

DISEC

Background Guide

GWCIA XXXI

Topic A:International Arms Control
Topic B: Nuclear Materials Security

Table of Contents

Conference Policies 2-3
Letter from the Chair 4
Introduction to the Committee 5
Background / Situation 6-8
Questions to Consider 9
Works Cited 10

Conference Policies

Misconduct Policy

GWCIA acknowledges that collegiate Model UN spaces often echo or perpetuate real-world discrimination towards various historically marginalized communities. As such, GWCIA enforces a zero tolerance policy for harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, national origin, religion, age, disability, or any other identity-based designation. Additionally, GWCIA practices a zero tolerence policy for sexual misconduct of any kind, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate 1) content in notes passed or documents created during committee sessions, 2) conversations throughout GWCIA, and 3) conduct at The George Washington University campus or at any GWCIA-sponsored programming. If a delegate experiences any kind of discrimination, social discomfort, or sexual misconduct, they are urged to bring it to the attention of any GWCIA secretariat member or report the instance via our anonymous misconduct form, which can be found on our Conduct Policies website page and in each committee room. Any potential cases of discrimination or sexual misconduct will warrant immediate investigation and may result in disqualification from awards and/or dismissal from the conference at the sole discretion of the Secretary-General.

Technology Policy — General Assembly

Using technology is prohibited in GWCIA general assembly committees, unless a delegate has an approved accommodation. GWCIA will provide delegates with one white legal pad and a pen that they may use to write clauses and contribute to resolutions. Delegates are free to bring their own additional notepads, staplers, Post-Its, or other supplies, as these will not be provided.

Plagiarism, Pre-Writing & AI Policy

All pre-written, plagiarized, or AI-generated content, which can include working papers, draft resolutions, directives, or crisis notes, is strictly prohibited at GWCIA. Pre-writing constitutes any language or content that was written outside of unmoderated caucuses in General Assemblies and outside of when debate is formally opened in crisis committees. This means that creating content before or after committee sessions or during moderated caucuses in Assemblies & Specialized committees is pre-writing. Writing during USG feedback, announcements, or during guest speakers equally constitutes pre-writing. All dais members and undersecretaries general are specifically instructed to monitor for pre-writing by checking typed and written materials that delegates may have prepared before the conference if potential pre-writing is suspected.
By participating in GWCIA, your delegation acknowledges that they understand this policy and the consequences if it is broken. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, verbatim or near-verbatim copying and pasting from academic sources or other websites. Any delegate found guilty of pre-writing, plagiarism, or flagrant AI usage will be immediately disqualified from any award in their committee. The GWCIA Secretariat reserves the right to search computers and laptops, notebooks and binders, USBs, and any form of electronics for Model UN specific documents in response to allegations. They additionally reserve the

discretion to run any content through an AI detector. In order to report a case of substantive misconduct, please see the anonymous misconduct form on our Conduct Policies page or contact a member of the Secretariat.

Awards Policy

While GWCIA recognizes that the core value of participating in any Model UN committee is education in international affairs and the development of related skills such as productive collaboration, public speaking, and critical thinking, we also recognize the value of rewarding delegates who are exceptionally prepared and proficient in these skills. At GWCIA, we value delegates who can leverage creativity, diplomacy, substantive knowledge, and critical thinking skills to debate effectively, lead negotiations and blocs, and write comprehensive clauses. We especially look favorably towards delegates who individually develop meaningful solutions to the committee's main issues while keeping in mind the realistic diplomatic dynamics of our world, as well as those delegates who are able to advocate for their solutions and ideas to be adopted. The dais encourages delegates to lead in a manner that uplifts and respects their competitors while also introducing strong, unique solutions that consistently anchor their group's directive or working paper. On the other hand, attempts to undermine the goals of the committee without reason or acting without detailed thought of consequences are discouraged. Any rude, disrespectful, or demeaning conduct towards other delegates' ideas will not be tolerated.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the Disarmament and International Security Committee for GWCIA XXXI! I am your chair, Sarah, and I'm so excited to be a part of GWCIA this year. This is my fourth and final GWCIA so I am super excited to chair this committee! Some things about me, I am a senior studying International Affairs with a concentration in Gender in IA and a minor in German as well. And I am originally from Baltimore Maryland, go Ravens! Here at GW, I currently travel with the Model UN team, I currently serve as the Secretary General for our high school conference, WAMUNC, and I am also a campus tour guide.

