Block Nuclear Weapons Testing
United Nations Security Council
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ROLE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations that is primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security. While the other organs of the UN like the UN General Assembly can only make recommendations, the Security Council has the power to carry out those recommendations. This duty makes the UN Security Council the most powerful organ in the United Nations system. From imposing sanctions on Iran to approving peacekeeping missions around the world, the Security Council can respond best to crises around the world.¹

The Security Council is made up of fifteen members: five permanent members and ten non-permanent members (or P5 members) who serve two-year terms. The five permanent members are: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States who have veto power over any UN Security Council resolution, which means that if any one of those five countries votes no, the resolution automatically fails. The non-permanent members for 2020-2021 include Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, and Viet Nam.²

When there is a threat to international peace, the Council can set principles to establish an agreement or dispatch a peacekeeping mission like enforcing UN peacekeepers who are military forces voluntarily provided by member states. In some emergencies, the Council may issue a ceasefire to prevent an escalation of a conflict. Nevertheless, the Council can also exercise its powers by enforcing a blockade, embargoes, travel bans, and economic sanctions. Ultimately, the Security Council is primarily a crisis-management body to maintain peace, and since 1990, has dramatically increased its activity to hold countries accountable.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nuclear weapons are weapons utilize energy released from a nuclear reaction to create an explosion. Nuclear weapons testing assesses the capabilities of nuclear weapons, including effectiveness, impact, and explosive capability, on various mediums, including above ground, underground, and underwater. The first nuclear weapon was constructed by the United States in the context of WWII. The number of nuclear weapons dramatically increased in the context of the Cold War and the concept of mutually-assured destruction. As the Soviet Union began pursuing nuclear weapons development, the United States responded by investing more into its own nuclear program.

Before the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which bans all nuclear testing, 2,000 nuclear tests were conducted. Most of these tests were carried out by the United States, followed by the Soviet Union, United Kingdom, France, and China. As of 2017, only 10 nuclear tests have been conducted by India, Pakistan, and North Korea since then.

Considering the considerable damage and environmental risks associated with nuclear bombing, nuclear non-proliferation is an essential prerequisite to international peace and security. The spread of nuclear weapons can only perpetuate existing tensions between rival nations. With the existence of nuclear stockpiles of nations in volatile regions, non-proliferation is fundamental to prevent a destructive escalation of existing conflicts.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON NUCLEAR TESTING**

Towards the end of World War II, both Allied and Axis countries had plans to develop a nuclear weapon, which they believed would be a decisive factor to help them win the war. In 1942, the United States established the **Manhattan Project**, a top-secret research program to weaponize atomic energy and create a nuclear weapon. By 1945, scientists working in Los Alamos Laboratory had created a working atomic bomb, which they tested on July 16th, 1945 in New Mexico. The **Trinity Test** was the first time a nuclear bomb was exploded in history, and the explosion created “an enormous mushroom cloud some 40,000 feet high.”

By August 1945, President Harry S. Truman decided that the US needed to use an atomic bomb at the of World War II in order to force the Japanese to surrender. On August 6th and 9th, two bombs nicknamed “Little Boy” and “Fat Man” were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing more than 100,000 people, with the total death toll of over 200,000 as a result of the bomb’s effects.

Shortly after the end of World War II, the Soviet Union became a nuclear power when they tested their own atomic bomb in 1949. By 1951, both the United States and the Soviet Union had established dedicated nuclear testing sites. From 1951 to 1992, the US tested 1,021 nuclear weapons at a Nevada testing site, just south of Las Vegas. These tests released large amounts of radioactive iodine into the atmosphere, and since no one had a full understanding of the negative

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effects of nuclear fallout, about 3,000 soldiers and technicians were exposed to high levels of radiation in the 1950s.\(^7\)

For the Soviet Union, they constructed a top-secret city in Kazakhstan that was heavily guarded and closed to all except Soviet scientists and technicians. Called Semipalatinsk-21, the highly secretive base witnessed 456 nuclear explosions. Similar to the United States, Soviet authorities did not fully understand the dangers posed by nuclear tests – Soviet troops would often ask the inhabitants of the town to step outside their homes when there would be a nuclear test, so they could better understand the long-term effects of nuclear fallout.\(^8\) Residents also experienced abnormally high levels of cancer, and children were often born with genetic mutations.

