

# LEARN ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

## ***ABM - Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty***

The ABM treaty was concluded in 1972 between the US President Nixon and Soviet leader Brezhnev. Anti-ballistic missiles are systems to counter nuclear ballistic missile attacks. Under the treaty both states agreed to have only one ABM system on their territories. The treaty prohibits test launches, development and deployment of sea-, space- and mobile land based ABM systems.

In 2001 the US President George W. Bush announced that the US would withdraw from the ABM treaty. In 2002 the US left the treaty, despite massive international and national protests. It was the first time the US withdrew from an international disarmament treaty. The proponents for a US withdrawal argued that testing and development of a national missile shield would be necessary to protect the US from nuclear blackmailing by rogue states. The critics responded that the withdrawal would be a significant blow to international disarmament and non-proliferation work, and would increase international tensions. The SORT treaty is partly a result of the negotiations between Russia and the US following the US withdrawal.

## ***INF - Intermediate Nuclear Forces***

This treaty was concluded in 1987 to eliminate the US and Russia's land-based intermediate- and shorter-ranges missiles. A total of up to 3000 missile systems were destroyed and Europe was freed from the most immediate nuclear threat, even if the INF treaty did not include tactical nuclear weapons. The treaty further included only elimination of the missiles and not the nuclear warheads, which meant warheads could be kept for use in other permitted systems.<sup>1</sup> In 1991, under the leadership of President George H. Bush, the US withdrew all its nuclear weapons from South Korea as a means of implementing the INF treaty.

## ***SALT I and II - Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I and II***

SALT I (1972) and SALT II (1979) were two rounds of negotiations between the Soviet Union and the US in order to create limitations in both states' strategic nuclear arsenals. SALT I resulted among other things in a regulation of submarine launched ballistic missiles. Negotiations on SALT II resulted in an agreement on increased limits on intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers. Other limits were placed on multiple re-entry vehicles and bombers with intermediate-range missiles. SALT II was to remain in

effect through 1985, but the US Senate, due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, never ratified it. Both states still kept to the agreements under the treaty.

### ***START I – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I***

Following ten years of tortuous negotiations, START I was signed by the US and the Soviet Union in July 1991. Only five months later the Soviet Union fell apart, resulting in four independent states with Soviet nuclear weapons on their territories: Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. In May 1992 the new states signed an Additional Protocol to START I. The treaty was not ratified until December 1994, when all nuclear weapons had been removed from Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus and all three states had signed the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states.

START I demands reductions in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia in silos, air force and submarines. SALT I prohibits both states from deploying more than 6000 nuclear warheads on a total of 1600 delivery systems, and the ballistic missile throw-weight (lifting power) is limited to 3600 metric tons. START I has been implemented: in 2001 the former Soviet and US arsenals were reduced by 30-40 %.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Presidential Nuclear Initiative***

In September and October 1991, U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced a series of policy initiatives declaring that the United States and the Soviet Union—and later Russia—would reduce their arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) and delivery vehicles. Russian President Boris Yeltsin reaffirmed and somewhat expanded Gorbachev's statement in the name of the newly independent Russia in January 1992. These initiatives have become known as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNI). The PNI's were "reciprocal unilateral commitments," meaning that they are politically, not legally, binding, and are non-verifiable. The PNI's led to perhaps 17,000 TNW's being withdrawn from service, the deepest reductions in nuclear arsenals to date.

### ***START II – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II***

US President George Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in 1993. The treaty limits their strategic arsenals to 3000-3500 warheads on delivery systems (tactical weapons and spares are not included in the counts). It also prohibits multiple re-entry vehicles (MIRV's) on intercontinental ballistic missiles, and limits the number of warheads deployable on submarine-launched ballistic missiles to 1700-1750.<sup>3</sup>

START II has not entered into force: when the US withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002, Russia declared START null and void the following day. It was replaced by the much weaker SORT in 2002.<sup>4</sup>

### ***START III – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty III***

Discussions began between the US and Russia in 2007 to further reduce nuclear arsenals to 2000-2500 each, though it is unlikely negotiations will begin, as Russia

withdrew from START II in 2002 and the SORT treaty was signed in May 2002. SORT does not, however, address strategic nuclear warhead destruction or tactical nuclear weapons limits, both groundbreaking arms control measures that were suggested for inclusion in START III.<sup>5</sup>

### *SORT – Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty*

The May 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), also known as the Moscow Treaty, commits the United States and Russia to reduce their deployed strategic nuclear forces to 1,700-2,200 warheads apiece. This warhead limit takes effect and expires on the same day, December 31, 2012. After this date, both sides are free to decrease or increase the size of their deployed strategic forces. Unlike past strategic arms control agreements between Moscow and Washington, SORT does not specify which warheads are to be reduced or how reductions should be made. No warheads or delivery vehicle must be destroyed under the accord. Past strategic treaties spelled out precise destruction obligations and processes for eliminating delivery vehicles to ensure that “reduced” warheads could not be quickly re-deployed. Basically, this means the US and Russia could just remove the warheads from the missiles, keep all missiles and store the warheads in a reserve – ready to be re-assembled at any time.