In this committee, you will be tasked with solving one of these two issues: International Arms Control or Nuclear Materials Security, both of which are crucial topics for DISEC. **Please note, delegates will not be required to write a position paper**, however, if delegates would like to write a position paper and receive feedback from the chairs, please feel free to email it to us (be sure to CC your advisor as well).

One last reminder, we will not tolerate any action that may violate GWCIA's conference policy. GWCIA is a conference for students to develop their public speaking, debate, diplomacy, and writing skills while also giving students an opportunity to have fun. We want GWCIA to continue to be a safe and fun place for all delegates. Any violation of GWCIA's conference policies will result in possible disqualification and/or removal from the conference.

Now with that, I cannot wait to begin committee!

Best,
Sarah Strolger

[sarah.strolger@gwmail.gwu.edu]

Reminder: Delegates must CC their advisor on any email sent to the Chair.

Introduction to the Committee

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and serves as the primary forum for addressing issues related to international peace, security, and disarmament. DISEC is responsible for discussing global challenges involving conventional and unconventional weapons, arms control, terrorism, and emerging security threats. While the committee cannot create legally binding resolutions, it plays a vital role in shaping international norms and policies by recommending actions to the General Assembly[1].

As military technologies advance and geopolitical tensions continue to evolve, DISEC remains central to international efforts aimed at reducing conflict and promoting global stability. Delegates in this committee are tasked with balancing national security interests with the broader goal of maintaining international peace and security.[2]

This year, DISEC will address two pressing issues. **Topic A, International Arms Control**, examines the future of nuclear arms control in an era marked by the expiration of the New START Treaty between the United States and Russia, leaving no active bilateral limits on the world's two largest nuclear arsenals. As major powers including the United States, Russia, and China continue to modernize and expand their nuclear capabilities, delegates must consider how the international community can prevent a renewed arms race and strengthen strategic stability.

Topic B, Nuclear Materials Security, focuses on the protection and management of nuclear materials used for peaceful purposes, including energy production, medicine, and scientific research. While these materials provide significant benefits to society, they also pose serious security risks if acquired by states seeking nuclear weapons or by non-state actors intending to develop radiological or nuclear devices. Delegates will explore methods to enhance international cooperation, strengthen security standards, and prevent the proliferation of dangerous nuclear materials while preserving their peaceful use.

---

[1] United Nations. “First Committee: Disarmament and International Security.” *United Nations General Assembly*. Accessed August 19, 2026. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml
[2] Model Diplomat. “DISEC.” *Model Diplomat*. Updated July 7, 2026. https://modeldiplomat.com/learn/glossary/disec

Background / Situation

Background

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly, born out of a global desire to ensure the horrors of World War II would never happen again. Under the UN Charter, DISEC is tasked with a massive mission: managing international arms control, which means creating global rules to limit, regulate, and eventually reduce the number of weapons in the world. Rather than banning weapons entirely, arms control focuses on keeping the peace by making sure countries are transparent about their military power so they do not accidentally trigger a war out of fear or misunderstanding.

Today, DISEC serves as the starting point for nearly all major international weapon frameworks, dealing with everything from atomic bombs to everyday firearms. When countries want to propose a new rule, like banning weapons in outer space or regulating automated drone strikes, they bring that idea to DISEC first. Because all 193 UN member states have an equal vote in this committee, it acts as a global sounding board. Even though DISEC resolutions are recommendations rather than legally binding laws, they set international norms regarding acceptable military behavior and often serve as the foundation for future treaties that strengthen global security.

While regulating traditional military power is vital, DISEC must also confront an invisible and deeply complex threat: nuclear material security. Nuclear materials, including highly enriched uranium (HEU), plutonium, and radioactive isotopes used in medicine and industry, can provide tremendous benefits for energy production, scientific research, and healthcare. However, if these materials are stolen, improperly stored, or diverted for malicious purposes, they can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons or radiological dispersal devices, commonly known as "dirty bombs[3]." Unlike conventional explosives, the consequences of a nuclear security failure can extend across generations, contaminating land, disrupting economies, and threatening international peace.

