



OEWG REPORT

Civil society perspectives on the open-ended working
group on nuclear disarmament
2–13 May 2016



Reaching Critical Will

13 May 2016
Vol. 2, No. 14

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Editorial: A tale of two securities
- 2 | Calendar of events
- 3 | News in brief
- 5 | Would a ban treaty be an effective disarmament measure? How?
- 6 | Event: Global support and political will for nuclear disarmament

The OEWG Report is published by Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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EDITORIAL: A TALE OF TWO SECURITIES

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

How can an approach to global security built on the threat of mass annihilation be compatible with a 21st century understanding of international cooperation, asked Austria during a rather surreal debate on Thursday. A handful of states that include nuclear weapons in their security doctrines extolled their perception that these weapons afford them security and stability and must be maintained by "responsible" states until some distant future date when the "conditions" for nuclear disarmament are "correct". This aggressive articulation of support for the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons seems to have been sparked by a more vocal and assertive display of support for the prohibition of these weapons. As the commencement of negotiations towards a treaty banning nuclear weapons gains traction, these nuclear apologists have—rather unwisely—begun escalating and entrenching their support for maintaining weapons of terror.

Fear mongering of weapons supporters

Perversely, although with apparent sincerity, states supporting the continued existence of weapons of massive, indiscriminate violence sought to argue that in fact it is those supporting a prohibition that are acting irresponsibly, threatening the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and fuelling polarisation in the international community.

Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Hungary, Republic of Korea, and Poland gave versions of accounts in which banning nuclear weapons is destabilising and where pursuit of the decades-old failed step-by-step approach is the only "effective" way forward. They asserted that a prohibition treaty would upset the international order in varying ways. Poland claimed it would "destroy the NPT system" and Hungary compared prohibition supporters to climate change deniers because they "ignore the security dimensions of nuclear weapons".

"This is not a game," warned Poland. "Our lives and our future are at stake."

A dangerous game

The sake of our lives and future is exactly why nuclear weapons must be outlawed and eliminated. It is the wielding of nuclear weapons that is destabilising. It is the perpetuation of the idea that nuclear weapons afford security that is irresponsible. It is, as Mexico said, the doctrine of deterrence that undermines the NPT and the broader multilateral system.

Any peace that we have experienced in the past 70 years is because of our efforts towards collective security in spite of, not because of, nuclear weapons, argued Ambassador Lomonaco of Mexico. Nuclear weapons "force states into an automatically adversarial relationship in which they threaten each other with the most destructive technologies of violence we have been able to develop as human beings," remarked Thomas Nash of Article 36 speaking on behalf of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

The real challenge to the NPT comes not from prohibiting nuclear weapons but from failing to fulfil NPT commitments. This includes the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons, but also, as Switzerland noted, commitments to transparency, denuclearisation, and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines—commitments that many states railing against the prohibition claim to support and yet have failed to implement.

A nuclear weapon ban treaty will not undermine the NPT. It only undermines a perverse conception of the NPT as an instrument that confers legitimacy on nuclear weapons for the five states recognised as possessors under that Treaty and for their allies who include the potential use of those weapons in their security doctrines.

Whose security is it anyway?

The crux of the problem is not polarisation "caused" by the majority of states seeking to prohibit nuclear weapons. Rather the problem is the entrenched posi-

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Editorial continued

tion of a minority of nuclear-armed and allied states that is fundamentally incompatible with international law and generally accepted moral principles. The problem is not that the majority of states ignore the security dimensions of nuclear weapons but that the minority does not seem to believe that humanity is a prerequisite for genuine, sustainable security. State security, in their view, is seen as distinct from and apparently more important than a much broader concept of security that as Austria's Ambassador Hajnoczi includes the environment, economics, and human beings, among other things. As Mr. Nash said, "security is not security without humanity."

This false binary privileges those seeking to maintain an imbalanced, discriminatory set of international relationships in which nuclear weapons are a symbol of power. Ms. Shorna-Kay Richards of Jamaica questioned why these states would wilfully posit nuclear weapons as instrumental to their security, asking why then should all countries not pursue nuclear weapons.

A number of other reasonable questions for these states remained unanswered at the end of the debate. Why, if they are so convinced of the perceived security benefits of nuclear weapons, would they want ever to get rid of them? How can they say with certitude that nuclear weapons bring stability and security in one breath and in the next say they are committed to nuclear disarmament? How can they claim that they want peace and security yet perpetuate the existence of and reliance upon weapons of mass destruction? Why are these countries even party to the NPT, if threatening the use of nuclear weapons is so useful for security?

