

IV. EMPOWERMENT

INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND PUBLIC OPINION

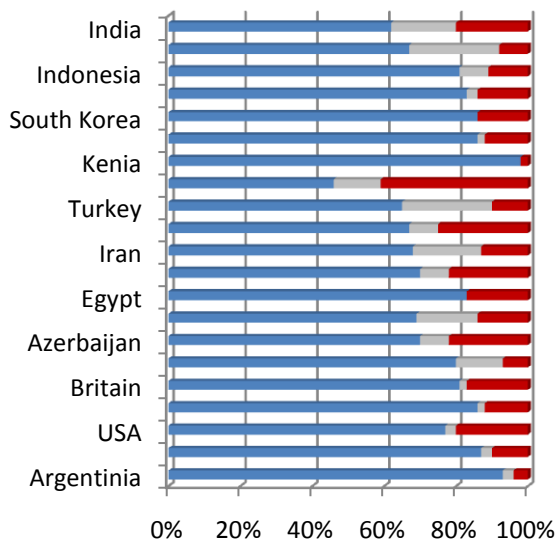
International Policies:

Why do nuclear weapons play an important role in international policies? First they are more a political weapon than a military because their use for military purpose is very limited and even states are working on reducing their role in security doctrines. Within their role for “nuclear deterrence” they are more a political instrument to put pressure on other states. They are also defining hierarchies in international policies. The five official nuclear weapons states are also the five veto powers of the UN Security Council. Through that they can influence policy but also economy. For example no UN sanction like an embargo can be imposed without China, USA, Russia, France and Great Britain agreeing on it. This is how the five powers are dictating the rules to 184 other nations.

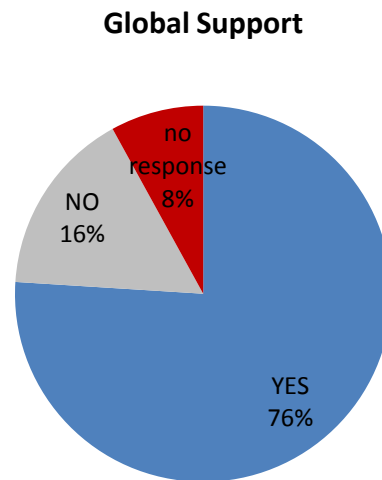
The so created imbalance is becoming visible also in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Here nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states are named and manifested. But the treaty will determine to abolish the imbalance through obliging the nuclear weapons states to get disarm their nuclear weapons until an early date. This is what the non-nuclear weapons states together with representatives from civil society are demanding. This common demand for a comprehensive framework of agreements or a nuclear weapons convention is becoming stronger in the past years.

Public Opinion:

Opinion polls from 2008 conducted in 21 countries have revealed that, on average, 76% of people worldwide support the negotiation of a treaty banning and eliminating all nuclear weapons.



Source: Global Zero



Supporter of a Nuclear Weapons Convention:

The Non-Aligned Movement, representing 116 parties to the NPT, strongly supported a convention at the Review Conference. The following nations also called for a convention in their statements: Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Holy See, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Qatar, Senegal, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Yemen

METHOD 1: YOUR OPINION

MATERIAL: enough space

LOCATION AND TIME: inside or outside, time is depending on number of questions and length of interviews from 5-10 Minutes

What do you think! People need to position themselves according to an imaginary line from yes/very to no/never. Then you can interview people why they are standing at this point of the line. If you hear arguments changing your mind you can also change your position. It sometimes makes sense to ask the same questions in the beginning and at the end of a workshop to see if positions have changed.

Examples for questions to begin a workshop could be:

- How important is the issue nuclear weapons for you?
- How important do you think is it for your community/country in general?
- Do you feel threatened by nuclear weapons?
- Do you think that nuclear weapons prevent wars in the past?
- Do you think a nuclear weapon could be used in the future?
- Do you think nuclear weapons can guarantee security?
- Do you think a world without nuclear weapons is possible?

The opinion barometer can also be used within a special topic for example to motivate students to start a discussion.

Examples are:

- Do you think scientists have a responsibility for their invention?
- Do you think the western countries must prevent that other states like Iran acquire nuclear weapons?
- Do you believe that the commitment of civil society can lead to the abolition of nuclear weapons?
- Do you think that nuclear weapons play a role in the conflict in the middle east?

METHOD 2: MAKE YOUR OWN SURVEY

MATERIAL: computer with printer and paper, internet, pens

LOCATION AND TIME: school area or city center, one day

Surveys can provide us with useful information about people's opinions and their level of knowledge.

You could conduct a survey to find out what other students at your school, or people from the wider community, think and know about nuclear weapons. Analyze your results and share what you discover!

Collecting personal data such as age, occupation, sex and city of residence can be useful. For example, you might discover that young people know more about nuclear weapons than older people!

Steps:

1. Design your survey based on what you hope to Learn.
2. Distribute your survey along with instructions for returning it to you once completed.
3. Compile the survey results in a spreadsheet.
4. Analyze the results and pick out statistics that people will find interesting.
5. Write a report of your findings, and consider sending it to your local paper.

An idea is to split the poll into three parts: Personal Data (Age, Sex, City), knowledge and personal opinion.