

THE FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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NGO Reporting on the
General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security



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Contributing groups to **The First Committee Monitor** include:

Amnesty International;
Global Action to Prevent War;
International Association of Lawyers
Against Nuclear Arms;
International Action Network on Small Arms;
Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy;
Middle Powers Initiative;
NGO Committee on Disarmament,
Peace and Security;
Quaker United Nations Office; and
Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom.



The Monitor is a weekly report produced by the NGO Working Group on the First Committee, a collaborative effort undertaken by non-governmental organizations to make the work of the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security more transparent. *The Monitor* is compiled, edited and coordinated by Reaching Critical Will, a disarmament project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

RCW provides services to activists, diplomats, UN-staffers, academicians and others, including:

- Posting statements, draft resolutions, and First Committee information online at www.reachingcriticalwill.org;
- Coordinating an array of briefings, workshops and panels designed to educate diplomats and activists on issues of disarmament, peace and security;
- Serving as an information resource by email or phone; and
- Providing a link between the First Committee and NGOs who are not in New York.



Introduction

The First Committee voted this week on the issues and draft resolutions it has been debating for the past month. The governments, UN staffers and non-governmental organizations all moved over to Conference Room 2 for the most well-attended sessions, where the sea of gray suits watches the green, red and yellow vote displays on the light board. In total, 48 of the 55 resolutions were put to a vote, with 7 of the most controversial resolutions left for Monday, October 30.

The most exciting vote went through on Thursday, when the First Committee adopted “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty” (A/C.1/61/L.55) by an overwhelming majority of 139 in favor, 1 opposed (US), and 24 abstentions. The crowded room of delegates and onlookers witnessed the official beginning of a process that could regulate the trade in conventional weapons—from tanks to shotguns—for the first time. (See ATT report)

For the most part, the voting patterns were largely similar to years past. The EU and NATO continued to vote no and abstain on the most progressive nuclear disarmament resolutions, and those limiting nuclear weapons’ use or threat of use. The Arab League continued to abstain on the “Transparency in armaments” resolution. (See Conventional Weapons report) Non-states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty continued to abstain on the resolution supporting that Treaty. (See Landmines report)

There were, however, some significant shifts in voting patterns this year. A handful of governments moved from abstaining to supporting the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) and Non-Aligned Movement’s nuclear disarmament resolutions. Iran moved to abstain on the NAC resolution because it was “not appropriately balanced,” meaning there was not enough nuclear disarmament in it. (See Nuclear Disarmament report) The draft resolution on a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons was withdrawn because of continuing divisions over its negotiating mandate and a programme of work in the

Conference on Disarmament. (See Fissile Materials report) North Korea joined the US in voting against the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty resolution, and voted against two other resolutions condemning its nuclear test. (See CTBT and North Korea reports)

The United States moved to a more unilateral position; it voted against the resolutions on negative security assurances this year for the first time, (See NSA report) and on Monday is expected to vote against the resolution on convening a fourth Special Session on Disarmament, which is traditionally adopted by consensus. It was the lone opposition vote on the preventing an arms race in outer space resolution—last year marking the first time it did so—, and also offered the sole opposition to the small arms and light weapons resolution, though this time without any budgetary explanations of that opposition. (See PAROS and SALW reports) It offered the sole opposition vote to five other resolutions, and was joined by only a few others (often France and the UK) in opposing six other resolutions. Only Israel joined the US in opposition to “Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol,” which won 163 votes in favor. (See Biological and Chemical Weapons report)

The votes in the First Committee continue to show serious divisions in the international community on disarmament and security measures. States hardening their positions and becoming more unilateral does not bode well for the upcoming 2007 Conference on Disarmament session or the 2007 Preparatory Committee beginning the next nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle.

However, the nuclear disarmament community would do well to take a lesson from our friends working to control conventional and small arms and light weapons (SALW), and mix those lessons in with our particularities and recent progress. Coming off a loss less than three months ago when the SALW Review Conference could not agree on an outcome, NGOs and governments working to curb the proliferation of illegal SALW managed to use the First Committee as

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Nuclear Disarmament

The three key nuclear disarmament resolutions were adopted last week in the First Committee, with little change from 2005 except for the unsurprising shift by North Korea to vote against any resolution that mentions their nuclear test.

The Japanese draft on “Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” (A/C.1/61/L.32) and the annual draft by the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden) picked up some support as countries shifted from abstention. Such a shift indicates that there remains broad consensus on the immediate steps needed to get nuclear disarmament on track.

While there exists staunch opposition to both drafts, such opposition is indicative of the poor state of international affairs rather than the worth of the drafts themselves. The United States, for instance, opposed any mention of the Comprehensive nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); India opposed any reference to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); and North Korea opposed any condemnation of its nuclear tests.

The traditional draft by the Non-Aligned Movement on “nuclear disarmament” (A/C.1/61/L.39) is the most ambitious and wide-ranging and, therefore, the most divisive.

L.32, the Japanese-sponsored “Renewed Determination” resolution was adopted on Thursday with 169 in favor to 3 opposed (the United States, North Korea, and India), with 8 abstentions.* The US said, “Of all the resolutions introduced on nuclear disarmament [this is] the most balanced and realistic,” noting the draft’s recognition of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, its call for negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT) and the condemnation of the North Korean test. The US nonetheless voted against it because of the endorsement of the CTBT. Pakistan, which abstained, said the draft had a “lopsided emphasis on non-proliferation and not on nu-

clear disarmament.”

