**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** Developing a framework for the addition of new Weapons of Mass Destructions as well as the renewal and expansion of current treaties

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Introduction

The creation new frameworks and the renewal and expansion of current treaties on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) is crucial for maintaining global security. Previous attacks involving WMDs have led to serious social, economic, and environmental consequences, such as deaths and injuries, environmental contamination, loss of major infrastructure, damage to global trade, and threats to international relations. Although efforts have been made to reduce the possession of WMDs, there still are a total of 12,512 nuclear warheads worldwide (Statista). Furthermore, since World War I, biological and chemical weapons have been present in warfare and assasinations, killing over 100,000 people and injuring over a million (Our World in Data). WMDs also propose possible risk of further proliferation, the threat of use and coercion, terrorism, and environmental damage in the case of use (Columbia). Despite previous efforts in decreasing the possession of WMDs, it is evident that many countries still possess it, and that WMDs still remains a constant threat to the world. Such lack of efficiency in reducing WMDs increases the need and urgency for new frameworks and the improvement of treaties.

As new technology emerges, the need for new frameworks and revised treaties increases. New cyber weapons, dual-use technology, and autonomous weapon systems may be used with or altered into WMDs, escalating fhe threat of WMDs globally. Furthermore, flawed verification and compliance mechanisms, the exclusion of non-state actors, and lack of acknowledgement of regional conflicts all could possibly cause or encourage the proliferation of WMDs, such issues could be addressed through creating nrew frameworks and editing treaties.

Definition of Key Terms

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

Weapons of Mass Destruction refers to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons or any other weapons both intended and able to inflict large scale death and destruction.

**Non-Proliferation**

Non-proliferation refers to preventing and controlling the spread or increase of something, specifically nuclear weaponry

**Disarmament**

Disarmament is the reduction, limitation, and abolishment of weaponry or military forces. In the context of the topic of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament of such weapons is complete, in which the complete elimination of WMDs is called for through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

**Dual-Use Technology**

Refers to goods, technology, or software that could be used both for civilian purposes and military purposes. In the context of WMDs, dual-use technology may be altered or used to cause mass destruction and deaths.

**Autonomous Weapons System**

A type of automated military system that is able to engage in search for target independently and attack without human intervention.

**Export Control Regime**

International frameworks targeting the limitation of proliferation of WMDs through controlling trade of WMDs and related technology.

**Proliferation Financing**

Raising funds and economic resources to support WMD proliferation, often in forms of supporting production, trading, and transporting.

**Evasion**

Using deceptive methods to avoid legal consequences and to successfully transport and transfer illicit products such as technology related to WMDs to other destinations.

**Transshipment**

Transferring products and goods to another method of transportation to reach the destination. This method is often used to avoid tracking down of illicit weaponry and technology and the final destination of such products.

Background

History of WMDs and relevant treaties

The first use of the term “weapons of mass destruction” originates back to 1937, when the Archbishop of Canterbury warned against the WMDs when addressing the bombing campaigns against civilians in Spain and Asia. Recognizing the harms and dangers of WMDs through World War II through Hiroshima bombings killing over 140,000, a declaration was issued jointly by the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom calling for the regulation of atomic energy in 1945 (Britannica). Similarly, established in 1945, the United Nations recognized a need for the disarmament of WMDs and facilitated the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968 through the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament which was established by the General Assembly in 1962. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) were developed later in support of the disarmament of WMDs. Additionally, export control regimes were established to further prevent the proliferation of WMDs and related technologies. Although there have been many attempts at preventing proliferation of WMDs, developing technology serves as a major obstacle in the success of such attempt, in which WMDs maintain a major threat to global security.

