

Forum	General Assembly 1
Issue	Measures to protect weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists and paramilitary organizations.
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Introduction

The term “weapons of mass destruction” (WMD) has been stated since at least 1937; it was previously interpreted as “massed formations of bomber aircraft” due to the formidable power to destroy the city and kill people during World War II. They were the most destructive and lethal weapons developed by humans; that’s why the word was stated as “weapons of mass destruction.”

However, WMDs falling into the hands of terrorists and paramilitary organizations was still a significant global safety crisis. WMD involves nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, and biological weapons. It may lead to a catastrophic domino effect if WMDs were acquired by a non-state actor and country security could not be guaranteed. Even the international frameworks, for example, the “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)” and “United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540),” do exist but lack constraining force on countries in conflict zones, the improvement in technology, and geopolitical rivalries.

Definition of Key Terms

Paramilitary organizations

Paramilitary organizations: An organization in the armed forces of a state or political group that undertakes mainly auxiliary military tasks and participates in low-intensity combat operations when necessary; they use militarized hierarchies and tactics but are not the official armed forces of the state, for example, Hezbollah, the Wagner Group, Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale (MVSN), and the Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia (FARC).

Terrorist organizations

Terrorist organizations: Non-state entities that achieve ideological or political goals through violence and intimidation, such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, that form a group of antisocial and anti-human people.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

Mutually Assured Destruction: The “balance of terror” is the idea that if one of the opposing sides fully uses nuclear weapons, both sides will be destroyed. The expected result is an immediate escalation to the point where both sides promise destruction; this kind of thinking and strategy can lead to a tense but stable peace between the two sides.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

It is an international organization for scientific and technical cooperation in the field of atomic energy, founded in 1957 and headquartered in Vienna, Austria. The purpose of the IAEA is to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to prohibit its use for military purposes, including nuclear weapons. Its main role involves safety standards and regulation of nuclear facilities, nuclear material control, etc.

Background

Historical Evolution of WMD and Proliferation

The proliferation of WMDs has been a defining challenge of modern international security. Its destructive potential was first recognized globally during World War II, as Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed with atomic bombs in 1945; this event marked the beginning of the nuclear age. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union collectively possessed about 64099 nuclear warheads in 1986, which resulted in an unbalanced power buildup on the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), enacted in 1968, aims to prevent nuclear weapons from spreading out by limiting the power to possess them to five states, which are the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom; ensuring non-nuclear states pledge to forgo nuclear development; and in exchange for peace. This framework emerged from Cold War geopolitics: the P5, as victors of World War II and early nuclear developers, aimed to monopolize nuclear capabilities to maintain strategic dominance.

NPT's legitimacy is severely weakened

The NPT is severely weakened due to its selective application and discriminatory policy. This hierarchy emerged from Cold War geopolitics in that the "P5" aimed to monopolize nuclear capabilities as a tool of strategic dominance but also under legal control.

Emerging Nuclear Powers

Emerging nuclear powers that were un-signed to this treatment, such as India, Pakistan, and North Korea, all developed on the nucleus after 1968. India and Pakistan consider the NPT discriminatory and keep developing nuclear weapons due to their long-standing antagonistic situation; similarly, North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003, citing U.S. hostility and the need for a "nuclear deterrent" against regime change.

Collapse of the Soviet Union

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, successor states such as Kazakhstan left behind large and poorly protected nuclear stockpiles. For example, the Semipalatinsk test site is one of the primary locations for Soviet above- and below-ground nuclear testing that was the site of 456 known nuclear weapons tests till 1991, which means it stored lots of leftover nuclear weapons that hadn't been cleaned up due to a lack of funding for secure storage. Corruption and economic hardship have led to several uranium smuggling cases and the loss of nuclear material. In addition, a system called the "Nuclear proliferation network" is run by Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, better known as A.Q. Khan, that supplied Libya and Iran.

Failure of NPT

NPT relies on voluntary compliance and lacks mandatory penalties for non-compliance, and the IAEA does not have the power to enforce the implementation of NPT and has no right to check on those military installations; for example, while the P5 modernized their arsenals, non-nuclear states perceived this as hypocrisy. Although the Security Council has declared that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is an issue affecting the maintenance of peace and international security, in reality, the Council often finds it difficult to address specific non-compliance issues. Security Council members, especially permanent members, seem to tend to support certain countries and refuse to address their non-compliance with obligations.

