

Critical Issues Forum 2008-2009

Nuclear Disarmament: Challenges, Opportunities, and Next Steps

Benchmark III

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2009

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main goals of international community now is to prevent nuclear proliferation and create all necessary conditions for nuclear disarmament. But it is connected with great challenges (see *Benchmark 2*). So, a predictable question appears: are there any available alternative options for “dealing” with nuclear weapons?

Before making conclusions we decided to ask common people and experts in this field to understand their vision of further options. Thus, the conclusion to this benchmark would be divided into two parts: “Social Opinion” and “Experts’ Opinion” sections.

SOCIAL OPINION

1. Getting Materials

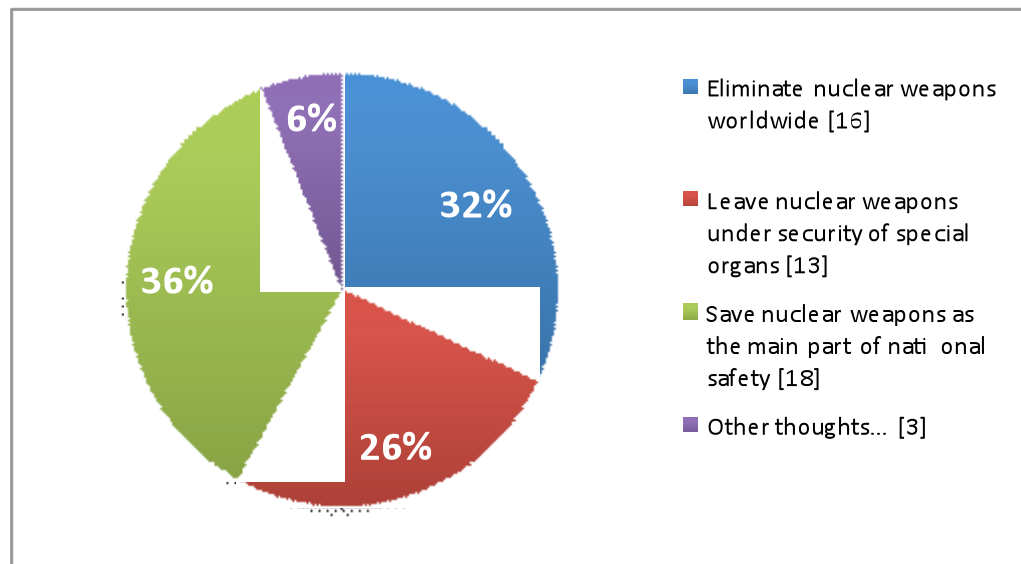
To research social opinion about what politicians should do with nuclear weapons we surveyed 130 people from 3 age groups (under 25; 25-50; over 50) here, in Zelenogorsk, Russia. The results appeared to be rather interesting and quite different. The exact question was “*What measures concerning nuclear weapons should states undertake to your mind?*”

2. Analysis

2.1. Age group “under 25”

50 people from this age group (mostly pupils of high schools) took part in this survey.

Diagram 1. Results of social survey. Age group “under 25”. Made by Boris Samoilenko.