Major issues

As mentioned above, a major point to consider is developing technology related or can be used and altered into a WMD, in which existing treaties are becoming outdated technologically, Dual-use technology may be used as WMDs, but also has civilian and every-day uses, which prevents it from being fully disarmed. A notable example of such technology is biotechnology. The rapid development of biotechnology has brought concerns on the verification and compliance on the prevention of proliferation of biological weaponry. Additionally, the United Nations Secretary General have also called for regulations on autonomous weapons systems, as there are no existing frameworks fully restricting the use and proliferation. Artificial intelligence should also be considered when creating frameworks and expanding current treaties, as it can be incorporated into autonomous weapons systems to enable such systems. Overall, the inflexibility of existing non-proliferation treaties such as the NPT decreases the efficiency and effectiveness of the disarmament and regulation of dual-use technology, increasing the need for the expansion of existing treaties and establishment of new frameworks to incorporate new technology.

Another factor to consider are export control regime and global trade. In which export control regimes such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime establishes guidelines providing standards for the export of WMDs, license and authorize related technologies, exchanges information on emerging technology and new risks of proliferation, and strengthening export control legislations, procedures, and reinforcement of planned regulations. However, export control regimes are non-binding and consists of selective groups of countries, excluding countries dominant in exporting arms and weapons of mass destruction, in which all relevant benefits of having export control regimes to limit the proliferation of WMDs would not apply and restrict these member states. Furthermore, illicit trading networks also are not under the jurisdiction of export control regimes. Generally, the export control regimes are highly effective in preventing the proliferation of WMDs, yet the lacking of universality of the regimes highly limit the export control regime’s efficiency and effectiveness in aiding the verification and non-proliferation of WMDs.

Without universal participation in current treaties on WMDs, verification and compliance measures cannot be implemented. Verification and compliance measures are measures aiming to gain information on WMDs of each country through inspections, declarations, and data exchanges to monitor possible violations of treaties and assessing compliance. Yet the lack of participation and engagement in the implementation of measures and treaties make such meausures useless in non-proliferation of WMDs in countries unwilling to participate. In summation, a major point to consider would be the engagement of member states in treaties, frameworks, and recommended measures.

Keeping in mind that some member states may not be as economically developed and able in infrastructure, resources and expertise to implement and strengthen nessecary regulations, procedures, and legislations to aid the proliferation and control of WMDs, this may effect the mitigation of transparency issues with production and trading of WMDs. Since such weakness in implementation may encourage illicit production and trading, as borders are not fully protected and may lack accuracy in screening, causing leakages and the proliferation of related technology used for the production of WMDs.

To support the illicit production of WMDs, there often is proliferation funding happening, often through vulnerabilities of the business sector, banking systems, and transactions. In addition, the produced WMDs are transported using evasion and transshipment tactics. With evasion tactics including falsifying shipping documentation by altering the quantity, destination, and user of the product; splitting products into separate shipments; intentionally falsifying labels to conceal the technology; and routing shipments through multiple destination to make it difficult to trace. Transshipment tactics involve exploiting countries with weaker border and export systems to take advantage of the weak infrastructure and less developed regulations to facilitate transport of WMDs and to use complex routes to prevent the tracking down of the final destination of such products.

Major Parties Involved

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) offers substantial support on areas of disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. It supports and participates in multiple efforts to strengthen the non-poliferation of WMD. This leads to cooperations with both relevant intergovernmental organizations as well as specialized United Nations agencies, such asInternational Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO PrepCom). UNODA also supported multiple previous treaties, in hopes of reducing WMD.

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is the implanting body of the Chemical Weapons Conventions. The OPCW works with 193 member states with goals of permanently and effectively eliminate chemical weapons.

**International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is also known as “Atoms for Peace and Developement”. It is a branch of the numerous United Nations agencies. It works with multiple member states to ensure, support and promote the usuage of safe and peaceful nuclear energy.

**United States of America**

The United States of America (USA) is one of the main participants within the United Nations. The USA firmly believes, and still works to support the act of reducing, eliminating, and securing radioactive and nuclear materials. Multiple leaders of the United States of America has already spoken out, pretaining to the issue, including Presdient John F. Kennedy, who gave a speech in 1946 on reasons to not eliminate weapons of mass destruction and unstable chemicals into outer space. Another presiden of the United States of America that has brough highlights on this current issue is President Joe Biden, who believes that the act of reducing, eliminating, and securing radioactive and nuclear materials would be the most effective way of reducing and preventing the acquisition and use of nuclear and radioactive weapons. He also said that the United States of America, would act accordingly to the details of the implementation of such control policies as stated in NSM in hopes of stopping WMD terrorism.

