

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

*NGO Reporting on the United Nations General Assembly
First Committee on Disarmament and International Security
6 October–4 November 2008*

6 October 2008

Preview Edition

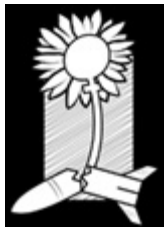
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The *First Committee Monitor* is a collaborative NGO effort undertaken to make the work of the First Committee more transparent and accessible. The *Monitor* is compiled, edited, and coordinated by **Reaching Critical Will** of the Women's International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

Contributing organizations and projects:

Arms Control Reporter
Global Action to Prevent War
Global Security Institute
International Action Network on Small Arms
Middle Powers Initiative
NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security
Peace Boat-US
Quaker United Nations Office
Religions for Peace
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Federation of United Nations Associations



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About the *First Committee Monitor*:

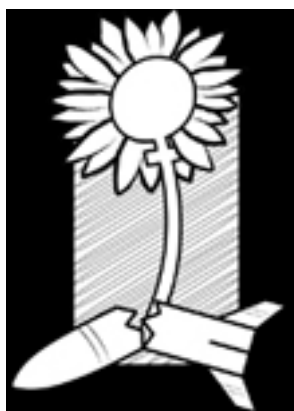
Regular reporting on the First Committee will commence on Monday, 13 October and will continue each week throughout First Committee. All topics related to disarmament and security will be covered by our team of NGO reporters.

To receive the *First Committee Monitor* in your inbox each Monday morning, please email info@reachingcriticalwill.org to subscribe. The *Monitor* is handed out to delegations attending First Committee each week and distributed to an email list of hundreds of subscribers.

If your delegation or organization is interested in advertising an event or publication in the *First Committee Monitor*, please email info@reachingcriticalwill.org or see Ray Acheson, the Reaching Critical Will project associate.

About Reaching Critical Will

Reaching Critical Will is your primary source for information, documents, and analysis about the UNGA First Committee and all other multilateral disarmament conferences.



On www.reachingcriticalwill.org you can find:

- This edition of the *First Committee Monitor*, and all others;
- All statements, working papers, resolutions, and voting results from all First Committee meetings since 2001;
- All statements and documents from the Conference on Disarmament, and regular reports on the plenary meetings;
- All statements, documents, and reports from NPT Review Conferences and Preparatory Committees, and archived editions of the *News in Review*;
- Research and analysis of critical issues related to disarmament and arms control.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) created the Reaching Critical Will project in 1999 in order to increase the quality and quantity of civil society participation at international disarmament fora, such as those that take place at the United Nations. We believe that nuclear disarmament will require coordinated and sustained effort on behalf of governments, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations. Reaching Critical Will is WILPF's initiative to encourage people to act and contribute to a variety of international fora. In order to act, they need information, primary documents, and informed analysis.

If you use Reaching Critical Will, please consider making a contribution to this important resource today. We need your support in order to continue. If you would like to make a donation to sustain and develop this project, please write to info@reachingcriticalwill.org.



Editorial: Opportunities for the 2008 UNGA First Committee

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will

As we begin the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, we should reflect on our current challenges and potential future successes. We cannot allow our frustration with past failures to impede our progress. The challenges we face present delegates, UN staff, and civil society with another opportunity to press for a breakthrough in disarmament at this year's First Committee.

In nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, another year has passed without substantial, positive developments:

The nine states that possess nuclear explosive devices continue to do so.

North Korea recently removed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) seals and banned inspectors from its weapons-related plutonium reprocessing plant.

The IAEA recently expressed frustration with its investigation into allegations that Iran had previously engaged in studies to build a nuclear weapon. The IAEA noted, however, that Iran has not appeared to use nuclear material in relation to these studies, nor has it seemed to attempt to design or manufacture a nuclear weapon. The Agency also continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament announced its Commissioners and gave a brief overview of its intentions. Unfortunately, disarmament seems to be only a minor concern in the Commission's agenda, relegated to the sixth point of the six concerns that will guide its work.

