

Is obamas strategic
nuclear arms control
policy sound politics
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Since the day Hiroshima and Nagasaki were hit by the first and only nuclear bomb to ever be used in the world history, world countries understood the evil implications of such weapons. From that moment, nations have been trying to sustain the stability of those mass destruction weapons through organizations, treaties, systems, etc. that have dated back to 1946. One of the most influential people who work hard with regards to solving such problems is President Barak Obama. Obama has been working on this issue since he took over presidency due to the serious problems between the U. S. and Russia regarding this subject from the times of President Bush.

Nevertheless, Obama's real motivation came when North Korea's launched a long-range rocket that could be used as a missile. Therefore he gave a speech in Prague calling for a nuclear-free world. President Obama pledged that the U. S. will reduce its nuclear stocks within the next four years.

Moreover, he assured the public that the U. S. will also strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, and penalize any countries that attempt to violate the rules or laws established in the treaty. This is why, in the year of 2010, a year from his speech, President Obama's administration settled particular standards. Thus the Nuclear Posture Review was released, in which the objectives that President Obama wanted to fulfill were met. President Obama identified the Nuclear Posture Review as a method that will prohibit nuclear proliferation, prevent the use and distribution of nuclear arms, and reduce the possibility of the formation of nuclear terrorism. Nonetheless, the Nuclear Posture Review was considered very controversial worldwide. Even though the U. S, one of the world's superpowers, issued the review, it was being opposed by many nations that believed it to be a utopian dream that will never be realized. In this essay, I am going to be discussing the negative

<https://assignbuster.com/is-obamas-strategic-nuclear-arms-control-policy-sound-politics-essay/>

effects that nuclear proliferation has on society. Also, I am going to examine the efforts President Obama exerted towards seeking a solution for this matter. In addition to that, I will note all the progress President Obama accomplished throughout his campaign, and all the barriers he had to overcome to reach where we are at now. On the other hand, I will mention how the world reacted to such a policy and whether or not they decided to adopt it. Finally, I will be discussing whether or not this arm control policy is sound and sufficient.

Introduction:

Nuclear proliferation is a term used to describe the spread of nuclear weapons. There are two types of proliferations. The first is vertical proliferation, which refers to the increase in the number of stockpiles of nuclear weapons, improving the technical sophistication or reliability of weapons, or developing new weapons through research programs in states that already possess nuclear weaponry. The second type of proliferation is horizontal proliferation, which refers to nation-states or non-state entities that do not have proliferation system, but are acquiring nuclear weapons or developing the capability and materials for producing nuclear weapons through research programs.

After the First atomic bomb was used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, world countries knew that a divinely dreadful power was unleashed.

Therefore, countries started to cooperate together, to place restrain orders on nuclear weapons and on the nations who possess them. As early as 1946, the organization now known as the International Atomic Energy Agency was established to limit the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes only.

<https://assignbuster.com/is-obamas-strategic-nuclear-arms-control-policy-sound-politics-essay/>

However, the effort to constrain nuclear arms has been a rather slow progress throughout the 1960s; the period of the cold war between the U. S. and Soviet Union.

During the cold war people lived with the knowledge that their world could be erased in a single flash of light by a nuclear war. However, we are now in the 21st century, and the cold war has come to an end. Nevertheless, the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up since thousands of the weapons used back then still didn't disappear. Also, more and more nations have acquired those weapons, and have the knowledge to build even more nuclear bombs. Hence, although there is an existing global non-proliferation regime, many nations still violate the rules. Also, the fact that terrorist nowadays want to buy, build, or steal those weapons is affecting the security of the nation and peace of the world, and in return, affecting the world high politics.

President Obama understands that these weapons are the ultimate tools of destruction. For no matter were an explosion occurs there is no end to its consequences. Since the U. S. is the only nuclear power to have ever used a nuclear weapon, President Obama believes that his country has a moral obligation to act upon and stop this phenomenon. He wants nations to join together and work towards a world without nuclear proliferation. To do so, he is leading a regime that aims for peace and security in our world! This strategy needs patience, persistence, and commitment to become a reality. Thus, President Obama's commitment is seen; " I am standing for the right of people everywhere to live free from fear" (YouTube Contributors, 2009).

Chapter One: President Obama Calls for Reduction in Nuclear Arms

On Sunday April 5th 2009, in Prague, President Obama launched an effort that would aid the world to make nuclear weapons obsolete, calling them “the most dangerous legacies of the Cold War” (YouTube Contributors, 2009). In his speech, Obama considered this strategy the aim of the 21st century. Thus, he urged nations to get rid of their nuclear weapons and stop researching and developing new types of nuclear weapons and means of warhead delivery. He also encouraged “an end to Cold War thinking” and promised to reduce the nuclear stocks in U. S. within the next four years.

The choice of Prague for such a speech carried strong symbolism, and President Obama didn't ignore it. Decades of communism were toppled in Czechoslovakia through the 1989 “Velvet Revolution”. Thus, President Obama praised the Czechs for helping bring down a nuclear-armed empire without firing a shot.

President Obama's speech was mainly driven by North Korea's launching of a long-range rocket in defiance to the international community, which took place earlier that day. Since the launching process was widely condemned by the U. S. and international officials. During his speech, President Obama targeted his comments at one point directly at North Korea, and declared that North Korea broke the rules by testing a rocket that could be used as a long-range missile. Such a launch emphasizes the urgency of the denuclearization agenda. Hence, President Obama pledged to work with partners for the denuclearization of North Korea at a summit with leaders of

the European Union in which President Obama called for a swift and joint statement condemning North Korea's actions.

Moreover, President Obama addressed another potential nuclear issue in his speech. He warned Iran and presented it with a clear choice to join in the community of nations and earn its right to peaceful nuclear energy, on the condition that it ceases its nuclear and ballistic missile activity. Otherwise, it may continue to refuse to meet its international obligations and face increased isolation. He also mentioned that the U. S. would proceed with development of a missile defense system in Europe as long as there is an Iranian threat of developing nuclear weapons. Once that threat is removed, he promised that the driving force for missile defense in Europe would be removed. However, this issue remains a very sore point between Russia and the U. S. since they are not in full agreement on what to do about the existing nuclear weapons in North Korea and the potential nuclear weapons in Iran, especially since Russia is being lenient with Iran's nuclear program.

On the other hand, President Obama coupled his call for a nuclear-free world with an assurance that the U. S. would not individually give up its nuclear weapons. President Obama also outlined several concrete steps toward a nuclear-free world. One of which was ratification of the "Comprehensive Test Ban" on testing nuclear weapons, which the U. S. would aggressively seek, and called for a global effort to secure nuclear material. He also noted that the U. S. would host a summit within the next year on reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons! However, The U. S. would still need major help from all the nations worldwide to reach such goal.

Additionally, President Obama reinforced his speech by mentioning that he signed an agreement to begin negotiating in Moscow, a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty to reduce warheads and stockpiles with his Russian counterpart, President Dmitry Medvedev. The treaty, which will take place at the end of the year, aims for cutting their respective nuclear arsenals to 1,500 each. President Obama also discussed the solutions that will include preventing the production of more nuclear weapons, and seeking a new treaty. Such a treaty will terminate the manufacturing of fissile materials used in nuclear arms, thus diminishing the purpose of nuclear arms in the American national security strategy, negotiating a new international treaty, and strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

President Obama promised that the U. S. would seek strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation treaty by providing more resources and authority for international inspections and mandating. Since, any country that would violate the rules of the treaty would face real and immediate consequences, including automatic referral to the UN Security Council.

At the end of his speech, President Obama addressed people who argue that the spread of these weapons cannot be stopped, and that human-kind are destined to live in a world where more nations and people possess the ultimate tools of destruction, stating that “ Such fatalism is a deadly adversary. For if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable” (YouTube Contributors, 2009).

Chapter Two: President Obama's Nuclear Posture Review

Former government officials, nuclear weapons experts, and leaders of arms control organizations representing more than one million Americans have sent a letter to the President, urging him to fulfill his April 2009 pledge to “put an end to Cold War thinking and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy” (YouTube Contributors, 2009).

In the letter sent to the White House on February 1st 2010, the group called on the president to ensure that the new policy advances the highest security priorities, such as preventing terrorists or additional states from obtaining nuclear weapons, reducing global stockpiles, and moving toward a world without nuclear weapons.