In 2005, the vote on the draft was 166 in favor, 2 opposed (US and India), and 7 abstentions. North Korea had abstained last year; it shifted to “no” this year because it objected to the draft’s condemnation of its nuclear test. Iran shifted from a positive vote in 2005 to an abstention this year. The Iranian delegate said this was because the text was “not appropriately balanced,” noting that the resolution only focuses on the FMCT as an item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, Iran noted, the reference to the FMCT is “not consistent with the previous agreements” on the verifiability of a treaty. The other six abstainers were Bhutan, China, Cuba, Egypt, Israel and Myanmar. Egypt criticized the text for not fully reflecting the consensus commitment made in the 13 Practical Steps at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

On October 27, the New Agenda Coalition resolution (A/C.1/61/L.13/Rev.2), “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,” was adopted with 148 in favor to 7 opposed, with 12 abstentions.* The 2005 First Committee vote was 144 in favor, 5 opposed, and 19 abstentions. The UK, US, France, India and Israel voted no in 2005; they were joined by North Korea and Pakistan this year. Speaking on behalf of the UK, US and France, the UK representative said the draft “takes account neither of the concrete progress nor the concrete efforts underway by the three countries” in fulfilling their Article VI obligations, nor mentions their willingness to negotiate an FMCT.

The draft’s operative paragraph 6 went through three versions. The first version called on North Korea to rescind its withdrawal from the NPT but was silent on the issue of the nuclear test. A revised text changed that paragraph so as to condemn “all nuclear tests by States parties and States non-parties” to the NPT, with a specific mention of North Korea. The third version retained the condemnation of North Korea’s test, but changed the language to condemn “all nucle-

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Arms Trade Treaty

In a promising step forward, the First Committee adopted the resolution, "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms" (A/C.1/61/L. 55) on Thursday, October 26. The number of co-sponsors of the text rose to an impressive 116 member states when Gambia, Azerbaijan, and San Marino were added just prior to the vote.

Expressing satisfaction at the number of co-sponsors, Nigeria, a co-sponsor, said an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) would establish common standards on conventional arms transfers and urged states to be guided by the example of the Economic Community of Western African States' Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Nigeria also acknowledged the prominent role played by civil society, particularly the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), in the effort.

The voting results on the resolution were: 139 governments in favor, 1 opposed, and 24 abstained. Particularly strong support was demonstrated from Africa, Europe and Latin America. Notable support for the resolution from other regions of the world included Algeria, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Morocco. The United States was the lone vote against the resolution.

After the vote, the Control Arms campaign, which had been lobbying at the UN since October 1st, said, "Today, the world's governments have voted to end the scandal of the unregulated arms trade. Since the Control Arms campaign began three years ago, conventional weapons have killed an estimated one million people. In response, over a million campaigners from over 170 countries have called for an ATT."

While virtually all states expressed support for the idea of an ATT, many of the abstaining states thought that establishing a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) right after the UN Secretary General collected states' views on the treaty was "prescriptive" and "premature." China, Cuba, Iran, and Libya (on behalf of Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Oman,

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, UAE and Yemen) expressed this view.

As a result of the above concerns, separate votes were called on operative paragraph (OP) 2 (establishment of a GGE) and OP 3 (assistance to the Secretary General for the GGE). Results on the vote on OP2 were: 133 in favor, 1 opposed, and 26 abstentions. OP3 fared similarly, with 133 in favor, 1 opposed, and 24 abstentions.

While abstaining from the vote, Cuba called the resolution "one of the most noble and ambitious resolutions submitted in years." Cuba said it was convinced of the good intentions of the co-sponsors of the resolution, but had concerns about the GGE.

In an apparent response to concerns raised by states from the Middle East, Algeria said after the vote that it supports the establishment of an international instrument to set up objective norms to regulate the transfer of conventional weapons. Algeria indicated that the effort must receive broad-based support from states and be based on the principles of the UN Charter.

Responding to the number of abstentions and the one opposition to the vote, the Control Arms campaign stated that the resolution gives states many opportunities to formally engage in the discussion on an ATT. They encouraged states to express their views to the UN Secretary General and participate in the GGE, and highlighted that the United States said they would participate.

Before the resolution is formally adopted, it must be approved by the UN General Assembly. The final vote is expected in late November or early December, and it is likely that the resolution will pick up more supporters as several of the resolution's co-sponsors were absent during the vote.

-Waverly de Bruijn, Global Action to Prevent War (www.globalactionpw.org); and
Colby Goodman, Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)



Small Arms and Light Weapons

This week, four resolutions were adopted addressing small arms and light weapons (SALW) directly; each was adopted by a vote. The resolution “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty” has direct relevance for the UN small arms process, especially since the Geneva SALW inter-sessionals next year will further consider global principles for regulating international small arms transfers. While small arms are only one category of the conventional arms regulated by a future Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), they currently cause the greatest devastation, as recognized by Jamaica in its speech prior to the vote on the ATT resolution. Jamaica also stated that the ATT resolution would be more effective if it referenced the 2001 UN Programme of Action (PoA), the 2005 Instrument on Marking and Tracing of SALW, and elements for controlling arms production.

Nigeria also made the connection between an ATT and international controls on small arms in its speech on the ATT resolution, urging member states to be guided by the example of the recent Economic Community of Western African States’ Convention on SALW. Iran preferred to highlight differences between initiatives on international transfer controls within the UN SALW process and those within the new ATT process. One reason Iran voted against the ATT resolution was that it believes consensus is necessary for effective international transfer controls.

The annual “omnibus” resolution on small arms was adopted with an overwhelming 172 votes in favor, 1 opposed (the United States), and no abstentions. Among other achievements, this resolution confirms a 2008 date for the next meeting of the UN small arms process, as stipulated in the PoA. The results are especially encouraging since the co-sponsors of the resolution did not hesitate to break consensus. The resolution received the largest margin of victory of any resolution voted at First Committee so far, indicating the massive support for continuing the UN small arms process, following the disappointment of the consensus-bound Review Conference.

There was some dissatisfaction that the omnibus resolution did not go far enough, with the suggestion

that some states refused to co-sponsor the resolution because of this perceived shortcoming. The European Union and Switzerland explained that they did not co-sponsor the resolution because their proposed amendments were rejected. Switzerland had proposed a preambular paragraph inspired by the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Finland, on behalf of the EU, had proposed two new preambular paragraphs. The first proposed paragraph would have noted the continued exchange of views on national and regional practices and lessons learned relating to controls on transfers of SALW. The second one would have encouraged the continued integration of efforts to fight the illicit trade in SALW into national and local plans and strategies.

The “Transparency in armaments” (A/C.1/61/L.38) resolution, adopted with 141 votes in favor, 23 abstentions and no votes against, invites states to provide information on international transfers of SALW when they report to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, as recommended by the 2006 Group of Governmental Experts. This is an important step in promoting transparency, as existing international customs information does not provide reliable information on the quantities of small arms transferred, only the value.

Emphasizing the need for UN peacekeeping operations to engage in disarmament activities, the “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures” (A/C.1/61/L.37) resolution was adopted with 158 votes in favor, 1 opposed (the United States) and no abstentions. This resolution also encourages states, including those donors comprising the Group of Interested States, to support international, regional and non-governmental organizations in their post-conflict disarmament efforts. This recognizes the valuable contribution made by civil society, also emphasized by Nigeria, which commented on the “prominent role” of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), the global network of non-governmental organizations working against gun violence, in its speech prior to the vote on the ATT resolution.

—Mark Marge, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) (www.iansa.org)



Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty

On Monday, Canada withdrew draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.23, which urged the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to immediately commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for use in weapons. Explaining this decision to the First Committee, Canadian Ambassador Meyer cited the lack of consensus over the self-described “minimalist approach” of the draft resolution. He further stated that there would be insufficient time to bridge the differences over its contents. In Canada’s opinion, a resolution passed without consensus would not send the right message to the CD.

In his statement, Ambassador Meyer also defended the resolution. Citing the progress made in CD this year, he said that his delegation felt it would be appropriate for the First Committee to make a contribution as well. He maintained that the broad language of the draft text, which did not contain any reference to the inclusion of verification measures in a possible treaty, did not preclude any topic from being raised in the context of treaty negotiations.

This view is reflective of the position taken by many Western states, which believe that a fissile materials treaty should be verified, but also believe the draft negotiating mandate introduced by the United States in May could be the basis for negotiations. While the US mandate and draft treaty text omits any reference to verification, many Western states insist that the US draft mandate does not prevent verification from being raised once negotiations have begun. Several states from the Non-Aligned Movement, which also insist upon a verified treaty, reject this view. (see Fissile Materials, week one)

Additionally, Ambassador Meyer stated that while the draft text urges action only on the fissile material treaty, one of four main issues on the CD’s agenda, such an approach would not prejudice any other item the CD might consider. This position is contrary to that taken by other members of the CD, which insist upon simultaneous progress on the other agenda items.

-Michael Spies, Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy (www.lcnp.org)

Disarmament and Development

On October 25, the First Committee voted on “Relationship between disarmament and development” (A/C.1/61/L.8), introduced by Indonesia on October 20. The resolution was adopted with 169 countries in favor, 1 opposed (United States) and two abstentions (Israel and France), the same voting record as in 2005. The US reiterated its position that disarmament and development are two distinct issues that should not be linked. It also said it was not bound by the 1987 final document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, because it did not attend the conference. While the United Kingdom supported the resolution, it explained that it does not see an automatic link between the disarmament and development. The UK also does not completely agree with the Group of Governmental Experts’ findings, which did not fully explain the complex relationship between disarmament and development.

The First Committee also adopted “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty” (A/C.1/61/L.55), as presented by the United Kingdom last week. The text “recognizes that the absence of common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is a contributory factor to conflict, the displacement of people, crime and terrorism, thereby undermining peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development”. (See ATT report)

During the end of the thematic debate on Disarmament Machinery on October 23, Ethiopia discussed the relationship between development and disarmament. Ethiopia noted that disarmament allows scarce resources to be diverted to more sustainable ends. Ethiopia reminded skeptics that disarmament also promotes an environment of security and boosts economic strength, both of which are crucial for development. It said peace and security are particularly important for the developing world, where disarmament measures “can create and nurture an ideal environment for development...to take hold and benefit the poor.”

-Heikki Hietala, Reaching Critical Will (www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



Conventional Weapons

This week, the First Committee voted on the resolutions related to conventional weapons (L.18, L.38, L.40 and L.43).

On October 25, the resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (A/C.1/61/L.18), which had roughly 45 co-sponsors, was adopted without a vote, as it has been in years past. Also that day, "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms" (A/C.1/61/L.40) was adopted without a vote, as it was in 2004 and 2005.

"Conventional arms control at the regional and sub-regional levels" (A/C.1/61/L.43) was adopted with the following results: 166 in favor (voting record indicates 165, though Spain stated immediately following the vote that it had intended to vote "yes"), 1 opposed (India), and 1 abstention (Bhutan). India and Bhutan also opposed and abstained, respectively, last year. After the vote was taken, India explained its opposition, asserting that the threats of states often extend beyond regional boundaries. Furthermore, L.43 requests the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to consider principles for regional agreements on arms control, and India views the CD as a forum for international rather than regional agreements.

"Transparency in armaments" (A/C.1/61/L.38), which deals with the UN Register on Conventional Arms, included separate votes on Operative Paragraphs (OP) 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7b, and 9. The resolution as a whole was adopted with 141 in favor, none opposed, and 23 abstentions, which is an increase of roughly 20 votes in favor and 2 abstentions from last year.

Of the new abstentions, Cuba noted particular concern with OP 7b, which reaffirms the decision to keep the scope and participation of the Register under review. While Cuba generally supports this decision, it nonetheless remains concerned with the composition of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). In the GGEs of 2004 and 2005, Cuba was interested in participating but was not represented.

The Arab League also abstained this year. Syria,

speaking on the League's behalf, stated that L.38 does not take into account the special situation in the Middle East. For any mechanism to succeed, Syria said, it should be balanced, transparent, non-discriminatory and strengthen the security of all. In its explanation of vote, Cuba stated its concern with the increased emphasis on small arms and light weapons without thought to including weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the Register.