On 6 September, the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group unanimously approved a exemption from its nuclear cooperation guidelines for India, in a move that violates the spirit of the NPT and undermines efforts to halt the spread of sensitive nuclear materials, to prevent nuclear arms races, and to abolish nuclear weapons.

Our colleagues campaigning against conventional weapons have seen more success:

On 30 May, 111 states adopted a landmark draft treaty, the Cluster Munitions Convention, which will outlaw the use, production, and sale of cluster munitions as well as require the destruction of stockpiles within eight years. Participating states are expected to sign the agreement in Oslo in December.

The Third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms met in July to review the implementation of the UN Programme of Action and the International

Tracing Instrument. It voted to adopt its final report with 134 states in favour, none opposed, and with Iran and Zimbabwe abstaining.

The Group of Governmental Experts on the Arms Trade Treaty released its report, though it contains no conclusions on the feasibility, scope, or parameters of a possible treaty. Instead, it recommends that the UN hold "further consideration of efforts to address the international trade" in conventional weapons.

Our current disarmament machinery continues to flounder:

The 2008 session of the Conference on Disarmament did not, for the ninth year in a row, adopt a programme of work.

The UN Disarmament Commission failed to adopt recommendations in either of its working groups—ending its three year cycle in failure.

At the second Preparatory Committee of the current nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle, the Chair was once again compelled to submit his factual summary of the session as a working paper, instead of appending it to the final report, due to disagreement over its contents and balance.

This session of the UNGA First Committee has an opportunity to build consensus, bridge gaps, and support the development international norms that can lead to effective disarmament and non-proliferation. In his opening statement on 16 September, General Assembly President H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, M.M. of Nicaragua noted, "The General Assembly has a clear mandate to consider principles regarding disarmament and the regulation of armaments, as well as to make recommendations. Each year this body adopts over 50 resolutions and decisions on these issues. Yet something is missing from our deliberations—namely, the effective implementation of our decisions by constructive action." He thus called upon member states during this sixty-third session "to adopt a results-based approach both to disarmament and to the regulation of armaments, an approach that measures progress by deeds—and not words or numbers of resolutions alone."

Reaching Critical Will supports this call and urges all delegations to commit themselves to actions that will increase real peace, security, and justice. This preview edition of the First Committee Monitor highlights just a few of the areas where concerted action is necessary and possible, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, cluster munitions, and depleted uranium weapons.

International Disarmament Expert Henrik Salander Named to Head the Middle Powers Initiative

Ambassador Henrik Salander, a Swedish diplomat and internationally-renowned expert on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, has been named the new Chairman of the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), succeeding the founding chairman of MPI, former Senator Douglas Roche of Canada.

Sen. Roche, who is stepping down from the chairmanship at age 80, made the announcement on behalf of MPI's International Steering Committee.

Ambassador Salander has had many pivotal roles in the international debate over nuclear disarmament. He was instrumental as a leading voice of the New Agenda Coalition from 2000, and chaired the 2002 session of the NPT Preparatory Committee. From 2003 to 2006, he was the Secretary-General of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, chaired by Dr. Hans Blix.

Ambassador Salander was Sweden's Ambassador to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament (1999-2003) where he authored the 2002 "five ambassadors" compromise proposal that is still the basis for efforts there to start negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty and other treaties.

In making the announcement, Sen. Roche said, "Henrik Salander is an outstanding diplomat with a long track record of deep commitment to nuclear disarmament. His work on behalf of the Government of Sweden and his highly-acclaimed work for the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission have won him international acclaim. He will lift up MPI as it goes into its second decade at a critical

moment in the life of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the regime as a whole."

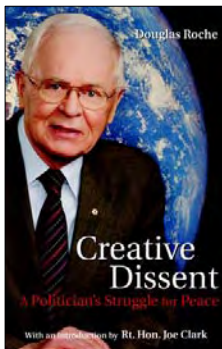
The Middle Powers Initiative was started in 1998 to encourage middle-power states to press the nuclear weapons states to fulfill their nuclear disarmament responsibilities. MPI's Article VI Forum has involved 30 states examining the legal, political and technical requirements for a nuclear weapons-free world.