However, in 2010, a year from his speech, and after much internal wrangling, President Obama's administration has settled on a clever and well-prepared standard, thus releasing the Nuclear Posture Review, which is a legislatively mandated review that determines U. S. nuclear strategy, policy, force posture, and capabilities for the next few years. It is consisted of 72 pages that review the program, and help the public understand some of its finer points and details. The review has policies that meet the objectives President Obama wants to accomplish. Thus it is consistent with President Obama's commitment to “listen, learn and lead”.

Additionally, The Nuclear Posture Review also explains how the United States will sustain a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent for the United States and its allies as long as nuclear weapons exist. While the Nuclear Posture Review was meant to inform the debate on NATO nuclear policy, it

does not explicitly address the subject. In fact, the Nuclear Posture Review states, any changes in NATO's nuclear posture should only be taken after a thorough review within - and decision by - the Alliance. The United States is considering basing the future of nuclear arms in Europe, and is committed to making the majority of their decisions through the use of the NATO processes.

Nevertheless, the Nuclear Posture Review states that the U. S. is now set to reinforce its long-standing ' negative security assurance' by implying that the U. S. would not use or threaten to use nuclear arms against nations that lack nuclear weapons, and non-nuclear weapons nations that are part of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and are obedient to their nuclear non-proliferation obligations, which they have remained in compliance with. Thus, this studied declaration is intended to highlight the security benefits of fully adhering and complying with the NPT and encourage non-nuclear weapon states party to the Treaty to cooperate with the U. S. other interested parties to adopt applicable measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

However, The U. S. has the right and will only consider attacking or threatening a country if it develops significant chemical, biological, or conventional weapons that pose a threat to the U. S. or its allies. This part of the treaty actually assures other countries that they should always be inferior to the U. S. militarily and returns everyone to square of the arms race among countries. The Nuclear Posture Review also leads to the removal of an entire class of nuclear weapons distribution systems " The Nuclear-Armed Tomahawk" from the arsenal. And called for further Russian and American nuclear arms reductions.

<https://assignbuster.com/is-obamas-strategic-nuclear-arms-control-policy-sound-politics-essay/>

On the other hand, President Obama identifies the Nuclear Posture Review as a method that prohibits the use of nuclear proliferation, and nuclear arms, and reduces the potential of the acquisition of nuclear weapons or the materials and knowledge by individuals or non-state entities, often termed “terrorists,” to produce nuclear weapons. Stating that the latter point is the most urgent priority, especially that the technology needed to construct a nuclear weapon has been known, and is being rapidly spread between nations. Thus, terrorists could build their own nuclear weaponry, which would threaten global safety and well-being.

All in all, President Obama’s new review restricts the role of nuclear weapons in the U. S. security strategy, and shifts both the U. S. and Russia towards a more stable strategic connection at lower levels of nuclear arms. The review is framed to support action for the immediate next steps with regards to a world without nuclear weapons, which were outlined in his Prague speech; the strengthening of the NPT, the entry by force of the CTBT, the accelerated action in order to secure nuclear weapons-usable material, and the conclusion of a new strategic weaponry treaty.

Chapter Three: International Responses

Domestically, the concept of the Russian and U. S. post-Strategic Arms Reduction Talks to decrease the number of launchers in both countries to 1500 each, were rather refuted by U. S. officials. Particularly because it was a smart move from Russia’s side, that is unfair to the U. S. Especially because the Russian Launchers will drop significantly within 8-9 years from 680 launchers to 270 launchers, simply as a result of aging and expiring of the system! Therefore, military leaders stated that President Obama should <https://assignbuster.com/is-obamas-strategic-nuclear-arms-control-policy-sound-politics-essay/>

be very careful about moving towards a low launcher numbers' strategy because it would provide major advantages for the Russian Federation, but major disadvantages for U. S. strategy.

Some experts believe that it is possible to completely eradicate nuclear weapons, and such a program that will drastically cut the world's negative atomic arsenal carries support from scientists worldwide. Also, a recent examination that conducted by researchers from all around the world was issued as a special of "The Nonproliferation Review" on key foreign governments' responses to the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, proved that contrary to the popular belief, President Obama's policy considerably influenced a number of countries' nuclear diplomatic doctrines, and produced significant progress toward a safer nuclear world. An example was Russia's nuclear doctrine. Which was revised to allow nuclear options only in the case of which they are used in response to attacks that threaten the existence of their state. Moreover, at last year's NATO summit in Lisbon, NATO governments settled to address concern by offering to negotiate with the Russian government for reductions or elimination of sub-strategic nuclear weapons in an upcoming arms-control agreement.

