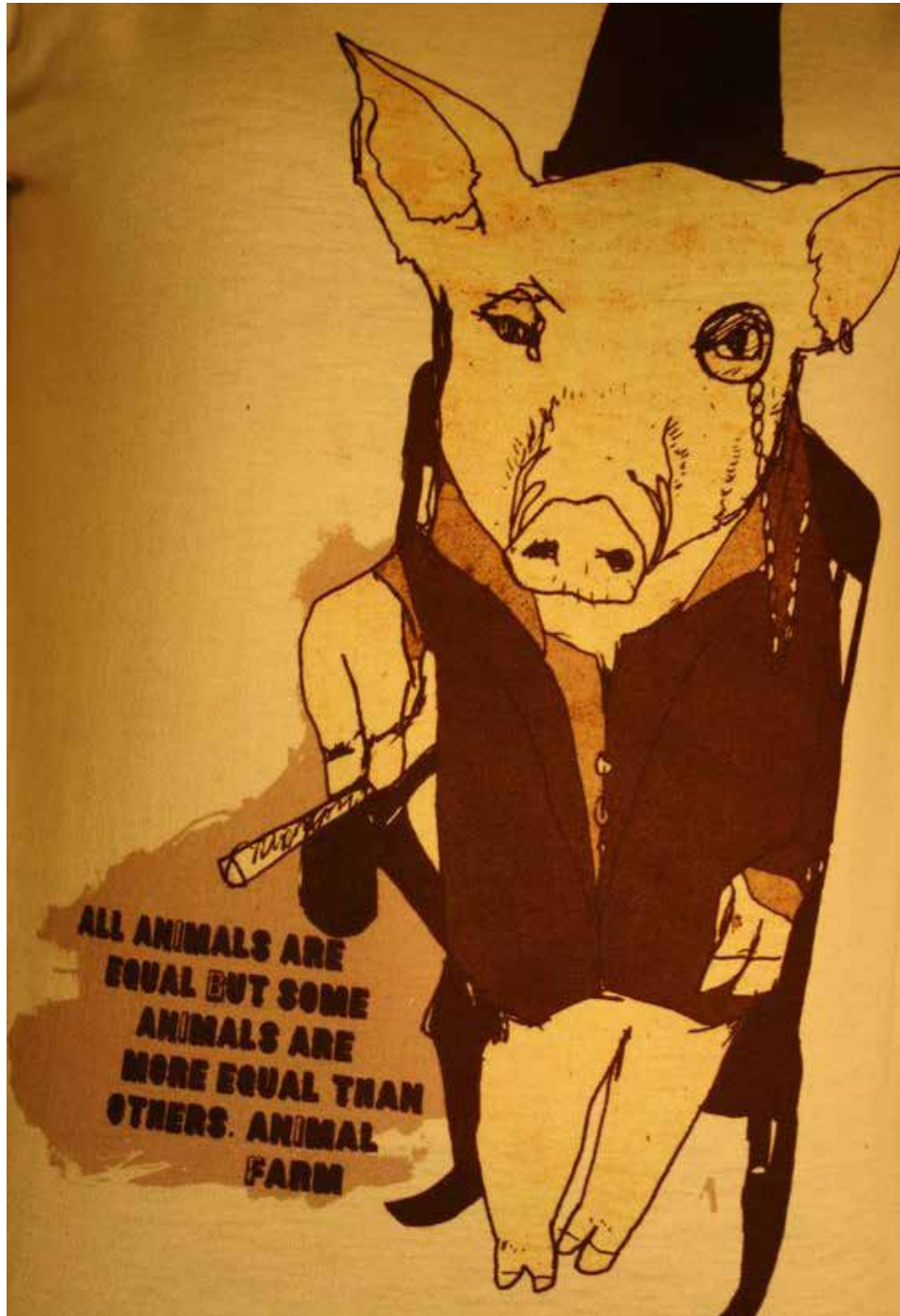


FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

NGO Reporting on the United Nations
General Assembly First Committee on
Disarmament and International Security
3 October–2 November 2016

NO. 3

17 October 2016



FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

2016 No. 3

Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Cover image: Quote from *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

Reaching Critical Will is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organization in the world. Reaching Critical Will works on issues related to disarmament and arms control of many different weapon systems; militarism and military spending; and gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and of disarmament processes.

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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: FIRST COMMITTEE FAIRY TALES AND A MEASURE OF REASON

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

“No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal,” says the character Squealer in George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. “He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be?”

Conference Room 4 at the United Nations has never felt more like the dystopian world depicted in Orwell’s novella than it did last week. When the representatives of most of the nuclear-armed states take the floor to assert that the rest of the delegations in the room are delusional; that their security interests do not matter or, as the UK ambassador suggested, do not exist; and that the initiatives they support are illegitimate, one cannot help but think about the fictional farm on which “all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

The self-described “nuclear powers” and some of their allies have tried to establish themselves as the authority on legitimacy and realism. They have berated the vast majority of states for supporting the negotiation of a legally binding treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, ridiculing their perspectives on peace and security and accusing them of threatening the world order and risking total chaos. They have sought, in an increasingly belligerent way, to stake their claim to truth *and* power, rather than allowing truth to be spoken to power.

In doing so, however, they have more clearly than ever exposed themselves as violators of international law and defenders of nuclear weapons.

Their insistence upon the “necessity” of nuclear weapons as essential for (their) security is an incitement of proliferation. Their boasting about parliamentary decisions to renew their country’s commitment to maintaining and modernising nuclear weapons is a violation of their legal obligation under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue and conclude multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Even putting aside their decades-long failure to implement or advance effective measures for nuclear disarmament, their intransigence in the face of this new movement to ban nuclear weapons is revealing of their true level of commitment to the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world.

Their hypocrisy has likewise never been deeper or more insidious. Words like consensus and inclusivity have become shadows, containing no real meaning anymore in the context of multilateral disarmament diplomacy.

The nuclear-armed and nuclear-supportive states insist that any process dealing with nuclear weapons must be governed by the rule of consensus, interpreted (by them) as unanimity. But it seems this is only relevant to processes they do not want, whereas initiatives they do support are not subject to the same rule. For example, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1996 and the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013 were both voted upon after it became clear that reaching a unanimous agreement was impossible and the objections of the “blocker” were deemed unimportant or insignificant in the calculation of geostrategic power.

Similarly, the states wanting to retain nuclear weapons demand that processes must be “inclusive”. Apparently it is not enough to have a process that is open to all states for equal participation. A process does not seem to be considered inclusive unless every single state (at least, those of “relevance,” i.e. those with nuclear weapons) participates. But this too is apparently only necessary for those processes not supported by these states, because their own initiatives are often extremely limited and exclusive. The new resolution put forward by Canada on a fissile material cut-off treaty reportedly sets up a process open only to 25 states. The Nuclear Security Summits organised by the United States have been open only to 53 states.