-Waverly de Bruijn, Global Action to Prevent War (www.globalactionpw.org)

Introduction, cont.

an opportunity to continue the small arms review process. (See the SALW report) Even more significantly, the First Committee kick-started work to control all conventional weapons for the first time by establishing a Group of Governmental Experts to consider a prospective Arms Trade Treaty. (See ATT report)

Even with hardened and unilateral positions by a few governments, votes in the First Committee show time and again that the vast majority of the world's people and governments want nuclear and conventional disarmament. More governments supported the major nuclear disarmament resolutions this year than in 2005. We are in a process of building international norms, and as the middle moves forward, the naysayers, slowly, even begrudgingly, will move along with it. Moreover, governments and policies change. The important thing now is not to stop progress with defeatist fatalism. The majority says move ahead; just look at the light board.

-Jennifer Nordstrom, Reaching Critical Will (www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



North Korea

Three resolutions condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) October 9 nuclear weapon test. Both the DPRK and the United States voted against these resolutions, which were all adopted by an overwhelming majority of the First Committee.

Despite their approval of language condemning the DPRK's announced test, the US rejected draft resolutions L.32 and L.48 since they both support the Comprehensive nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The US cannot, they maintained, "support a resolution that supports the CTBT." (see CTBT report)

169 countries voted in favor of A/C.1/61/L.32, the Japanese-sponsored "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". Only the DPRK, the US and India voted against. Last year, the DPRK merely abstained, leaving India and the US as the sole opposition.

A/C.1/61/L.48, the resolution specifically focused on the CTBT, was adopted with 175 in favor, two opposed (US and DPRK) and 4 abstentions. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Ambassador Kari Kahiluoto of Finland called upon the DPRK to ratify the CTBT, noting the increased potential for proliferation. Israel, an Annex II state that has not ratified the CTBT, nonetheless voted in support of L.48. In their explanation of vote, Israel asserted that the DPRK test added instability to the region. The DPRK did not participate in the 2005 vote on the similar CTBT-focused resolution (A/C.1/60/L.26/Rev.1).

The third resolution addressing the North Korean nuclear test, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments" (A/C.1/61/L.13/ Rev.2), was introduced by Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) on October 20. This resolution condemns all nuclear testing and "urges the [DPRK] to rescind its announced withdrawal from the Treaty." The DPRK and the US were joined by 5 other states in their votes against L.13/Rev.2. Last year, the DPRK supported the NAC resolution.

In the face of overwhelming support for these mea-

Negative Security Assurances

On October 23, the First Committee adopted the resolution "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/61/L.45), with 108 in favor, 1 opposed (US), and 57 abstentions.

This resolution was introduced by Pakistan and calls for a legally-binding international instrument on negative security assurances (NSAs). The annual resolution has traditionally been adopted with large numbers of abstentions, primarily from NATO countries, but without any votes against it.

In explanation of their lone vote against, the US simply stated that they continue to oppose any proposal for an NSA treaty or other legally binding security assurances regime. The US has made this explanation before, when they abstained, and they did not give any explanation as to why they changed to voting against.

Japan, one of the 108 countries that voted in favor of the resolution, explained that negative security assurances should be dealt with without prejudice to, and based on, the result of the ongoing discussions in the Conference on Disarmament.

As with last year, nuclear weapons-possessing India, Pakistan and China voted in favor. France, Israel, Russia, and the United Kingdom again abstained.

- Beatrice Fihn, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (www.wilpf.int.ch)

North Korea, cont.

sures, the DPRK continues to defend its purported nuclear test, calling it "a self-defensive countermeasure to protect the sovereignty of the country as well as life and security of the people from the intensified nuclear war threat, sanctions and pressure by the US against the DPRK."

-Neal Sandin, Middle Powers Initiative (www.middlepowers.org)



Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

On Thursday, October 26, the First Committee voted on “Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty” (CTBT) (A/C.1/61/L.48/Rev.1), which was introduced by Australia and co-sponsored by 44 other states. The vast majority of states supported the resolution, adopting it with 175 votes in favor, two opposed (North Korea and the United States) and four abstentions (Colombia, India, Mauritius, Syrian Arab Republic).

The revised version differs from the original draft resolution in two ways. First, paragraph 5 was lengthened so it condemns the recent test conducted by North Korea (DPRK) and also “demands that the DPRK not conduct any further nuclear tests.” Second, paragraph 7 was shortened to remove the suggestion to consider confidence-building measures such as coordinated ratification.

Before the vote, the European Union gave a general statement highlighting the “urgent need” for the “entry-into-force of the CTBT at the earliest possible date.” The EU urged the international community to “redouble (its) efforts to complete the outstanding ratifications that are required,” especially from the necessary Annex II states. The EU also pushed for North Korea to “sign and ratify the CTBT” and “to refrain from conducting any further nuclear test.”

Pakistan and Israel, two of the Annex II states that have yet to ratify the CTBT, voted in favor of the resolution. Pakistan stated that it “supports the objectives of the CTBT” and voted for the resolution in keeping with its policy of restraint and responsibility. Israel noted it has been working to add to the CTBT verification regime and reiterated that the regime needs to be “robust” and “immune to abuse.” Israel also pushed the importance of compliance with the CTBT in the Middle East.

Iran also voted in support of L.48/Rev.1, asserting that “the CTBT entry-into-force has faced a serious set back by the rejection of the ratification process of the United States.” Iran was particularly critical of the US Nuclear Posture Review plans to create new

and improved nuclear weapons and noted, “[t]est explosions are a key step in the design, development and refinement of nuclear weapons.”

The US Nuclear Posture Review also states that the US cannot ratify the CTBT because “[n]uclear nations have a responsibility to assure the safety and reliability of their own nuclear weapons” (p.55) through nuclear testing, if necessary. The United States once again voted against the CTBT resolution and stated, “[w]e cannot support a resolution supporting the CTBT.” The United States also voted against “Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” (A/C.1/61/L.32) for its support of the CTBT. In reference to L.48/Rev.1, the US delegate declared, “[n]evertheless I would like to note our support for the position expressed in Operative Paragraph 5, which condemns the DPRK’s nuclear test and demands that the DPRK do [sic] not conduct further tests.”

North Korea, the only state that joined the US in opposing L.48/Rev.1, opposed the resolution because of that paragraph. Last year North Korea did not vote; this year its opposition reflects its focus on nuclear testing as “self-defense.”

