**Should Nuclear Weapons be ABOLISHed?**

After the League of Nations failed to prevent World War II (1939–1945), there was widespread recognition that humankind could not afford a third world war. Therefore, the United Nations was established to replace the flawed League of Nations in 1945 in order to maintain international peace and promote cooperation in solving international economic, social, and humanitarian problems. However, the UN has been struggling to resolve an issue that could plunge our world into WWIII- nuclear weapons. A 2007 UN Convention Treaty on Nuclear Weapons is still being negotiated. **Should nuclear weapons be abolished for all countries forever, or should we share the technology with all? Would nuclear proliferation cause a global conflict? Can you save our world from the potential threat of WWIII?**
(The abolishment of nuclear weapons would constitute the complete disarmament of all current nuclear weapons and material made specifically for their development or production.)

**Background:**Nuclear weapons first dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, forever changed the face of war, and the half-century of Cold War which followed was dominated, above all, by the threat of nuclear destruction. Both superpowers raced to produce a greater arsenal than their opponents, leading to the point where they had the ability to destroy the world several times over. Added to the direct destructive power of the weapons was the consensus growing among scientists from 1970s onwards that a major war would plunge the world into a ‘nuclear winter’, destroying life even in places that had escaped attack. This led to the concept of ‘Mutually Assured Destruction’, a stalemate in which both sides knew that the use of their weapons would lead to their own destruction as well as their enemies.

The global situation has, however, changed substantially since the end of the Cold War. Nuclear Weapons have ceased to dominate world politics; however, the fear of proliferation – the spread of weapons of mass destruction to many more countries – is also on the rise. India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea are all now believed to be nuclear powers, and many fear that Iran will soon join them. Proponents focus on the total abolition of the world’s nuclear arsenals as a realistic and necessary goal to aim for. It will take time, as President Obama has recently argued “I'm not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly –- perhaps not in my lifetime.” The opposition is more pragmatic, not defending the weapons per se but insisting that they remain a necessary means to a peaceful end.

President Obama has moved the idea of nuclear disarmament up the international agenda. In Prague in 2009 he stated “So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” Obama followed up with a Nuclear Security Summit which sought to safeguard nuclear materials but did not much advance any attempt to abolish nuclear weapons. Is abolishing nuclear weapons a realistic goal? Will the countries who have this technology eliminate their stockpiles? Will the countries that are developing this technology halt their efforts?

**To answer these questions we will attempt to create a new nuclear weapons convention. A nuclear weapons convention is a proposed international treaty that would prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of**[**nuclear weapons**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons)**, as well as provide for their elimination.**

**As a class we will attempt to draft a new Nuclear Weapons Convention. However, you will be split into teams that represent all countries that have or are developing nuclear technology.

This is not just a regular debate, although many arguments for and against the elimination of nuclear weapons will be part of our dialogue. As a team you must represent your country as realistically as possible, but also be willing to negotiate and compromise to draft a new NWC and save our planet from WWIII.**

**Grading: In this conference, you will get points for representing your country and participating in the dialogue and drafting of the treaty (40 test points). Your teammates will also be grading your participation.

To start our Conference, each country must give a statement describing their current domestic and foreign policy concerns, nuclear capabilities, opinion on abolition vs. proliferation, and plan for the treaty.**

[POINTS FOR](http://idebate.org/debatabase/debates/politics/house-would-abolish-nuclear-weapons)

#### -States should not possess such destructive, cataclysmic weapons

#### -The purported efficacy of nuclear deterrence drives nuclear proliferation and therefore increases the risk of nuclear weapons being utilized

#### -Risk of nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands

#### -Both the use and threat of nuclear weapons are illegal

#### -Nuclear weapons can be abolished through the co-operation of nuclear powers and the establishment of an independent verification system

POINTS AGAINST

#### Nuclear weapons are required for deterrence

#### Abolishment is an unrealistic goal

#### Abolishment would be counter-productive and only lead to greater barbarity in warfare

**Helpful Websites and Articles:**
<http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2013/03/world/nuclear-weapon-states/>
<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/>
<http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/06/20/10-reaons-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons/>
<http://www.ctbto.org/>
<http://nonukes.org/cd18_sixarg.htm>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/weekinreview/10taubman.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2010/05/04-global-zero-ohanlon>
<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/07/13/elias.nuclear.weapons/index.html?iref=allsearch>
<http://www.globalzero.org/get-the-facts>