Global Nuclear Disarmament: Putting Fear back in its Holster

Nuclear Arms Proliferation

Because of a perceived threat, nuclear weaponry is developed.

These weapons provide immediate power and status, and threaten territorial and global enemies.

Changing Times, Changing Minds

The internet connects cultures worldwide, creating a global village that reveals our reliance on one another and our planet.

Movies begin to show other perspectives, and depict the “what-if’s” of nuclear fallout.

Technological advancements, such as space travel, begin to alter our perception of Earth and its inhabitants. Images such as Apollo 8’s Earthrise and Apollo 17’s Blue Marble influence this.

If we disarm, what will protect us? (1) (4)

If we disarm, won’t we be vulnerable?

While some say that disarmament is impossible due to territorial threats to vulnerable states, policies that include global collaboration for security and safety encourage disarmament while decreasing nuclear threat.

How can states disarm safely?

States in positions of territorial threats would engage in treaties with larger, more powerful countries. Global accountability, active pro-disarmament voices and policies and setting peaceful examples, such as signing the new START and NPT, all encourage disarmament and discourage proliferation.

How can we stay “nuke-free”?

Treaties and policies that demand rigorous checks on nuclear states, regulation of nuclear materials, surprise inspections, and powerful alliances would serve as deterrents for proliferating, selling, manufacturing, or harboring nuclear weapons.

What is being done? (6)

Many global policies and treaties reflect the desire of the world to engage in a disarmament movement.

The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) was signed by Russia and the USA in 2011.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been ratified by 159 states, and 24 more have signed it.

The Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) is in negotiations—it would prohibit the production of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium.

The UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) is supported by 65 nations.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has 189 state signatures.

Weighing the Pros and Cons

Should we focus on complete disarmament, or crisis stability?

Human Cost: Nuclear weapons, while promising safety, threaten utter destruction. The effects of nuclear fallout on humans range from immediate vaporization to fatal burns; from radiation resulting in cancer and infertility to reproductive malformations. Predominantly, the result is death, by varying degrees of time.

Environmental Cost: If only 0.03% of the world’s nuclear weapons were used, the ozone would be depleted by 40-70% in certain areas. Crops would take up to a decade to grow after the fallout, and the atmosphere would be so polluted that many areas would be uninhabitable by any life form.

Global Implications: The detonation of nuclear weapons—for testing or warfare, creates a world of mistrust, fear, and destruction. Warhead deployment by one state threatens the entire planet, and calls into question the role of such nations in protecting the only place we have to live, and therefore, the life of everyone sharing it.

These weapons have a dramatic and devastatingly permanent effect on our planet—from it’s inhabitants to it’s ecosystem, the power to utterly destroy has never been more apparent than it is during nuclear fallout. Understanding the myriad reasons that methodical disarmament is necessary is the first step to successfully and completely eliminating these massively destructive weapons.

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(All photos courtesy of Google Images.)

References


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