In 1952, the US tested its first thermonuclear weapon, also known as a hydrogen bomb. This new weapon was approximately 1,000 more powerful than the atomic bomb. The year after, the Soviet Union followed suit and tested their own thermonuclear weapon.\(^9\) Many of the US’s thermonuclear testing occurred at Bikini Atoll, which severely damaged the ecosystem and displaced the native population. In an infamous test called Operation Castle Bravo, engineers “seriously miscalculated the yield of the device,” leading to “critical radiation contamination” that spread over 11,000 square kilometers.\(^10\) After more than 60 years, the islands remain dangerously irradiated and uninhabitable.

Another notable American thermonuclear test was Operation Starfish Prime, which tested a nuclear weapon in low orbit, 250 miles above the Pacific Ocean. The test created a massive electromagnetic pulse that shut down electrical services in Hawaii, nearly 1,000 miles away.\(^11\) The test also damaged dozens of satellites, including an AT&T communications satellite that had its transistors destroyed by radiation.

The most well-known test, however, is likely the Soviet Tsar Bomba (left image), which remains the largest nuclear device ever detonated and the most powerful man-made explosion in history. The weapon was approximately 1,570 times more powerful than

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\(^11\)”Going Nuclear Over the Pacific.” Smithsonian. [https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2012/03/18/general/lucky-dragons-lethal-catch/#.XdWmQFdKhpY](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2012/03/18/general/lucky-dragons-lethal-catch/#.XdWmQFdKhpY).
the Hiroshima bomb, and 10 times more powerful than all conventional, or non-nuclear, bombs dropped during World War II combined. The blast destroyed all wooden buildings in a hundred-mile radius around the center of the detonation, and the heat from the explosion caused third-degree burns over 60 miles away from the test site. Windows as far away as Norway and Finland were shattered by the shockwave, and seismic sensors that typically measure earthquakes registered the shockwave as it traveled through the Earth three times before dissipating.\(^\text{12}\) The mushroom cloud was over 40 miles high, or 7 times higher than Mount Everest, and the top of the mushroom cloud was over 60 miles wide.

The destructive impact of these atmospheric tests clearly demonstrated the dangers of nuclear tests, and they provoked international concerns about health and environmental effects of continued atmospheric tests. As a reaction to the dangerous effects of nuclear testing, the United Nations and other countries would form various treaties and agreements over the course of the last sixty years.

**PREVIOUS UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTION**

Below is a selection of important international treaties and agreements, but further research may need to be done, depending on different countries that delegates are representing.

**Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) - 1963**

- **Countries**

- **Purpose**
  - The treaty aims to curb all nuclear testing, not including underground testing, and was negotiated as a reaction to a series of tests and the Cuban Missile Crisis.\(^\text{13}\)

- **Significance**
  - The LTBT laid grounds for the CTBT, establishing a precedent for future nuclear proliferation. Although it limits nuclear fallout, the LTBT treaty still did not completely stop underground testing, harming the environment.\(^\text{14}\)

- **Implications**
  - The US and the Soviet Union continued to conduct underground nuclear tests, which worsened the two countries’ political relationship. This eventually led to a secret Gentleman’s Agreement between both nations in order to avoid public debate on nuclear testing. Additionally, the United States assisted the French in 1972 in monitoring atmospheric tests in the Pacific, possibly violating the treaty, indicating issues with enforcement. Also, the treaty was not accepted as a global

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\(^{12}\) “Tsar Bomba.” Atomic Heritage Foundation. [https://www.atombomb.org/history/tsar-bomba](https://www.atombomb.org/history/tsar-bomba).


