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HIS MUN 2025
BACKGROUND GUIDE
DISEC

HISMUN'25

Letter from Executive Board

It is with immense honour and great pride that we welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee at HISMUN 2025. As your Executive Board, we are devoted to providing you with a smooth, yet exciting two days of debate, forming connections and writing resolutions.

Our agenda, 'Revisiting the Role of Nuclear Weapons in Global Security: Confronting Renewed Arms Races, Emerging Nuclear Powers, and the Erosion of Global Non-Proliferation Frameworks, ' could not be more relevant in today's geopolitical climate. With renewed arms races, emerging nuclear powers, and the weakening of long-standing treaties, the global balance of power is being redefined. Through this committee, delegates will have the opportunity to question whether nuclear weapons remain instruments of deterrence or ticking time bombs in the pursuit of peace. Bear in mind that the DISEC is a committee concerned with the maintenance of disarmament, international peace and security, it is a recommendatory body. That being said, the Executive Board will smile upon an extensive parley involving the relevant principles of international law, and a solution-oriented approach towards the agenda.

This committee will examine the contemporary role of nuclear weapons in global security with a focus on three dimensions:
Renewed Arms Races: resurgence of nuclear modernization programs by major powers.
Emerging Nuclear Powers: proliferation concerns involving states like Iran and DPRK.
Erosion of Non-Proliferation Frameworks: weakening of treaties like the NPT and CTBT
Other issues like peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear terrorism, or space-based weapons will only be discussed if they directly relate to these three dimensions.

It is of utmost importance to note that this background guide only serves as a headstart to your research and every delegate is expected to do his/her own research and bring strong and valid arguments to the table. Last but not least, a committee is only as good as its delegates and we believe that each and every one of you has the potential to excel and lead, first-timer or not. We encourage each and every one of you to speak and participate as it would give us great joy to know that each delegate walked away from our committee with more knowledge than he or she walked in with.

Regards,
Srihitha Gorrepati, Chairperson
Ishaan Mathew, Co-Chairperson
Anand S Menon, Moderator

An Overview of DISEC

Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) stands as a pivotal platform within the United Nations General Assembly, dedicated to addressing global security challenges and actively working towards disarmament. It was the first Main Committee formed under the United Nations Charter which was signed in 1945 by 50 nations. The DISEC gave milestone documents such as the Resolution 1 (I) and Resolution 1378 (XIV).

The significance of DISEC lies in its ability to tackle and find solutions to some of the most pressing security concerns facing our world today. From nuclear proliferation, cybersecurity to the illicit arms trade, DISEC serves as a catalyst for international cooperation, fostering dialogue, and promoting effective policies that seek to enhance peace and security.

Moreover, DISEC's international role is paramount. In an increasingly interconnected World security challenges transcend borders and require collective action. Through its deliberations, the committee encourages cooperation, builds trust among nations, and fosters an environment of mutual respect.

Mandate

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), also known as the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, is mandated to address issues related to international peace and security. It focuses on disarmament, arms regulation, and the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, while also promoting the reduction of conventional arms and confidence-building measures among nations. DISEC's powers are primarily recommendatory, meaning it can debate, draft, and pass resolutions but cannot enforce them. Its recommendations are forwarded to the General Assembly or the Security Council for further consideration. Although it lacks the authority to impose sanctions or compel compliance, DISEC plays a crucial diplomatic role in shaping global security norms and fostering cooperation to maintain international peace and stability.

Introduction to the Agenda

Currently, there are nine states publicly known to possess nuclear weapons: Russia, the USA, China, France, the UK, Pakistan, India, Israel, and North Korea, collectively holding an estimated 12,121 nuclear warheads. The persistence of such vast arsenals, combined with increasing geopolitical tensions, poses a serious threat to global peace and stability. DISEC aims to revisit and reassess the role of nuclear weapons in maintaining or undermining global security, working with both nuclear and non-nuclear states to address the risks associated with their possession.

Throughout history, instances such as the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict have highlighted how close the world has come to nuclear confrontation. Today, the erosion of major arms control agreements like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), along with the rise of new nuclear technologies and emerging powers, has reignited fears of a renewed arms race.
Additionally, the two states with the largest nuclear arsenals, the United States and Russia, withdrew from some of their disarmament commitments in recent years, and there are currently no nuclear disarmament negotiations in progress.

This agenda invites delegates to critically evaluate whether the existence of nuclear weapons acts as a deterrent or a destabilizing force. Furthermore, the committee will explore frameworks to prevent nuclear proliferation both to new states and to non-state actors and strengthen global mechanisms for disarmament and transparency. Ultimately, DISEC seeks collaborative, realistic, and multilateral approaches to ensure collective security in an increasingly uncertain world.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in force since 1970, legally defines a Nuclear-Weapon State (NWS) as a state that "manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967." This definition officially recognizes only five states: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These five states, which are also the permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5), maintain a unique legal status under the NPT, committing to pursue disarmament while having a monopoly on nuclear weapons within the treaty. Conversely, India, Israel, Pakistan, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) possess nuclear weapons but are considered to be outside the NPT regime (or, in the case of the DPRK, have withdrawn from it). These states are often referred to as non-NPT nuclear-armed states.

Historical Background

The Dawn of the Nuclear Age (1945–1949)

U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th 1945 and August 9th 1945, respectively, marked the first and only time nuclear weapons were used in a conflict. The bombings initially killed 250,000 people but the number of deaths climbed due to exposure to radiation. Following this, The U.S held a monopoly over nuclear weapons. However, in 1949, The Soviet Union successfully conducted its first ever nuclear test, ending The U.S's monopoly and beginning the Cold War. Both Nations raced to expand and enhance their nuclear arsenal.

The United Kingdom and France Nuclear Powers (1952-1960)

The United Kingdom successfully tests its first atomic bomb, becoming the third nuclear power and solidifies its role as a nuclear ally of NATO. France conducts its first nuclear test, codenamed "Gerboise Bleue," in the Algerian desert. It becomes the fourth nuclear-armed nation, motivated by a desire for strategic independence from both the U.S. and U.S.S.R.

The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)

In October 1962, the world faced its most dangerous moment during the Cuban Missile Crisis, a 13-day confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. U.S. spy planes discovered Soviet nuclear missiles being installed in Cuba, just 90 miles from U.S. soil. In response the U.S. declared a naval blockade of Cuba. For almost 2 weeks the world stood on the brink of nuclear war. Eventually a deal was reached-The Soviet Union agreed to remove its missiles and the U.S. removed its missiles from Turkey and promised not to invade Cuba.

China Becomes a Nuclear Power (1964)

The People Democratic Republic of China conducts its first nuclear test in Lop Nur, becoming the fifth nuclear armed country. Shifting the balance of global power and marking its ambition to become the next global super power.

India's First Nuclear Test (1974)

India successfully conducts its first nuclear test, code named "Smiling Buddha", and becoming the first country outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

India and Pakistan's Nuclear Tests (1998)
Both India and Pakistan conducted multiple nuclear tests in May 1998, openly declaring themselves nuclear-armed states and intensifying their regional rivalry, causing widespread international concern.

North Korea's First Nuclear Test (2003-2006)
North Korea conducts its first underground nuclear test, becoming the world's ninth nuclear power and drawing widespread international condemnation.

Relevant treaties and conventions

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT, 1968):
It was built the foundation for efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament but now faces growing challenges. It intends to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and further the goal of achieving international security and complete nuclear disarmament. Today, a total of 191 Member States have joined the treaty, which prohibits nuclear-weapon States parties from transferring such weapons and non-nuclear-weapon States parties from manufacturing or acquiring them. Its provisions are reviewed in five-year intervals, and compliance is verified through a safeguarding system under the responsibility of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, the effective implementation of NPT is challenged by increasing nationalism, the spread of nuclear technology, and the non-participation of several nuclear-weapon states.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT, 1996):
This treaty prohibits all nuclear testing. Since it was concluded, CTBT has been ratified by 178 Member States but has not yet entered into force. For the treaty to come into effect, all of the 44 Member States that possessed nuclear power or research reactors at the time of the adoption of the treaty and are listed in Annex 2 of the treaty have to ratify it. However, nine of them have not yet done so. China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Russia, and the United States have signed this treaty but not ratified it. India, Pakistan and North Korea are the only three states that have not signed the treaty at all. The strengths of this treaty lie in its function as a Global monitoring network, however its weakness prevails in the lack of enforcement.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW, 2017):
The adoption of this treaty made considerable contributions to the fulfillment of NPT's provision to stipulate negotiations on a treaty on general and complete nuclear disarmament. It is the most recent international treaty in this field and prohibits the use, possession, deployment, production, testing, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