The four delegations that abstained from the vote, Colombia, India, Mauritius, and Syria, are the same states that abstained last year. The Syrian delegation maintained that the CTBT is insufficient because it ignores the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear weapon states and does not contain an obligation for nuclear weapon states to stop conducting lab tests, eliminate their arsenals or halt the development of new weapons. Syria further stated it continues to harbor doubts that the International Monitoring System of the CTBT would not be used by some states for political ends.

Colombia spoke to “reaffirm total support” for the spirit of the CTBT and reiterated its plan to find a way around its “constitutional impediments” which have been delaying ratification for years. Venezuela voted in support of the resolution and also stressed its commitment to the CTBT despite its delay in ratifica-

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Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

Five draft resolutions related to regional disarmament and nonproliferation were tabled this session: two relating to the Middle East, one on Central Asia, one on the Southern Hemisphere, and one on Mongolia. Of these, only the Central Asian nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ) resolution has yet to be voted on, largely due to the rejection of the recently signed treaty by some of the nuclear weapon states and last minute efforts to gain support.

Like last year, “Establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” (A/C.1/61/L.1) was adopted without a vote, while “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” (A/C.1/61/L.2) was adopted with a vote of 156 in favor, 4 against, and 6 abstentions. Last year, Israel and the US voted against and Australia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and India abstained. This year, Israel and the US were joined by Micronesia and Palau, while Canada and Tonga abstained with the previous four.

Israel “joined consensus [on L.1] despite substantive reservations,” because the draft is committed to a noble vision. Israel believes Middle Eastern nuclear issues should be dealt with regionally, beginning with modest confidence-building measures that lead to more ambitious goals. These measures cannot be imposed from outside but must emanate from within the region itself. Israel also emphasized that the process to a Middle Eastern NWFZ cannot begin when some parties maintain a state of war and refuse to acknowledge the existence of other parties in the region.

L.2 further highlights the schism in Middle Eastern perceptions of nuclear proliferation. Israel reiterated its routine response to the draft: L.2 is blatantly one-sided and does not reflect the troubles of the region. It overlooks hostility in the region towards Israel, and singles Israel out unfairly. Australia agreed that L.2 is too focused on Israel and makes no mention of Iran’s non-compliance with its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement. Canada also expressed concern over the lack of balance and incomplete scope of the resolution, and chose to ab-

stain, hoping it will be revised next year. Cameroon called for less polemic, non-discriminatory language to be considered in revisions. The European Union voted for L.2 but is likewise concerned “over Iran’s nuclear programme” and “regrets that . . . Iran has not fulfilled the obligations established by UN Security Council Resolution.”

Meanwhile, Iran commented that Israel’s non-adherence to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and IAEA verification measures prevents the goal of a NWFZ in the Middle East from materializing. Palestine stated that non-proliferation and disarmament measures must be comprehensive rather than selective, arguing that it is absurd for the international community to focus on Iran when Israel is immune to the inspection and oversight of the NPT and the IAEA. Switzerland explained that it voted in favor of L.2 because it aims to universalize the NPT.

“Nuclear weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas” (A/C.1/61/L.20) was adopted with 168 votes for, 3 against (France, United Kingdom, and US), and 7 abstentions (Bhutan, India, Israel, Marshall Islands, Pakistan, Russian Federation, and Spain). A separate vote was taken on operative paragraph (OP) 5, which was adopted with 161 in favor, 1 against (India), and 9 abstentions; another separate vote was taken on the last three words of OP 5- “the Middle East”-, which were adopted with 159 in favor, 2 against (India and Pakistan), and 11 abstentions.

France, the UK, and the US voted against the NWFZ in the southern hemisphere resolution (A/C.1/60/L.12) last year as well, with a final vote of 144 in favor, 3 opposed, and 6 abstentions. The only new abstention this year was the Marshall Islands.

In its explanation of vote, Spain indicated that it has abstained from this resolution since 2000 because it feels the resolution is moving away from NWFZ being freely arrived at. India and Pakistan’s concerns are similar; they object to the resolution’s specific request for the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia

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Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

The First Committee took action on the two outer space draft resolutions on October 25. "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/61/L.10/Rev.1) was adopted with a vote of 166 in favor, one against (the United States) and two abstentions (Israel and Côte d'Ivoire). The American and Israeli votes were the same as they were last year, which was the first time the US voted against the resolution. Côte d'Ivoire did not explain its vote, but its abstention appears to be due to lack of direction from capital.

In its explanation of vote, the US reiterated its position that there is no arms race in outer space, nor any prospect of an arms race in outer space. It said existing legal regimes, such as the Outer Space Treaty (OST), adequately serve the international community's interest in preserving space for peaceful uses. The US repeated its intention to continue all its space-related activities, including those related to national security, in accordance with the OST and the United Nations Charter.

Brazil explained that it supported L.10/Rev.1 because, in addition to being a substantive and necessary resolution in itself, the resolution also helps restore credibility to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) by calling for negotiations in that body.

"Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (A/C.1/61/L.36) was adopted with a vote of 167 in favor, one against (US), and one abstention (Israel). The Russian Federation introduced L.36 two weeks ago as a progressive step up from last year's resolution on confidence-building measures (CBMs) in outer space. It emphasized the invitation to all states to submit concrete proposals on outer space transparency and CBMs regardless of their space capabilities. Last year, the US and Israel were also the only states not to vote in favor of the 2005 resolution on CBMs in outer space.

In support of the resolution, China reiterated its belief that L.36 supplements efforts to establish new international legally-binding instruments on outer space. China sees such instruments as the only way to meet

Nuclear Disarmament, cont.

ar-weapon tests by States that are not yet parties to [the NPT] and any further nuclear-weapon test by any State whatsoever." India and Pakistan criticized this change. Pakistan said the reference was now "discriminatory and selective" and that the New Agenda had undermined its credibility. India was "surprised" by the change so that the text no longer condemned all nuclear tests. This "selective condemnation" was "misplaced," he said.