The idea that some states are more equal than others seems to have taken firm hold in these contexts. But the UN General Assembly, founded on the basis of the equality of all states, must reject this approach. The vast majority of states have a different vision of collective security and sustainable peace than the minority that value nuclear weapons and take pride in wielding the threat of inflict massive nuclear violence. “Some countries measure their power in counting the number of weapons they hold. Others are left with counting the victims of these weapons,” noted the representative of the State of Palestine last week. “It is time to substitute the balance of fear and the arms race it entails, with a measure of reason, which can save us all.” •

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

As it did during the first week of First Committee, the issue of nuclear weapons dominated the discussion throughout last week, from general debate to the exchange with high-level officials to the opening thematic debate. The key focus once again was the prohibition of nuclear weapons, for which there is a resolution on the table to commence negotiations in 2017. The majority of states support this proposal—it currently has 36 cosponsors and has established the dates for negotiations as 27–31 March and 15 June–7 July 2017. However, those possessing nuclear weapons or including them in their security doctrines continued issuing attacks against the future ban treaty and the states championing it.

Thai ambassador Thani Thongphakdi, who chaired this year's UN open-ended working group (OEWG) on nuclear disarmament, presented the report of the group to First Committee on Friday. One of its recommendations, he noted, was to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. His presentation triggered three statements vociferously opposed to this conclusion of the OEWG, from Germany, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

Germany criticised the OEWG report for its supposed "one-sided highlighting" of certain positions. Germany, which hosts US nuclear weapons on its soil, had decided to "distance itself" from the report for this reason and expressed concern that an "immediate ban" on nuclear weapons "bears the risk" of weakening the NPT. Germany also alleged the treaty will not lead to reductions in nuclear stockpiles, which was echoed by other states in favour of the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons.

Australia said it had participated "constructively" in the working group, though it forced a surprise vote on the report. A ban would be "potentially dangerous," said Australia, which asserts a "benefit" from its "extended nuclear deterrence" with the United States.

The UK delegation, in one of the most strongly worded anti-ban statements so far in the First Committee, alleged that even proponents of a ban have said that it would have "no normative effect," positing that there is already a strong norm against nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the UK asserted, "A ban has the potential to do great harm." It argued, "Politically, a ban will be a referendum on the NPT."

The UK also expressed worry about progress on nuclear disarmament being mandated by states "with

no external security concerns"—suggesting that only those that are nuclear-armed face security threats. It also boasted that the UK parliament had this year voted to keep its nuclear weapons. This vote, argued the UK ambassador, was proof that a ban would have no effect on parliamentary debates. Advocates for a ban on nuclear weapons are "fooling themselves," he stated.

During the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, the other nuclear-armed states and some of their nuclear-supporting allies echoed these arguments. Pakistan said the framing of the discourse in humanitarian terms has "excluded" and "trivialised" security concerns. Israel cautioned against "independent," "non-inclusive" processes and the "diversion of international attention towards solutions of lesser or weakened efficacy" with "depleted or hollow" outcomes. China, claiming that "the authority of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is being undermined," argued that setting up "new kitchens" is not "the right way to solve problems."

Canada, Estonia, and Turkey expressed concern about the divisiveness of the ban treaty approach. Estonia said it is "a delusion" to "implement a ban treaty without nuclear-weapon states, without strong verification mechanism and to not take into account the security environment." Estonia and Turkey emphasised the importance of consensus. Morocco, while fully supportive of negotiating a ban on nuclear weapons, argued that "before adopting such an important decision, a real dialogue with the participation of all is needed."

France described the OEWG and prohibition treaty as "illegitimate processes". It described the ban treaty as ineffective for the reduction of arsenals, undermining of other measures, and without any added value for states that have rejected nuclear weapons. The French representative also expressed concern that the ban would "generate uneven pressure" on the various nuclear-armed states and that it is "destabilising".

Describing nuclear weapons as "an integral part of our collective security architecture system," France asked, "what sense can a discussion on nuclear disarmament have that deliberately dismisses, and even stigmatizes, concerns of States which directly or indirectly base their security on nuclear deterrence." Similarly, the United States questioned how a state that relies on nuclear weapons for its security could "possibly join a negotiation meant to stigmatize and eliminate them."

The US ambassador also asserted a ban treaty would undermine existing non-proliferation and disarmament regimes as well as regional security, because it is “polarising,” and that it cannot be verified. Finally, it argued that a ban treaty will do nothing to address the underlying factors “preventing” nuclear disarmament.

This is in contrast to the many statements and arguments in favour of a ban treaty, which articulate how the prohibition of nuclear weapons will help facilitate disarmament.

Austria, introducing the resolution on commencing negotiations on the ban treaty, explained a prohibition instrument would “constitute the basis on which the necessary system to ensure the complete and verified implementation of the ultimate objective of a world free from nuclear weapons could subsequently be established.” It will also facilitate the implementation of article VI of the NPT, which “is not meant to be a static treaty allowing for indefinite possession” of nuclear weapons.

“We do not believe that a negotiating process with the participation of the majority of states lacks credibility nor realism,” said the Austrian ambassador. “No similar legally-binding instrument has started with universality, so we cannot expect this here, either.”

Malaysia articulated how the OEWG and ban treaty process are complementary to the NPT, reinforcing the commitments to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Malaysia also argued that the OEWG

does not undermine established disarmament machinery, explaining that it “is complementary and creative, in the absence of decades of tried-and-tested methods.” Likewise, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) said the OEWG and its outcome offer “an unprecedented opportunity to infuse momentum in achieving the next critical steps to move the nuclear disarmament agenda forward.”

Many delegations also pushed back on the assertions from nuclear-armed states that some countries’ security concerns are not as important as others, or that ban treaty-supporters are contributing to further destabilisation in the world.

“For a safer and secure world where international peace and security prevails and sustains,” said Myanmar, “we must take the security of all into serious consideration. Not that of a few and their allies.” Reliance on nuclear weapons for security “derives from their very existence,” the delegation explained. “And their existence inflicts insecurity on others. Then, reliance on one’s own arsenal for deterrence grows. This vicious cycle must be stopped.”

Supporting the OEWG recommendation for negotiation of a prohibition treaty, the Holy See pointed out “that nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence.” The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) pointed out that the argument from nuclear-armed states and their nuclear-supportive allies that the ban treaty fails to take into account “security dimensions”



Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations
TE AKA AORERE

The New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations
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Professor Treasa Dunworth

Author of

Negotiating Nuclear Disarmament: Clarifying the Law
A Set of Questions and Answers

Monday, 17th October
1:15 – 2:30pm, CR 4

Commentators:

H.E. Ms. Dell Higgie (Chair)
New Zealand Ambassador for Disarmament

Dr. Gro Nystuen
Senior Partner, International Law and policy Institute (ILPI)
Commenting on the “**The ICJ’s 1996 Advisory Opinion**”

Ms. Kathleen Lawand
Head, Arms Unit, ICRC
Commenting on “**Nuclear Weapons and IHL**”

To be followed by discussion
All are welcome to attend

Please direct any enquiries to Annie Di
Email: annidiunnz@gmail.com



is disingenuous and incorrect. “The ban treaty is first and foremost about the security of all states threatened by the consequences of nuclear weapons, including the nuclear-armed states,” explained ICAN.

Almost all states reiterated their concern with lack of progress on disarmament. The Caribbean Community said it is “dismayed by the reluctance of nuclear weapon states to fulfil their moral obligation towards advancing the common objective of nuclear disarmament.” Several, such as Kenya, expressed concern that “what we are seeing underway is an arms race and not disarmament” as nuclear-armed states seek to maintain their “overwhelming military dominance”.

Many states highlighted the insecurity to all states and people stemming from the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, with Palestine also pointing out that the use of nuclear weapons poses “the great possible breach to the principle of distinction” under international humanitarian law.

In this regard, the International Committee of the Red Cross emphasised the responsibility of states to “take decisive action” by taking forward the recommendation to prohibit nuclear weapons. It described this treaty as “an indispensable building block,” arguing that “unambiguous prohibition is both the foundation for disarmament and a disincentive for proliferation.”

Other nuclear weapon issues

All states indicated support for various other measures related to nuclear weapons, such as entry into force

of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), promotion of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs), further discussions on preventing the proliferation of WMD or the acquisition of nuclear materials by terrorists, or negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. A number of states parties to NWFZs talked about the importance of their promotion. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin American and the Caribbean (OPANAL) articulated its support for a global ban on nuclear weapons, noting that NWFZs are not an end in themselves but a means to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

On CTBT, Malaysia noted that while this year states are commemorating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, it seems “rather ironic to mark 20 years of a non-entry into force” of a treaty. Malaysia also cautioned that UN Security Council resolution 2310 on the CTBT should not “stall or substitute ratification” by the annex 2 states. Turkey and others echoed this call.

Several states individually highlighted the importance of reducing the alert status of nuclear weapons. The De-alerting Group, however, emphasised that this is “not an alternative to nuclear disarmament or a step that makes the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons more acceptable. Rather, de-alerting constitutes an interim disarmament measure that must be pursued alongside efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.” •

See www.icanw.org for more statement extracts related to nuclear weapons.

FEATURE: DO NO HARM—BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Tim Wright | International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Australia

On Friday, the United Kingdom's disarmament ambassador, Matthew Rowland, feigned concern that a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons would weaken the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We should abide by the principle of "do no harm," he lectured delegates. Then—in one of the more blatant displays of hypocrisy during this year's First Committee session—he boasted that Britain's "democratically elected" parliamentarians had voted in July to renew its fleet of nuclear-armed submarines. How was this decision not harmful to the NPT?

Like all NPT states parties, the United Kingdom is legally obliged to pursue negotiations for nuclear disarmament. And quite obviously, it is failing to do so—as are the United States, Russia, France, and China, as well as states that include nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. It is these governments that are eroding the NPT—and treating the rest of its membership with contempt.

How can a state that wields weapons of mass destruction—weapons that it has acknowledged have "catastrophic humanitarian consequences"—preach to others about doing no harm? The British ambassador, who accused ban treaty supporters of "fooling themselves" to believe that such a treaty would have a positive effect for nuclear disarmament, seemed only to be fooling himself to think that an intervention of this nature would be compelling to states determined to outlaw weapons that threaten all of our security.

Let us recall, too, that the United Kingdom, through the bolstering of its nuclear arsenal, has caused harm not only to the NPT, but also to countless people. It has perpetrated hundreds of acts of nuclear violence, conducting nuclear test explosions and related trials in my own country, Australia, and in the Pacific and Nevada.

Aboriginal people bore the brunt of the tests on our land in the 1950s and '60s, carried out with the complicity of the Australian government. For many Australians, nuclear weapons are not a distant, abstract threat, but a lived reality—a persistent source of pain and suffering, of contamination and dislocation.

Little was done to protect the test site workers, and even less to protect nearby Aboriginal communities. Today, survivors suffer from higher rates of cancer than the general population due to their exposure to radiation. Only a few have ever been compensated, and much of the land used for the blasts remains off limits.

At the Vienna conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in December 2014, Kokatha-Mula woman Sue Coleman-Haseldine described the irreparable harm that the United Kingdom had inflicted on her people. "Our old people remember the good life of hunting for wild game and collecting bush fruits. Life was healthy. There were still Aboriginal people living and travelling this way in the Emu Field and Maralinga region when the bomb tests started. The government was no good at ensuring everyone was safe," she said. "Many people died and became sick in the immediate test areas. So did the animals. The first atomic bomb called 'Totem 1' spread far and wide and there are lots of stories about the 'black mist' it created, which killed, blinded and made people very sick."

Last week, the president of the UN General Assembly, Fijian ambassador Peter Thomson, reminded First Committee delegates that our region "still bears the human and environmental scars from nuclear weapons testing." Fijians, in particular, have suffered greatly from British nuclear violence.

Ambassador Rowland asserted on Friday that his country's "nuclear deterrent," by which he meant its nuclear weapons, have kept the peace for decades. What peace? And should every nation acquire a "nuclear deterrent" to make the world a safer place? How is inciting proliferation not harmful to the NPT? His statement—which he delivered in response to the report of a UN working group on nuclear disarmament that the UK had boycotted—was offensive to all those who have suffered from Britain's acts of nuclear violence, and to those who are committed to implementing the NPT by negotiating a ban treaty.

Following the remarks, the US disarmament ambassador, Robert Wood, fist-bumped his British counterpart, signalling his praise. But the intervention, with its insulting tone and weak argumentation, could only have strengthened the commitment of other nations to begin negotiating a ban.

The NPT is not a licence for five nations to retain nuclear weapons in perpetuity. It does not confer any legitimacy on their weapons. Yet the United Kingdom last week was speaking as if that were the case. And it will continue to do so until we prohibit, and effectively stigmatise, these abhorrent weapons.

Indeed, we must all abide by the principle of "do no harm". Which is why we must urgently negotiate a global ban on the worst weapons of mass destruction.

SIDE EVENT: BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Tim Wright | International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Australia

On 14 October, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), together with the permanent missions of Brazil and Guatemala to the UN, held a side event at UN headquarters in New York on the possible elements for a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. The speakers also evaluated the potential impact of such a treaty on different states, from those that are nuclear-free to those that possess nuclear weapons or include them in their security doctrines.

Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, said that lessons could be learned from the development of regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. He expressed confidence that around two-thirds of the UN membership would vote “yes” to the upcoming UN resolution to begin negotiations in 2017 on a global treaty banning nuclear weapons.

Ambassador Carlos Duarte of Brazil and Soledad Urruela Arenales of Guatemala said that their respective governments are fully supportive of the humanitarian-based movement to outlaw nuclear weapons. The proposed new treaty, they said, would help stigmatise nuclear weapons and advance the goal of eliminating them completely, but is not an end in itself.

Australian senator Lisa Singh, speaking in her personal capacity, not as a member of the Australian delegation to the UN General Assembly, said that her party, the Australian Labor Party, “firmly supports the negotiation of a global treaty banning such weapons and welcomes the growing global movement of nations that is supporting this objective.”

“We will do everything we can—from the opposition benches of parliament—to support this process as it moves forward,” she said. “I’m confident that a future Labor government in Australia would sign and ratify a treaty banning nuclear weapons, as per our national policy platform.”

Beatrice Fihn, executive director of ICAN, challenged the argument that a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons would not have practical effects. She outlined some of the suggested provisions for a treaty that have been articulated through government working papers and civil society studies, explaining how these would have normative, legal, economic, and social effects on nuclear weapons. She also emphasised that the motivation for banning nuclear weapons comes from the unacceptable catastrophic nature of the weapons themselves. •



SIDE EVENT: NUCLEAR CRUISE MISSILES

Margaret McNish

The panel on nuclear cruise missiles opened with Ambassador Eva Walder of Sweden saying that the goal for all of us must be a nuclear weapon free world but that nuclear cruise missiles pose a particularly dangerous threat to global society. It is difficult to distinguish between a cruise missile that is carrying conventional warheads and cruise missiles that are carrying nuclear warheads. Therefore, a misinterpretation could easily trigger nuclear war, she warned.

Before introducing the panelists, Frank Greuter emphasised that this conversation is very important, because it could lead to the prohibition of an entire category of nuclear weapons. He said that we should unite where we can, and the nuclear cruise missile issue may be one that we can unite on.

Andrew Weber, former assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs, spoke from an American perspective. He began by noting the anniversary of an article published by William Perry and himself in the Washington Post nearly a year ago on 15 October 2015 proposing that the United States cancel its plan to develop a new nuclear air launched missile (follow up articles can be found at nuclearcruise missiles.com). Weber seconded Walder's concerns regarding the indiscriminate nature of these weapons. They are designed as first-use weapons to be used early in a conflict without warning, he explained. Continuing to develop them could contribute to a new potential arms race that he says we seem to be "sleepwalking ourselves into".

John Gower, speaking as a private citizen since he is recently retired from the UK Ministry of Defence, focused on the line distinguishing strategic from non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons. Cruise missiles,

he believes, are the "epitome of non-strategic nuclear weapons." They are not a reliable weapon of deterrence, he argued, and states must buy or develop more to ensure success. The result is an inevitable arms race. Again, Gower shined a light on the unnecessary risks that come with misinterpretation. Gower ended with saying that there has to be at least one category of nuclear weapons to be removed on the path to zero, and "the nuclear weapons category that has a tactical mindset should be the first to go."

Pal Sidhu of the EastWest Institute highlighted three dangers of these weapons and three approaches to handling their prohibition. The dangers are: 1) their use by states who already have this capacity; 2) the proliferation of these arms to states that do not have this capacity; and 3) that these weapons may find their way to non-state actors and terrorist groups. A short term approach to a ban would include steps to reduce the risks of existing cruise missiles. For example, states could keep them in storage. Second, states could resist the temptation of introducing new kinds of these weapons. Finally, a long term solution would be to establish a taboo against nuclear-armed missiles that could be made binding.

Christine Parthemore, a Fellow at the Center for American Progress, discussed how there is a bilateral precedent for a prohibition of this type. She cited the approach the United States and China took in creating the climate agreement. However, there are also unilateral actions that states could take, such as countries not developing these weapons or dividing to get rid of them. It is also imperative that the public is aware that dismantling nuclear cruise missile programmes is a stabilising move rather than a destabilising one. •

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BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Kathryn Millet | Disarmament Dynamics and Biosecu.re

The second week of general debate saw Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Iran, Pakistan, Brunei Darussalam, Nepal, and the International Committee of the Red Cross continuing to stress the importance of universalisation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), while Algeria, China, Guinea, Palestine, and Serbia emphasised the need for its full implementation. Nepal gave the welcome news that it is in the process of ratifying the BWC, while Myanmar highlighted its recent accessions to the BWC and the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

Algeria, Canada, Estonia, San Marino, Serbia, Turkey, and the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) addressed preparations and hopes for the forthcoming Eighth Review Conference of the BWC in November 2016. Algeria emphasised the need for "enhanced cooperation" on Article X issues relating to the transfer of biological technologies for peaceful purposes and underscored the need to establish a verification mechanism. Canada highlighted its work with China and the BWC Implementation Support Unit to "advance key issues in the lead-up to the Review Conference," citing as priorities the need to improve the science and technology review process, promote effective national implementation of the Convention, and explore voluntary transparency activities that share best practices on implementation and improve confidence in compliance with the Convention. Turkey noted the need for a stronger intersessional work programme, while China drew attention to its recommendation of a Code of Conduct for Biological Scientists as well as the establishment of a Non-Proliferation Export Control and International Cooperation Regime.

The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs highlighted the urgent need to better prevent and respond to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons use, particularly in the context of non-state actors. In his address, Mr. Kim Won-soo emphasized the importance of the BWC Eighth Review Conference as an opportunity to strengthen cooperative response and preparedness mechanisms under Article VII in the absence of an in-house institutional capacity and spoke to the need to strengthen the operational capacity and readiness of the Secretary-General's Mechanism to investigate allegations of the use of chemical, biological, and toxin weapons. Mr. Kim referenced the need for an improved science and technology review mechanism in addition to "reinforcing the Implementation Support Unit with technical expertise." The High Representative also remarked that international biosecurity efforts lag behind chemical and nuclear security measures.

Marking the first time a non-governmental coalition has addressed First Committee on the issue of biological weapons, the GCSC noted with alarm that the norm against the development and use of biological weapons is under threat and that the BWC is becoming increasingly "unfit for purpose". The GCSC called for states parties to the BWC to work together towards achieving four priorities at the Review Conference, namely a robust science and technology review process; an improved intersessional work programme with the ability to take decisions; a revitalized discussion on compliance options; and an expanded and appropriately resourced Implementation Support Unit.

States speaking on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including Algeria, Brunei Darussalam, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Iran, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Serbia, and Turkey, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), again highlighted the importance of universality of the Convention and full implementation of all of its provisions.