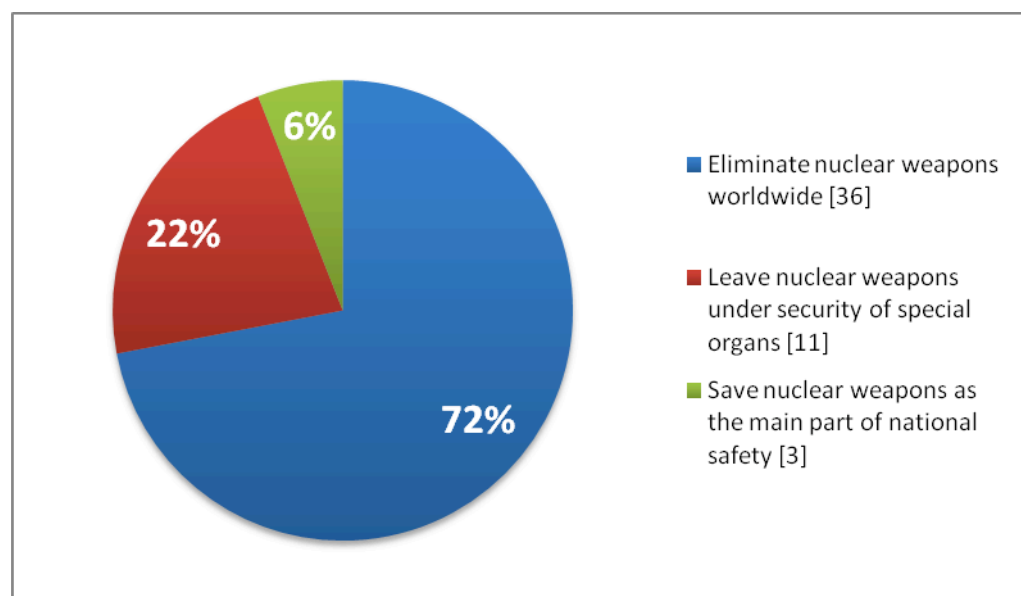
As it can be seen, the most part of young people prefer saving nuclear weapons. But far not less votes has option of eliminating nuclear weapons. This nearly equal division can be influenced by many factors. Even if the third option is dominating in this survey it doesn't mean that understanding of the dangers of nuclear weapons is not enough developed among young people. Yes, nonproliferation and disarmament are not popular topics to discuss in the age group "under 25", but potential destructive power of nuclear weapons is clear to everybody. But at the same time young people understand global elimination of nuclear weapons as a rather naive goal and hard to realize. Then why not to save it and use as a deterrence factor?

So, as it was understood, such division of opinions in this group is the result of dominating practical realistic point of view of young people.

2.2. Age group "25-50"

50 people from this age group took part in this survey also.

Diagram 2. Results of social survey. Age group "25-50". Made by Boris Samoilenko.



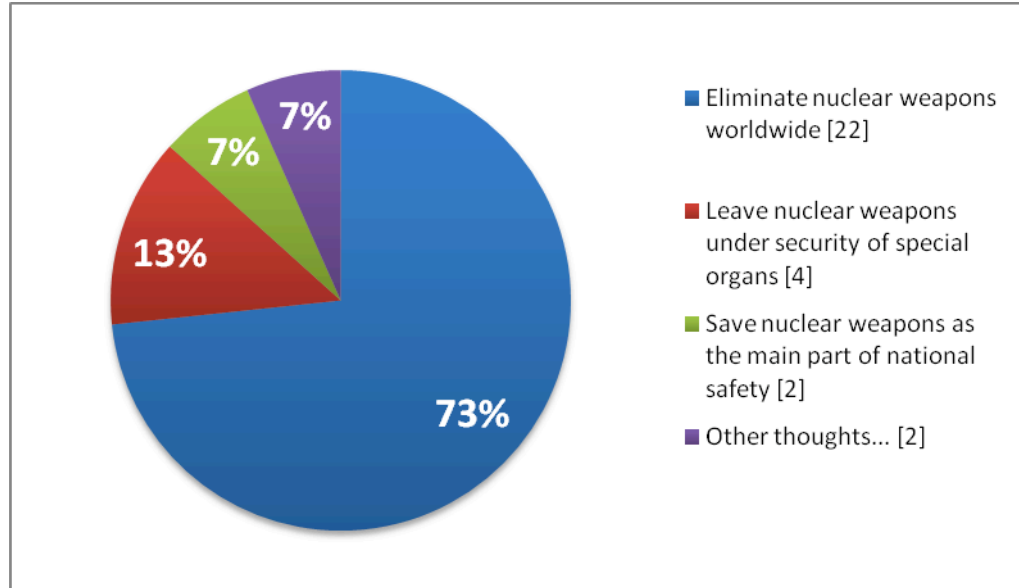
Here an idealistic point of view is dominating. We would avoid calling it "naive". Taking into consideration life experience of surveyed people we can understand 72%-leadership of the first option as extra-hard, but necessary for realizing. People of this group have mostly formed conscience about this question. They don't seem to be people who are ready to run for impossi-

bilities. But disarmament to their mind is not impossibility. It can become real but only as the result of long, hard and global political and diplomatic work.