The Non-Aligned Movement's draft on "nuclear disarmament" (L.39) was adopted 105 votes in favor to 45 opposed, with 6 abstentions on October 23. This represents a slight improvement over last year (94 in favor, 42 opposed, 17 abstentions) for essentially the same resolution, yet it remains the most divisive of the key nuclear disarmament resolutions. Because it contains such a sweeping list of recommendations, there is something to offend many countries. The United States, United Kingdom and France voted no, Russia abstained and China voted yes. India and Pakistan abstained, citing the references to the NPT. NATO countries and the former Soviet republics voted no or abstained. The New Agenda countries split, with the two European countries in the coalition (Ireland and Sweden) abstaining, while the others voted yes. Japan, which abstained, said the resolution "lacked certain elements," an oblique reference to the failure of the draft to include recognition of what states consider positive elements, such as the reduction of strategic arms by the US and Russia.

-Jim Wurst, Middle Powers Initiative (www.middlepowers.org)

*Equatorial Guinea and Togo mistakenly voted "no" when they meant to vote "yes" on L.32 and L.13, respectively. These tallies reflected the corrections.

PAROS, cont.

the challenge of the weaponization of space.

-Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will (www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



Iran

This week, discussions of Iran's nuclear programme returned to the First Committee, in the context of the vote on "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" (A/C.1/61/L.2). The annual resolution sponsored by the Arab group was adopted with 156 in favor, 4 against (Israel, Micronesia, Palau, United States), and 6 abstentions, a similar margin as in years past. The resolution "affirms the importance of Israel's accession to the [NPT]," calls upon it to join the Treaty "without further delay and not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons".

Explaining its abstention, Canada repeated its concern from last year over the "lack of balance" in the resolution, particularly commenting on the lack "of any reference to other nuclear proliferation risks in the Middle East region." Last year, Canada supported the resolution. Specifically, the Canadian representative "regretted that no reference was made to the findings of the International Atomic Energy Agency regarding Iran's non-compliance with its safeguards obligations pursuant to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." He mentioned that Canada is "particularly cognizant" of the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution S/RES/1696 and Presidential Statement S/PRST/2006/15.

For each of the past three years, the IAEA has annually certified that all nuclear material has been accounted for in Iran, and therefore none has been diverted to non-peaceful purposes. The IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution on September 24, 2005 finding "that Iran's many failures and breaches of its obligations to comply with its NPT Safeguards Agreement, as detailed in [IAEA document] GOV/2003/75, constitute non-compliance in the context of Article XII.C of the Agency's Statute."

Explaining the vote of the European Union in favor of the draft resolution, Ambassador Kahiluoto of Finland, speaking on behalf of the EU, echoed Canada's concern over Iran's nuclear programme. He affirmed the EU's full support for Security Council resolution S/RES/1696 which, according to the Ambassador, "made it mandatory for Iran to suspend all enrichment related and reprocessing activities." He further

stated that for Iran, "suspension is no longer a voluntary confidence-building measure, but an international obligation."

In resolution S/RES/1696, the Security Council, acting under Article 40 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, "demands... that Iran shall suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development." Although the resolution states the intention of the Security Council "to make mandatory the suspension required by the IAEA," it represents a departure from the means by which the Council traditionally makes its resolutions binding.

As an additional matter of "serious concern," the Canadian representative further charged that "Iran has repeatedly threatened its neighbour, Israel - and the people of Israel - with annihilation." In a press conference held at the UN last month, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denied having threatened the people of Israel, and restated his belief that the solution to the situation in the Middle East is the creation of a single state of Palestine, encompassing both present-day Israel and the occupied territories, and comprised of both Jews and Muslims.

Egypt's annual resolution, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East" (A/C.1/61/L.1), was adopted again without a vote. Also this week, the permanent members of the UN Security Council began deliberations on a Chapter VII resolution, intended to halt Iran's nuclear fuel cycle program and to impose sanctions on Iran's nuclear energy and ballistic missile programmes.

-Michael Spies, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy (www.lcnp.org)

CTBT, cont.

tion. The Venezuelan delegation asserted the international community needs the CTBT to enter-into-force to "create a safer, nuclear free world."

-Jennifer Leigh Schwerer, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (<http://disarm.igc.org>)



Disarmament Machinery

On Monday, October 23, the First Committee concluded its thematic debate on disarmament machinery. The debate about the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and its lack of programme of work continued when Australia said the CD should move beyond past proposals, as the Five Ambassadors' proposal (A5) does not enjoy consensus. The A5 proposal would create ad hoc committees on the four core CD issues: nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances (NSA), prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), and a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

The United States (US) consistently opposes negotiations on all core issues on the CD agenda, except an FMCT. Last year, they changed from abstaining on the First Committee PAROS resolution to voting against it, and this year they change from abstaining on the First Committee NSA resolution to voting against it. (See NSA report)

This year, however, Canada withdrew its FMCT draft resolution, which called for the immediate start of negotiations on such a treaty in the CD. (See FMCT report) While no state disagreed with beginning negotiations, states disagreed with how negotiations would fit in a CD programme of work. South Africa, the first president of the CD 2007, suggested that the CD might not need a programme of work, but rather "a programme that works," and pointed out the importance of working with each other, not against.

While the debates on the substantive work of the CD continue, the Committee adopted the procedural report of the CD (A/C.1/61/L.29) without a vote on October 25. The resolution took note of the increased deliberations of the CD, the structured debates and the cooperation among all six presidents of the Conference. The resolution also welcomes the decision of the Conference to request its current President and the incoming President to conduct consultations during the inter-sessional period. However, Turkey noticed that the resolution includes a reference to the expansion of CD membership, and stated that this should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Turkey preferred the paragraph not be included.

The US announced they would not participate in the vote on the draft resolution on the report of the Disarmament Commission (DC) (A/C.1/61/L.11) but did not explain why. In the 2006 session of the DC in March, they questioned whether the Commission had "finally outlived its usefulness," and Cuba implied the US had proposed eliminating the Disarmament Commission in the mandate review process then taking place. Resolution L.11 was adopted without a vote on October 25.

Norway recognized the improvements in the First Committee's working methods, but highlighted some things that could further enhance the relevance of the Committee. Norway complimented the value of the NGO participation this year, and was convinced the debates would benefit from even more contributions by civil society. Norway also suggested fewer resolutions, better follow-up to the adopted resolutions, and more time for interactive debates and open-ended consultations.

The US said member states should oppose efforts to convene Groups of Governmental Experts when other groups on the same topic had not been able to agree on any outcome. The US also said the revitalization of the First Committee remained incomplete, and called on the General Assembly to formally adopt the thematic clusters.

The First Committee also adopted the following draft resolutions on disarmament machinery without a vote: "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament" (A/C.1/61/L.9); "United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services" (A/C.1/61/L.12); "Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean" (A/C.1/61/L.14); "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa" (A/C.1/61/L.24); and "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific" (A/C.1/61/L.28).

- Beatrice Fihn, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (www.wilpf.int.ch)



Biological and Chemical Weapons

On Monday, October 23, the First Committee voted on the resolutions on biological and chemical weapons. Both the “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction” and the “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction” were adopted without a vote, as they have been for years. “Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol” was adopted with 163 votes in favor, none opposed, and two abstentions (Israel and the United States).

Hungary introduced the draft resolution entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction” (A/C.1/61/L.27) on October 11, 2006. The resolution’s text is largely similar to years past, with some updates.

Prior to the vote, Finland made a general statement on behalf of the European Union supporting further strengthening the Convention. The EU will do this “by actively working towards a successful outcome of the Review Conference later this year.” The EU will also “contribute to a full review of the operation of the Convention, promote efforts to enhance transparency through an increased exchange of information among states parties, support further action being taken on the results of the inter-sessional work, and support a further inter-sessional work programme until the Seventh Review Conference that should be held no later than 2011.”

Poland introduced the draft resolution entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction” (A/C.1/61/L.19) on October 11, 2006. The resolution contains several new elements, including an important new operative paragraph (5) reaffirming the states parties’ obligation to completely destroy their chemical weapons and facilities by the Convention’s deadline.

The resolution also stresses that the “full and effec-

International Court of Justice

On October 27, the First Committee adopted “Follow-up to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons” with a vote of 117 in favor, 27 opposed, and 26 abstentions. There was a separate vote on operative paragraph (OP) 1, which was adopted with 159 in favor, 4 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

The draft resolution, introduced by Malaysia on October 10, is very similar to the ICJ resolutions Malaysia has introduced annually since 1996. It calls for negotiations that would conclude in a nuclear weapons convention—a universal treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapons and provide for their elimination under international verification and compliance mechanisms. OP 1 simply underlines the unanimous 1996 ICJ advisory opinion, and is less controversial than the rest of the resolution.

As in previous years, the resolution was supported by a variety of countries, including some non-aligned, western, and nuclear-possessing, including China, India and Pakistan. France, Israel, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States opposed the resolution.

Japan and Russia provided an explanation of their votes. Russia said it continued to oppose the resolution “for reasons known to all, which have not changed,” without elaborating. While Japan, which abstained, expressed its support for the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons and for the unanimous opinion of the International Court of Justice, Japan “believe[s] it is premature to call upon all the state immediately to fulfill that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.” Japan, instead, called for steady and incremental progress towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

-Courtney Gugliuzza, Reaching Critical Will
(www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

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Verification and Transparency

During the fourth week of the First Committee, the delegations voted on two draft texts pertaining to verification and transparency.

The procedural draft decision sponsored by Canada, "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification" (A/C.1/61/L.22), which welcomed the update from the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Verification, was adopted without a vote.

However, both Pakistan and Iran raised concerns over the makeup of the GGE and the philosophy of verification in general. Pakistan stated that while it went along with the resolution in the spirit of cooperation, it was nonetheless disappointed with a perceived imbalance in representation on the GGE. Pakistan expressed their "hope that adequate representation of all relevant countries would be ensured in any future work on this important issue."

The Pakistani delegation also expressed a general difference in opinion as to the fundamental role of verification within the global community. It asserted that "[v]erification ensures the effectiveness and integrity of [disarmament treaties and agreements]," but contends that "the concept and practice of verification is integral to arms limitations and disarmament agreements. It has no independent existence and concepts relating to verification cannot be promoted in a vacuum."

The Iranian delegation expressed concern over the panel's use of email to conduct discussions since its last meeting in August. Iran feels that the great importance of the panel's work makes it necessary to conduct meetings in person. To date, the General Assembly has not provided extra funds to facilitate another meeting of the GGE.

Conversely, Egypt expressed its support for a system for verification in all its aspects, encouraging the GGE to complete its work as soon as possible. Egypt said the General Assembly should encourage this new methodology for future work of GGEs, in order to arrive at a swift consensus. It saw the use of elec-

tronic communication after a meeting as a precedent that should be supported because it would promote multilateralism in studying disarmament at the UN.

The First Committee also voted on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activity" (A/C.1/61/L.36). The resolution reaffirms "that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger to international peace and security." Furthermore, it emphasizes "the need for increased transparency and confirm[s] the importance of confidence-building measures as a conducive means of ensuring the attainment of the objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space." (See PAROS report)

-Eric Sorenson, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (<http://disarm.igc.org>)

Bio & Chem Weapons, cont.

tive implementation" of the Convention, including its provisions on national implementation, "constitutes an important contribution to the efforts of the United Nations in the global fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". According to Poland's October 12 introduction, this is the first time a General Assembly resolution has stressed national implementation of a disarmament treaty as a contribution to fighting terrorism.

Pakistan stressed that both biological and chemical weapons must be eliminated to prevent terrorist access to them, in its explanation of vote on "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.52). Pakistan also underlined the need to obtain more control over biological weapons and to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Similar to the vote in the 2004 First Committee, Israel and the United States were the sole abstentions on this year's "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" (A/C.1/61/L.5). In 2004, the Marshall Islands also abstained.