Canada, Brunei Darussalam, Estonia, Myanmar, San Marino, and Turkey, as well as the ICRC, the OPCW, and the UN High Representative of Disarmament Affairs, issued strong condemnations over the use of chemical weapons on Syrian territory by both the government of Syria and by non-state actors, with a number of states calling for accountability for perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks. In addition, Canada, Estonia, Myanmar, and Turkey noted the successful efforts towards chemical weapon stockpile destruction in Libya and Syria. Turkey, however, voiced its dismay at the continuing discrepancies in Syria's chemical weapon programme declarations. Estonia expressed its expectation for "a strong resolution" from First Committee on the implementation of the CWC that will be discussed next week.

The OPCW spoke to the need for "zero tolerance" on the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons, noting its work in Syria under the UN-OPCW Joint Investigatory Mechanism as well as its technical assistance visits (TAV) to assist Iraqi authorities in the conduct of their investigations regarding alleged chemical weapons attacks by non-state actors in three locations in Iraq. The OPCW also highlighted the work of its Open Ended Working Group on Terrorism, cooperation under UN Security Council resolution 1540, and with the UN Counterterrorism Implementation Taskforce. The OPCW reported that its Technical Secretariat established a rapid response and assistance mission in 2016 to be deployed at the request of a

state party to provide assistance in the case of use of chemical weapons. In addition to its cooperation and assistance work, the OPCW pays particular attention to education and outreach activities recently establishing an Advisory Board on Outreach and Education. This initiative is especially welcome at a time when, as a civil society youth representative from PACE University lamented during the NGO segment of this week's debate, states have an "anemic vision" of disarmament education, demonstrating little genuine interest in promoting disarmament education, providing little substance and even fewer resources.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) use by non-state actors was a pervasive theme in many interventions. Several states highlighted the importance of UNSCR 1540 in the global security architecture. The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs cited the "capacity gap in national implementation" and looked to the Comprehensive Review, due to be completed by December 2016, as an opportunity to consider the implications of emerg-

ing technology that can increase the risk of WMD use and proliferation. Malaysia drew attention to its high level Open Debate in August on addressing the proliferation of WMD to non-state actors and called for a "regular review of scientific, technological and international commerce advancements that facilitates access to WMD acquisition." Serbia noted its accession to the Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance, and stated that it is the process of finalizing its CBRN National Action Plan.

During statements by international organisations, the International Atomic Energy Agency described its efforts under the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force WMD Working Group entitled "Ensuring effective inter-agency interoperability and coordinated communication in case of chemical and/or biological attacks." The task force focuses on improving inter-agency coordination in terms of operational activities and communication with the public to ensure an effective response to a terrorist attack involving chemical and/or biological weapons. •

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Laura Boillot | International Network on Explosive Weapons

The end of general debate saw statements of concern over the use of explosive weapons in populated areas from the Holy See, Iran, San Marino, the International Network on Explosive Weapons, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In a strong statement against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the Holy See stated that "increasingly more powerful and sophisticated conventional weapons are devastating entire communities, hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure" and said that this "must now be treated with the same condemnation we attach to weapons of mass destruction." San Marino similarly raised the suffering, displacement, and death of civilians from these practices and urged all parties to refrain from the use of explosive devices in populated areas. Iran specifically raised the bombing of a funeral gathering in Yemen by Saudi Arabia, and its widespread bombardment of civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.

The ICRC expressed concern over heavy explosive weapons when used in populated areas, which are prone to indiscriminate effects owing to their wide-area effects. In addition to high risk of incidental civilian death, injury, and disability, "heavy explosive weapons tend to cause extensive damage to critical civilian infrastructure, triggering debilitating 'domino effects' on interconnected essential services such as

health care, and water and electricity supply systems. This in turn provokes further civilian death and displacement." The ICRC called on states to "avoid using explosive weapons with a wide impact area in densely populated areas" and to "share how they put into practice the constraints of IHL on their choice of weapons in urban warfare."

INEW's representative Ms. Alma Taslidzan Al-Osta shared some of the testimonies she has heard from spending time with Syrian families that have been displaced and are currently in a refugee camp in Amman, Jordan. She described the devastating impacts that the use of EWIPA has on entire communities for many years. INEW argued, "all too often, the impacts of explosive weapons are considered as an foreseeable result of conflict. Yet experience shows that at an operational level, militaries can, and have, curbed or halted the use of certain weapons in populated areas, and in doing so can strengthen civilian protection."

INEW called on states to engage in the process to develop an international political declaration to stop the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, and said that "a political declaration should be a practical tool that promotes actions that will reduce humanitarian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and increases the protection of civilians living through conflict." •

ARMS TRADE TREATY

Raluca Muresan | Control Arms

As the general debate continued into the second week of the First Committee, ten additional states, both states parties and signatories (Estonia, Senegal, Guinea, Côte D'Ivoire, San Marino, Canada, Turkey, Djibouti) as well as non-states parties (Nepal, Pakistan) welcomed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)'s entry into force and highlighted its important role in curbing the illicit trafficking of arms. Palestine, as an observer state, endorsed the ATT for the underlying principles behind it, "its object and purpose and the prohibitions it formulates". Canada and Turkey also took the opportunity to reaffirm their commitments to ratify the ATT in the near future.

Several African states (Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Guinea, Sénégal), affected disproportionately by the illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition, expressed their hope that the ATT will curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and help bring peace and stability to their region. Similarly, a link between the ATT and development was made by Nepal, which hopes its implementation will promote transparency and accountability and reduce the humanitarian impact of illicit SALW.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reminded member states that "irresponsible arms transfers are facilitating serious violations of IHL, including acts of terrorism and sexual and gender-based violence." It stressed the need for the transfer prohibitions and export assessments under the ATT. Anna Macdonald delivered a powerful statement on behalf of Control Arms urging member states to not only take note of the suffering and humanitarian tragedies happening every day in places like Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan but to take immediate action in order to prevent them. "Strong statements are not enough—governments must stop the arms supplies that are enabling these attacks on civilians," she argued. Control Arms also emphasized the undeniable link between these humanitarian crisis and the continuous flow of arms into conflict zones. It urged ATT states parties to

immediately implement and uphold all the Treaty's provisions, reminding the delegates that "the men, women and children being shot and bombed every day do not have the luxury of time."

After civil society delivered its interventions, Ireland took the floor to welcome the work of NGOs, expressing hopes that these contributions will further strengthen the work of First Committee. Ireland also highlighted the inclusive and participatory approach taken by governments and civil society during the negotiation of the ATT, which resulted in a milestone Treaty that can have real humanitarian impacts.

The new ATT resolution, introduced by Finland as the President of the third Conference of States Parties, was well received this week, with over 65 countries having co-sponsored. Built on the 2015 ATT resolution, it includes primarily procedural updates. A new preambular paragraph welcomes the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 16, which aims to significantly reduce illicit arms flows by 2013. The resolution also introduces four new operative paragraphs, which welcome the decisions taken at the Second CSP, particularly the establishment of the working groups on implementation, transparency and reporting, and universalisation, as well as the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, and notes the endorsement of the reporting templates.