2.3. Age group “over 50”

30 people from this age group took part in this survey.

Diagram 3. Results of social survey. Age group “over 50”. Made by Boris Samoilenko.

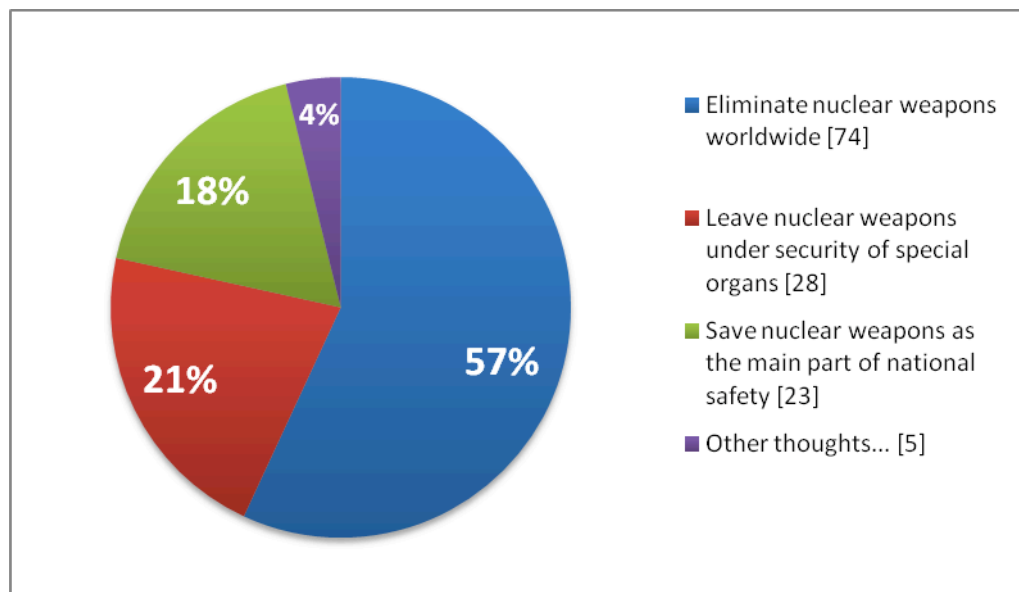


A peaceful approach was always a characteristic of the most part of people over 50. In spite of the fact that these people lived during the Cold War and Arms Race, witnessed the development of nuclear weapons, were influenced by the Soviet propaganda, they agree that nuclear weapons should be eliminated and shouldn't be used neither as a deterrence factor no as a real weapon.

3. Total results. Conclusion

Totally 130 people took part in our survey.

Diagram 4. Total results of social survey. Made by Boris Samoilenko.



As the conclusion to this part of work we should stress that social opinion is mostly led by humanitarian motivations. We also can't say that other options are less important, so they are “bad” or something like that. On the contrary, people who preferred other options than eliminat-

ing are also guided by ideas of safety and humanitarian motivations. The division of people into groups by points of view on these questions is influenced by different factors: age, practical or idealistic view on the world, etc. But, actually all of them are not willing to see the usage of nuclear weapons or its spread.

EXPERTS' OPINION

1. Getting Materials

Three experts took part in our survey, so we got three different points of view on the situation.

Nikita Perfilyev, MIIS student, writes:

“As for the answers, I choose (d) Leave it under national control but decrease its importance in national security.”

As it was understood, Nikita offered to keep securing nuclear weapons, but not be addicted to it.

Elena Sokova, CNS Assistant Director, writes (translated):

“Eliminate nuclear weapons by concluding a treaty of its full eliminating and creating a plan of its elimination for each of the nuclear weapon states with obligatory mechanism of verification and eliminating control.”

Elena offers to strengthen already existent option that ideally should lead to full elimination of nuclear weapons, achieve full nuclear disarmament.

The most many-sided opinion we've got from Nikolay Sokov. First of all, he pays attention to the complexity of this question:

Nikolay Sokov, CNS Senior Research Associate, writes (translated):

“Even if it's the only question, it's extremely complex. There is no answer to it, and, I think, the final decision will be found during negotiations on the final stage of disarmament. It's hard to predict, because every option has both strong and weak points.”

Nikolay also pays attention to four important factors:

Nikolay Sokov CNS Senior Research Associate, writes (translated):

- 1) *“It's hard to just “forget” how nuclear weapons are created. This knowledge will be always with the humanity, and it always will be a risk of creating nuclear weapons one more time. It is, by the way, one of the most serious objections against the idea of full disarmament.”*
- 2) *“Even one nuclear warhead provides huge advantages to its owner in nuclear-weapon-free world. If, for example, North Korea and Iran create nuclear weapons, their disadvantages would be rather limited. But if they are the only nuclear weapon owners in the world, they would be able to dictate their opinion to the whole world.”*
- 3) *“Any suspicions, that somebody creates nuclear weapons will lead to immediate renewal of the Arms Race.”*
- 4) *“When there are no nuclear weapons, the “value” of usual weapons, which is already noticeable nowadays, is increased very much. Some people think that the absence of nuclear weapons creates a risk of new world wars.”*

So, further, Nikolay sees meaning in achieving an agreement in the following fields:

- Keeping potential of creating nuclear weapons (but not keeping nuclear weapons itself) under strong international controls to guarantee non-realization of this potential.
- Saving limited nuclear arsenals under control of international organ (UNSC?). *Here Nikolay stresses these decisions require great changes of the structure of international relations.*

- Paying the most serious attention to contradictions in international relations which can lead to large-scale non-nuclear war.

More importantly, Nikolay is not going to give finished decisions, but leaves this opportunity to the authors of this work. So, that's what we are going to do further.

2. Analysis

So, we've got three different points of view, but connected by the same idea:

- Leave nuclear weapons under national security
- Eliminate nuclear weapons
- Pay attention to international relations

What is the right decision then? We agree with Nikolay about the complexity of this question. There are no decisions, which can be marked as "the only right" ones.

Nuclear weapons became some kind of a stumbling-block of the humanity. It showed that humanity wasn't ready to get such weapons and now it's like an indicator of all the international relations. We should be ready for accepting global decisions, which look like unachievable and impossible.

As a possible option we can not only limit a plan of disarmament by some definite decision, but use a sequence of decisions. Options offered by our experts can be used as main parts of this potential sequence.

First of all, to make all further steps easier for achieving, it's worth *starting work on international relations*. This can sound naive, but it's really necessary.

Once again we want to draw attention to the importance of *shaping public conscience* as one of the ways of modernizing international relations.

When a particular state makes a decision or an offer, as a rule, it is guided by some definite interest. But it's important to remember, that the interest of some definite state is not always an interest of all the humanity, even if the state says so. Of course, it's impossible to detect when ever state is guided by selfish interest or by international one. That's why it's worth paying attention to bringing up humanitarian conscience in the political sphere. Historically, there has been not a single century without a war. People were always dying for some selfish interests of their leaders. That's why it's important to make states think that their interests are not the main in the world. It doesn't matter if it is a great nuclear superpower, or a little non-developed state. Forget about the world domination! Only then we can solve many (not only nonproliferation and disarmament) problems connected with international relationships. [Our CIF conference presentation fragment]

Working on relations is always hard – so it's like a global humanitarian project where everybody has rights and obligations. Otherwise the humanity has a risk to get stuck in useless formal treaties, organizations, conferences, meetings etc.

After mutual trust is enough developed for new opportunities, every state can start disarmament not being afraid of other states. So it would be the stage of *leaving nuclear weapons under national security and its parallel eliminating*.

3. Conclusion

So, one more time we should stress the importance of international relations and humanitarian aspect in nuclear question. We can talk and make assumptions about the necessity of future possible treaties, agreements and try to bypass the main problem, which is inside of us for centuries. Actually, all private mutual relations of people are projected onto the political sphere in less obvious way. Even today there are a lot of international, national, regional, nongovernmental organizations (see *Benchmark 2*) connected by the goal of disarmament. But disarmament actually is not being hurry... Nuclear weapons showed this problem – the problem of relations. The problem of nuclear weapons is an unusual threat, so it can't be solved with the help of usual means.

SOURCES (ALONG WITH BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS)

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