A crisis of faith

The nuclear-supportive states in the room seeking to disrupt efforts towards a prohibition came across

at times a bit like believers that the sun revolves around the earth having their entire worldview put into question. It is as if they have deemed nuclear weapons as critical to their survival, to the extent they no longer recognise that their security is interdependent with the security of other countries. In saying that they are being threatened by aggressive states undertaking exercises on their borders, they seem not to recognise the perceptions of their own actions by the states they fear. These perceptions of aggression of course go both ways and nuclear weapons lock these relationships into a highly negative dynamic from which it is very difficult to escape. These states also missed the opportunity of today's debate to address what Austria, Brazil, and many others have described as a suicidal policy of nuclear deterrence. Instead they overlooked the risks and consequences of nuclear weapons and asserted that their security concerns are being ignored.

The majority of states, which reject nuclear weapons and are seeking to prohibit them, do not ignore this minority's perceived security concerns. They are trying to change their perspective – seeking the paradigm shift that many have said is essential to move those states out of their current nuclear-armed security tangle. The reality that is denied in the dogma of nuclear weapons is that, as Ms. Eunice Akiwo of Palau said, they are immoral, they are inhumane, and soon they will be illegal. In this context, it is irresponsible for these states to claim that prohibiting nuclear weapons will be destabilising. Rather they should redouble their efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their own security doctrines and stop seeking to undermine the positive developments towards a legally-binding instrument that strengthen the global norm against nuclear weapons and increase international security for all. •

Calendar of events

When	What	Where
10:00-13:00	Summary by Chair; exchange of views	Room XIX
15:00-18:00	The way forward in preparation for August; exchange of views	Room XIX



NEWS IN BRIEF

Mia Gandenberger | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The News in Brief is not a comprehensive summary of all statements. It highlights positions on a few critical issues covered during plenary discussions. Today's brief covers the exchange of views on panel VI on other measures - reviewing the role of nuclear weapons in the security and other contexts of the 21st century.

Panellists

- J. Cartwright presented the report of the Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction and said a nuclear weapons exchange by states as the third most dangerous existential threat.
- P. Ingram suggested that in order to persuade nuclear-armed states to give up weapons, states have to shine light on their competing commitments. He also suggested that the nuclear-armed states boycotted the OEWG because of the discussion on prohibiting nuclear weapons. Participants would have to accept there's more than one morality and shouldn't pretend to have the "right" morality.

Support for prohibition or other disarmament and non-proliferation measures

- Malaysia stressed that the conditions for disarmament can only then be right when states make it right. States can make it right by prohibiting nuclear weapons.
- Hidankyo recalled the experience of survivors of the nuclear weapons attacks and called for support for its petition for elimination.
- Ireland underlined that nuclear weapons serve no military purposes, as deterrence is a fallacy. It expressed concerns with the worrying signs that the norm against use seems to be weakening, apparent in the nuclear testing by the DPRK, unambiguous threats by nuclear-armed states, the open pursuit of WMDs by non state actor groups, and the continued investment in nuclear weapons modernisation.
- Jamaica highlighted WP.4 and NGO/22 regarding dismantling nuclear deterrence. Nuclear weapons are of no use in addressing today's security threats and a more sensible approach to global security would be to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.
- Austria stressed that nuclear deterrence is not a valid framework for security in the 21st century. Precisely because of the current security environment nuclear disarmament has to be pursued with great urgency. There can only be a common security in this world, as what is national security but the security of people, that of human beings.

- South Africa stressed that its own experience has illustrated that nuclear weapons do not increase but in fact undermine security.
- Ecuador wondered what world leader would be capable of such an inhumane action as to launch a nuclear weapon strike? It wondered why nuclear-armed states are modernising their arsenals if they are not meant to be used.
- Ecuador further stressed that nuclear weapons do not provide security, rather quite the contrary. Those in nuclear-armed states are less safe.
- Kazakhstan highlighted the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World adopted by the UNGA in resolution A/RES/70/57.
- Brazil and Cuba stressed the urgent need for withdrawal of reservations or interpretative declarations to NWFZ treaties.
- Palau challenged the notion of "responsible nuclear weapon states," asking, isn't it fundamentally irresponsible to possess a weapon of mass destruction?
- Sweden introduced WP.39 on nuclear-armed cruise missiles.
- Switzerland expressed concern with the failure to reduce role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and further development of arsenals.
- Mexico explained the main ingredient for the security situation in the Latin American and Caribbean region is that states in the region neither possess nor host nuclear weapons.
- Regarding national vs collective security, Mexico called on states not to forget history, where many atrocities have been committed in the name of national security.
- Mexico argued that the doctrine of deterrence in itself is threat to NPT regime and a ban treaty will be the "ultimate non-proliferation measure" and strengthen the NPT.
- Colombia recalled yesterday's panellist and called for states to pursue the de-legitimisation of nuclear weapons, something they have already done for other weapons.
- Philippines reiterated its support for a prohibition treaty.
- Global Zero warned that as nuclear weapon modernisation programmes expand so does their role in security doctrines and risk of their use.
- Article 36 on behalf of ICAN stressed nuclear deterrence is as much an illusion of security as