But despite the success of adopting such a far-reaching treaty, its potential impact on the elimination of nuclear weapons is limited since none of the current nuclear-weapon states have signed the treaty. Moreover, states whose security is guaranteed by nuclear powers are reluctant to sign TPNW because doing so would prevent them from stationing nuclear weapons of their allies on their territory.

Strategic Arms Reduction Talks & Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties:
Russia and the United States, possessing the world's largest nuclear arsenals, have historically engaged in bilateral negotiations to control and reduce their stockpiles. Key agreements include the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), comprising SALT I (1969) and SALT II (1979), which set initial limits on strategic offensive weapons. These were followed by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START), including START I (1991), START II (1993), and New START (2010), which introduced binding limits on deployed warheads and verification mechanisms. These treaties played a crucial role in maintaining strategic stability and reducing the risk of nuclear confrontation. However, the ongoing geopolitical tensions have repeatedly challenged arms control, as seen in Russia's suspension of participation from New START in 2023.

Regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (NWFZs):
On a regional level, a total of over 100 Member States have signed agreements and joined Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZ) in Latin America and the Caribbean, South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central Asia.T hey were established in response to shared security concerns by legally binding agreements that prohibit the acquisition, possession, testing, and use of nuclear weapons, and created systems of verification and control to guarantee compliance. Treaties include: Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967): Latin America and the Caribbean, Treaty of Rarotonga (1985): South Pacific, Treaty of Bangkok (1995): Southeast Asia, Treaty of Pelindaba (1996): Africa, Treaty of Semipalatinsk (2006): Central Asia. The proposed Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (MENWFZ) remains a major unresolved issue, especially given Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal and Iran's nuclear program. However, due to ongoing geopolitical rivalries, security concerns, and the political influence from global nuclear powers in the region, the establishment of NWFZ or a similar arrangement appears unlikely.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a crucial role in this agenda by verifying states' compliance with non-proliferation obligations, ensuring that nuclear materials are not diverted for weapons purposes, and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology under international safeguards.

Current State of Affairs

Nuclear weapons, once a symbol of deterrence and stability, are increasingly viewed as catalysts of insecurity today. Nearly eight decades after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear arsenals remain key to global security. As the post-Cold War optimism for disarmament fades, NNWS (Non-Nuclear Weapon States) yearn to develop nuclear power, and NWS modernise their arsenal.

As of 2025, the Russian Federation and the United States of America possess the world's largest and second largest nuclear arsenal, together making up over (90% of the world's nuclear weapons). While the global stockpile hasn't increased dramatically, military postures strain alliances and global stability. Over 2100 have been placed on high alert, ready to be launched at any given moment.

The collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty and the uncertainty to the new START treaty have reignited fears of the unlawful usage of nuclear weapons. China's developed arsenal have introduced hypersonic missiles with their quickly developing nuclear missiles, leading to a new tri-polar aspect to deterrence. Nuclear doctrines are shifting toward flexible, tactical, or low-yield weapons. This increases the risk of escalation in conventional conflicts.

One of the most threatening situations to nuclear concern in widespread media is the Russo-Ukrainian war. Russia's invasion of Ukraine raises concerns of NATO involvement. The escalating situation causes some to wonder if this war might be the tipping point which forces Russia to use nuclear power. While Ukraine doesn't possess a developed arsenal, involvement of NATO countries like the UK and the USA might lead to an all out nuclear war.

North Korea (DPRK) has declared itself a nuclear state (NWS) by launching approximately over 90 ballistic missile tests in the year of 2022. North Korea's development has been a concern for South Korea in particular as one wrong action could kill millions. Another concerning development is in the middle east, where the Iran Nuclear Deal threatens the disarmament protocols put in place decades ago. Iran has made strides in developing nuclear goods, now coming closer than ever to producing its first nuclear weapon. The United States has attempted to mediate this with no success, and as the Persian Gulf Crisis continues to threaten international relations, calls have been made to cease the development of nuclear goods in the middle east altogether.