Sen. Roche added: "MPI now has a proven track record, especially with the Article VI Forum. Under Ambassador Salander, it will have even greater impact as it increases its outreach to diplomats, politicians and civil society. With this new Chairman, the future of MPI is extremely promising."

Ambassador Salander is currently Deputy Director-General in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Upon his retirement from the Swedish civil service in January 2009, his first official function as MPI Chairman will be the next Article VI Forum in Berlin, January 29-30.

* * *

The Middle Powers Initiative is co-sponsored by eight international non-governmental organizations: Albert Schweitzer Institute; Global Security Institute; International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms; International Network of Engineers and Scientists; International Peace Bureau; International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War; Nuclear Age Peace Foundation; and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.



CREATIVE DISSENT A Politician's Struggle for Peace

by The Hon. Douglas Roche, OC

A political memoir that takes us behind the scenes in describing the tensions of a public life devoted to peace and social justice.

The U.S. book launch and signing will be held at

The UN Bookstore

Tuesday, 7 October at 1pm

Remarks by:

H.E. Kiyotaka Akasaka, Under-Secretary General for Public Information

H.E. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Creative Dissent: A Politician's Struggle for Peace recounts Douglas Roche's life story. Roche is one of only three Canadians who has served his country as a Member of Parliament, Ambassador and Senator. Over the past 30 years, he has emerged as one of the world's most passionate advocates for nuclear disarmament. Senator Roche's timely memoir is all about politics and the perils awaiting public figures, about bringing spiritual values to the public square, about never succumbing to the cynics. Most of all, the book is about one Canadian's passion for peace.

"Doug Roche is an extraordinary visionary. He understood the profound dangers of nuclear proliferation before many and has done more than most to save us from nuclear peril. He is a true patriot and a proud Canadian. Good work, Doug!" -- Michael Douglas, Actor, Producer and United Nations Messenger of Peace



The Middle East: Nuclear Future or Nuclear Free?

A panel discussion on current security challenges in the Middle East and their implications for global security, addressing questions about Iran, Israel, the nuclearization of the region and the goal of a WMD Free Zone

Iran Overview and Recommendations

Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute

Nuclear Politics of the Middle East

Merav Datan, Mideast Political Advisor, Greenpeace International

"According to Foreign Sources"

Sharon Dolev, Disarmament Campaigner, Greenpeace Med, Israel

Facilitator: Dr Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director
The Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy

&

Videos and photos from local and regional campaigns

Theodora Karchovsky, Communications Officer, Greenpeace Med, Israel

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

1:15 – 2:45

Conference Room D

United Nations, New York

**Sponsored by Greenpeace, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, and
Reaching Critical Will/Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**

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Reflections on the UNGA General Debate

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will

The United Nations General Assembly held its general debate from 23-29 September 2008, at which heads of state, foreign ministers, and other high-level representatives addressed the international community with their concerns, priorities, and opinions about a variety of topics. This year's statements were dominated by a myriad of crises—primarily financial, food, and climate. Speakers aptly tied their references to peace, security, and development to these crises—and the “threat of terrorism”—though largely at the expense of references to disarmament and non-proliferation, which received less attention this year than any other year in recent memory.

However, some delegations did provide thoughtful reactions to the crises that have overshadowed traditional security issues this year. Rather than pursuing their security objectives through the usual channels, these states focused on reform and bigger-picture issues, calling for UN democratization and criticizing military spending and misplaced social priorities.

In his opening statement, the President of the General Assembly noted, “More than half the world's people languish in hunger and poverty while at the same time more and more money is spent on weapons, wars, luxuries and totally superfluous and unnecessary things.” Many states lamented reemerging arms races, heightened militarism, and continuing aggression. Cuba's delegation argued, “The wars of conquest, the aggression and illegal occupation of countries, military intervention and the bombing of innocent civilians, the unbridled arms race, the pillage and usurping of the Third World's natural resources and the imperial offensive to crush the resistance of the peoples who are defending their rights, constitute the greatest and most serious threats to peace and international security.” Others, including Armenia, Cuba, and Indonesia, criticized excessive military expenditures. Costa Rica's President noted, “On a planet where one-sixth of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, spending \$1.2 trillion on arms and soldiers is an offense and a symbol of irrationality, because the security of a satisfied world is more certain than the security of an armed world.”

Weapons of mass destruction

Only eight delegations called for the abolition and/or reduction of nuclear weapons, including Australia, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, and Sweden. However, ten states voiced support for

nuclear weapon free zones and/or weapons of mass destruction (WMD) free zones. Nine of these states—all Arab—called for the establishment of a WMD free zone in the Middle East. Four delegations—Australia, Czech Republic, Germany, and Kazakhstan—called on relevant states to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Only India referred to the US-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement and the related waiver granted to India by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which very recently dominated international disarmament and non-proliferation discussions. India argued that the waiver, “will have a positive impact on global energy security and on efforts to combat climate change. This is a vindication of India's impeccable record on non-proliferation and to our longstanding commitment to nuclear disarmament that is global, universal and non-discriminatory in nature.”

24 delegations offered contrasting perspectives on how to deal with the crises relating to Iran and North Korea's nuclear programmes. Many Western states called on Iran to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including Australia, Austria, Hungary, and the United States. Some simply expressed concern about the situation, including the European Union, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, and Sweden. Others, including Bahrain, Czech Republic, Jordan, Kuwait, Slovakia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Viet Nam, called for a peaceful solution to the tensions in conformance with international law, including the right of states to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and in coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Sweden expressed concern over recent developments with North Korea's nuclear programme. North Korea and Iran's delegations defended their respective actions.

Conventional weapons

A few delegations voiced support for existing processes in controlling conventional arms. One delegation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, called for bolder actions, including the elimination of small arms and light weapons, “which threaten to shoot holes in the fabric of our democracy and compromise the values of our civilisation.” Other delegations, including Austria, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Congo, Ecuador, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Liberia, and Nigeria expressed concern about small arms and/or emphasized the need for the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on

continued on next page



Small Arms and Light Weapons to combat their illicit trade, while Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Liberia, and Trinidad and Tobago voiced their support for an Arms Trade Treaty.

Only three delegations—Austria, Czech Republic, and Ireland—voiced their support for the Cluster Munitions Convention, while Lebanon called on “the states concerned” to “meet their pledges to provide the necessary sources of funding to complete the demining program” of cluster munitions left behind by Israel on Lebanese soil. Ireland expressed concern about the use of cluster munitions in the recent conflict in South Ossetia.

Outer space and “missile defense”

Only Kazakhstan and Russia referenced outer space security, respectively calling for the prevention of an arms race in outer space and condemning its militarization. Iran and Russia also criticized the development of anti-missile systems.

Multilateralism and UN reform

Many delegations spoke about the value of multilateralism and the need for reforms within the UN system to democratize and bring equilibrium to its services and functions. The overwhelming number of states emphasized that multilateralism, as opposed to unilateralism, is the only way the world will be able to overcome the challenges it faces and to guarantee international peace, security, development, and human rights. Several states specifically highlighted the problems of unipolarity, such as Eritrea, who argued that “management by crisis” has become a “new tool of policy promotion,” wherein “crises are deliberately spawned and allowed to fester so that their ‘management’ would provide the United States with the opportunity and latitude for control in a situation of permanent instability.” Eritrea, like others, criticized the UN for failing “to pursue an independent line and act as a bulwark of robust multilateralism.”

Terrorism

The importance of multilateralism was often stressed in relation to combatting terrorism. The majority of delegations that spoke about terrorism called for a multilateral response rooted in international law. Some, such as Ethiopia, called for “dialogue among civilizations to build a culture to enable us to create closer understanding among nations” in order to prevent terrorism. Cuba’s delegation criticized the “so-called war on terrorism ... [as] an excuse for aggression and military occupation, for torture, arbitrary arrests and the denial of the right of self-determination of peoples, for unfair blockades and unilaterally imposed sanctions, for the imposition of political, economic and social models that facilitate imperi-

al domination, in open disdain for history, cultures and the sovereign will of the peoples.” The President of Cyprus argued, “A response to the problem of international terrorism will only be effective if our world becomes less unjust. Without tackling hunger and poverty, without solving regional disputes on the basis of international legitimacy and without a more fair distribution of global wealth, peace can not grow firm roots.”

Many, however, simply noted that the threat of terrorism still plagues the world community and called for implementation of related multilateral agreements and increased vigilance.

Achieving peace and justice

In his closing statement, the President of the General Assembly noted that during the general debate, “Those appealing for courage and compassion have far outnumbered those who inspire fear and distrust.” Several delegations highlighted justice, human rights, development, economic equilibrium, international law, human security, disarmament and arms control, dialogue, friendship, cooperation, reconciliation, and tolerance as both preconditions and products of peace.

Qatar’s delegation, which spoke primarily about peace throughout its statement, argued, “The human experience that is full of hopes and horrors reminds us all that achieving world peace is a conscious positive act and not just wishful thinking.... We have all recognized through these long and exhausting experiences that achieving peace is a positive act that means more than just eliminating the threat of arms.” Qatar’s Amir explained, “achieving peace requires establishing and promoting economic and social justice among peoples, and this is what constitutes positive peace.” Positive peace is “the era of international law that ensures political rights, and the era of development that provides parallel and equal opportunities to one world that cannot head into the future hindered by the injustices of politics or blinded by the darkness of underdevelopment.” In his statement, Costa Rica’s President Óscar Arias Sánchez emphasized, “We must guarantee peace and justice for the past, peace and development for the present, peace and nature for the future.... Forgiveness is based on memory, not in concealment; and peace will be possible only through memory.”

Reaching Critical Will and PeaceWomen, the two main projects of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, tracked all references to peace and security at this year’s UNGA general debate, focusing on disarmament and weapons. Two indices, by country and by topic, are available online at reachingcriticalwill.org.

Report on the Ministerial Meeting of the CTBT

Jim Wurst | Middle Powers Initiative

More than 40 foreign ministers of countries that have ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) issued a declaration on 24 September calling on the states not party to the Treaty to join so that the Treaty banning nuclear weapons tests can enter into force. "The entry into force of the Treaty is vital to the broader framework of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation efforts," the statement read. "Progress on this issue would also contribute to a positive outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT."

The CTBT has been signed by 180 states and ratified by 144. This is usually more than enough for a treaty to become law, but unlike other treaties, the CTBT requires the ratification of 44 specific countries with major nuclear facilities. Of those 44 in Annex II of the Treaty, all but nine—**China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United States**—have ratified the Treaty. The ministerial meeting and its final declaration were designed to encourage those states to bring the CTBT into force.

"We call upon all States to continue a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. Voluntary adherence to such a moratorium is a welcome step, but does not have the same permanent and legally binding effect as the entry into force of the Treaty," the declaration said. "We reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty's basic obligations and call on all States to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty pending its entry into force." The statement also welcomed the progress being made in building up the verification and monitoring system of the CTBT Organization (CTBTO).

Before issuing the declaration, the meeting heard from a panel of foreign ministers, UN

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, former US Defense Secretary Dr. William Perry, and UN Messenger for Peace and actor/producer Michael Douglas.

Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik said, "Testing nuclear devices is a clear threat. Twenty years after the end of the Cold War the language of threat is no longer the language we want to speak." The meeting was organized by the Permanent Missions of Australia, Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, and the Netherlands.

Ban said, "Some critics are saying it would be unrealistic to expect the entry into force of the Treaty any time soon, given the overall stalemate in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. I flatly reject such a pessimistic view. With the persistence and optimism that you have dem-

onstrated thus far, we can, and we shall, see the day when the Treaty enters into force."

The Secretary-General, who was the chairman of the preparatory committee for the CTBTO in 1999, added, "Allow me once again to urge all Governments that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay... As Depository of the Treaty, I intend to send a letter to the nine countries whose ratifications are required for the Treaty to enter into force, urging them to do so as soon as possible."

Echoing that theme, Douglas said a test ban "must not be held up any longer by the intransigence of the few. A global ban on testing will fulfill promises made to extend the [NPT] and bring coherence and credibility to the nonproliferation imperatives we all share."

Perry said that during his tenure as defense secretary under President Bill Clinton, he saw nuclear tensions drop and "at the time I thought we were well on our way to dramatically reducing the nuclear danger. However, he continued that since that time "the efforts to reduce the nuclear danger has stalled—and even reversed," with the failure of the US Senate to ratify the CTBT as one of the causes.

"Speaking to the assembled foreign ministers at this UN forum, I feel it appropriate to ask the question: What can the UN do to energized this nuclear disarmament process that seems to be moribund?" He gave three answers: the Secretary-General should use his "bully pulpit" to awaken the world to the dangers; states should take "high priority actions" including US ratification of the CTBT under the new administration and encouraging the US and Russia to extend the provisions of the START Treaty (which expires in 2009); and working "to ensure that North Korea and Iran do not build nuclear arsenals."

This meeting is held every two years to encourage the Annex II countries to ratify the treaty. The difference this year—held exactly 12 years to the day when the Treaty was opened for signing with President Clinton as the first signatory—was the high-profile attendance by Perry and Douglas.

At a news conference after the ministerial meeting, Tibor Toth, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, stressed the civilian opportunities offered by the Organization's extensive International Monitoring System. For the \$1 billion cost of the system, it is "the best and fastest early warning" for tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and other natural disasters.



The Future of Cluster Munitions

Thomas Nash | Cluster Munition Coalition

The adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions by 107 states in Dublin on 30 May was a momentous step forward for the protection of civilians, for the rights of survivors and all victims, and for international humanitarian law. This is only the seventh time in history that an entire category of weapons has been prohibited outright. The Cluster Munition Coalition was proud to be an integral part of the 'Oslo Process' to bring about this historic new treaty and we will be working hard with governments to ensure it is signed by as many states as possible in Oslo on 3 December 2008 and ratified at the earliest possible date.

The treaty is important because it bans an entire class of weaponry that has caused untold suffering. While too many people have suffered already, the ban is all the more significant because it requires the destruction of the millions and millions of cluster bombs in stockpiles around the world. Half of the world's stockpilers adopted the treaty in Dublin and it is likely that more will sign in Oslo and afterwards, leaving only a small group of states clinging to this indiscriminate and illegitimate weapon. In this way, the treaty is preventive, a promising development, given that the international community has too often waited until tragedy strikes before taking action.

The ban is also important because it puts the humanitarian imperative first. Military arguments are outweighed by humanitarian arguments. Survivors of cluster bombs and representatives of affected states had as much influence in the negotiations as defence officials from countries with stockpiles of the weapon. The process to decide what would be banned started from the precautionary approach that all cluster munitions cause unacceptable harm and that all should be banned. In the absence of any proof to the contrary by stockpiling states, a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions was agreed to by all. The strict obligations for clearance and stockpile destruction mean the problem will be addressed now so that it can never cause casualties in the future. Finally, the far reaching obligations that states must promote and uphold, including the rights of survivors and their families and communities, will help ensure real action that will change people's lives for the better.

The support from the United Nations system for the new treaty has been critical. UNDP has been a natural partner and has supported governments throughout the various conferences of the Oslo Process. The UN Secretary-General has provided vital support for the Oslo Process at important

moments of the negotiations and welcomed the adoption of the treaty in Dublin. The Secretary-General has also agreed to take on the role of depositary of the treaty, as stipulated in Article 22. While some states, such as the United States, Russia, China, Pakistan, India and Israel, remain opposed to the new treaty, eventually we hope all UN member states will sign it. In the meantime, we are convinced that the stigmatisation of the weapon will prevent further use, production, and transfer, much as the Mine Ban Treaty has had an effect well beyond its formal members.

During the First Committee, we hope that governments will take the opportunity to announce or reiterate their commitment to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo on 3 December. We hope that states will use the opportunity to lobby others to come to Oslo and sign the treaty. With the wealth of Oslo Process experience amongst diplomats at the First Committee, we also hope it will be a useful environment for diplomats and civil society representatives to discuss plans for Oslo and for the subsequent ratification campaign and the concrete steps states should take to implement this new treaty.

On Tuesday, 21 October, states will have a chance to discuss the new Convention on Cluster Munitions when Ambassador Daithi O'Ceallaigh, Chair of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference, will report to the First Committee on the conference and its adoption of the new treaty. Ireland will also host a side event at lunchtime that day aimed at encouraging signature of the Convention in Oslo. In addition, the Irish government will introduce a brief procedural resolution to the First Committee to provide the UN Secretary-General with the appropriate United Nations mandate, as referred to in Article 14.3, to perform tasks assigned to him in the new treaty.

Looking ahead to the Oslo Conference, we are expecting this historic occasion to be one of the most important political events of 2008. It is a celebration of success but it will also be the beginning of a new phase of implementation. We are hoping for announcements of concrete national steps, including national ratification to allow for swift entry into force of the treaty but also of concrete plans for stockpile destruction, new initiatives on victim assistance, new funding for clearance, and other measures to turn the treaty's text into reality.

Our goal is for 123 states to sign the Convention, which is one more than signed the Mine Ban Treaty

Uranium Weapons—Controlling Toxic Remnants of War

Doug Weir | International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons

In December 2007, the General Assembly passed an historic resolution highlighting health concerns over the use of depleted uranium (DU) in ammunition and armour. The resolution, "Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium" (A/62/30), passed by a landslide majority with only five votes against.

In the succeeding year, the profile of the DU issue has risen considerably. In Italy the government agreed to the first ever wide scale compensation package for soldiers affected by Balkan Syndrome, where DU exposure is a suggested cause of the illnesses. In February, the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs acknowledged the need for a uranium weapons treaty, while campaigners in Costa Rica and New Zealand pushed for domestic bans on uranium weapons akin to that achieved by Belgium in March 2007.

In May, 491 Members of the European Parliament—out of a possible 521—voted in favour of a detailed and far reaching DU resolution, "Global treaty to ban uranium weapons" (P6_TAPROV(2008)0233). It was the fourth time the parliament had passed a DU resolution and it was by far the most thorough, with requests for DU studies and a halt to deployment in contaminated areas, alongside the proposed launch of a fund to

compensate civilians. While the European Parliament has little political clout within the European Union (EU), its members represent the democratic will of half a billion people, so this should be seen for what it is—a clear mandate for action among EU member states.

Uranium weapons were first fielded in the 1991 Gulf War by US and UK forces. Since then they have been used in the Balkans and the 2003 invasion of Iraq; a combined total of more than 500 tonnes of uranium in all. There is some evidence to suggest that they may also have been used in Afghanistan, although this remains controversial—as does the allegation that the classified "dense metal" found in some huge US bunker-busting bombs is in fact DU.

While detailed epidemiological surveys of civilian populations have yet to be undertaken, chiefly for reasons of security and finance, reports from clinics and hospitals across Iraq suggest that the rates of certain cancers, such as lymphoma, leukaemia, and breast cancer are increasing. In addition, the age at which patients are developing these illnesses appears to be decreasing.

A wealth of laboratory studies suggests that the fine uranium particles produced when these weapons burn can cause considerable damage to cellu-

continued on next page

ICBUW Lunchtime Seminar
Banning Uranium Weapons:
Legal Avenues and Political Cul-de-Sacs
Wednesday 8th October 2008

Conference Room A, United Nations, New York, 13:15 - 14:45



Introduction

Tara Thornton (Steering Committee, ICBUW)

The health and environmental effects of DU weapons: a critical review of published reports

Dr Katsumi Furitsu and Gretel Munroe (Science Team, ICBUW)

Political steps towards prohibiting DU munitions

Alyn Ware (Consultant, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms)

Maintaining the momentum

Doug Weir (Coordinator, ICBUW)

Last year's resolution on the use of arms and ammunition containing depleted uranium brought the issue firmly onto the UN's agenda for the first time in years. Meanwhile the Secretary General's report that followed highlighted genuine concerns from the international community over the use of uranium in conventional weapons.

With the weapons now banned in Belgium and amid tough calls for action from the European Parliament, ICBUW will be assessing the political steps needed to move the issue forward at the UN and critically examining the position of the WHO, UNEP and the US National Academy of Sciences.

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lar processes. This damage can be caused both by uranium's radioactivity and its chemical toxicity, or a combination of the two. This in turn may express itself by the formation of cancers or a range of other physical symptoms. Furthermore, once the particles are released into the environment there are few, if any, ways of removing them.

It is this last point that has led the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) to argue that the case against uranium weapons should be viewed through the prism of the Precautionary Principle. The principle states that if an action or policy might cause severe or irreversible harm to the public or to the environment, in the absence of a scientific consensus that harm would not ensue, the burden of proof falls on those who would advocate using DU, in this case the US and UK governments. The UK in particular sees the argument quite differently. It argues that the protection of its troops overrides the protection of civilians, claiming that its CHARM3 120mm ammunition is the best tank munition available and that this consideration trumps all others—a position seemingly at odds with the norms of international humanitarian law.

The application of the Precautionary Principle at the supranational level has several precedents. It formed the basis of the 1987 Montreal Protocol on protecting the ozone layer and appeared in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, while in the European Union, the principle was contained within the Maastricht Treaty and it has been promoted by the European Commission where it now informs food safety, technological development, and consumer safety. The principle also guided the Belgian Government's decision to ban the use of uranium weapons, as it should other EU member states that claim to adhere to the same standards of EU environmental law.

During the 63rd Session of the General Assembly, ICBUW would like to see two key positions reached. The first is a voluntary moratorium on the use of uranium in conventional weapons on the part of all member states, until such time as research into the effects of long-term DU exposure on civilian populations is completed. This is in line with the Precautionary Principle and mirrors the opinion of the European Parliament. The second is the creation of a Group of Governmental Experts to assess the wealth of new evidence suggesting that uranium dust poses a serious threat to human health and the environment. This group should welcome the input of NGOs active on the issue and other independent specialists.

In many respects, it seems odd that it has taken this long for concern over the battlefield use of ra-

dioactive heavy metals to spill over into the halls of the United Nations. DU aside, the normalisation of the use of all toxic weapons must be challenged. From Geneva to Rio, there are legal precedents with which to guide the hand of legislators; all that is lacking is the political will.

And yet it seems that this is now changing. The Secretary General's report on uranium weapons, "Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium" (A/63/170) contains several detailed criticisms of DU weapons, including one by Serbia, a state that understands better than most the threat that they pose.

The First Committee has it within its power not just to limit the future use of depleted uranium but also to set a valuable precedent when it comes to the use of other radioactive and chemically toxic materials in warfare. It is now up to states to grasp this opportunity.

Cluster Munitions (cont.)

in Ottawa in 1997. The more that sign in Oslo the stronger the signal will be of the stigmatisation of this weapon. Our next goal after Oslo will be to campaign for the 30 ratifications required for entry into force to be deposited by 30 May 2009, one year after the treaty' was adopted. At the same time, we'll turn our attention to the detailed and hard work of implementation and monitoring of the treaty, two elements that have been crucial to the success of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty over the past decade. We'll also be preparing for the first Meeting of States Parties, which must take place within one year of the entry into force of the treaty and which will construct the framework for the treaty's implementation and monitoring in the years ahead.

We hope that all participants in the First Committee this year will draw inspiration from the energy and promise that the Oslo Process provides for multilateral disarmament and for the idea of disarmament as humanitarian action. States have shown that they can "do disarmament" and that they can have results. We hope this positive outlook will spill over into other areas of disarmament work in dire need of progress.

Spot the Odd One Out!

Which product has NOT been recalled from the market because it can be fatal to children?





IPFM
INTERNATIONAL PANEL
ON FISSILE MATERIALS

A Fissile Material (Cutoff) Treaty and Its Verification

The International Panel on Fissile Materials will present
for discussion a draft of the scope and verification sections of
a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty

Introduction: Ambassador M. Grinius (Canada)

Speakers: Frank von Hippel

Zia Mian

Jean du Preez

Alexander Glaser

IPFM in cooperation with the Canadian delegation to the First Committee,
UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

**Friday, October 10, 1:15-2:30 p.m., Conference Room 4
United Nations, NY**

Sandwiches and drinks will be provided from 12:45 p.m.