\(^{14}\) “Fact Sheet: The Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT).” Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. [https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-limited-test-ban-treaty-lttb/](https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-limited-test-ban-treaty-lttb/).
standard for nuclear conduct until 1980, 17 years after the negotiation of the treaty.¹⁵

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - 1968

- **Countries**
  - 191 states, not including India, Pakistan, and Israel. North Korea withdrew in 2003.¹⁶

- **Purpose**
  - The treaty aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and encourage the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.¹⁷

- **Significance**
  - Compared to other arms limitation and disarmament agreements, the NPT has been ratified by more countries and is considered the foundation for nuclear disarmament.
  - The treaty establishes five **Nuclear-Weapons States (NWS)** of the US, the UK, Russia, China, and France. The treaty also establishes **Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS)**. All NNWS swear off the pursuit of nuclear weapons and agree to regular inspections of their facilities by the **IAEA**.¹⁸

- **Implications**
  - The NPT is often criticized for being ineffective since North Korea withdrew from the treaty and then acquired nuclear weapons and Iran developed a nuclear program.
  - The establishment of NWS has allowed these states to use their status for diplomatic influence. For example, the United States has used nuclear guarantees to persuade its allies to join the treaty.¹⁹ By only taking into account five of nine current NWS, the NPT has a limited impact, leaving the remaining four NWS not held accountable by the nuclear disarmament clause of the treaty.
  - The NPT is less effective because it can be extended forever. The treaty is meant to work with other nuclear multilateral agreements, including the CTBT, Fissile Cut-Off Treaty, and agreements at the Middle East WMD-Free Zone conference. However, only the CTBT has been implemented, even then without **ratification** of six of nine NWS.²⁰

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¹⁷ Ibid.


Threshold Test Ban Treaty - 1974

- **Countries**
  - The US and the Soviet Union

- **Purpose**
  - The treaty bans all nuclear tests of 150 kilotons or more, which is equivalent to ten times the size of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb.

- **Significance**
  - The Threshold Ban Treaty was an effort to alleviate tensions between nuclear-armed states and address the safety and environmental impact of nuclear testing.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) - 1996

- **Countries**
  - The UN General Assembly

- **Purpose**
  - The CTBT bans all nuclear testing, including civilian and military. It also aims to address the environmental effects of nuclear testing.

- **Significance**
  - The treaty aims to prevent non-nuclear states from developing a nuclear weapon while also preventing nuclear states from advancing their weapons designs. In this way, the CTBT would reduce the likelihood of regional arms races.

- **Implications**
  - The CTBT is still not into force because of pending ratification from China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and the US. Thus, ratifying States convene every two years to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) - 2017

- **Countries**
  - The UN General Assembly. As of October 2019, 33 states have ratified the agreement, while 79 are signatories.

- **Purpose**
  - The TPNW is an attempt to achieve disarmament through the prohibition of launching nuclear weapons. It also intends to provide assistance to those affected by nuclear weapons testing and restore damaged environments.

- **Significance**

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Throughout 2019, member states have held Preparatory Committee sessions to address existing issues and to prepare for the 2020 Review Conference of the TPNW.

**Questions to Consider**

- What impact will this have on proliferation efforts, if any? How can this treaty convey greater legitimacy than the NPT?

### Health and Environmental Effects of Nuclear Testing

In addition to complicating foreign policy, nuclear testing has had dangerous effects on the environment and the people who live near where bombs went off. After World War II, the United States detonated a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb at Bikini Atoll, the most powerful explosion ever detonated by the US and equivalent to more than 1,000 Hiroshimas. As a result, the area is still uninhabitable because of extreme radiation, including plutonium levels that are between 10 and 1,000 levels of Fukushima and 10 times higher than Chernobyl. At the time, these tests were justified “for the good of mankind.”

The Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan, the site of the first mushroom cloud, has similarly left one million people in the zone of radiation impact. In a 40-year period, 456 nuclear devices were exploded, not only exposing people externally to radiation but also internally through the food grown in that area.

Fortunately, there have been multiple efforts to clean-up both Bikini Atoll and Semipalatinsk. The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits nuclear testing in the South Pacific that implicates a state’s population. At the same time, the TPNW calls for environmental protection to reduce hazards

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27 “70 Years Later, Bikini Atoll May Still Be Too Radioactive For Resettlement.” Huffington Post. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bikini-atoll-radiation-resettlement_n_5757cf4ee4b08f74f6c09fb4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bikini-atoll-radiation-resettlement_n_5757cf4ee4b08f74f6c09fb4)


at nuclear testing sites. Also, various countries have worked to clean up nuclear sites. During the end of the 20th century, U.S. troops helped clean up the atoll between 1977 and 1980. However, safety precautions were not taken and those troops suffered many health problems.

In considering solutions to preventing nuclear weapons testing, delegates must take into account the impact that nuclear testing has on people. Solutions should take into account ways to clean up nuclear waste while also protecting the health of workers and people living in affected areas.

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NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In order to achieve nuclear non-proliferation, many states have pursued the development of civilian nuclear programs. For example, during the Cold War, South Africa pursued a nuclear program as a form of deterrence. However, with the end of the Cold War, South Africa dismantled their nuclear weapons. By agreeing to the NPT, South Africa would also gain significant advantages by giving up its nuclear weapons, including friendlier relations with its neighbors. The country was also able to sign a safeguards agreement with the IAEA in exchange for its nuclear inventory.

With the collapse of Soviet Union, Ukraine acquired a large portion of the Soviet arsenal, or number of nuclear weapons they had, that were directly aimed at the United States. In response, the United States, Russia, and the UK were committed to providing security assurances for Ukraine and negotiated the Budapest Memorandum. All three countries agreed to respect the borders and sovereignty of Ukraine in return for Ukraine’s removal of the Soviet nuclear weapons and commitment to the NPT.

However, Russia’s recent actions in Ukraine have affected the Budapest Memorandum. Not only did Russia break the agreement, but its actions have badly affected future security promises, especially as tensions rise because of North Korea’s nuclear program.

There are also other countries in the Middle East how have built up their nuclear programs. Saudi Arabia has recently committed to the construction of a nuclear research sector for civilian energy use, but considering their rivalry with Iran, with a well-establish nuclear program, there are concerns that the Saudis are instead building a nuclear arsenal.

The Effectiveness of Sanctions

As suspicions of states building their own nuclear arsenal increases, many Western nations enforce sanctions to discourage nuclear development. However, these sanctions have had mixed results. In the case of Iran, the JCPOA was negotiated in 2015 to prevent uranium enrichment and lower existing sanctions to encourage economic development. But once the United States pulled out of the agreement and re-enforced economic sanctions in 2018, Iran began pursuing its nuclear program again.

Similarly, despite sanctions on North Korea to prevent further nuclear development and testing, North Korea still continues to test nuclear weapons. The sanctions restrict the amount of humanitarian aid that the UN can provide to North Korea, affecting everyday people instead of the political leaders.

**Nuclear Testing -- Case Studies**

Throughout the Cold War, there were multiple confirmed or suspected nuclear tests that violated international treaties like the Partial Test Ban Treaty. The following set of case studies provide some examples of how the international community has responded to nuclear tests.

**India’s Smiling Buddha (1974)**

On May 18, 1974, India announced that it had successfully tested a nuclear weapon, marking the first confirmed nuclear test by a country outside of the P5. The Indian government claimed that the test was for peaceful purposes only, and named it “Smiling Buddha.”

The test was carried out using plutonium made by the Canada India Research Utility Service nuclear reactor. While Canada financed and provided technical assistance for the reactor’s construction, the United States supplied the heavy water needed to operate the reactor. In a previous agreement, Canada and India had agreed that the reactor would be used for “peaceful purposes only.”

Although the government continued to claim that the test was peaceful, the international community reacted negatively to the test. In the aftermath of the nuclear test, Canada cut off all support for India’s nuclear program, including assistance for two heavy water reactors that were under construction. The United States, however, concluded that the test did not violate any agreements and approved a shipment of enriched uranium to India. The US later determined that the test violated its Atoms for Peace program, and cut off nuclear fuel exports to India.

The test also led to the creation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which seeks to ensure that peaceful

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nuclear trade doesn’t contribute to nuclear weapon proliferation by limiting the exports of nuclear technology and equipment to avoid their misuse in weapons development.\textsuperscript{43}

\textit{The Vela Incident (1979)}

In 1979, a US surveillance satellite called Vela 6911 detected signs of a nuclear explosion in the South Atlantic Ocean. The satellite was one of many launched after the adoption of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, and was used to watch for the telltale “\textbf{double flash}” of an atmospheric nuclear test. The White House was immediately notified, and suspicion quickly fell on South Africa, which was working on a nuclear program at the time, and Israel.\textsuperscript{44}

Subsequent tests, ranging from analysis of radioactive molecules to sonars, pointed to a nuclear explosion close to the water’s surface, near the South Indian ocean.\textsuperscript{45} This nuclear test was a major problem for the United States. Since South Africa’s nuclear program was not believed to be advanced enough for a test, the White House suspected Israel actually conducted the test. US laws on arms control, however, required sanctions if the President found that any state other than the P5 detonated a nuclear weapon. Confirming the Israeli test would also have meant confirming that Israel violated the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which it signed in 1964. As a result, the Carter Administration decided to cast doubt on the satellite data, arguing that if there was no nuclear explosion, the administration would not need to do anything.

In a memo to the Secretaries of State and Defense that has since been declassified, several options were mentioned, one of which being “emphasize that one cannot tell whether September 22 event was nuclear or non-nuclear.”\textsuperscript{46} Although a White House panel concluded that the satellite data was caused by a small meteoroid hitting the satellite’s panels, President Carter himself was skeptical, writing in his diary that “we have a growing belief among our scientists that the Israelis did indeed conduct a nuclear test explosion in the ocean near the southern end of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{43} “Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).” Nuclear Threat Initiative. https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/nuclear-suppliers-group-ngs/.
\end{itemize}
South Africa.”

To this day, the US government still has not confirmed that there was indeed an atmospheric nuclear test, and no blame has been assigned. Because no other country had conclusive proof, the international community never considered the issue.

**Pakistan’s Chagai I and II (1998)**

In May 1998, Pakistan conducted five simultaneous nuclear tests in response to a series of nuclear tests that India conducted earlier that month. The Chagai-I and II tests were the first time Pakistan had publicly tested a nuclear weapon, and marked the second time a country not recognized by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as a nuclear power had conducted a weapons test. In the aftermath of the test, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that India’s nuclear tests had “gravely threatened” the peace and stability of the region.

The Pakistani test came just one year after the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization had been established, which meant that member states of the CTBT Commission had access to data about the nuclear test. This test, as well as India’s earlier test, broke the ban on nuclear testing since the CTBT opened for signatures in 1996. In contrast to India, which had pledged it would not use its nuclear weapons unless another country had used it first, Pakistan stated that its “weapons are to deter aggression, whether nuclear or conventional.”

The nuclear tests drew a sharp response from the international community. President Clinton imposed sanctions on Pakistan and suspended all aid except for humanitarian assistance, and the US held intense negotiations with both India and Pakistan to persuade them to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, without any success. The UN Security Council also unanimously passed Resolution 1172, condemning both India and Pakistan’s nuclear tests and demanded that both sides refrain from further tests and to avoid further military provocations.