Another important resolution this year is the Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which seeks to promote the inclusion of women in disarmament and arms control decision-making processes and brings attention to the need to prevent gender-based violence and violence against women and children. This resolution recalls the ATT's entry into force and encourages states parties to "fully implement all the provision of the Treaty, including the provision on serious acts of gender-based violence and violence against children". •

SIDE EVENT: IMPLEMENTING THE ATT IN CARICOM

Maria Virginia Olano | Control Arms

A side event hosted by the Mission of Trinidad and Tobago and organised by Project Ploughshares and Control Arms on Tuesday, 11 October, focused on issues surrounding the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in the CARICOM region. The event illustrated the varying challenges Caribbean nations,

face in particular due to their geographic uniqueness, including Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Jamaica, Guyana, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Raluca Muresan of Control Arms provided a brief overview of the status of the ATT's universalisation

and implementation. She highlighted the active role that CARICOM states played throughout the Treaty's negotiation and urged them to remain equally engaged in the CSP process, as it is an important step in ensuring the effective implementation of the Treaty. Cesar Jaramillo of Project Ploughshares reminded the audience that the role of civil society did not end with the signing of the Treaty, and that efforts are now focused on assisting states with its implementation. He stressed the need for stronger collaboration between civil society and governments towards building capacity, developing resources, and ensuring regional and national expertise. Maria Pia Devoto of Asociación de Políticas Públicas stressed the need for governments to update norms and laws that are outdated, in order to adequately respond to current challenges. Focusing on ATT legislation, she illustrated how it must be tailored to respond to national and regional challenges, such as the need for clear transit and transshipment regulations in the CARICOM region.

An engaging dialogue ensued on three main areas: 1) challenges and difficulties, 2) lessons learned and best practices, and 3) the role of interstate collaboration and capacity-building. Ambassador Marshall of Barbados underlined the links between the illicit arms trade and organized crime, particularly the drug trade

that plagues his region. The majority of the representatives also expressed their concern that despite not being arms producers or exporters, but an important transit route both for the arms and the drug trade, Caribbean countries suffer from high levels of armed violence.

The discussions also focused on shared experiences and lessons learned and on from implementing the ATT, including the adoption of national legislation, national control systems, or the collaboration between governmental stakeholders in developing the initial and annual reports. Many brought up the lack of resources in the region and the crucial need for international assistance in achieving the full implementation of the ATT, as well as combating the illicit trade of arms and drugs.

The event concluded with many expressing the need for these kinds of dialogue to continue as a useful tool for the Treaty's implementation, particularly towards harmonising existing regional and national legislation with the Treaty's provisions. The positive reception of the event was indicative of the high level of engagement and commitment of CARICOM nations to the ATT. •

SIDE EVENT: *SHADOW WORLD* DOCUMENTARY FILM

Maria Virginia Olano | Control Arms

On Friday evening, as a kickoff to the Humanitarian Disarmament Forum taking place over the weekend, Control Arms invited colleagues to the theatrical premiere of the documentary film *Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*. The film is based on the book with the same name, written by Andrew Feinstein, and delves into the complexities and the institutionalised corruption of the global arms trade.

The event was very well attended and positively received by the audience, and included an engaging Q&A with Andrew Feinstein after the film, moderated by Control Arms.

Andrew also spoke about his own background, from being a member of parliament in South Africa, where he was able to gain access and learn about the rampant corruption behind arms deals in his own government, to giving up his political career in order to continue his investigations into these issues.

Through interviews and personal accounts of former military executives, members of Congress, activists,

and even an international arms dealer, the film skillfully weaves a compelling story that shines a light on the murky, corrupt, and dangerous nature of the arms trade. The accounts also offer important insights on how powerful individuals, who have the ability to shape policy, have furthered the "need" for more arms by engaging their countries in countless wars or by authorising arms exports to human rights and humanitarian law violators. "We are put in a position where our own tax dollars are enabling the dreadful loss of civilian life," said Feinstein, commenting on the arms sales from the United States and the United Kingdom to the Saudi Arabian-led coalition, which has been involved in serious violations of IHL due to its bombardment campaign in Yemen.

Although the issues highlighted in the film sparked outrage in many, the event ended on a very positive note with a call to action from Feinstein. He stressed the important progress made in the humanitarian disarmament field so far and exemplified some of the work done by international campaigns and non-governmental organisations present at the screening. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Gwilym Roberts-Harry | International Action Network on Small Arms

Though the voices of civil society in First Committee have been limited to four-minute presentations during a floating holiday at the United Nations, many NGO representatives used their slots to add fresh perspectives to the debates on disarmament, including on the issue of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Such voices included that of Beulah Kollue of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). Born in a refugee camp in Nigeria after her parents fled from a conflict in Liberia, Beulah pointed out that a civil war that killed or maimed hundreds of thousands of people, used 15,000 child soldiers, and turned approximately 200,000 people into refugees, was initiated by just one man and approximately 100 collaborators armed with AK-47s. She urged governments to do more to prevent easy access to guns and ammunition; to give more attention to crime and not only to conflict in the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) on the illicit trafficking of SALW; and to reduce the global stockpile of small arms and light weapons—rather than only discussing managing this stockpile.

Baffour Amoa of the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) stated that pervasive armed violence—whether in conflict or in crime—denies millions of people access to justice and incapacitates institutions, leading to further armed violence. “If illicit arms flows are not significantly reduced, it will torpedo the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,” he emphasized.

During the second week of the general debate, member states of the African Group were particularly vocal

on the topic of SALW. Côte d’Ivoire noted that of the more than 600 million SALW in the world, there are 100 million in Africa alone. Angola attributed SALW proliferation to weapons that are easily obtained and cheaply purchased through criminal networks. They are largely supplied by states to non-state armed groups and also to terrorists in a dangerous game of influence and power, it argued. Djibouti, Senegal, and Guinea agreed that irresponsible SALW trade destabilises countries, leading to chaos.

Serbia suggested that member states follow the effective regional cooperation mechanism established in the West Balkans. This mechanism has established regional confidence building and transfer of knowledge. Serbia concluded by stating that discussing best practices and exchanging information is invaluable. Angola proffered that strengthening border security is a key factor toward curbing the traffic of weapons and implementing the UNPoA, particularly in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. Afghanistan echoed the need for states to enforce rules to prevent illicit trade.

The delegation from Senegal noted the UNPoA boosts cooperation and commitment among member states, and establishes a follow-up mechanism for the next six years. In 2018, the Review Conference will serve as an opportunity to focus closely on implementation of the UNPoA. Because it is impossible to extricate SALW from issues of pervasive armed violence, sustainable development, stability, security, crime, poverty, and gender equality, IANSA hopes these topics will be at the heart of the next Review Conference. •

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Josephine Roele | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

This week’s statements saw concerns raised about social and economic inequality as a barrier to peace and development, both as a result of and as a catalyst for armed conflict. Most speakers, from member states and civil society alike, pointed to disarmament and the promotion of peace as a means to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, highlighted the 2030 Agenda’s “integrated, horizontal way of working across issues, with clear links to disarmament.” Taking arms out of

the equation for development has a positive impact at every level, from safe and functioning infrastructure to the availability of natural and economic resources to political stability. Ms. Rachel Salcedo, a representative from civil society, spoke on the importance of disarmament education as a means to increase participation from typically marginalised sectors of society such as “youth, women, survivors of violence and people from the Global South in peace and security policy-making.” The Control Arms Coalition used the tragic humanitarian crisis in Yemen as an illustration of the human suffering that goes hand in hand with armed conflict.



Kenya, Nepal, and the Holy See referenced military spending as an obstacle to development. Broadly, the arguments from states against military spending criticised the disparity between global spending on disarmament—upwards of 1.7 trillion USD—and development. Kenya and Nepal recognised that the growing gaps of inequality and exclusion, as a result of insufficient development efforts, sow the seeds for further conflict. Global priorities should be redressed in favour of social and economic development rather than fuelling conflicts with the trade and supply of armaments.

The President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Baffour Amoa representing the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), and Ms. Emily Welty representing Faith Communities Concerned about the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, also raised concerns about diversion of financial resources for the military and security sectors. Timor-Leste reflected similar concerns in their statement, stating that an arms race “will never bring peace and justice to the world.” Some speakers on this topic recalled Article 26 of the UN Charter, “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources.”

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Ms. Welty noted that against a backdrop of human suffering, nuclear spending in particular illustrates the “skewed and misplaced” priorities of the global community. The President of the General Assembly and CARICOM spoke on the long-term environmental and developmental damage of the production, maintenance, and modernisation of nuclear weapons. CARICOM, a region of small island developing states, is especially concerned about the radioactive materials and hazardous waste associated with nuclear weapons and their pernicious effects on economic and environmental sustainability. Timor-Leste stated that the reduction of nuclear weapons is integral to regional and international stability, peace, and development.

Nepal, Timor-Leste, Guinea, the President of the General Assembly, and Ms. Nyonsuabeleah Kollue representing the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) spoke on the consequences of small arms and light weapons (SALW) for development. Guinea, Nepal, and the President of the General Assembly drew clear links between the circulation of SALW and human suffering. SALW have negative consequences for political security, the economy, and social stability. Nepal and IANSA welcomed the work of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons

in this respect, affirming the relationship between arms control and development.

The International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), the Toxic Remnants of War Network, and the President of the General Assembly put forward arguments around damage to infrastructure as an impediment to development. INEW and the Toxic Remnants of War Network highlighted that where social infrastructure is damaged, it is civilians who bear the brunt of the consequences of armed conflict. A lack of access to adequate shelter, water, and sanitation has disastrous impacts on a community. INEW raised the use of explosive weapons in populated areas as a “key driver of population displacement.” The Toxic Remnants of War Network stressed that the damage to natural resources by munitions containing toxics continues far beyond the period of conflict. As such, states should seek to “address harm, remediate damage, to provide assistance to those affected and to utilise the environment and its resources as a tool for cooperation and development.”

Other concerns about challenges to sustainable development include access to land, as raised by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Toxic Remnants of War Network. Palestine cited outer-space, cyber technologies, and the ocean floor as spaces that should be kept for peace, and collective human development. Guinea stated that “new information and communications technologies should be put in the service of economic and social development.” •



LATUFF 2006

UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF WEAPONS IS A QUESTION OF LIFECYCLE, NOT LAW

Doug Weir | Toxic Remnants of War Project

How do weapons damage the environment, and how does that damage impact human health and livelihoods? It is a question that has received insufficient attention, certainly in First Committee, and there are numerous ways to frame the question. But should we frame it using the law, or do we need to consider the lifecycle of weapons? Not just their use in conflict but also the footprint of their production, testing, training, storage, and disposal?

The environmental impact of weapons is often framed using international humanitarian law (IHL), for example in weapons reviews. The problem with this approach is that the thresholds for what constitutes unacceptable environmental harm under treaty IHL are both unrealistically high and frustratingly vague. Customary IHL, and with it the due regard rule, whereby “methods and means of warfare must be employed with due regard to the protection and preservation of the natural environment,” provides some restrictions. But what constitutes due regard, military necessity, and precautions in attack, is open to interpretation. In addition, what is understood as the “natural environment” may be rather different to the idea of the “environment of the whole,” which of course includes civilians.

There are comparatively few types of weapons that breach the environmental thresholds of treaty IHL. Those that do include weaponised herbicides, and of course nuclear weapons. For the latter, the US and UK reject the applicability of the environmental standards enshrined in Additional Protocol 1—a view that still casts a long shadow over debates on the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict gener-

ally, and on the environmental impact of weapons in particular.

This leaves the environmental impact of the vast majority of weapons largely unregulated and often neglected. For example, impacts on the natural environment may include physical damage, such as bombturbation, whereby intensive bombing, and with it the widespread disruption of soils, can affect vegetation, hydrology and, because of the presence of UXO, land use and access. Toxic or radioactive munitions constituents, such as depleted uranium, may have a comparatively small effect on ecosystems but can nevertheless create persistent health threats to communities. Meanwhile sea dumped munitions can pose a risk to trawlerpeople or beachgoers, and their presence can impede offshore industrial development, fisheries, and tourism.

A further concern is that the constituents of many conventional weapons—be they metals, explosives, obscurants, or propellants—are toxic to humans. Some, like the explosive RDX, are highly persistent in the environment; others like TNT become more toxic as they break down. Scrutiny of these substances has increased in recent years, yet there are still significant gaps in our understanding over their toxicity and environmental behaviour. As much of what we know comes from the regulation of firing ranges, nowhere is this more apparent than in conflict settings. These problems indicate that existing IHL alone is a poor measure of the environmental acceptability of weapons, and it suggests that it is the duty of those that employ them to fully understand the consequences of their use. •



GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Josephine Roele | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Estonia was the only state to reference gender in the second week's general debate statements. Estonia advocated for the continued implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Specifically, the delegation raised women's participation in peace processes and their protection from gender-based violence in conflict.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Control Arms expressed concern over sexual and gender-based violence facilitated by irresponsible arms transfers. To this end, the Arms Trade Treaty criteria around gender-based violence (Article 7.4) must be fully implemented in order to reduce human suffering.

