

Challenges and Weapons of Mass Destruction

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DESCRIPTION

A significant threat to global peace and security continues to be the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). On how best to address this situation, the United Nations' member nations remain sharply split.

Thirty-one nations are outside the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), nine have not yet ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, three nuclear powers are still outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the current nuclear crises with North Korea and Iran have not been resolved.

The Cold War-era NPT's discriminatory structure is less widely accepted today; recent stagnation in disarmament is a source of growing resentment; and perspectives continue to differ on how to bolster international verification systems in light of the developing nuclear sector.

Much work needs to be done to stop terrorist organisations from gaining access to biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological weapons and related technologies. There are still significant gaps in national legislation and law enforcement procedures intended to prevent proliferation.

The UN system urgently needs to give nonproliferation and disarmament a higher priority and to reach an agreement on these concerns.

Challenges of mass destruction

The United Nations has a long history of involvement in attempts to counter the threat presented by weapons of mass destruction, in contrast to other transnational security issues. 1 Strong institutions (ranging from the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Security Council) and rules are only a few of the effective measures presently available for preventing proliferation and achieving disarmament (from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972, to the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993).

The current focus is on updating, bolstering, and adapting existing tools to a shifting technical and political environment.

Nuclear, chemical, and biological technology advancements all have the potential for dual use, which presents significant difficulties for nonproliferation policies aimed at preventing a potential military application of these technologies. For instance, the biotechnology revolution raises the possibility that genetic recombination will result in the development of brand-new weaponry. Additionally, technological advancement opens up opportunities for the militarization of novel chemical agents.

In the nuclear industry, these difficulties are particularly pressing. Many observers believe that the civilian nuclear business will significantly expand in the context of climate change and the hunt for new energy sources. The likelihood of this "nuclear renaissance" begs the question of how to maintain these activities' peaceful nature.

Weapons of mass destruction

The major issue, however, is the disconnect between the need for collective security in relation to WMDs and the current accords. Particularly, these treaties fail to appropriately take into consideration those who already have WMD technologies and capabilities or are suspected of developing them.

Specific measures toward disarmament have halted in recent years. The CWC is behind schedule with regard to destroying chemical weapons stockpiles. Article VI of the NPT, which deals with disarmament, has not been implemented in full in the nuclear industry because there is no evaluation or verification system in place. Many nations contend that the NPT's current implementation favours nonproliferation over disarmament, which benefits those who already have nuclear weapons. Both the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations have not yet started.

CONCLUSION

The verification processes are being seen with a growing amount of annoyance and mistrust. Confidence in the current

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verification and inspection mechanisms has been weakened by the failure of inspections to uncover covert nuclear projects in Iran, Libya, and Iraq in the late 1980s. In more recent times, the IAEA's inquiries over the Syrian Dair Al Zour site have gone unanswered. There is currently no consensus on this topic

despite attempts to create a method for verifying biological activities. The CWC parties have never employed the process known as "challenge inspections," which permits on-site visits to look into potential violations of the agreement.