



General Assembly

Thirteenth Session

Distr.: Middle School

Sept 2018

Original: English

First Committee – Disarmament and International Security

This committee aims to create a more peaceful world. Talks in this committee center around reducing weapons in the world. It also identifies threats to peace and finds solutions to international security.

This committee believes the world can become stable through cooperation. Countries can protect their people better if they work together for peace. For example, this committee might discuss how to keep weapons from terrorists. Or, how less weapons can make the world safer. Also, countries talk about policing weapons and finding ways to reduce the weapons they have.

First Committee works closely with **United Nations Disarmament Commission** and **Conference on Disarmament**. They have passed resolutions on ammunition, military spending and missiles.

Agenda Item 102 – The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Focus Questions

A Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East would do a lot to ease tensions. It would also make the area safer. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making a NWFZ in the Middle East.

- How can your country play a role in making the Middle East a safer place with less violence?
- How can the countries in this region work together to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone?
- Why do some states want nuclear weapons and how can other states help them so it is not something they want?

Background

Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction that cause more damage than traditional bombs. A small nuclear weapon can destroy an entire city. They have only been used twice in history. At the end of World War II, the U.S. dropped two nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. These two bombings caused the deaths of more than 129 000 people.

Many countries saw the danger of nuclear weapons. However, some countries made nuclear weapons because they thought they might need them. They thought they needed them for protection. The first five countries to develop nuclear weapons were the US, Russia (former Soviet Union), the United Kingdom, France and China. Since 1961 at least three more countries have made nuclear weapons. There are now around 22 000 nuclear weapons in our world.

Background

Nuclear disarmament is something the UN has always wanted. In 1961 the General Assembly adopted a resolution that said the use of nuclear weapons “*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.*”

Since the 1960s the UN has been encouraging countries to make Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ). Since not all countries can agree to live without nuclear weapons, at least large areas can be safe. 115 states belong to a NWFZ.

Over the last 50 years, countries have been trying to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This would help to ease some of the tensions in that area of the world. The Middle East is a “conflict hotspot”. This means that there are a lot of risks for violence to happen there. One of the major causes is the Syrian Civil War. Over 470 000 people are thought to have died. The fighting spills into other countries and makes them unsafe as well.

Another issue is Israel. Many countries in the Middle East do not think Israel should be allowed to exist. The only states in the Middle East that have diplomatic ties with Israel are Egypt and Jordan. Since it became a country in 1947 Israel has fought 8 wars. Many people in the Middle East believe Israel should be destroyed. This causes tensions in the area. To protect itself, many people believe Israel made nuclear weapons. They might believe it will keep people from attacking them. Israel will not admit if they have nuclear weapons. They prefer to keep it a secret.

Recent Developments

In the past, Iraq, Libya and Syria tried to create nuclear weapons. Some states suspect Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons secretly. Iran says that they are not trying to get a nuclear weapon. However, they do admit that they are interested in nuclear power research. This scares many states however because nuclear power is the first step to getting a nuclear weapon. Nuclear research and nuclear facilities can be used to create the uranium for a nuclear weapon.

In 2012, President Obama said “It will not be tolerable to a number of states in that region for Iran to have a nuclear weapon and then not to have a nuclear weapon ... so the threat of proliferation becomes that much more severe ... The dangers of an Iran getting nuclear weapons that then leads to a free-for-all in the Middle East is something that I think would be very dangerous for the world.”

In 2015 President Obama with Germany, China, Russia, France, the UK and the EU negotiated a deal with Iran. It was called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The deal lifted **economic sanctions** against Iran in return for allowing International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors into the country. The agreement listed many things that Iran could not do. The inspectors were there to make sure Iran followed the rules. States hoped the rules will stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

In 2018, President Trump decided to pull out of the Iran deal. He believes Iran is trying to make nuclear weapons in secret. This has made a lot more tensions. The US flag was burned in the Iranian Parliament. Iranian soldiers fired rockets into Israel from Syria. Israel responded by attacking Iranian military in Syria. Iran has said they might restart their nuclear program.

Saudi Arabia has said that they would consider building nuclear weapons if Iran and Israel had them. This could create a lot of tension in the Middle East.

Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

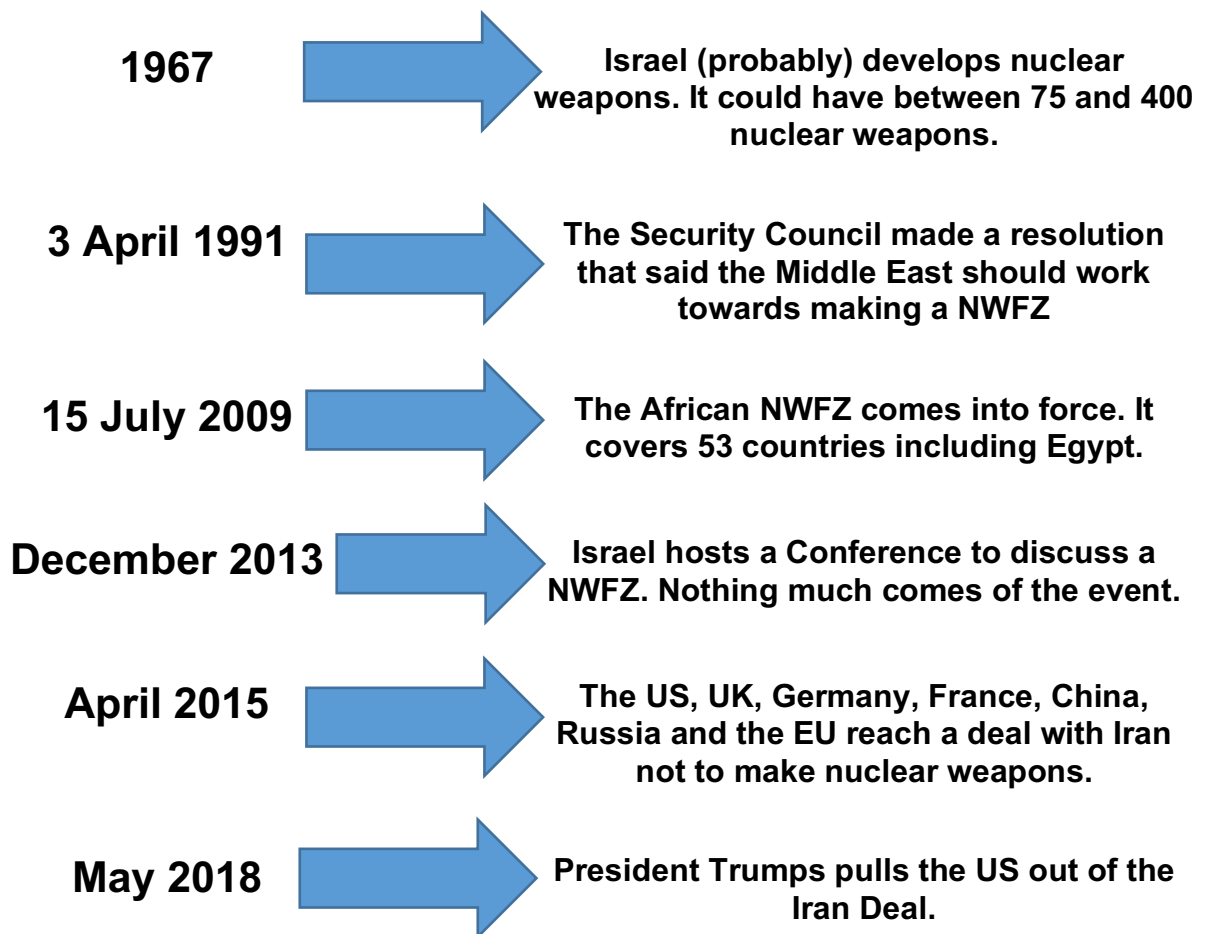
This treaty, also known as the NPT, is a very important document. It aims to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and encourages countries to use nuclear energy peacefully. First signed in 1968, only 4 states have never signed it: India, Israel, Pakistan and South Sudan. North Korea signed it in 1985 but left the treaty in 2003.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

This treaty would ban ALL nuclear explosions in all environments. This means that no country that signs it would be able to test nuclear weapons. This is important because since 1945 over 2000 nuclear tests have been conducted. That is 28 tests a year! One nuclear blast every two weeks! This treaty is not yet in force. It needs to be ratified by China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, the U.S., India, North Korea and Pakistan.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

This treaty wants to see ALL nuclear weapons banned. It goes further than the NPT. It wants even countries with nuclear weapons to give them up. In July 2017 there was a vote and 122 states voted yes to the final draft. In September 2017 states were invited to sign the treaty.

Timeline: Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone

Research Questions

1. What are the benefits of having nuclear weapons? What are the drawbacks?
2. How can countries prove to each other that their nuclear research is not a threat? How can countries trust them when they say they don't want a nuclear weapon?
3. Is it possible that countries with nuclear weapons would ever agree to getting rid of them? Why or why not?
4. How can nuclear power be used in positive ways?
5. Research some of the history of the Middle East. Why is there so much conflict there in your opinion?
6. Does your country think that nuclear weapons make the world a safer place?
7. The United States is not trusted by many countries in the Middle East. What other countries can influence the opinion of the states in the Middle East.
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. Who is working on it? NGOs, not for profits, other groups or individuals?
10. Knowing about this problem, how does it impact your world view?
11. How could you make an impact on this issue through your life choices?

Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
UNODA	https://www.un.org/disarmament /	Official page of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.
Forbes	https://www.forbes.com/sites/startswithabang/2017/09/09/ask-ethan-how-can-a-nation-have-nuclear-power-without-the-danger-of-nuclear-weapons/#6f41b94039cd	An article on the connection between nuclear weapons and nuclear power.
Reaching Critical Will	http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban	Information on the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.
PBS News Hour	https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/what-is-the-difference-between-the-nuclear-material-in-a-bomb-versus-a-reactor	Background on nuclear power and weapons.
IAEA	https://www.iaea.org/	The International Atomic Energy Agency official site.
BBC	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655	Information on the Iran Nuclear Deal.
The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2018/may/08/iran-nuclear-deal-donald-trump-latest-live-updates	Article about Donald Trump having the US leave the Iran deal.
Nuclear Ban Daily	http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/reports	A list of newsletters that have information about banning nuclear weapons.
ICAN	http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/positions/	Website about the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons.