

3. Nuclear negotiations: back to the future?

KEY TERMS

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—Established by the Eisenhower administration in 1957, this independent wing of the United Nations promotes peaceful and safe use of atomic energy by, among other things, conducting inspections of nuclear sites

“Lead but hedge” — The military strategy used by the Democratic Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama that advocated for the United States to lead on arms reduction and nuclear nonproliferation while maintaining a nuclear arsenal to deter unknown threats

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) — Doctrine of military strategy widely accepted since the Cold War arms race in which the use of nuclear weapons by two or more countries would lead to the complete annihilation of both the attacker and the defender

“Peace through strength” — A Roman motto that has consistently appeared in the Republican party platform since the Reagan administration that suggested a strong military can preserve peace

Theory of deterrence — A military belief that gained prominence during the Cold War that a nation, despite its size, could deter an enemy’s attack by demonstrating strength with a nuclear arsenal

123 Agreements —Originating from Section 123 of the 1954 United States’ Atomic Energy Act that formally called for cooperation with other nations to develop peaceful nuclear energy projects

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LESSON ONE

Student Objectives

Upon completion, students should be able to:

- Explain a nation's motivations to build up its nuclear weapons arsenal
- Outline the history of nuclear arms races
- Develop an argument identifying how the United States should address the emerging arms race in 2019

Materials

- Classroom set of Handout #3-A
- *Great Decisions* article

Time

45 minutes for preparation, 45 minutes for class discussion

Lesson Development

1. Warm-up: Prior to reading the *Great Decisions*' article "Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future?", ask students to share their background knowledge of the Cold War arms race. Significant terms and events that one should hope to bring to light include: the dropping of atomic bombs to end World War II, Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), deterrence, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.
2. After handing out the *Great Decisions*' article "Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future?", instruct students to read and annotate the article paying particular attention to evidence of William O. Chittick's foreign policy values: community objectives, security goals, and prosperity values. These are further described in the introduction of this book.
3. After students have read the *Great Decisions* article, give students Handout #3-A. Instruct students to use the information from the article to decide what policy the United States should adopt to address the growing nuclear arms race. Students should be encouraged to use the events of past arms races to identify whether a ban on nuclear weapons, a deterrence posture, or a modernization of its nuclear weapons is the best path forward.
4. Conclusion / assessment: Ask students to report on their conclusion and to reflect either in writing or through discussion. Assess student preparation, participation, and reflection.

Additional Suggestions

- Consider extending this lesson by having students develop conclusions on how President Trump's decisions addressing the nuclear arms race may affect the nation domestically and its standing internationally. Key concepts to discuss may include the political risks the President's administration may incur on either end of the argument and how his decisions may affect the nation on the global stage.

LESSON TWO

Student Objectives

Upon completion, students should be able to:

- Describe the recent developments in the nuclear arms race
- Contrast the points of view and motivations of world leaders currently participating in the arms race

Materials

- Classroom set of Handout #3-B.
- Computers or other devices with Internet access
- *Great Decisions* article

Time

45 minutes for research, 45 minutes jigsaw activity or whole class presentations.

Lesson Development

1. Have students read the *Great Decisions* article “Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future?” prior to class.
2. At the beginning of class, lead a class discussion over the article they read prior to class. Be sure to check for student understanding throughout the discussion.
3. Once you feel that students have an adequate understanding of the current issues concerning the proliferation of nuclear weapons, break the students into five groups. Each group should be assigned a nation currently participating in the nuclear arms race: the United States, China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. If the class is larger, the teacher may want to consider dividing the class into more groups and assigning countries indirectly impacted by the current arms race. Suggested nations may include Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Japan.
4. Explain to the class that in order to better understand the complexity of the current arms race, each group will be responsible for researching an assigned country currently involved. Encourage them to focus their research on their nation’s motivations for developing weapons.
5. After giving the students 45 minutes to prepare, have students share their findings in a jigsaw activity by matching them up with students from other groups. They will be expected to share their information about their assigned country with these other students. Prior to this activity, give each student Handout #3-B to help students follow the discussion.

OR

1. After giving the students 45 minutes to prepare, have each group present their information in front of the whole class. Prior to this activity, give each student Handout #3-B to help students follow the discussion.
2. Conclusion / assessment: Ask students to compare and contrast the motivations and actions of the current players in the nuclear arms race. Using this information, students should develop a one-page position paper on how the United States and the world can best address the current arms race.

Additional Suggestion

- Consider having students participate in a mock United Nations conference on the proliferation of nuclear weapons. During the conference, students will act as delegates from the nation’s they researched earlier. As these delegates students will work towards solutions slowing the growth of nuclear weapons while protecting their nation’s interests. This option requires students to understand United Nations procedure. Ample support for this can be found online.

HANDOUT #3-A

How may the United States best address the emerging nuclear arms race?

NAME: _____

Directions: After reading and annotating the *Great Decisions*’ article “Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future”, complete the chart using specific evidence from each historical arms race.

Nuclear Arms Race	Options for U.S. policy today		
	Evidence for weapons ban	Evidence for deterrence	Evidence for weapons modernization
Original race (World War II)			
Vertical race (Cold War)			
Horizontal race (1962–Present)			
Denial race (post-9/11)			
Space race (Present)			

Based on the chart above, should U.S. foreign policy seek to develop a nuclear weapons ban, take a deterrence-only posture, or modernize its nuclear weapons to address current concerns over nuclear weapons proliferation?

HANDOUT #3-B
Players in the Contemporary Nuclear Arms Race

Directions: Complete the chart using the information shared during the activity.

	Motivations	Actions
United States		
Russia		
China		
North Korea		
Iran		