States like South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Japan show doubts about the global non-proliferation regime's credibility. Meanwhile, international treaties and legal norms like the NPT, CTBT, and TPNW(2017) are failing to reach standards. The failure of the 2022 NPT Review Conference revealed deep divisions between disarmament and deterrence forces. Nuclear-weapon-free regions exist (Latin America, Africa, South-East Asia), but lack global support.

In the age of nuclear technology, quantum computing, cyber vulnerabilities, and AI in command systems, accidental or unauthorised risks are a great concern. Hypersonic delivery systems and dual-use technologies make it harder to tell the difference between conventional and nuclear weapons. This makes it more likely that people will make mistakes in a crisis.

The resurgence of arms races among major powers, the ambitions of emerging nuclear states, and the weakening of key non-proliferation frameworks like the NPT and CTBT highlight an urgent need for international cooperation. As prevention doctrines blur and treaty commitments falter, the international community must reassess whether nuclear weapons continue to ensure stability or instead endanger collective security. Through this agenda, DISEC aims to confront these challenges by revisiting global disarmament commitments and strengthening mechanisms that prevent further proliferation.

Stances of Parties

Russia

Russia is the country with the most nuclear weapons in its arsenal. With 5,459 known warheads, its stance on Nuclear Proliferation is one of the most important. When it was the Soviet Union, Russia stood as a massive power ready to attack at any time, and in the present, there are threats of large scale nuclear attacks on neighbouring countries such as Ukraine. The current president Vladimir Putin was an intelligence officer during the Cold War, and his current actions imply a desire to return Russia back to its "former glory", even at the cost of heightened nuclear tensions.

USA

The United States is second only to Russia in terms of nuclear weapons with 5,177, and has more which are at high alert. Although historically known for nuclear tensions with Russia, the United States has been steadily decreasing their nuclear arsenal, and has been adamant on such following the Cold War. Subsequently, their approach to nuclear proliferation is one of mounting uncertainty, especially as a country dealing with a rapidly militarising nuclear world. As such, the United States of America will be particularly disapproving of nuclear aggression, especially as it is unprepared for large-scale nuclear war.

China

At an estimated 600 nuclear warheads, China has intentions to rapidly increase its nuclear capability in the interest of self-preservation and national security. Many state officials believe that China seeks to break the nuclear superiority that is held by the United States by maintaining good relations with Russia, as well as introducing new technologies to its own arsenal. President Xi Jinping aims for "national rejuvenation", which may be achieved through military means such as increasing weapon stores, further exacerbating nuclear proliferation.

France

The current French President has a positive view of nuclear power. Its technological advancements in terms of nuclear energy and weaponry development have been a source of national pride for the government. With roughly 290 nuclear weapons, France is yet another state with a significant stake in nuclear proliferation. President Emmanuel Macron states that "Without civilian nuclear energy there is no military use of this technology – and without military use there is no civilian nuclear energy', which indicates a fair degree of pushback for complete demilitarisation.

UK

The United Kingdom is also recognised as a nuclear state, with roughly 225 nuclear warheads in its stockpile. Although the state had previously agreed to reduce 65% of its arsenal, the commitment has been walked back due to increasing security concerns. Information on the current stockpile – both deployed and inactive – has been made unavailable. Overall, the United Kingdom has shown decreasing commitment in terms of mitigating nuclear proliferation, and adopts a more conservative stance in terms of demilitarisation, due to a lack of assurance of its security.

Pakistan

Pakistan has over 160 nuclear weapons, and has been in increasing internal conflict in recent years. A concerning terrorist presence alongside general government instability has endangered Pakistan and its allies, as well as all other neighbouring countries. Over time, more and more countries have grown distrustful of Pakistan militarily, forcing the state to make promises which stretch the limits of its political capability.

India

India has kept relatively quiet regarding its nuclear weapons arsenal. Regardless, It is considered another nuclear state with well over 100 weapons, and plenty of material to produce more. Continued nuclear research and test firing in neighbouring countries has increased tensions in South Asia, especially considering its historically negative relations with countries like Pakistan.

