear disarmament is extremely serious and important, especially nowadays. The invention and spread of nuclear weapons lent greater urgency to the need for disarmament. Our planet is too fragile to carry the stockpiles of nuclear arsenals. Today there are too many countries which want to possess NW. Some countries believe their power depends on the sizes of NW stockpiles.

While studying and analyzing the information from different sources and talking to people of different generations I came to the conclusion that there are three points of view concerning the problem of disarmament and keeping the balance on the Earth. They are:

- Eliminate nuclear weapons now.
- Rely on arms control.
- Keep nuclear weapons as an essential part of national security.

I decided to do a research work and find out what the students of the 11<sup>th</sup> form think about NW, they were suggested to choose one way of keeping nuclear balance on the Earth. These are the results of my survey:



*Made by Fyodor Serkov.*

1. 19, 5% of the students think that the way is quite reasonable but impossible. I quite agree with them as it is an expensive process and takes a lot of time. The existence of NW causes the necessity of different states to arm and they spend a lot of money on it. Asia is a region where a lot of countries are developing and growing their own nuclear potential without any serious control. They are: China, North Korea (it is an owner of a number of nuclear warheads de facto, though it is holding nuclear warheads tests regularly), India, and Pakistan. Besides, such countries as India, Israel, Pakistan, Brazil, Cuba and North Korea are not parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but they are widely believed to possess a nuclear arsenal. So, they can use NW and they won't break international agreements. They are an example to follow for other countries and cause some threats. Analysts over the world say if Japan, or South Korea, or Thailand develop NW, that will arise a great wave of interest to the nuclear warheads and military use of the atomic energy on the Earth. And nobody knows how International Treaties will control it. That's why the situation in Asia is of a particular interest all over the world.

Militarization is not the main goal of countries of the Third World as there is a shortage of funds even on satisfying basic people's needs. Nevertheless they continue the process of militarization.

The world is becoming unstable and difficult to control. NW is becoming less effective nowadays. For fulfilling military tasks there is no need in such amount of NW. US President Barack Obama has set a goal of a "world without nuclear weapons", but the Pentagon calls for modernization of nuclear arsenals. The new administration has an intention to engage Russia in negotiations on deeper cuts in nuclear arms with the aim of reducing them to zero.

The reason for NW elimination is also the development of other kinds of weapons such as biological and chemical. Besides, NW is very expensive to produce and there is a problem of its utilization.

One more reason for NW elimination is that terrorists are looking for opportunities to acquire weapons of mass destruction. We will not be free of dangers until nuclear weapons are completely abolished. In my opinion, we should eliminate NW but preserve nuclear energy and use it for peaceful purposes. We should increase our funding of programs around the world to dismantle existing weapons and convert weapons programs for peaceful purposes.

I think that for elimination of NW the world's mentality should be changed but it's impossible.

2. 41, 4% of the students chose the second point of view as the most real. In my opinion, they are quite right. One of the major efforts to preserve international peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been to control or limit the number of weapons and the ways in which they can

be used. One of the means to achieve this goal is arms control. Arms control refers to treaties made between adversaries that reduce the likelihood and scope of war and usually imposes limitations on military capability.

Though rouge states are working to build or acquire NW, the world's huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons increase risk of theft and proliferation, states can't eliminate NW completely. It will be reasonable to maintain some NW in order to preserve the ability of the state to deter a nuclear attack against it. And the best way to prevent the theft and proliferation is carefully-negotiated international arms control agreements. International cooperation is necessary for solving global problems. Current nuclear powers should cooperate to reduce the world's nuclear arsenals to minimal levels.

The only way to deal with terrorism is through cooperation of states to control their nuclear materials. The IAEA is the biggest and the most world-wide center of cooperation in the nuclear field to implement safeguards on nuclear materials and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear power.

The Conference on Disarmament is the only negotiating body for disarmament issues on the international level. In the Conference on Disarmament 66 states participate and decisions are taken by consensus. Within the framework of the Conference a lot of important international agreements have been adopted, such as the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapon, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling and use of Chemical Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and others.

Arms control is essential as NW is used for different peaceful purposes. History shows that this system of NW control is very effective because the process of producing, testing and using of NW is very dangerous, it takes a lot of time, a lot of specialists are involved in it.

Nevertheless, the total arms control is impossible as each country keeps its military technologies in secret. There are some secret information connected with a technical design of a weapon and nuclear warheads, the system of control and notification, vital plans, list of goals and other.

Life changes very quickly, but agreements and treaties are invariable. Arms control is difficult to realize because bilateral and multilateral agreements require serious changes, renewals and completions. Government should pay attention to the extension of role of legislative power in forming military and nuclear policy of the state.

3. 39, 1 % of students answered that the third point of view –to keep NW as an essential part of national security-is also very important, objective and reliable. Despite the idea of nuclear disarmament, many countries modernize or change the nuclear weapons in their arsenals. They continue to maintain nuclear forces for some important reasons: the international security environment remains dangerous and unpredictable; nuclear weapons continue to play a unique role in supporting national security as they remain an essential element in modern strategy.

Most nations have nuclear weapons to indicate scientific and military strength and to declare their nuclear status, they have a desire to increase and maintain international prestige.

Though the economic power of Russia, political and social stability are not ensured, it has a nuclear status as one of the world's leading military powers. Nowadays modernization of Russian strategic nuclear forces is a top priority for the government. Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov told lawmakers in his speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February that the process of upgrading ground, sea and air components of nation's strategic deterrent forces is expensive but necessary. Russian military weaknesses, for example, shortages of precision weapons and modern communications were evident during its August war with Georgia. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, at a meeting with military chiefs in Moscow on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March ordered a "large-scale" rearmament of the Russian army and navy to begin in 2011. He said Russia must upgrade its arsenals and combat readiness to fend off threats posed by NATO's expansion, international terrorism and local conflicts.

Every state must preserve its right and ability to attack before it is attacked.

NW is cheaper and more effective than military forces and modern weapons with "electronic filling". As for social factor is concerned, the role of NW shouldn't be only destructive. Having a psychological power, NW will be less destructive as it prevents states from beginning a war. Elimination of NW will make the world safer for conventional wars which can cause more heavy casualties. So it's necessary to liquidate the reasons of wars, to change the system of international relations.

NW continues to be the main factor of world's policy and a lot of states don't want to decline it because of its "values". For solving this urgent and global problem we shouldn't make other people responsible for it, but change the system of international relations. People should make every effort to turn things right. Governments should find ways to change the situation for the best and to prevent people from making such devices which are the world's greatest threat.

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