-Lizzie Herzog, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (<http://disarm.igc.org>)



Terrorism

Three draft resolutions that address terrorism were voted on this week, each of which are concerned primarily with preventing non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Like last year, India's draft resolution, "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.52), which calls on member states to actively prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD, was adopted without a vote. "Reducing Nuclear Danger" (A/C.1/61/L.49) was adopted with a vote of 105 in favor, 50 opposed, and 13 abstentions. "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.19) was adopted without a vote on October 23.

As they did similarly last year in their explanation of vote, Pakistan expressed its support for the objective of L.52, while asserting its continued belief that the language of the resolution needs improvement to more accurately represent the reality of terrorism. Pakistan said the danger of terrorist acquisition and use of WMD "must be viewed in perspective. Terrorist organizations, or non-state actors, are more likely to acquire and use [chemical and biological weapons] capabilities. The acquisition and use of nuclear weapons by terrorists and non-state actors is much less likely. This concern should not become an excuse for discrimination against 'selected' countries." Furthermore, Pakistan reiterated that, "the best guarantee against the threat of possible use of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons is their elimination."

"Reducing Nuclear Danger" somewhat indirectly addresses terrorism, and calls for the review of nuclear doctrines as well as a reassessment of the hair-trigger alert status of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution states that "the threat posed by the increased risk of nuclear weapons or its components falling into the hands of non-State actors, including terrorists, has further aggravated existing dangers". Similar in text and voting patterns to last year's resolution of the same name, the draft was adopted with a vote of 105 in favor, 50 opposed and 13 abstentions.

This year, the resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention (L.19) says the implementation of the Convention, including its provisions on national implementation, "constitutes an important contribution to the efforts of the United Nations in the global fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". According to Poland's October 12 introduction, this is the first time a General Assembly resolution has stressed national implementation of a disarmament treaty as a contribution to fighting terrorism.

"Preventing the risk of radiological terrorism" (A/C.1/60/L.39/Rev.1), introduced by France for the first time last year, was not introduced this year. Pakistan cautioned that the international community must not lose sight of preventing the development and use of dirty bombs and that initiation of negotiations on a Radiological Weapons Conventions should be given serious consideration.

-Courtney Gugliuzza, Reaching Critical Will
(www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

NWFZs, cont.

in OP five. India argued there is no greater validity to calling for a NWFZ in South Asia than in any other part of the world. While Pakistan supports NWFZs, it said L.20 fails to acknowledge reality on the ground. Pakistan unsuccessfully tried to promote a NWFZ in South Asia for 24 years, but that the campaign was killed by India's nuclear explosion, to which Pakistan responded.

Meanwhile, the UK, speaking also for France and the US, explained they voted against L.20 for the same reason as last year, because of ambiguity over its implications for the high seas.

The bi-annual resolution A/C.1/61/L.53, "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status," was adopted without a vote, as it was in 2004.

-Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will
(www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



Landmines

States which are party to the Mine Ban Treaty voted in favor of "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.47/Rev.1), and states which are not party abstained from voting. In total, 157 countries voted in favor, ten more than did last year. No state voted against the resolution.

Cuba, Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, India and South Korea reiterated that they cannot stop using landmines because of their security situations, but still sympathize with the spirit of the Treaty. They insist they are balancing military and humanitarian concerns by using landmines "responsibly" and protecting civilians from them as much as possible. According to Pakistan, adhering to the Mine Ban Treaty will not be possible without a replacement defense system. As a highly mined country since the Second World War, Egypt said its abstention emanated from its view that the Mine Ban Treaty does not mention the responsibility of states that plant mines in other countries for clearing them.

It is a positive sign that these countries abstain from the resolution instead of voting against it. A universal norm against the use of these indiscriminate weapons continues to grow.

-Heikki Hietala, Reaching Critical Will
(www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

Missiles

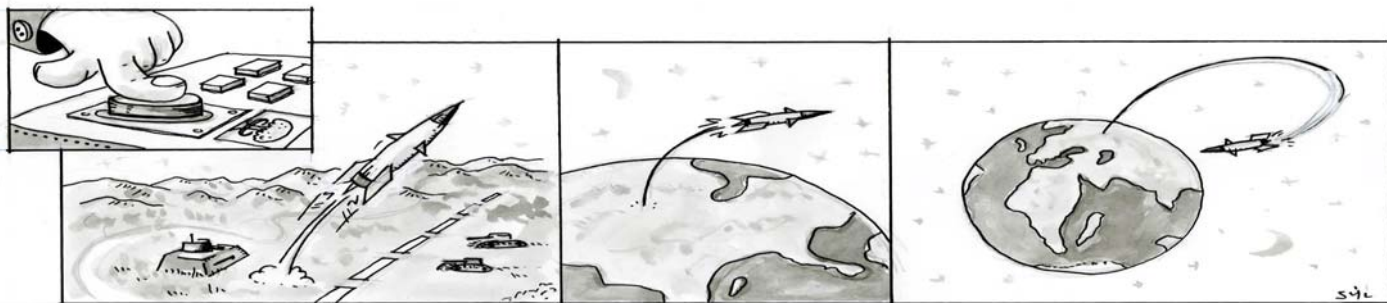
"Missiles" (A/C.1/61/L.3) was adopted by the First Committee on Monday, October 23, with 105 votes in favor, 6 opposed and 55 abstentions, marking an increase of four oppositional votes and five abstentions. Israel and the United States, the two negative votes of 2005, were joined by Albania, France, Micronesia and the United Kingdom.

L.3 takes note of the Secretary-General's Report on Missiles and decides to include missiles in the agenda of next year's First Committee. The resolution also creates a third Panel of Governmental Experts to be convened in 2007, which will report to the General Assembly in 2008.

Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union, stated that the EU did not support the resolution because it did not mention any of the relevant Security Council resolutions adopted this year or the Hague Code of Conduct on Ballistic Missile Proliferation. The United States earlier noted that the work of the third Panel should be based on the final report of the second Panel- which is not yet completed- rather than starting from scratch or using the new report on missiles from the UN Institute for Disarmament Research.

With L.3 now adopted, the General Assembly will be able to continue to contribute to the efforts to curb the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which, as the EU stated this past week, "puts at risk the security of all states and peoples."

-Waverly de Bruijn, Global Action to Prevent War,



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