8.12 Nuclear Deterrence and the Disarmament Debate: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain two reasons why some religious believers might support nuclear deterrence as a way to preserve peace, referring to religious ethical concerns about protecting life.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Explain two reasons why some religious believers argue against unilateral disarmament, referring to concerns about security and justice.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Explain two ways Just War proportionality concerns apply to the possession or threat of use of nuclear weapons, with reference to the likely effects on civilians.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Explain two Christian responses in favour of disarmament, each supported by a named scriptural or doctrinal source of authority, and give the source.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

5 Evaluate the view that nuclear weapons can never be justified. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments, and reach a justified conclusion. This question carries up to 3 marks for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG).

(Total for Question 5 is 15 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.12 Nuclear Deterrence and the Disarmament Debate: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

point 1: deterrence is argued to prevent large scale war and so protect many innocent lives, oe **B1**

development: this links to the religious priority of preserving life and the lesser-evil reasoning that keeping weapons may avoid a greater catastrophe, oe **B1**

point 2: deterrence can be seen as maintaining a stable balance of power that prevents aggression, oe **B1**

development: some believers adopt a pragmatic ethic where an evil means is tolerated to prevent a worse evil, citing duty to protect the innocent, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. deterrence prevents large scale war and protects innocent lives; deterrence maintains balance of power and stability, a pragmatic toleration of a bad means to avoid a worse outcome.

Question 2

point 1: unilateral disarmament may leave a state vulnerable if other states keep weapons, risking injustice to its citizens, oe **B1**

development: religious duty to protect the innocent could be cited to justify keeping weapons until others disarm, oe **B1**

point 2: unilateral action might weaken deterrent stability and provoke hostile behaviour, increasing the chance of conflict, oe **B1**

development: some believers argue justice includes maintaining order and preventing aggression, so unilateral disarmament could be irresponsible, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. vulnerability if others remain armed risking citizens; weakening deterrence and possibly provoking hostility, contrary to duty to protect and maintain justice.

Question 3

point 1: proportionality requires that harm caused by force is not excessive compared with the good aimed for, and nuclear weapons cause massive, indiscriminate harm, oe **B1**

development: therefore threat or use of nuclear weapons is hard to justify proportionally because civilian casualties and environmental damage would vastly outweigh most aims, oe **B1**

point 2: even deterrent threats may fail proportionality because they accept the possibility of unacceptable civilian suffering, oe **B1**

development: Just War theorists and religious critics argue that the scale of destruction makes nuclear deterrence morally problematic under proportionality, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. proportionality is breached because nuclear weapons cause massive civilian and environmental harm that outweighs aims; even threat of use accepts potential unacceptable suffering so may be unjustifiable.

Question 4

response 1: pacifist Christian view that weapons should be renounced because followers of Jesus must not kill, oe **B1**

development: supported by scripture such as Matthew 5:9 'Blessed are the peacemakers' or Matthew 5:21-22 on refraining from killing, oe **B1**

response 2: moral argument that disarmament upholds sanctity of life and prevents mass civilian suffering, oe **B1**

development: linked to Genesis 1:27 about the value of humans made in God's image and Catholic teaching emphasising protection of life, oe **B1**

the scriptural or doctrinal sources are named accurately and linked to the responses, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. pacifist Christian view using Matthew 5:9 or Matthew 5:21-22 to support renouncing weapons; sanctity of life argument linked to Genesis 1:27 and Catholic teaching about protecting life.

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Question 5

Level 4 A well-developed, balanced evaluation that analyses strong reasons for and against the view, includes relevant religious arguments and sources, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion.	**10-12**
Level 3 A clear evaluation with several relevant points on both sides, some use of religious arguments or sources, and a supported conclusion.	**7-9**
Level 2 Some evaluation with points for and against, but limited development or limited reference to religious arguments; a simple conclusion is given.	**4-6**
Level 1 A few simple, relevant points, likely one-sided or descriptive, with little or no conclusion.	**1-3**
Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Arguments supporting the statement: Sanctity of life and the scale of civilian casualties mean nuclear weapons are intrinsically immoral; religious teachings that value human life such as Surah 5:32 and Matthew 5:9 can be used to argue for absolute rejection.
- The indiscriminate nature and long term environmental and humanitarian damage make proportionality impossible, so Just War principles rule out nuclear weapons.
- Arguments against the statement: Deterrence may have prevented major wars since 1945, saving many lives; some religious thinkers argue a pragmatic duty to protect innocent citizens could allow possession as a last resort.
- Multilateral disarmament may be unrealistic without security guarantees; some argue nuclear weapons as a temporary measure until effective global treaties and verification systems are in place, citing maslahah or stewardship responsibilities.
- Religious responses are diverse: pacifist and sanctity of life positions reject nuclear weapons unconditionally; other religious voices accept limited deterrence to prevent greater evils, so the moral judgement depends on weighing outcomes and intentions.
- Conclusion: a justified conclusion should weigh the strength of the sanctity of life and proportionality arguments against pragmatic protection arguments and consider whether credible, enforceable alternatives to deterrence exist.

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