

*United Nations Office for
Disarmament Affairs*

*Addressing the
Autodestruction Law:
Denuclearization*

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) is the world's main intergovernmental assembly for issues regarding the denuclearization of

countries. Its goal is to promote nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the strengthening of the disarmament regimes in respect to other chemical, biological, and mass destruction weapons. The UNODA was established in 1998 as part of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's plan to reform the United Nations as presented in his report to the General Assembly in 1997. Now, its headquarters are located in New York City, USA and are led by Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, Izumi Nakamitsu of Japan (UNODA, 2018).

Nuclear weapons are considerably the most dangerous weapons on earth. One could not only destroy a city and kill millions, but it could also biologically ruin the natural environment of said area, making it uninhabitable (Nuclear Weapons, 2018). This is why denuclearization has become an essential topic when discussing international affairs.

A country's denuclearization is the act of reducing or eliminating its nuclear weapons. Proponents of nuclear disarmament say that it should be a top priority in the international community, as it would essentially lessen the probability of a nuclear war occurring, especially as it could spontaneously manifest itself and escalate to the point of it being impossible to deter.

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

Denuclearization is a topic which has concerned people all around the world. In August 6, 1945, during World War II, the world's first atomic bomb was dropped. An American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first nuclear weapon over the city of Hiroshima. The explosion killed 90 percent of people in that city and instantly killed 80,000 people; thousands would die days later due to extreme exposure to radiation. Japan's Emperor Hirohito surrendered and described the nuclear weapon as "a new and most cruel bomb". (History.com Staff, 2009)

Before the war broke out, a group of American scientists became concerned the research being conducted in Germany. The research consisted of nuclear weapons. During mid 1940, the U.S. government decided to fund its own nuclear weapon development program. Over the next few years, the scientists in the program began to work on the production of key materials such as plutonium and nuclear fission-uranium-235. These materials would be sent to New Mexico, where they would be turned into workable nuclear weapons. On the early morning of July 16, 1945, the Manhattan Project had its first successful test. Nuclear weapons had officially been created. (History.com Staff, 2009)

During this time, the Allied powers had already defeated Germany. Japan, however, refused to surrender, even though they had little chance of winning. In late July, Japan's government decided to reject the Allied demand for surrender put forth in the Potsdam Declaration, which threatened Japanese people with "prompt and utter destruction" if they refused. The United States then established themselves as a dominant country by bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two Japanese cities.

Even after WWII, the threat of nuclear weapons did not disappear. Even though President George Bush withdrew all nuclear weapons, North Korea had different plans. North Korea conducted underground nuclear tests and made it known to the world that the threat of nuclear weapons was as real as it had ever been. Even though North Korea had continuously been experimenting with nuclear weapons, the United States became allies with South Korea and defended the Korean peninsula. (Vaynman, J., & Narang, V., 2018)

Just recently, President Donald Trump met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Trump announced that he and leader Kim had agreed to the cancellation of U.S.-South Korean military exercises, thus relieving some ongoing nuclear tension. North Korea committed to "total denuclearization". (Westcott, B., 2018)

CURRENT SITUATION

As previously mentioned, denuclearization is an ongoing fight for "complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of Pyongyang's program." (Westcott, B. 2018) Over the past decade, the United States of America has actively tried to shut down North Korea's nuclear programs. According to experts, in order to achieve denuclearization, observers would need to be allowed in North Korea in order to verify and check on North Korea's steps. (Vaynman, J., & Narang, V., 2018)

North Korea has previously pledged to dismantle their nuclear program in exchange of international help. But this promise was not kept, as both parties refused to cooperate. Even though not much progress had been made, the United States and North Korea have come to a common ground and President Trump has declared that there is a "good chance" of denuclearization. (Westcott, B. 2018)

On the other hand, Kim Jong Un (Leader of North Korea) has not mentioned Pyongyang dismantling its nuclear weapons in any of his speeches or statements. For North Korea, denuclearization doesn't just involve Pyongyang, it involves the whole Korean Peninsula and American troops. The removal of North Korea nuclear weapons would have to be in conjunction with the United States removing their

troops from South Korea. As stated by experts, Kim Jong Un considers the United States as a nuclear threat. (Westcott, B. 2018)

In a press conference after the summit, Trump also announced other commitments that he and leader Kim had agreed to the cancellation of U.S.-South Korean military exercises.

Despite the positive looking outcome, Robert E. Kelly, a political science professor at Pusan National University in South Korea, tweeted that the agreement "is even thinner than most skeptics anticipated". Their agreement also did not provide specifics about what Kim means by "denuclearization" and was considered to be too general and lacking in details. President Trump believes there will be a need for a second summit. Many politicians and experts believe that the second summit will either help negotiations, and establish a more defined agreement, or cause these negotiations to take two steps backwards. (Jackson, D. 2018)

UN ACTIONS

The United Nations has sought to eliminate nuclear weapons since its establishment. Many resolutions have been proposed, the first of which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946. It established a Commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy and the assurance that it would only be used for peaceful purposes. The solution ended up deciding that the Commission would exercise its power with the goal of reaching "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction." (Nuclear Weapons - UNODA, 2018).

The United Nations then approved the launch the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). It was established by Kofi Annan in July 1977 as part of a plan to decrease nuclear arsenals worldwide (UNODA, 2018). The United Nations' and UNODA's ultimate goal was to rid the world of the possibility of nuclear war. Found in landmark resolution 1653 of 1961, titled "Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons," the UN General Assembly stated that the use of nuclear arsenals "would exceed even the scope of war and cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction to mankind and civilization and, as such, is contrary to the rules of international law and to the laws of humanity". This then led to the struggling fight to exterminate said weaponry, and after many years without much action,

countries finally came together to the two most impactful treaty signings in the topic's history:

- The Total Nuclear Test Ban is signed on September 24th, 1996. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty opens for signatures in the UN. Nations that sign the treaty include: China, France, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States (ICANW, 2018).
- On July 7th, 2017, the UN adopts the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty. Following intensive negotiations, two-thirds of the world's nations favored to adopt the landmark UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 2017)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Create an International Global Treaty with the purpose of completely eradicating and suspending all nuclear arsenals.
 - Option A: Establish a treaty solely through the United Nations and governmental organizations to accelerate the Global Denuclearization process and officially declare the countries in favor of disarmament.
 - Option B: Join forces with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW) and support the campaign's promotion through their 100+ established countries in order to implement their treaty into the developing UN Nuclear Weapon Ban.
- Establish the clear benefits of nuclear disarmament and the possible future of a nuclear-weapons-free world through various global campaigns beginning at educational levels.
- Establish the obligatory renunciation of both the threat and the first-use of nuclear weaponry to all nuclear weapon states.
- Set a forum where actively nuclear countries' representatives can meet and come to an understanding of diplomatic manners to resolve their ongoing issues, automatically removing those not part of their political disputes from any future consequences.
- Support local and international leaders that agree with the values of nuclear disarmament and are willing to use their power to take action to help and surrender to global denuclearization.

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