The International Action Network on Small Arms spoke on the increased engagement of women in small arms control through the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States for the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Also on the subject of engagement, civil society representative Ms. Rachel Salcedo stressed that disarmament education should be implemented in such a way to be "sensitive to marginalisation and differential access, for example, mainstreaming promotion of gender equality across all programmes and building the capacity of under-represented peoples and groups," including women.

Ms. Ray Acheson, director of the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, gave a statement on behalf of

a number of civil society groups. She observed that while both sexes suffer from gender-based violence, and while men tend to make up the majority of direct victims of armed violence, the effects of weapons use and proliferation on women tends to be less visible, and the responses to their suffering by the international community can lead to the further erasure of women from participation in arms control and in seeking assistance.

The categorisation of women as innocent or as vulnerable, for instance, is unhelpful because it assumes passivity. One consequence of this is that women are not equally represented in peace and disarmament processes. In response, the collective statement recommends gender mainstreaming in all treaties, resolutions, and commitments related to disarmament, and recognition of the gendered impact of armed violence in all instruments that deal with women's human rights. This would also cover the secondary and tertiary impacts of armed violence such as reduced access to survivor assistance, risk of sexual violence because of displacement, and the exacerbation of inequalities in the breakdown of the social and political climate. The statement also called for improved gender- and sex-disaggregated data on the impact of weapons, and reminded states that gender-based violence is violence "based on socially constructed norms, perceptions and power relations of gender," with wider-reaching effects and implications than the oft-simplified idea that this stands for violence against women. •

CYBER

Allison Pytlak

There were further references to cyber security and related issues in the second week of general debate. China advocated for the principles of "peace, sovereignty, co-governance and universal benefit" to be followed in building a rules-based cyberspace that would consider the applicability of existing international law to cyberspace without pre-conceived views, yet also create new international rules as needed. It support discussions taking place in the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs).

Estonia also spoke to work being conducted in the GGE, saying it has been a productive forum for work and inviting other states to share their views on how the GGE's proposals are being implemented. Estonia

stated that international law is the largest source of authority for the use of ICTs. It's government is seeking the certainty that comes with norms in order to ensure transparency and predictable behaviour.

Jordan noted the importance of collective efforts to prevent cyber space from being used by terrorists. Palestine referenced cyber space as a shared space belonging to all humanity.

Civil society presented a statement on the subject that stressed the importance of not overlooking the challenge of human rights repression as caused through ICTs. Civil society urges states to establish new avenues for discussion of this subject that are broad and inclusive. •

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

While during the first week of general debate on space security the United States (US) claimed that it “will use this year’s First committee session to advance space security and sustainability” with emphasis on stability through transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs), the second week was marked by China’s advocacy of “a new concept of international security.”

China’s vision of security as “common, comprehensive and sustainable” with emphasis on “fairness, justice, joint participation and shared benefits” echoes the widely held view of outer space as a domain for peaceful purposes and the common interests of humanity. This view was evoked by other statements on outer space, particularly by Jordan, Namibia, and Palestine.

Specifically on the topic of outer space, China lamented the absence of rules and norms in what it referred to as an “emerging frontier” and recalled the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT). It also advocated

no first placement of weapons in outer space. Additional support for a treaty prohibiting weapons in outer space was provided by Armenia and Pakistan while Namibia and Nepal spoke against weaponisation.

The civil society statement by Cesar Jaramillo of Project Ploughshares further asserted that within international efforts to enhance the security of outer space, there has been insufficient attention to the issue of weaponisation and an arms race in space. Jaramillo provided five practical recommendations for moving forward on this effort, including the opportunity to convene a first-ever conference of states parties to the Outer Space Treaty to mark its 50th anniversary in 2017.

Substantive debate on the issue of nuclear weapons marked a missed opportunity to draw attention to the nuclear dangers linked to the growing hostility and possibility of confrontation in outer space detailed by Mr. Jaramillo. However, Guinea’s general statement called for a cessation of the arms race in outer space in the context of the risks of nuclear proliferation. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

The issue of cluster munitions was mentioned numerous times and in strong terms in the first week of the general debate. In this second week as the debate wrapped-up, four delegations tackled it.

Canada spoke about the importance of addressing the “devastating impact” of cluster munitions on civilian populations.

The Holy See noted the progress made in addressing the concerns posed by cluster munitions. It stressed that the use of conventional weapons that clearly violate international humanitarian law and that devastate communities, schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure must be “treated with the same condemnation we attach to weapons of mass destruction.”

Palestine said its decision to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions had been based on the importance

of “protecting life, fundamental freedoms and human dignity.”

Over the past several weeks, horrifying reports of the use of cluster munitions in Syria included an attack on a hospital in Aleppo and another attack on a Palestinian refugee camp. This follows confirmed reports of regular use of the weapon in Syria since 2012. In Yemen, the use of cluster munitions has resulted in unspeakable devastation and numerous civilian casualties.

In its statement, the Cluster Munition Coalition said: “This should cause international outrage. We call on all of you to request investigations and to take steps to end this use.” The Cluster Munition Coalition further called on the Security Council to include the issue of cluster munition use in its resolutions on Syria and Yemen. •



LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Delegations speaking about antipersonnel landmines as the general debate wrapped up included one of the most affected states, two donor states, one state still outside the Mine Ban Treaty, and civil society.

Afghanistan, which has been running the world's largest mine action programme, explained that landmines and other explosive remnants of war impede local development. It called for international support for mine clearance. Canada referred to the support it provides for mine action, and stressed that the full implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty is the only way to end the human suffering caused by antipersonnel mines. In a strong statement, Estonia said that "in order to enhance global security and stability the international community has to strive for progress towards universalization, effective implementation

and strengthening of existing disarmament ... instruments." It pledged to increase its contribution to mine clearance and urged all states outside the Mine Ban Treaty to come on board.

China, a state not party to the treaty, mentioned its technical and financial assistance for mine clearance. It did not, however, mention any steps taken towards joining the treaty.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines emphasised that attaining a mine-free world by 2025 is doable. In establishing this deadline, states parties have signaled their strong resolve and political commitment to tackle the issue of landmines worldwide. To reach this deadline and finish the job by 2025, all states must act now and provide sufficient funding for all areas of mine action. •

DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS, DECADES

THE LENGTH OF TIME DEADLY UNEXPLODED SUBMUNITIONS HAVE LAID DORMANT SINCE USE, READY TO KILL OR MAIM AT ANY MOMENT



WWW.STOPCLUSTERMUNITIONS.ORG

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

The *First Committee Monitor* is a collaborative NGO effort undertaken to make the work of the First Committee more transparent and accessible. The *Monitor* is compiled, edited, and coordinated by **Reaching Critical Will** of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:

Biosecu.re
Cluster Munition Coalition
Control Arms
Disarmament Dynamics
International Action Network on Small Arms
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Australia
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
International Network on Explosive Weapons
Project Ploughshares
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Reaching Critical Will