Challenges

The rise of non-state actors caused a huge challenge, such as terrorist organizations, like ISIS, getting chemical weapons during the Syrian Civil War (2014–2017) that caused hundreds of casualties by capturing sulfur mustard gas stockpiles from Syrian

government facilities to attack normal citizens and their enemy power. These kinds of organizations can't be directly controlled by the state and often acquire weapons and technology through illicit channels and create instability in conflict areas.

Another kind of non-state actor is the paramilitary; they are often involved in violent activities, including kidnappings, murders, and terrorist attacks. The paramilitary are usually unconstrained by the law, and their activities often violate the law and disrupt social order. The frequent use of force and violence by these groups without legal authorization poses a serious threat to public security, and it will also become a great threat if they get the chance to touch WMDs

Major Stakeholders

United States (U.S.)

The United States is a leading advocate for global non-proliferation efforts, prioritizing the prevention of WMD acquisition by non-state actors through both multilateral frameworks and unilateral measures. The U.S. advocates for executing the "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)" and other non-proliferation treatments. In addition, the U.S. also leads the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), formed by 105 nations; however, some people believe that the PSI is not comprehensive enough since it ignores areas such as smuggling routes, etc. Furthermore, the U.S. also enforces stringent sanctions against states like Iran and North Korea to curb nuclear proliferation and the missile threat.

Russian Federation (U.N)

Russia indirectly supports the action of preventing the proliferation of WMDs, but at the same time, it also supports the action of paramilitary groups, such as the Wagner Group, and it has already been proved by the UN that they are smuggling radioactive materials in exchange for oil that enhances the spread of WMDs.

Islamic State (ISIS)

As a terrorist organization, its core goal is to establish an extremist religious regime; getting WMDs could enhance their ability to cause panic and the ability to cause terrorist attacks that were directly against the international non-proliferation regime.

Wagner Group

The aim was to achieve a political target, and it was under the control of laws, so it was a serious threat to social stability. The Wagner Group stands in the name of anti-terrorism” control of uranium, uranium ore smuggled to Iran and other countries in exchange for missile technology.

Timeline

Date	Description of Event
Month Day, Year	
August 6 th – 9 th , 1945	The U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which mark the use of the first nuclear weapon and open a whole new section.
July, 1968	The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opens for signature, establishing an international framework to limit nuclear weapons, which are involved in WMD proliferation.
April 28 th , 1991	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 urges all member states to stop the proliferation of WMDs and enhance the security of materials.
December 25 th , 1991	The Soviet Union collapsed, and some countries have a lack of security on WMD stockpiles, especially Kazakhstan and Ukraine. That means it turns more likely for those materials to fall into non-state actors' hands.
March, 2014	Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Expanded to Air and Land Interdictions, led by the U.S. with 105 nations, to strengthen WMD-related transportation monitoring

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540) is the first time that the international community has required all member states to take systematic measures to prevent non-state actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction in a legally binding form, and as of 2023, more than 90% of UN member states have submitted implementation reports. However, this resolution is not that comprehensive since it is hard to effectively monitor WMD materials in conflict areas such as Syria.

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is led by the U.S. countering proliferation through joint interdiction of illicit WMD shipments by land, sea, and air; there are already 105 nations joined. Deploying drones to monitor shipping routes in real-time and stop smuggling, could effectively impact the problem; however, PSI focuses on interception by sea but lacks monitoring on land, which may not effectively control the smuggling actions.

Possible Solutions

To deal with this, various domains could be thought of, such as but not limited to:

First of all, enhance the monitoring system to protect human rights; for example, dispatch UN human rights observers to conflict zones to prevent the situation that the UN could not control and monitor the conflict zones WMDs security.

Secondly, implement disarmament initiatives by embargoing verifiable arms and supporting community-led weapons surrender schemes. This could be checked by creating a third-party verification coalition: Non-governmental organizations audit the weapons destruction process and make video evidence publicly available.

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