The treaty also does not regulate or constrain how deployed warheads are fielded. “Each party shall determine for itself the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms,” the treaty declares. In effect, this means the United States and Russia can continue deploying multiple warheads on a single ICBM – a configuration banned by the 1993 START II accord that never entered into force.

SORT has no provisions for assessing compliance. The Bush administration argued against such provisions, citing improved U.S.-Russian relations. Instead, the two sides said they would rely on the 1991 START verification regime for verifying implementation. However, START I expires December 5, 2009, three years before the SORT limit takes effect. Both states can withdraw from the treaty with one month's notice. Unlike most arms control treaties, the withdrawing party does not have to justify its action.<sup>6</sup>

The SORT treaty has jokingly been called the “SORT of treaty” due to its vague language and lack of verification provisions: “We're sort of gonna try to disarm and sort of find some kind of way of keeping track of how...” The fact that a treaty this vague and weak was the best that the world's two major nuclear players could negotiate does not exactly increase the impression that their commitment to total elimination of all nuclear weapons, as stated in Article 6 of the NPT, is a serious undertaking.

### *The Canberra Commission*

In 1995, the Australian government appointed the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The commission was tasked with considering

practical steps towards nuclear weapons elimination. In August 1996, the Canberra Commission presented its report. The commission is convinced that immediate and firm action is necessary to abolish nuclear weapons. The damage caused by nuclear weapons is tremendous. Any use of nuclear weapons would be nothing short of a catastrophe.

The report suggests gradual disarmament of nuclear weapons while maintaining stability and security in the world. The report presents no time frame for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Some of the measures proposed are de-alerting of nuclear arsenals; dismantlement of nuclear weapons from the launching mechanisms; negotiations between the US and Russia on further disarmament. In addition, nuclear weapon states must issue so called 'no first use' pledges, and pledge not to use or threat to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states - so called 'negative security assurances'.

### *The Carlsson Commission*

In 1995, the Commission on Global Governance (a.k.a. the Carlsson Commission, after one of its chairmen, former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson) published a report called *Our Global Neighbourhood*. In this report, the countries of the world are encouraged to begin nuclear disarmament. A programme was suggested to abolish nuclear weapons within ten to fifteen years.

### *The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission*

The positive development in the disarmament and non-proliferation field immediately following the end of the Cold War, has been followed by a far less constructive period. The threat of continued proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or the use of existing weapons by states and non-state actors, is today highly topical. At the same time, the development in recent years indicates a renewed rearmament, rather than steps to terminate states' possession of weapons of mass destruction. On this background, on the initiative of the UN and the Foreign Minister of Sweden Anna Lindh, an independent international commission was appointed: the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC).

Hans Blix was asked by the Swedish government to chair the commission and to appoint other commissioners. On 16 October 2003, Hans Blix presented a group of 14 commissioners from all over the world, with a thorough political, military and diplomatic experience of peace and disarmament work. The commission began its task in January 2004.

Under the leadership of Hans Blix, the WMDC launched its final report *Weapons of Terror - Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms* on 1 June 2006. The report describes the international system of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control and includes 60 recommendations as to what the international community - governments, civil society and the business world - can and should do to meet the

global challenge posed by weapons of mass destruction. The report and its recommendations have called for great attention all over the world.

***Political and military bigwigs say no***

In December 1996, about fifty generals from the nuclear-weapon states signed a petition, amongst them General Lee Butler, who a few years earlier had been Commander of the nuclear forces of the US Air Force and Marines. Their stance was that nuclear weapons can never be used to build security – not for a country, nor for the world. Thus they are, from a military point of view, useless. Nevertheless, they pose a grave threat to the survival of mankind. Therefore, the generals appealed to the countries of the world to abolish all nuclear weapons.

In January 2007, an unexpected coalition of former US top-notch politicians and nuclear proponents co-wrote an article in the Wall Street Journal. George Shultz was the US Secretary of State 1982-89; William Perry was the Defense Minister 1994-97; Henry Kissinger was the US Secretary of State 1973-77; and Sam Nunn a former senator and chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The title of the article was *A World Free of Nuclear Weapons* and explored the necessity of nuclear weapons disarmament and non-proliferation. The authors say that nuclear weapons played a key deterrent role during the Cold War, but that these, in today's international security system, have played out their role. A year later, on 15 January 2008, the four authors joined together for a follow-up article in the Wall Street Journal, *Toward a Nuclear-Free World*, reiterating their demands and presenting a list of measures for the US and Russia to complete in order to reduce the nuclear danger.

The articles have received great attention and many leading politicians and decision-makers have voiced their support. Michail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union in the end of the Cold War and one of those involved in nuclear weapons politics at the highest level, supports the call. Likewise, Margaret Beckett, former Foreign Minister of the UK, signalled her government's support. Other former US high-ranking politicians in support of the statement are e.g. Madeleine Albright, Richard V. Allen, James A. Baker III, Samuel R. Berger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Frank Carlucci, Warren Christopher, William Cohen, Lawrence Eagleburger, Melvin Laird, Anthony Lake, Robert McFarlane, Robert McNamara and Colin Powell.

The fact that persons previously warmly supporting nuclear weapons, and above all US nuclear weapons, so clearly take positions against these weapons raises hope for change. The authors end their article saying: *"In some respects, the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is like the top of a very tall mountain. From the vantage point of our troubled world today, we can't even see the top of the mountain, and it is tempting and easy to say we can't get there from here. But the risks from continuing to go down the mountain or standing pat are too real to ignore. We must chart a course to higher ground where the mountaintop becomes more visible."* In many aspects, the authors are absolutely right: a nuclear weapons free world may be like a tall mountaintop. But it is not necessarily true that the top is invisible and impossible to reach. 186 of the world's

approximately 195 states have said no to nuclear weapons. The demands increase, from all directions, for complete abolition of nuclear weapons. States and non-governmental organisations keep up their untiring work – at times together and at times apart – to reach that mountaintop. Hence, calling it invisible is an exaggeration.

For the Wall Street Journal article *A World Free of Nuclear Weapons* by George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn, [click here](#) (pops up)

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A conference dealing with the development after the publishing of these articles was held in February 2008 in Oslo. The discussion of the conference can be found at [http://disarmament.nrpa.no/?page\\_id=6](http://disarmament.nrpa.no/?page_id=6)

### *New Agenda Coalition*

On June 9, 1998, eight countries agreed on a declaration demanding the swift and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, at the same time presenting a programme for how to achieve this. The eight countries called themselves the "New Agenda Coalition," NAC, and consisted of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia (which later withdrew), South Africa and Sweden. They put forth demands for the five official nuclear-weapon states (the US, Russia, the UK, France and China) and the three threshold states (India, Israel and Pakistan) to take a number of concrete steps towards the ultimate goal of total disarmament.

Since the first declaration in 1998, the NAC countries have worked actively in various international fora for the implementation of the proposed plan for total nuclear disarmament. The resolution has been presented a number of times to the UN First Committee and has been met with broad support in the UN General Assembly.

	Yes	No	Abstained
1998	114	18	38
1999	111	13	39
2000	154	3	8
2001			
2002	120	3	42
2003	133	6	38
2004	151	6	24
2005	158	2	11
2006	157	7	13
2007	156	5	14

The NAC countries have played a major role in bringing the nuclear powers to negotiations when discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation have been underway in contexts of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). At the year 2000 NPT conference, much of the credit for the success of the conference belongs to the NAC countries, who were very active. One breakthrough at the conference was that the nuclear powers, for the first time, committed themselves to an “unequivocal undertaking” to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals, even though no dates were given. Furthermore, all the 187 countries agreed on thirteen practical steps to achieve the goal of a nuclear-weapon free world. The 2005 NPT review Conference failed to produce concrete action towards nuclear weapons disarmament and non-proliferation.

Read the thirteen practical steps from the 2000 NPT Review Conference here: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/13point.html>

### *South Africa*

South Africa is the only state ever to possess nuclear weapons and voluntarily give them up in order to join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. The country had a nuclear weapon programme during the 1970's and 80's. It produced six nuclear devices and had a seventh under development when abandoning the nuclear option in the early 1990's.

In connection to the end of the apartheid regime in the early 1990's, South Africa gave up its nuclear weapon programme. The reason is believed to be a reverse in the arguments that initially led to the development of the South African weapons. When the Cold War ended, and thereby the meddling of the two super powers in local conflicts in Africa, South Africa believed the situation in the region would stabilise, and nuclear weapons be less attractive. At the same time, South Africa began seriously considering changing the apartheid politics that had isolated the country from the rest of the world and sought ways to get out of that isolation. In 1994, the IAEA inspectors declared the South African nuclear weapon programme fully terminated after careful inspections of the country's nuclear facilities.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, South Africa took the lead in negotiating an African nuclear weapons free zone – a treaty later signed in Cairo in 1996.

### *Civil society's struggle around the world*



Since the development of the first nuclear weapon in the 1940's, the opposition to the bomb has been immense. After the US atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, people all over the world realised the destructive power of the new weapons, and the opposition hardened. The United Nations (UN) was established at the end of World War II in 1945. Already in the first UN resolution adopted, member states agreed on

the “elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”

In 1955, 11 leading scientists and intellectuals signed the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, warning of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and calling on world leaders to find peaceful solutions to international tensions. The Committee of 100 was founded in the UK, October 1960, in response to the Russell-Einstein Manifesto for a movement of non-violent resistance to nuclear war and to the manufacture and use of all weapons of mass extermination.



In the 1980's, the nuclear arms race reached its peak. In 1986, there were a total of 70 500 nuclear weapons in the world's arsenals. During the 80's, public opposition against nuclear weapons also reached its peak. All over the world, marches, rallies and protests were organised, demanding nuclear disarmament and a world free from nuclear weapons.

From 1981 through 2000 the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp took place outside a nuclear base in Berkshire, England. During those years, thousands of women visited or lived at the Peace Camp, non-violently protesting against the nuclear threat. The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp received a lot of attention and was visited by journalists from all over the world.



The last missiles left the camp in 1991 but the camp remained in place until 2000 after protestors won the removal of the nuclear weapons, the closure of the base, the return of the land to public commons and right to house a memorial on the site.



The biggest demonstration on earth (until the global anti-Iraq war march of 15 February 2003) took place in New York on June 12, 1982, when one million people gathered in support of the second UN Special Session on Disarmament and to protest nuclear weapons. Labour unions joined peace groups, other organisations and concerned individuals from across the country in the largest demonstration ever held in the nation's largest city, in protest against the Reagan administration's nuclear weapons build-up.

In 1984 Jo Vallentine was elected to the Australian Senate as a candidate for the newly formed Nuclear Disarmament Party, on the single issue of nuclear disarmament. She was the first and only person in the world to be elected on the single issue of nuclear disarmament.



The same year, New Zealand became the first ever single-nation, nuclear weapons-free zone, when a Labour government led by Prime Minister David Lange implemented a nuclear prohibition policy despite considerable opposition from its Western allies.

In 1985 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). The Nobel Committee regarded IPPNW as an organisation that had "performed a considerable service to mankind by spreading authoritative information and by creating an awareness of the catastrophic consequences of atomic warfare."



After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the peace movement lost its edge for a while. The Cold War was over, the world no longer divided into two political blocks: the capitalist US and the communist Soviet Union. But the nuclear weapons remained, then and today, and the struggle to get rid of them continues. Prior to the



Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2005, a march through Manhattan to Central Park on the eve of the Conference drew 40,000 persons who formed a human peace symbol. Nearly 2,000 NGO's were on hand at various stages of the Conference, the largest representation ever. Seminars and workshops were arranged next to the

official review process. Analyses and articles were written and circulated world-wide. In the gallery of the General Assembly, obligated to silence, sat hundreds of civil society representatives, devotedly listening to the many and exhaustive statements presented by the NPT States Parties. At the end of the conference – more than three weeks of meetings not even producing a Final Document – government representatives were heard saying the only success of the 2005 NPT Review Conference was on part of the civil society, while the official conference was a great failure.



Mayors for Peace is an international network of cities around the world that has voiced support for peace and disarmament work. As of April 2008, 2195 cities in 128 countries and regions had joined the Mayors for Peace network.<sup>8</sup> The network promotes a Vision 2020 program to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2020.

All over the world, every day, work is done to reach the goal of elimination of all nuclear weapons. The struggle goes on from the lowest grassroots level to advocacy work towards top level politicians and decision-makers. Many states appreciate the contribution of civil society to the disarmament work, and encourage increased availability for civil society to participate in debates and negotiations.

In the "links" list you will find many organisations around the world, in different ways working towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

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- 1 Federation of American Scientists <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/inf/text/inf.htm>
  - 2 Federation of American Scientists <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/start1/index.html>
  - 3 Federation of American Scientists <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/start2/index.html>
  - 4 Reaching Critical Will <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/treaties.html>
  - 5 Arms Control Association <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/start3.asp>
  - 6 Arms Control Association <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/sort-glance.asp>
  - 7 Nuclear Weapon Archive <http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Safrica/SADisarming.html>
  - 8 Mayors for Peace <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/>