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News in Brief, continued

anything. Nuclear weapons distort the security of those possessing them and force them into adversarial relationships. A nuclear weapon ban treaty would reaffirm and solidify the general political and legal rejections of nuclear weapons that exist today, reducing any space for them to be perceived as legitimate.

- Indonesia stressed that the pace of nuclear disarmament should not be determined by the nuclear-armed states. A new prohibition instrument even if negotiated without nuclear-armed states would present an effective measure under article VI of the NPT and would co-exist with, support, and enhance the Treaty.
- Initiatives pour le désarmement nucléaire thought the concept of “good faith” in article VI of the NPT seems to have been abandoned by France.
- OPANAL stressed that nuclear weapons are used every day as political. Further the nuclear-armed states have demonstrated their lack of interest in nuclear disarmament by not participating in the OEWG.
- Amplify warned that states trying to stall the process for a treaty banning nuclear weapons are gambling with our collective future.
- Wildfire presented the preliminary results of its UNSC candidate survey to allow states to take an informed decision in that regard. It called on states to use their Security Council vote to increase political cost of relying on nuclear weapons and to vote against candidates in nuclear alliances.
- P. Ingram explained conditions for disarmament not necessary for progressing nuclear disarmament.

Support for nuclear weapons

- Estonia, Poland, Germany, Canada, Hungary, Bulgaria, Japan, Republic of Korea, Turkey underlined the progressive approach as their preferred option to move ahead.
- Australia explained that security threats can be perceived in different ways.
- Germany, Poland, Belgium, Estonia, Turkey stressed that the legitimate security concerns of states need to be considered in the discussion on the way forward.
- Japan in referring the situation in its reason stressed the need to consider each states’ security concerns, and recalled the risk reduction measures presented last week.

- Estonia thought it delusional to have a ban without nuclear weapon states.
- Germany stressed that regional tensions will have to be dealt with in order to make progress on nuclear disarmament. Negotiating a prohibition without addressing security implications means untying nuclear weapons from security policies.
- Poland explained nuclear weapons play a significant role in maintaining stability and security. A prohibition treaty would “destroy NPT system”.
- Canada explained nuclear weapons bring security, while acknowledging this is not a popular position. Negotiating and adopting a prohibition treaty might carry a certain satisfying symbolism, but it would not be effective. •

The final edition
of the OEWG Report
will be issued on
Tuesday, 17 May 2016.

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WOULD A BAN TREATY BE AN EFFECTIVE DISARMAMENT MEASURE? HOW?

Greg Mello | Los Alamos Study Group

There are no panaceas in multilateral nuclear disarmament. No one at this OEWG who has spoken in favor of prohibiting nuclear weapons has claimed that such a treaty would be sufficient in itself for complete nuclear disarmament, or in the meantime for eliminating the risk of nuclear war.

Instead, what a large majority of states have articulated here, in impressive and increasing detail, is that a universal prohibition of nuclear weapons is inescapably and urgently necessary, as a foundational step and within the framework of the NPT, for further disarmament measures. It is necessary because there is no legal and normative clarity regarding the possession of nuclear weapons, as the General Assembly recognized when it created this working group.

Disarmament can proceed by many paths: parallel and sequential; unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral. All of them would be enabled—and none impeded—by a clear and universal prohibition of nuclear weapons. The steps in the so-called “progressive” agenda are impractical without first clearly stigmatizing nuclear weapons. A ban treaty would turn public opinion worldwide against nuclear weapons more strongly, including in nuclear-armed states that do not subscribe to the treaty.

The reality of a ban treaty would occasion a massive breakthrough in the world’s awareness of nuclear weapons. It would reconfirm and strengthen humanity’s negative valence toward these instruments of mass murder, releasing into consciousness and politics the pent-up frustration and animus against these weapons that many people, including political and opinion leaders, have carried their whole lives.

A ban would awaken and inspire civil society, with crossover benefits to civil society efforts in human development, solidarity, and human rights. A ban would provide a tangible source of hope for humanity and a bulwark against cynicism. Political and opinion leaders would have to take this new reality into account and incorporate it into their worldviews, actions, and identities. The status of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons careers would fall.