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Since the end of the Korean War, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), also known as North Korea, has been attempting to build its own nuclear weapons. Although North Korea had been a member of the NPT since 1985, IAEA inspections suggested that North Korea had an undeclared nuclear program, leading to North Korea’s withdrawal from the IAEA. Hoping to discourage North Korea from withdrawing from the NPT, the US signed the 1994 Agreed Framework, in which the US would provide light water reactors in exchange for a freeze on North Korean nuclear activities.51

In 2002, the Agreed Framework broke down, and North Korea withdrew from the NPT a year later. In August 2003, North Korea signaled its willingness to enter into negotiations, and the Six Party Talks, attended by China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States, began. Although North Korea agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in 2005, the steps to full disarmament were never implemented.52 Shortly thereafter, North Korea tested its first nuclear weapon on October 9, 2006. While the explosion was much smaller than the Hiroshima bomb (less than 1 kiloton versus 15 kilotons of TNT), the test was met with universal condemnation. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1718, calling the test a “clear threat to international peace and security.”53 The Security Council also established a special committee to oversee sanctions on North Korea and ensure that countries are abiding by the sanctions.54

Then North Korea tested two more nuclear tests in 2009 and 2013. After each test, the UNSC imposed more sanctions on arms imports and luxury goods, severely restricting North Korea’s ability to buy equipment or materials abroad to advance its nuclear program. In 2016, North

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Korea tested what it claims as its first hydrogen bomb, drawing strong condemnation from the international community. The US Congress passed a law that sanctioned individuals or companies that import or export goods to North Korea, and the Security Council passed Resolution 2321, requiring all member countries to inspect cargo to or from North Korea for banned materials. The resolution also banned North Korea from conducting ballistic missile launches.\footnote{55} In September 2016, North Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test, which was more powerful than its previous tests, with an explosive equivalent of about 10 kilotons of TNT. In response, China, which had previously declined to reduce its trade with North Korea, agreed to ban all imports of coal from North Korea, which hurt the DPRK’s economy.\footnote{56}

On September 3, 2017, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test with an explosive equivalent of over 100 kilotons of TNT, which was exponentially more powerful than its previous tests. Although North Korea’s claims that it was a thermonuclear weapon could not be independently verified, the much larger explosive yield is clear evidence that North Korea’s nuclear program has advanced rapidly. In its aftermath, the Security Council passed UNSCR 2375, banning textile exports and limiting oil imports.\footnote{57} In a UN General Assembly speech, President Trump threatened to “totally destroy North Korea,” and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un responded that he would make the President “pay dearly for his speech.”\footnote{58} Since then, Trump and Kim Jong-Un have held two summits to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, although the second one ended with no agreement, and nuclear talks between the two countries have remained at an impasse.

Despite strong UN sanctions, North Korea’s nuclear program continues to advance, partially because China, its closest ally, has so far not seriously committed to pushing North Korea towards denuclearization, and North Korea has repeatedly evaded UN sanctions through elaborate maritime smuggling efforts that allow it to continue selling coal and importing oil.\footnote{59}

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What security policies does your country have? How does your country protect itself from harm and danger?
2. During the Cold War, where did your country stand on nuclear issues? Did your country have nuclear weapons? Did your country oppose nuclear weapons?
3. What kinds of nuclear tests has your country conducted? If your country hasn’t conducted nuclear tests, what is the government’s stance on testing?

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\footnote{56} “A timeline of North Korea’s five nuclear tests and how the U.S. has responded.” Washington Post. \url{https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/14/a-timeline-of-north-koreas-five-nuclear-tests-and-how-the-u-s-has-responded/}.

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4. What kind of humanitarian aid or assistance does your country give? Has your country ever imposed sanctions on another country?

5. Are there any peace or nuclear non-proliferation organizations based out of your country? What do they recommend should be done to block nuclear testing?

GLOSSARY

Bikini Atoll: The small island in the Pacific Ocean that, in 1946, the United States used as a nuclear test site for hydrogen and atomic bombs

Budapest Memorandum: an agreement between the United States, Russia, and the UK to provide security assurances for Ukraine in return for Ukraine’s removal of the Soviet nuclear weapons and commitment to the NPT.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT): multilateral treaty that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments

Conventional weapons: weapons that are not weapons of mass destruction; can include armored fighting vehicles, armed helicopters, combat aircraft, artillery and warships

Cuban Missile Crisis: a time of heightened confrontation between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Cuba during the Cold War when the Soviet Union built missile sites in Cuba

Deterrence: the idea that nuclear weapons are intended to deter, or prevent, other states from attacking with their nuclear weapons, through the promise of being attacked with other country’s weapons

Detonation: an explosion, usually done on purpose

“Double flash”: a double pulse that occurs because a nuclear explosion forms a dense fireball that radiates light from its surface. As it expands, its temperature drops, and so does the radiation

Electromagnetic pulse: an intense pulse of electromagnetic radiation, especially one generated by a nuclear explosion and occurring high above the earth’s surface

Gentleman’s Agreement: an arrangement or understanding which is based upon the trust of both or all parties, rather than being legally binding

Heavy water: water in which the hydrogen in the molecules is replaced by the isotope deuterium; used in certain types of nuclear reactors, where it slows down neutrons and makes nuclear reactors more stable

Hydrogen bomb: an immensely powerful bomb whose destructive power comes from the rapid release of energy during the nuclear fusion of isotopes of hydrogen (deuterium and tritium), using an atom bomb as a trigger.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA): an agreement between the US, European Countries, and Iran in which Iran agreed to roll back parts of its nuclear program in exchange for relief from some sanctions.

Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT): first signed in 1963 by the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) , and the United Kingdom; prohibits the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, underwater, or in space
Manhattan Project: research and development undertaking during World War II that produced the first nuclear weapons; led by the United States with the support of the United Kingdom and Canada

Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS): countries that are not allowed to receive nuclear weapons from any other country, and are not allowed to manufacture or acquire them

Non-proliferation: the prevention of an increase or spread of something, especially the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): entered into force in 1970, an international treaty meant to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology

Nuclear reactor: an structure in which nuclear material can undergo a controlled, self-sustaining reaction with the consequent release of energy; used to create energy in an nuclear power plant

Nuclear Weapons States (NWS): the five states – China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States – officially recognized as possessing nuclear weapons by the NPT

P5: refers to the UN Security Council's five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States

Ratification: the action of signing or giving formal consent to a treaty, contract, or agreement, making it officially valid

Sanctions: a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule; a common policy that countries can use to discourage other countries from nuclear weapons testing

Semipalatinsk-21: the primary testing venue for the Soviet Union’s nuclear weapons

Shockwave: a sharp change of pressure, caused by explosion moving faster than sound

Six Party Talks: talks between countries that aimed to find a peaceful resolution to the security concerns as a result of the North Korean nuclear weapons program

Soviet Tsar Bomba: Western name for the Soviet hydrogen bomb detonated in 1961; the largest nuclear device ever detonated and the most powerful man-made explosion in history

Thermonuclear weapon: a nuclear weapon with greater destructive power than first-generation atomic bombs

Threshold Test Ban Treaty: treaty signed in July 1974 by the United States and Soviet Union; establishes a nuclear “threshold” by prohibiting nuclear tests of devices greater than 150 kilotons after 1976

Treaty of Rarotonga: treaties that formalized a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the South Pacific; bans the use, testing, and possession of nuclear weapons within the borders of the zone

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW): the first legally binding international agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of their total elimination

Trinity Test: the first detonation of a nuclear device; occurred in 1945
GLOBAL CLASSROOMS DC POSITION PAPER OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

What is a Position Paper?
A position paper is a short document that outlines a country’s opinion on an issue. The paper includes a short summary of what the issue or problem is, explains why the country is interested in the issue, and communicates the country’s stance on what should be done to address the issue. A position paper is written as if you were the actual representative of the country stating its position. Your personal opinions on the issue should not be included. A position paper is not a summary of your country’s GDP, government, economy, languages, etc. unless directly relevant to the issue. Only one position paper is written per country, per grade school committee; if there are 2 or 3 delegates representing the same country on a committee, they should write the paper together.

