

Executive Summary:

Over the last two years, the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) engaged early-career professionals in nuclear and space policy education and analysis. These efforts support broader strategic weapons disarmament and nonproliferation goals. These include building technical, legal, economic, and historical understanding of U.S. and international space and nuclear policies, related arms control and disarmament understandings and issues.

NPEC's Nuclear Policy Certificate Program introduces young professionals to the civil and military dimensions of nuclear energy, with attention to the history of nuclear programs, their key technical and economic dimensions, deterrence theories, nuclear proliferation concerns, and how nuclear strategy relates to conventional and new-generation warfare. The Space Policy Certificate Program focuses on space systems as they relate to strategic military concerns including their possible use in general and nuclear wars.

Young professionals help NPEC develop strategic war games for both courses, which, in turn, includes the students as participants. These games explore escalation risks involving nuclear use, strikes on nuclear infrastructure, and space-based conflict that escalate potentially into nuclear conflicts. Young professionals are also regularly invited to take part in NPEC workshops and events aimed at informing policy discussions on these issues.

These programs help prepare early-career and entry-level U.S. government staffers, military servicemembers, reporters, Capitol Hill aides and correspondents, and foreign embassy staff to engage meaningfully with the technical and strategic questions at the core of nonproliferation and disarmament policy. This year, NPEC is expanding this program to include undergraduate and graduate-level students.

Full Submission:

Submission by the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) Youth Engagement and Empowerment Activities in the Area of Disarmament and Non- Proliferation April 2023 – April 2025

The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) is proud to support the Secretary-General's report on youth engagement in disarmament and nonproliferation. As part of our mission to strengthen informed policy debate and analysis, NPEC has focused on empowering early-career professionals through two core programs: the Nuclear Policy Certificate Program and the Space Policy Certificate Program.

1. Nuclear Policy Certificate Program

In 2023 and 2024, NPEC ran two full cohorts of its Nuclear Policy Certificate Program, training over 70 early-career professionals from the U.S. government, military, foreign diplomats, and media. Participants took part in a challenging curriculum of 14 lectures by NPEC's Executive

Director, Henry Sokolski, and 10 additional sessions with top experts in nuclear law, history, and strategy.

This program equips young professionals and students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to further their own education on civil and military nuclear matters.

2. Space Policy Certificate Program

NPEC completed the third iteration of its Space Policy Certificate Program in spring 2024 and will host the fourth cohort in late April 2025. The program includes seven expert-led lectures on topics such as civil-military dynamics in space, commercial satellite vulnerabilities, international space law, and emerging security threats in orbit.

While space policy is not traditionally included in nuclear disarmament frameworks, the program emphasizes the increasingly important role that space systems play in global security, strategic deterrence, and dual-use technology control—making it highly relevant to emerging disarmament challenges.

By introducing participants to these rapidly evolving issues, the program helps build a strong foundation for future engagement on space-related arms control and disarmament issues.

3. Young Professionals in Strategic Simulations

In the past two years, early-career professionals and students have played key roles in three major war games hosted by NPEC. These simulations explored:

- Israeli and Iranian nuclear use;
- Drone strikes on nuclear power plants in East Asia;
- Chinese attacks on Taiwan’s ground- and space-based communications systems and the escalation this could prompt.

Students and young professionals participated in every stage—from developing scenarios and conducting pre-briefings to analyzing outcomes and co-authoring after-action reports. These experiences gave them practical exposure to high-stakes policy analysis and crisis simulation.

4. Research and Writing Contributions

NPEC also created opportunities for young professionals to contribute directly to its major research publications. Graduate students and junior analysts—including contributors like Makena Young, John Krzyzaniak, and Eva Lisowski—authored chapters in two upcoming edited volumes:

- *Thinking the Unthought: Unexplored Nuclear Wars* (Spring 2025)

- *The Coming Collision of Commercial and Military Space* (Fall 2025)

Their work brings fresh, well-researched perspectives into global nuclear and space policy conversations.

5. Outreach and Public Engagement

NPEC's broader outreach has intentionally prioritized access and engagement for younger professionals. Through virtual public retreats, academic lectures, and open briefings, participants had the chance to engage directly with experts on topics like:

- The vulnerability of nuclear infrastructure;
- Legal implications of military activity in space;
- The future of arms control in the Middle East.

All events were shared widely through NPEC's website and social platforms, extending their reach to youth audiences around the world.

Conclusion

NPEC's approach to youth engagement blends education, practical war game simulations, and research opportunities to foster an informed, critically thinking generation of disarmament and nonproliferation policy practitioners and analysts. NPEC is committed to expanding these efforts.

NPEC respectfully request that the executive summary be included in the Secretary-General's report and welcome the full submission being posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

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