It would affect corporate investments and decisions, as we have seen with other weapon systems that have been prohibited. It will affect political values and spending priorities in the nuclear-armed states, whether or not they sign the treaty. All the nuclear-armed states have limited public funds and have competing demands for those funds both from within the military sector and from outside it. Nuclear investment decisions are often contested and will be increasingly so. Key destabilizing moderniza-

tion decisions are being taken, in the U.S. at least, by relatively narrow margins.

As we see in this OEWG meeting, such profound changes are difficult for some people to contemplate. Such change up-ends their political assumptions—and for some, their career assumptions and identities. It is especially difficult for some people to imagine that non-nuclear-armed states could act on this issue without the permission or participation of nuclear-armed states. Unconsciously but visibly, these people and these states accord unassailable status and power to nuclear weapons and those who wield them. That is just the problem we are trying to solve.

The resistance we see here in this meeting to formally and legally condemn and prohibit nuclear weapons is a measure of the effectiveness of such a treaty, and of the diplomatic breakthrough it would bring.

Part of the OEWG mandate is to “examine additional measures to increase awareness and understanding of ... the humanitarian consequences” of nuclear detonations. Such efforts have been underway for more than 70 years. Negotiations to ban nuclear weapons would more fruitfully increase awareness of nuclear weapon dangers than any other measure. Conversely, lack of disarmament progress by diplomats and statesmen is a major factor against awareness, from the top to the bottom of society.

A ban treaty would not be just another bit of news. It would change the framework in which all nuclear weapons information is evaluated, processed, and disseminated. It would awaken the news media to many interesting stories of which they are currently unaware, or which are—in nuclear-armed and dependent states—taboo.

A ban treaty would reach directly into individual consciences, affecting career decisions for scientists and engineers, a crucial factor in weapons maintenance and modernization. Even militaries would be forced to reevaluate the role of circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used. And it would increase, to some extent immediately, so-called “self-deterrence,” thus decreasing the risk of nuclear war.

In these ways and others a ban treaty would powerfully affect the actions and policies of the nuclear-armed states as well as other states that might contemplate a nuclear option. Even without acceding to the treaty, the new norms it established would affect nuclear states powerfully. A ban treaty imposes nothing on anybody, but demands, through its undeniable political and legal reality, that everyone re-evaluate and re-conceptualize nuclear weapons. •



EVENT: GLOBAL SUPPORT AND POLITICAL WILL FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Jessica Lawson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

This side event, organised by Unfold Zero, World Future Council, and the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations in Geneva highlighted examples and indications of support for nuclear abolition from around the world, and ideas for strengthening global campaigns.

The panel included ten speakers and was chaired by H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations. Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament made some opening remarks, emphasising the need to include civil society in this process. He said that he is pleased to see civil society seizing the opportunity at the OEWG to put forward their ideas. He also mentioned that with the second civil society forum for the Conference on Disarmament being organised for this year, he hopes that we can together find ways to break the deadlock in that forum.

The event heard from some panelists with perspectives from within nuclear-armed states. Bernard Norlain, Air Force General (ret), Honorary Chairman National Defense Committee, Vice-President of Initiatives for Nuclear Disarmament, and member of Global Zero talked about the challenges he faces as a General in favour of nuclear disarmament in France, the third nuclear power and a country that loves the bomb. Heather Wokush, whose father once designed nuclear weapons and then later nuclear power plants, discussed the importance of engaging humans with this issue, since it is a humanitarian debate.

Others offered opinions about the current state of disarmament diplomacy. Thore Vestby, Vice-President of Mayors for Peace, expressed his dislike of the NPT process, saying that it's like a big man with a fat cigar telling everyone else not to smoke. Vinay Nayak, Youth Outreach Coordinator for the 2012 Obama re-election campaign, talked about messaging. He said it is important to be empathetic in order to engage those with different ideas than our own.

Alexandra Arce von Herold, PNND Central America Coordinator talked about the Youth Summit on Nuclear Abolition that was held in Hiroshima and the launch of a new international network of youth dedicated to nuclear abolition, Amplify, last month.

Ambassador Manuel Dengo of Costa Rica, who was the chair of the 2013 OEWG taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament spoke about how far we have come since the first OEWG. He said that since 2013, countries have had a chance to think about the results of the first OEWG and many now have clear views on the issue. He said that now the challenge will be to start funneling those ideas into our shared goal of global zero.

Meredith Horowski, the Campaign Director of Global Zero, said that in order to reach this shared goal, we need a bigger movement than the one we have today. She emphasised that young people, the provocative power of art, and political fights outside of parliamentary forums is key to achieving that. •