Why write a Position Paper?
Writing a position paper will help you organize why an issue matters to your country and what your country wants done on the issue. The first thing you will likely do in committee is present an opening speech about your country’s position. You should be able to pull portions of a well written position paper into an introductory speech on your country’s perspective. Also, your delegation is not eligible to win best / outstanding delegation without the submission of a position paper. There are separate awards given for best position paper.

How to Write a Position Paper
(1) Research the Issue. The questions you want to answer are:
   1. How does this issue affect your country?
   2. How does this issue affect your country’s neighbors or allies?
   3. Is this a global problem that impacts everyone?
   4. What would your country like to see done on this issue?
   5. Are there countries or groups of people who will be particularly sensitive to addressing this issue?
   6. Are there any conventions or resolutions on the topics that your country has signed or ratified?
   7. What are UN actions on the issue? Has your country supported or opposed these actions?
   8. Keep in Mind: What a country says, and what it actually believes should be done may be different. Also, some countries may believe that no action should be taken on an issue. They may disagree with how others feel or may not want international involvement. It is okay if your position is that the international community should do nothing, but you will need to explain why.

(2) Brainstorm Specific Actions. Come up with 3-4 specific things that can be done to reach the outcome your country desires. For example: “The United States believes we should send a peacekeeping mission to monitor human rights abuses in Syria and encourage talks between both sides.” You will present these ideas in committee as possible solutions to the problem and attempt to pass a resolution which includes these actions.

(3) Outline Your Paper. Make an outline of what points you want to cover in your paper and the order in which you would like to address them. Remember a good paper should briefly explain the problem, explain why your country cares about the issue, and inform others what your country should like to see done. If you know other countries favor a solution that you will disagree with, make sure to include why your country disagrees.

(4) Write your Paper. Position papers should be no more than one page long and be written from the perspective of the country you are representing. Rather than being a report on the topic, a position
paper should explain what your country wants to see done to address the issue. Start by giving a brief summary of the issue and how it impacts your country. Then explain the specific actions you would like to see taken. Close by summarizing your country’s overall position. Proper grammar and spelling are a must!

**Award Criteria and Eligibility**

- One position paper award will be given out per committee.
- The ideal position paper will have a clearly defined and summarized topic with your country’s position clearly outlined. Points are also awarded for organization, style and correct grammar.
- GCDC Staff will be fact checking position papers, so be sure to include the most up to date information and a works cited (or list of all the sources you use).
  - Proper source citation: if an idea or quote came from another source, you must provide a footnote / citation.
- Papers will be disqualified if the conference staff has discovered that students did not write their own papers or that content has been plagiarized.
- Make sure your position paper must have the required header below! Do not create any additional title pages - points will be deducted for improper format.
- Formatting Requirements: 500 words minimum, 1,500 words maximum. Times New Roman font, 12-point size
- All position papers must be sent to gcdc@unanca.org by March 25, 2020 at 11:59 PM EST.

**REQUIRED POSITION PAPER HEADER**

| Committee: | Examples: | UN Environment Programme (UNEP) |
| Topic: | Climate Change |
| Country: | The United States of America |
| Delegate Name(s) and Grades: | Bob Smith and Jane Doe (gr. 7) |
| School (Teacher/Coach): | Madison High School (Mr. Jones) |

The United States of America believes …