

Critical Issues Forum

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Objective 1

From the very beginning of the nuclear arms race to today, the possibility of an accidental detonation or even an intentional detonation of a nuclear weapon has remained a very real threat to not only the United States, but the rest of the world as well. Following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it became clear to the United States that the consequences were much more devastating than originally thought and to ensure safety for all, an agreement, between all nuclear weapon possessing countries and countries that felt it necessary to also possess nuclear weapons, needed to be put in place.

By 1968, a nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) had been signed by three of the five major powers which are the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom with the remaining two, China and France, signing not long after. One major condition of the NPT is that all other signatories are “prohibited from acquiring or even pursuing a nuclear weapons capability”. While most nations in the world have complied with this condition, some, including Pakistan, Israel, India, have refused to sign at all because they oppose the “favoritism” given to certain countries. They make the argument that all nations should then be required to give up their nuclear weapons. This poses a problem however because now that the nuclear genie has been let out of the bottle, it can’t be put back in. If nuclear weapons were to be completely destroyed, there would no way for a country to protect itself from a nuclear terrorist attack.

The Non Proliferation Treaty has three main conditions designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. According to articles one and two of the treaty, the five nuclear powers are prohibited from “transferring to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices”. Article two focuses on the non nuclear state end of the deal: “Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”.

The treaty also aims to promote peaceful use of nuclear energy for non militaristic purposes through international monitoring of the nuclear materials.

Objective 2

“I believe that we, in our own small way, have illustrated that long-term security can be far better assured by addressing the root causes of conflict, rather than by taking shelter behind weapons of mass destruction.” They are utilized for defensive and offensive strategy, and that is why the disarmament of nuclear weapons is so difficult to embark upon. Countries that do carry nuclear weapons hold them in order to pose a threat on the rest of the world, maintaining their own superiority in order to quell attacks by other countries. Countries that do not harbor nuclear weapons do so for either two reasons. The first, they do not wish to provoke the rest of the world, sustaining positions of neutrality. The second, they do desire nuclear weapons; the only factor separating them from their goal is that they do not have access to them.

On September 8, 2006, the foreign ministers of Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan signed a treaty which established a Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ). By joining the other zones covering Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Africa, these countries represent the main difference between countries with nuclear weapons and countries without. Their example of nonproliferation serves as the counterpart of their neighboring countries—Russia, China, Pakistan, India, and Israel—each of whom harbor their own nuclear weapons, and especially the instance of the internal nuclear-armament between Iran and North Korea. The treaty imposed the impression on the countries holding nuclear weapons that nonproliferation is the best institution of weapons; it is as though they laid down their weapons, raised their empty hands, and stated “we come in peace.”

The Republic of South Africa, as well, found themselves straying away from nuclear weapons as the first African country to do so. After decades of securing several nuclear reactors and weapons, the Republic of South Africa voluntarily dismantled its weapons program for the same motives that Japan exercises. They realize the effects a nuclear weapon bombing on their country would create, and they do not wish for a world-demonstration of another Hiroshima or Nagasaki on their own soil. As in the case with Japan, carrying nuclear weapons would suggest provocation, and provoking is the greatest method for getting attacked. Thus, the basic description of willingly disarmed countries is this: they do not want fighting, war, etc., and the simplest manner of neutrality is not carrying weapons so as not to be attacked.

They do not wish their countries to be the targets of terrorism; a nuclear reactor would be the easiest and most efficient target available. Once a treaty to join the nuclear free zone is enacted, their country would become safer from attacks by nuclear strikes. The race to join these free zones is evident in the efforts of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) Council member Hon. David Coltart and Hon. Dr. Raphael Chegeni from Zimbabwe and Tanzania respectively. They are urging other African countries to

ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, which requires twenty eight of the fifty one African States who have signed to ratify that treaty. They are intent on the treaty becoming entirely effective, so as to join with other weapons-free zones to create a Southern Hemisphere and Adjacent Areas Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

South Africa, as well, struggles to improve the disarmament of African countries and even countries outside of their continent's borders. As countries such as India, Pakistan, and North Korea violate the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by producing nuclear supplies, the treaty's validity comes into question. South Africa, though respecting the rights of these countries to produce nuclear energy, actively works to obligate them to the Treaty's nuclear weapons restrictions.

Yet so many countries believe armament is essential to survival. Occasionally, countries attack other countries that do not even have military power. It is possible that an unprovoked attack on their country could very well be imminent, and if they are attacked, and are not well-equipped to counterattack, then they will be lost. They would become a sitting duck for those nations who wish to conquer.

Other countries fall into the same position that the former Soviet Union was in. They feel threatened by opposing countries who still harbor weapons of mass destruction, resulting in an arms race to impose a threat from impending attack. Yet to do so, these countries too harbor a budget large enough to afford a stockpile. These become the irresolute motives of the thirty African states who have signed the Treaty of Pelindaba, but have not ratified it.

And thus, the major divergence between armed countries and disarmed countries is established. Armed countries, such as the United States, Russia, Great Britain, and Israel, know all too well of the threat abroad. They are countries who have throughout history, found themselves threatened, invaded, or attacked by countries with larger militaries. These are the past memories that hold these countries to their weapons; they cling on to them, fearing that if they lose that shield, they will be attacked as the vulnerable ones who were foolish enough to get rid of that only barrier. The countries who do not have nuclear weapons do not feel the same threat that the more developed countries feel. The danger that they know is not from abroad, but within their borders. These countries, such as the Republic of South Africa, realize that their focus needs to be upon their own people. This is why most disarmed countries do not have weapons; they do not have the funding to buy them, and they do not have money to direct upon their own people. Their concentration is diverted to their people's well-being, not to weapons that do nothing for the immediate help of their homeless and hungry.

This is another reason why the armed, poor countries do have access to nuclear weapons. The people are in need, and because their government does not have the ability to aid them, they find themselves turning to the help of terrorists, terrorists who wish to be armed. The citizens of these countries become the terrorist's support, and their country is ultimately deviated away from the

moderate qualities of neutrality. The people need to eat. The terrorists need support. The terrorists feed the people. The people give the terrorists their support. A country with a nuclear program is born.

The countries that demonstrate for nuclear free zones are aware of this contrast. They realize that other countries have “many pressing issues which demand the attention of African governments and that nuclear disarmament might not be at the top of the agenda.” This statement originates from the PNND representatives from New Zealand, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania to the prime ministers and presidents of those countries that have not yet ratified the treaties. The statement indicated that although nuclear disarmament is a top priority for some states, others have more pressing issues to deal with. These issues—economic and domestic—demonstrate the difficulties of obtaining ratification from these countries. They do not see the impending danger of a nuclear holocaust, but that of their starving poor. The domestic issues become the main concern for these countries and it becomes difficult for those countries bent on disarmament to achieve the necessary attention.

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