Israel

Israel is thought to possess between 70 and 400 nuclear warheads. Israel is a secretive state which has historically withheld information from the United Nations and its neighbouring countries. The war with Palestine has caused massive international uproar and disapproval, but Israel insists its a fight on terrorism within its borders. The concern is a potential use of Nuclear weapons, especially considering that it remains globally unchecked for the foreseeable future.

North Korea

North Korea currently stands at about 40 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, and shows no signs of slowing down development, threatening neighbouring countries on multiple occasions within the last decade. The capital city Pyongyang has consistently tested ballistic missiles despite sanctions and international outcry, which has now cemented it as an extreme security threat not only for South Korea and Japan, but for the United States as well. A large percentage of its GDP goes towards weaponry, and as a historically isolated country, its true capabilities remain largely unknown to the rest of the world.

Japan

Japan is the only country who has experienced the devastating effects of nuclear weapons, as bombs were dropped on both Hiroshima and Nagasaki towards the end of WWII. Regardless of the fact, Japan is not actively against nuclear weapons, seeing them as an invaluable source of protection within its allies, especially the USA.

Cuba

Although it was previously the location of the most escalated nuclear event in cold war history, Cuba does not have a nuclear weapons arsenal, and has advocated for complete global denuclearisation. Due to its complex nuclear history and its unwillingness to have war within and near its borders, Cuba has remained politically neutral for a large majority of nuclear resolutions, there is a possibility it can be in the forefront for mitigating nuclear proliferation in the current age.

South Africa

South Africa is the only country who has developed, then dismantled its nuclear arms programme. The state sees no need in developing any more weapons as it is recognised by the United Nations, and deems it unimportant to continue advancing weapons, not being in direct danger. As such, South Africa opposes the current trend of Nuclear Proliferation, especially in its likelihood to produce a “knock-on” effect on other African states.

Australia

Australia is one of the few countries with a hardline stance against nuclear weapons. Besides formulating some of the most impactful non-proliferation treaties which have been signed in the UN, the country has also made sweeping efforts to create bilateral agreements ensuring the eventual disarmament of Oceania and the greater world. Australia has traditionally kept amiable ties with the west, and has been continuously allied with a few nuclear states. Despite this, it remains a completely nuclear free country which has disarmament set within its national values.

Iran

Iran has shown an increase in nuclear capability and aggression over the last few decades, even though a deal was signed in 2015 to limit its nuclear programme. Having historically had bad tensions with the west, and consistent insurgency presence within its state, Iran has shown itself to be both capable and aggressive – much to the display of other nuclear states.

Ukraine

The current war with Russia has left Ukraine in dire need of support, especially Russia has indicated its intention to use Nuclear Weapons if necessary. Ukraine gave up over 1900 Soviet weapons after its independence, and has no nuclear weapons programme to date. Many Ukrainians believe giving up nuclear warheads was a mistake, however a lack of knowledge on nuclear weapons has made Ukraine unlikely to develop any for the foreseeable future.

QARMA

1. Are existing international policies fair to all nations?
2. How should nations deal with hidden nuclear weapons or materials and prevent terrorist actors from acquiring them?
3. What can be done to increase the ratification of CTBT and TPNW, and other future agreements and ensure their full implementation?
4. How can the international community ensure peaceful uses of nuclear technology, prevent their misuse, nuclear accidents and further nuclear proliferation especially to emerging nuclear states?
5. How can technological advancements be monitored effectively to ensure compliance with international treaties?
6. How can countries assist in aid of affected populations, in the case of an attack?

Nature of evidence

Documents from the following reports and documents will be accepted in the committee in cases of any controversial statements made in the session.

1. Reuters, Al Jazeera - Documents and quotations from the Reuters and Al Jazeera news agencies will be widely accepted. In cases of executive board approval of the accuracy check on statements that surround controversy which are made in committee.

2. Official Government documents - Government official documents, reports and quotations will also be considered as evidence or proof of any such statement made during committee.

3. UN official reports- All United Nations agency reports will be accepted as adequate evidence and proof. Quotations and Verbatim from UN charters will suffice as solid proof and will stand valid.

4. Invalid sources - Evidence and quotations from sources like Wikipedia will not serve as authentic proof in committee. Although it is barred to serve as proof, it can be used to understand the agenda better. Also note that this guide may not be cited as a source for information if asked.