Timeline of Events

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| Date | Description of event |
| June 1925 | Geneva Protocal—outlawed usages of WMD during international conflicts |
| January 1946 | First resolution on this issue by the United Nations General Assembly, with the exact wording of “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction” |
| September 1962 | President John F. Kennedy talks about not filling outer space “with weapons of mass destruction, but with instruments of knowledge and understanding” |
| August, 1963 | Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty—bans all nuclear testing, except those underground |
| January 1967 | The Outer Space Treaty—prohibits the stationing and testing of these weapons in outer space. |
| July 1968 | Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—1. Prevented nuclear proliferation 2. Promoted nuclear disarmament 3. Promoted peaceful usages of nuclear energy |
| February 1971 | Seabed Arms Control Treaty—banned stationed WMD on the ocean floor |
| April 1972 | Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC)—comprehensively bans biological weapons |
| June 1981 | Operation Opera |
| April 1991 | United Nations Security Council Resolution 687—Declares that Iraq shall unconditionally accept the removal of their WMD |
| June 1991 | United Nations Secruity Council Resolution 699—confirms that Special Commission and the IAEA still has authorities to carry out activites stated in Section C of Security Council Resolution 687. |
| September 1992 | Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)-- comprehensively bans chemical weapons |
| September 1996 | Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)—Banned all nuclear weapon tests |
| September 2017 | Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) -- comprehensively bans nuclear weapons |

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The United Nations has been clear in its intentions of promoting and supporting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destructions. Not only were there multiple resolutions submitted on said matter, there are also treaties established between countries and amongst governmental organisations to maintain and establish said goal. World leaders, such as President John F. Kennedy, also spoke out on such issues, addressing the uses and stationing of weapons of mass destruction in different areas, including space. Out of the numerous treaties, documents and resolutions submitted and established in hopes of decreasing the usage, testing, and ownership of weapons of mass destruction, here are some of the most notable ones:

* Geneva Protocol
* Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
* The Outer Space Treaty
* Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
* Seabed Arms Control Treaty
* Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)
* Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC)
* Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
* Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

Possible Solutions

Addressing the engagement issues of member states and dominant weaponry suppliers, the strategy of deterrence could be used by relevant UN committees and organizations. The strategy of deterrence involves convincing member states with WMDs but not in participation of treaties and frameworks or seeking to acquire WMDs that WMDs do not benefit the interests of the state; however, is harmful to their benefits. Such strategy would involve establishing a credible threat or consequence in the case of the member state acquiring WMDs or refusal to accept the UN intervention in WMDs. Specific reasons and consequences would differ with different member states. This strategy would be efficient as it has worked before. During the Cold War between US and USSR, both forces possessed nuclear weaponry; understanding that there would be overwhelming retaliation and lethal costs, such deterrence prevented direct conflict.

Along with deterrence methods, member states could be encouraged to strengthen export controls to better monitor new, dual use technology. It would also be more efficient to reassess the effectiveness of export control technology and protocols in identifying potential WMDs and relevant technology. To further enhance such verification methods, new technology could be invested on to recognize and target the emerging technology. Futhermore, real-time data collection would also be useful in identifying and monitoring dual-use technology and newly developed weaponry. Overall, in the expansion of treaties and frameworks, stricter verification and compliance methods should be included.

Treaties, frameworks, and regulations should also be constantly expanded to incorporate rising transnational threats, such as terrorists groups. Possible solutions to such threats could include further disarmament of WMDs through decreasing or restricting the production of WMDs and monitoring exports of weaponry of member states while also constantly investigating for any illicit, unmonitored production and trading of lethal technology, it may also be beneficial to encourage international collaboration with other member states and third-party organizations to exchange information about the illicit trading and unmonitored production, especially when such trading involves terrorist groups or groups highly suspected of actually putting WMDs into use.

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