Perhaps the primary short-term achievement of President Obama's new policy was that it stopped the erosion of the 2005 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, yet later on suffered an unfortunate hindrance when the international community was unable to reach an agreement that was in favor of the nonproliferation regime. This failure was blamed on the Bush administration by numerous nations. By contrast, at the May 2010 NPT Review Conference, the signatories to the treaty welcomed the reductions announced by some <https://assignbuster.com/is-obamas-strategic-nuclear-arms-control-policy-sound-politics-essay/>

nuclear weapons states, praised new and improved International Atomic Energy Agency safeguard inspection protocols, and underscored the importance of international discussions on multilateral control of sensitive nuclear fuel facilities. One political scientist reported that this outcome would not have been imaginable if it not for President Obama's open-mindedness regarding the aim towards a nuclear-free world, and the implementation of a nuclear stance that helped US move towards achieving that objective.

On the other Hand, Some overseas governments such as India and China still view the new posture with skepticism, and its statements about nuclear weapons reduction as a mere rhetoric. Accordingly, Chinese officials expressed concerns that in the future, conventional weaponry enhancements might make the U. S. more likely to threaten China. Moreover, an Indian commentator called the new U. S. doctrine " more posture than review."

However, that kind of reaction was only encouraged when U. S. officials strayed from President Obama's declared policy. Also, former President Chilton insisted that future generations would depend on nuclear arms for the survival of the U. S. A phrasing that is deeply inconsistent with President Obama's stated goal. Thus, it is critical that the President Obama's administration maintain high discipline within the military and government bureaucracy concerning this issue.

In the run-up to 2010 Senate ratification of New START, President Obama's administration ordered an increases in financial-banking for the nation's nuclear laboratories in order for them to preserve the safety and reliability of the U. S. nuclear arsenal without nuclear testing in the future. This program

added integrity to President Obama's frequent declarations that the U. S. requires a nuclear deterrent as long as other states have nuclear weapons.

I also think that in order to further enhance the credibility of President Obama's pledge to work towards creating a world free of nuclear arms, the administration should also demand further diminutions in U. S. nuclear arms beyond those enforced by the New START agreement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that the world is obviously facing a growing threat from nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, and President Obama is one of the few influential people that decided to adopt this security dilemma, and attempted to fix it. However, I personally think that this could not be a one-man-show since such a strategy needs to be supported worldwide, especially by countries that possess those weapons. Therefore, nations must recognize that nonproliferation is a two-way street, and that progress can only be achieved by a truly global coalition. Hence, a noticeable success in preventing further nuclear proliferation would require building bonds and links between countries to maximize cooperation.

Also, such an aim would take an extended period of time to be realized. Thus making it a long-term goal that countries should join hands to achieve.

Hence, I think that in the meantime nations should seek to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons, yet not eliminate them completely since this gives the U. S. a sense of security; knowing that if invader attacked, they would have sufficient resources to defend themselves.

Indeed, every country is opting for peace in the world. However, some might privately have weapons stored, waiting for the right opportunity to exploit first world countries, and be considered a superpower. Hence, the greed and thrive for power is also considered a major barrier in the way of President Obama's strategy. Countries are selfish, and place their own needs and well-being above anything else, thus preventing them from thinking straight and cooperating with others to achieve what is best for global welfare.

Finally, it can be noticed that President Obama's Prague speech aimed high, but the Nuclear Posture Review leaves the U. S. nuclear policy at square one. All in all, I think Obama's strategy is not sufficient enough for eliminating nuclear threats since there is no guarantee that countries will want to follow in the footsteps of the U. S. and In order to fully realize the promise of a world without nuclear weapons, President Obama and his team must do more to change outdated Cold War thinking and reduce the U. S's reliance on nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, we should praise President Obama for his continuous efforts and time spent trying to solve this dilemma. President Obama's strategy is a major step, paving the road to a world without nuclear weapons.