The international community has spent decades building institutions and agreements to reduce these risks. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), established in 1957, works with states to promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology while implementing safeguards to ensure nuclear materials are not diverted to military purposes. Landmark agreements such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) created a framework built upon three pillars: preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, promoting peaceful nuclear cooperation, and pursuing eventual nuclear disarmament. Additional agreements, including the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, established international standards for securing nuclear materials during transport and storage[4].

---

[3] United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Nuclear Weapons.” *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*. Accessed August 19, 2026. https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons

[4] United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.” *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*. Accessed August 19, 2026.

Despite these efforts, nuclear material security has become increasingly challenging in the twenty-first century. Advances in technology have made sensitive scientific knowledge more accessible, while expanding nuclear energy programs have increased the amount of nuclear material requiring protection worldwide. At the same time, terrorist organizations, transnational criminal networks, cyberattacks targeting nuclear facilities, and geopolitical conflicts have introduced new vulnerabilities that earlier international agreements were not designed to address.

Current Situation

Today, the international security landscape is defined by a combination of renewed great power competition and rapidly evolving technological threats. More than thirty countries operate nuclear power reactors, dozens possess research reactors containing weapons-usable materials, and nine states maintain nuclear weapons arsenals. While the majority of nuclear materials remain securely protected, even a single security breach could have catastrophic humanitarian, environmental, and political consequences.

Recent conflicts have demonstrated that nuclear facilities themselves may become targets during times of war. Military operations near civilian nuclear power plants have raised global concerns about the safety of reactors and the security of nuclear materials during armed conflict. These events have challenged long-standing assumptions that nuclear infrastructure would remain protected under international law and have sparked renewed debate over how the international community should respond when nuclear security is threatened by conventional warfare.

Meanwhile, technological developments continue to complicate traditional arms control efforts. Cyberattacks against critical infrastructure have become increasingly sophisticated, raising concerns that hackers could disrupt nuclear facilities or interfere with security systems designed to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive materials. Artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons systems, and advanced drone technology have also blurred the line between conventional and strategic weapons, forcing policymakers to reconsider whether existing arms control agreements remain sufficient.

International cooperation has likewise become more difficult. Growing political tensions between major powers have slowed negotiations on new arms control agreements, while some existing treaties have expired or weakened over time. At the same time, many developing countries continue to expand peaceful nuclear energy programs to meet growing energy demands and climate goals, increasing the need for technical assistance, funding, and international oversight to ensure these programs remain safe and secure.

As delegates enter the committee, they must balance competing priorities: protecting states' sovereign right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology while preventing nuclear proliferation, strengthening international oversight without infringing upon national security interests, encouraging transparency among geopolitical rivals, and adapting decades-old arms control frameworks to address emerging technologies and modern security threats. The decisions made in DISEC will influence not only the future of nuclear material security but also the broader international system responsible for preventing conflict and maintaining global peace.

---

https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons

Questions to Consider

1.) What is your country's position on nuclear weapons and arms control agreements? Does your country support reducing nuclear arsenals, maintaining them, or expanding them?
2.) How can countries work together to prevent a new global arms race while still protecting their national security interests?
3.) What international organizations or agreements currently help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and how effective are they?
4.) What steps can governments take to ensure that nuclear materials used for energy, medicine, and research do not fall into the hands of terrorists or other non-state actors?
5.) How can the international community balance the peaceful use of nuclear technology with the need to prevent nuclear proliferation and maintain global security?

Works Cited

United Nations. “First Committee: Disarmament and International Security.” *United Nations General Assembly*. Accessed August 19, 2026. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml

Model Diplomat. “DISEC.” *Model Diplomat*. Updated July 7, 2026. https://modeldiplomat.com/learn/glossary/disec

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Nuclear Weapons.” *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*. Accessed August 19, 2026. https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.” *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*. Accessed August 19, 2026. https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/weapons-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons