

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

*NGO Reporting on the United Nations General Assembly  
First Committee on Disarmament and International Security  
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**6–10 October 2008**

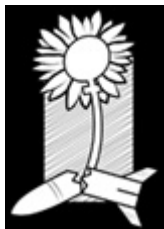
**First Edition**

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*The views in this publication are not necessarily those  
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**Editorial: Bread Not Bombs—De-Weaponising Security**

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will

**F**irst Committee's opening week of general debate largely echoed the sentiments expressed by high-level officials during the general debate of the General Assembly in September. Concerned with the status quo, the overwhelming majority of delegates called for change—in attitude, posturing, political will, and, more than usual, in spending. Alarmed, perhaps, at the financial crisis ricocheting around the world, many delegations lamented excessive—and growing—global military expenditures.

In 2007, military spending reached approximately \$1,339 billion, which represents a 45 percent increase over the last decade. Fifteen countries—including the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—accounted for over 80 percent of the 2007 expenditures. The United States alone is responsible for 45 percent.

Meanwhile, the annual regular budget of the United Nations is \$1.9 billion. For two decades, the UN has faced financial difficulties. As of 29 February 2008, member states' arrears to the regular budget exceeded \$1.6 billion. Incidentally, the \$1,339 billion spent in 2007 on militaries could fund the UN regular budget for almost 600 years.

These figures demonstrate the priorities of the most economically and militarily powerful countries in the world. As military budgets increase, funding for the United Nations, which was created to carry out the goals of peace, global security, international cooperation, and sustainable development, decreases. Many delegations cited the "international security environment" as one of the major impediments to progress in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Of course, lack of progress in disarmament and non-proliferation is also one of the major causes of increased tensions in the international security environment. The role of disarmament machinery, as Sri Lanka's permanent representative argued, is to reduce military expenditures through arms control and disarmament so that the international community can "progressively de-weaponise security."

This is the same goal, incidentally, of Article 26 of the UN Charter, which calls upon the Security Council to formulate a plan for the regulation of armaments in order to establish and maintain "international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources." However, instead of creating plans for arms control and the reduction of military spending, the permanent members of the Security Council have engaged in weapons profi-

teering and arms races.

According to the Cuban delegation, "The most recent statistics show that that the United States and the countries of the European Union control 92% of the world armament market." The developing world in particular is a huge market for arms transfers as most developing countries import most of their military equipment. In 2006, the value of arms transfer agreements with developing states, which amounted to nearly \$28.8 billion, comprised 71.5 percent of all such agreements worldwide. The United States, United Kingdom, and Russia accounted for 47 percent of these.

Meanwhile, most donor (high income) countries have not met their 0.7 per cent development assistance pledge and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remain far from met. The permanent representative of Tanzania pointed out, the resources going to "research and development and investment in the armaments industries continue to outstrip the investments in economic and human development. The achievements of internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs are seriously undermined by expenditures on armaments as they are likewise affected by the negative impacts of climate change, the oil crisis, the food crisis, and now the financial crisis in the world."

Reducing military expenditures and devoting some of these resources to development, as suggested by many delegations at First Committee and the General Assembly, seems to be an ideal way to solve many of the challenges facing the international community and to meet the goals of the United Nations: peace, security, justice, development, human rights. Yet disarmament and non-proliferation fora like First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, or the Disarmament Commission, where these types of commitments should be discussed, have been recently reduced to repeating past promises and struggling to even function properly.

Ghana's permanent representative called for "critical introspection to ascertain whether the goals that we set for ourselves ... have been attained, either partially or wholly. After all, the world outside will not assess our stewardship by eloquent rhetoric, but by concrete and progressive results." In keeping with the UNGA President's call for delegations "to adopt a results-based approach ... that measures progress by deeds—and not words or numbers of resolutions alone," Canada's ambassador for disarmament called on

## Nuclear Disarmament

Marcy Fowler | Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy

Many delegations expressed a sense of frustration with the current disarmament status quo. Representing the Republic of Korea, Kim Bong-hyun said "the real problem lying behind the stalemate is that we might have developed a sense of complacency." For Sergio Duarte, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the problem is not complacency, but a lack of "operational plans for disarmament."

While some delegations reaffirmed their commitment to nuclear disarmament, the question for the First Committee Chair and for the many nations that called for arsenal and stockpile reductions was: "are we disarming?" The United States and Russian delegations both answered affirmatively, and reported that they have reduced their nuclear stockpiles. The United States ambassador for disarmament said, "[b]y 2012 the total stockpile of strategic nuclear warheads will be at its lowest level since the 1950s and 80 per cent lower than its level in 1990." Russia's ambassador said that since 1991 it has reduced its arsenal five-fold and its weapons stockpile by three-quarters. Both delegations reported that the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, also known as the Moscow Treaty) is being successfully implemented. However, Indonesia's representative objected that the Treaty contains no verification mechanisms, and suggested that the International Atomic Energy Agency should monitor and verify adherence to the Moscow Treaty. The US and Russia also reported that they are in discussions on a new legally-binding agreement to follow the bilateral Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which expires at the end of 2009.

Both the US and Russian delegations stressed that the progress of nuclear disarmament depends on the international security situation. However, the US ambassador also stated that the United States could maintain its security commitments while reducing its arsenal. Many delegations, including those of China and the New Agenda Coalition, criticized the prominent role of nuclear weapons in the military doctrines and strategies of the nuclear weapon states. The US delegation claimed that it has decreased its defense strategy reliance on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence as part of its Nuclear Posture Review, and placed more of an emphasis on other weapons. However, Pakistan's delegation argued that the US doctrine of pre-emption creates an incentive for nations to develop nuclear weapons.

Pointing to the waiver for nuclear trade recent-

ly granted to India by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Egypt's delegation said that the actions of the NSG has ended its role as safeguard of NPT compliance and universality and may endanger the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Switzerland's ambassador noted that the NSG decision "raises fundamental questions about the future of the nuclear non-proliferation system." Canada's ambassador pointed out that the situations in South Asia and the Middle East will be factors in the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Egypt and other Arab delegations called for the implementation of the 1995 NPT Resolution on the Middle East and stated that Israel should adhere to the NPT.

Though many concerns were raised, so too were reports of positive action and reasons for optimism for the future of nuclear disarmament. Brazil's delegation pointed out that though the Second NPT Preparatory Committee did not lead to a consensus report, the five nuclear weapon states did submit a common statement reiterating their commitment to the NPT. Many delegations looked forward to the Third NPT Preparatory Committee. The United Arab Emirates delegation sees the Committee as an opportunity to reinforce the goals of the NPT based on the rule of law, and Canada's delegation hopes to act as a "bridge-builder" between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

Several delegations also pointed to recent statements made by prominent figures in world policy as positive signs for global nuclear disarmament. Earlier this year, the G8 released a Leaders' Declaration containing a paragraph calling on nuclear weapon states to reduce their arsenals. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has pledged to "give increased priority to disarmament." Articles in the Wall Street Journal by the "Hoover Group"—former US Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, former US Secretary of Defense William Perry, and former US Senator Sam Nunn—have created a renewed sense of urgency for disarmament.

With this momentum, much work remains to be done. Several delegations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), called on the international community to increase the political will and flexibility to achieve disarmament. Nuclear weapon states were called on to further reduce their stockpiles. Norway's delegation urged cuts to go deeper than required in START and SORT. Many delegations called on nuclear weap-

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## Nuclear Proliferation

Michael Spies | Arms Control Reporter

Delegations offered contrasting approaches on nuclear proliferation issues during the general debate of the First Committee, in statements that generally mimicked those of previous years, but with less dynamism. Comments on proliferation issues revealed well-worn differences on several points, depending on the point of view of the observer and whether or not they are party to an existing dispute. As in past years, the discussion focused largely on the two most pressing proliferation crises of the day: the nuclear programmes of Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Only the European Union and Israel referenced suspicions of a clandestine nuclear programme in Syria.

As in past years, nuclear proliferation concerns are not likely to result in any particular action by the First Committee. Ambassador Rocca announced the United States would be reintroducing its resolution on compliance, based on resolution 60/55 (2005), citing "broad consensus that strict compliance with [arms control and disarmament agreements] is critical to international peace and security."

### ***A Worn Debate: Compliance vs. Diplomacy***

During the general debate, some states, mainly Western and developed, emphasized the need for compliance with Security Council resolutions. Ambassador Hill of Australia described the nuclear non-proliferation regime as under pressure by actions of a few states. Ambassador Hill further suggested a link between solving the Iran and DPRK nuclear issues and making further progress on disarmament, stating, "Their actions undermine international confidence, security and stability that is fundamental ... to ensuring further progress on nuclear disarmament."

Others continued to emphasize the need for diplomacy and negotiations. Ambassador Wang of China remarked that non-proliferation issues must be addressed through the improvement of bilateral relations, further imploring states to abandon double standards, to act impartially and without discrimination.

Seemingly in agreement with Ambassador Wang's points on diplomacy and negotiation, in reference to the Six Party Talks on the DPRK Ambassador Rocca said the parties' cooperation "shows how multilateral approaches can be applied to even the most complex international problems." She said the situation with Iran was analogous, where the United States has "put together an international coalition of states to address a problem."

The US view on multilateralism overlooks a key difference in the two cases, however. With the DPRK issues, the country that is at the heart of contention is a member of the process in settling the dispute, whereas in the case of Iran, US officials have ruled out direct contact to similarly discuss or address Iran's concerns until it has acquiesced on the primary points of contention—namely suspension of its nuclear programme.

### ***Discussion on Iran and the DPRK***

On Iran, those states that have routinely called for Iran to comply with Security Council resolutions updated their statements to reflect the

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### ***Nuclear Disarmament (cont.)***

on states to end the qualitative improvements of their nuclear arsenals. Most delegations called for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT, which compels nuclear weapon states to make every effort to disarm. These member states recommended utilizing the thirteen practical steps as detailed in the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Nations not party to the NPT were urged to accede, with the goal of universalization of the treaty.

There is also work to be done by civil society. Mr. Duarte pointed out that the role of civil society in furthering the cause of nuclear disarmament is both to increase global political will and to activate the leaders around the world so that the stalemate and the complacency that has existed can be replaced by enthusiasm and results.

### ***Editorial (cont.)***

delegations to consider "which of the nearly 60 resolutions" on the First Committee agenda "best contribute to our common objectives." He argued that the majority are "ancient" annual and biennial resolutions that could be "retired or incorporated with others ... [to] open up space for new deliberation and debate."

Civil society groups anticipate a few new resolutions this year, including one from Ireland on cluster munitions and one on the illicit brokering of small arms from the Republic of Korea and Australia. However, we also anticipate that most of the resolutions we have seen for many years will be reintroduced. We ask, as Ghana's representative did, for "critical introspection" of these documents, their purpose, and their contribution to disarmament, peace, and real security.

**Nuclear Proliferation (cont.)**

latest twists in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigation into its past nuclear programme. The EU, for instance, echoed the serious concern of the IAEA regarding the Agency's inability to make further progress in alleged Iranian studies related to the weaponization of nuclear materials.

Perhaps reflecting the December 2007 national intelligence estimate that Iran ceased its "nuclear weapons activities" in 2003, Ambassador Rocca's remarks suggested the object of the Security Council's resolutions was not to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, but rather to compel it to abandon its "ambitions for technologies that can lead to nuclear weapons."

Other delegations remarking on Iran included those of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, all of which emphasized the need for Iranian compliance with Security Council resolutions. The Chinese delegation appealed for a political and diplomatic solution, suggesting the parties should exercise patience and step up diplomatic efforts.

On the DPRK, delegations representing participants in the Six Party Talks generally made anodyne remarks deferring to the negotiation process. Ambassador Rocca, for instance, acknowledged only that the process had experienced "up and downs." Ambassador Tarui of Japan called on the DPRK to comply with Security Council resolutions, but did not comment on issues related to the Six Party process.

Of the representatives of the Six Party participants, only Ambassador Kim of the Republic of Korea made reference to the DPRK taking action to restart its plutonium production reactor at Yongbyon, describing these setbacks as "highly regrettable" and urging the DPRK to resume disablement. This prompted a right of reply from the DPRK, which accused the United States of backtracking on the implementation of the second implementation plan for the September 2005 Joint Declaration by refusing to remove it from its lists of state sponsors of terrorism.

By the weekend, however, events had overtaken the discussion in the First Committee, with the US State Department announcing it had reached agreement with the DPRK on removing it from its terrorism watch list in exchange for resumption of disablement activities and allowing verification activities at the Yongbyon complex.

*Krisztian Gal of the World Federation of United Nations Associations contributed reporting to this article.*

**In Brief: Negative Security Assurances**

Madeline Woo | Reaching Critical Will

- Many delegations, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the Rio Group, and the African Group, called for negative security assurances from nuclear weapon states to non-nuclear weapons states. They all called for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as the only absolute guarantee against their use.
- The United Arab Emirates, El Salvador, Kuwait, Algeria, Venezuela, Syria, Malaysia, South Africa, and India called for legally-binding negative security assurances.
- Australia, Ghana, and Kazakhstan expressed the opinion that the development of nuclear weapon free zones can act as a way for nuclear weapon states to give negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states.
- The New Agenda Coalition and South Africa stated that negative security assurances are a good reward for countries that decide to not develop nuclear weapons and that nuclear weapon states not granting negative security assurances could encourage other countries to develop nuclear programs of their own.
- Belarus and Senegal both pointed out that negative security assurances were good confidence-building measures and created mutual trust.

**In Brief: The Operational Status of Nuclear Weapons**

Michael Spies | Arms Control Reporter

- According to sources, the six sponsors—Chile, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sweden, Switzerland—of resolution 62/36 (2007) on "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems" are expected to reintroduce a similar resolution this year.
- India announced it would again table its annual draft resolution on "Reducing nuclear danger," which includes a step on de-alerting nuclear weapon systems.
- Only a few delegations remarked on reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons in their general statements, including Switzerland, Norway, and the New Agenda Coalition.
- Switzerland and New Zealand described the matter as a priority for their countries.
- The governments of Chile and Switzerland are hosting an event on the operational status of nuclear weapons on Friday, 17 October, 1:15-2:45pm.



## Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Ildikó Bors | Middle Powers Initiative

In the opening week of this year's First Committee, many delegations placed vital importance and urgency on the entry into force and universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as essential for the sustainability of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and a crucial step in promoting both a comprehensive nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

With the latest signature of Timor-Leste and the ratification by Burundi, the CTBT has been signed by 180 states and ratified by 145. The Treaty requires the ratification of 44 specific countries with major nuclear facilities, identified in Annex II of the Treaty, in order to enter into force. All but nine of these—China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and the United States—have done so. Myanmar's representative was pleased and encouraged to observe that the number of states to have ratified the Treaty has been growing. Representatives from New Zealand and the Rio Group welcomed that Colombia, an Annex II state, by depositing on 30 January 2008 its instrument of ratification, "brought us one step closer to having the ban on nuclear explosions fully in force under international law" and acknowledged the country's "efforts to find a way to take this step, notwithstanding the legal difficulties for doing so." Colombia's delegation reaffirmed its commitment to the CTBT. Kuwait similarly acknowledged Iraq's signing of the Treaty on 19 August 2008 and articulated its hope for a prompt ratification as well.

Out of the seven Annex II countries that addressed First Committee, all but Indonesia's delegation failed to make any mention of the CTBT agenda. Indonesia considers it a "deeply disturbing signal" that the two nuclear weapon States (China and the United States), which were among the first to sign the Treaty, have not ratified it and "(t)here is no positive indication on the part of the three non-NPT state parties (India, DPRK, Pakistan) that they are ready to sign the Treaty. The Indonesian delegation said, "For its part, Indonesia is seriously undertaking preparation at present for the ratification of the CTBT."

Statements by many delegations, including Russia, New Zealand, Viet Nam, Senegal, Colombia, Malaysia, and Kuwait, emphasized the imperative that this Treaty enter into force without any further delay. They urged all remaining Annex II States to ratify it as a matter of high priority. They added, non-entry into force would undermine the international community's quest to achieve a

world free of nuclear weapons and argued that its entry into force is a pressing goal and non-negotiable commitment of all states signatories. Ambassador Eric Danon of France, speaking on behalf of the European Union, invited the international community to support the regime as a "specific and realistic disarmament initiative."

According to the delegations of Norway and the Rio Group, a legally-binding and universal CTBT would limit the qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons and, as the Bangladeshi statement said, it "must be pursued at bilateral, regional and international levels." The Dominican Republic's delegation declared, it was this conviction that motivated their country to ratify the CTBT last year. The African Group, Singapore, Myanmar, and Ukraine stressed the importance of the Treaty's universalisation to "tangibly help to realize the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons" and serve the interests of international security and stability. The Republic of Korea's delegation stressed the entry into force of the CTBT as a priority in the context of minimizing the risks entailed in the increase in peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The delegations of El Salvador, Congo, Fiji and Ukraine also mentioned their belief that pending entry into force of the CTBT, all states should maintain political moratoriums on carrying out nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear test explosions, and refrain from acts that would weaken the objective and purpose of the Treaty. Fiji's ambassador highlighted the use of the Pacific as a testing ground for nuclear weapons, lamenting that citizens of the region continue suffering from the effects of nuclear explosions while the powers responsible for the tests have "resisted all attempts to discuss" it. He called on these states to take responsibility for the health and environmental affects their tests have caused.

Myanmar's delegation, on behalf of the ASEAN countries and in its national capacity, recognized the Final Declaration of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in Vienna in September 2007, which pressured states that had not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. The Rio Group voiced its satisfaction for the regional meeting on the CTBT that took place in San Jose, Costa Rica, last September and along with Japan acknowledged the success of the fourth ministerial meeting of states parties to the Treaty.

## Fissile Materials

Michael Spies | Arms Control Reporter

For a second year in a row, the Canadian delegation announced at the outset of the First Committee session that it would not table a draft text on a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). In his statement to the general debate, Ambassador Grinius blamed a “small handful of countries that wish to retain the capacity to produce fissile material in the future” for indefinitely blocking forward movement on the treaty.

The last time the General Assembly expressed support for an FMCT was in 2004, when it adopted resolution 59/81 by a vote, with 179 states in favour, the United States and Palau opposed, and with Israel and the United Kingdom abstaining. In 2006, the Canadian delegation withdrew its draft resolution after it became clear it would not find consensus. In 2007, the Canadian delegation found in preliminary consultations that it could not even find consensus on a procedural decision to put the issue on the agenda for the current session of the General Assembly.

According to the International Panel on Fissile Materials, only India, Israel, and Pakistan are believed to be currently producing fissile material for use in weapons. Both India and Pakistan are presently constructing new weapons-related fissile material production facilities. Indian Ambassador Rao reiterated in his general statement that India supports negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) of a universal, non-discriminatory, and verifiable FMCT.

Pakistan, however, is believed to be the key state blocking consensus on the commencement of negotiations in the CD. In his general statement, Ambassador Akram rejected as “not factually correct” the position that a fissile materials treaty is more “ripe” than any other priority issue in the CD, which include negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and nuclear disarmament. He said his country would endorse any programme of work in the CD that treats the four core issues “in a balanced manner,” suggesting it would allow negotiations to proceed on a fissile materials treaty if the CD also agrees to negotiating mandates on its three other core issues—an idea not supported by many states.

In their general statements, a dwindling number of delegations took time to reiterate their desire to see negotiations commence—about a dozen countries in all, including China, the European Union, and the United States. Australia, Switzerland, and the Rio Group called for negotiations without preconditions. Underscoring the sense of

resignation on this issue, Japanese Ambassador Tarui noted the General Assembly had adopted the original FMCT resolution by consensus in 1993—fifteen years ago.

Perhaps tellingly, the US delegation, which tabled a draft FMCT text in the CD in 2006, only made reference to this fact in its general statement, declining to repeat past calls for states to use it as a basis for negotiations. While the US text had been politely welcomed by many states, it had also been widely critiqued for its omission of verification provisions, consistent with US opposition to such measures. As an indication of the sentiment toward the US draft, Indonesian representative Dr. Percaya sharply described the US call for negotiation of an unverified treaty as a “direct contravention to the position of all CD members, as signified by the Shannon mandate.”

Unfortunately, no viable option seems to exist for beginning negotiations soon. Dr. Percaya sug-

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## In Brief: The Nuclear Fuel Cycle

Michael Spies | Arms Control Reporter

- The European Union announced it is “examining attentively” making a financial contribution to the fuel bank proposal put forward by the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the International Atomic Energy Agency. In its general statement, the EU said, “it is time to finalise concrete measures regarding multilateral approaches to the fuel cycles [sic],” the objective of which would be to reduce need for states to pursue fuel cycle technologies, thus reducing proliferation concerns.
- Russia noted the Ukraine and Armenia are completing their processes for acceding to the Russia-Kazakh International Uranium Enrichment Center. In its general statement, Russia said, the solution to proliferation concerns related to the spread of nuclear power is “in the promotion of multilateral approaches ... aimed at creating an economically reasonable and feasible alternative to the establishment of [national] nuclear fuel cycle elements” while not undermining rights to access benefits of peaceful use.
- A number of delegations, including the Non-Aligned Movement, reaffirmed the “inalienable right” to nuclear energy as provided in Article IV of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.





**Fissile Materials (cont.)**

gested negotiation of an FMCT could take place within the NPT, however, this approach would leave out the only three states that are presently believed to be producing fissile materials.

Although not specifically referring to the stalemate in the CD, Ambassador Grinius cited the adoption of the final document of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons biennial meeting by vote rather than consensus as “a precedent which the UN might wish to invoke more generally in order to advance near-universally agreed objectives.”

This precedent, however, seems out of the bounds of possibility for the CD. As predetermined by the final document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament, rule 18 of the CD’s rules of procedures explicitly states, “The Conference shall conduct its work and adopt its decisions by consensus.” Rule 47 states any amendment to the rules of procedure can be made by decision of the Conference. Such a decision, however, would also have to be exercised by consensus in conformity with rule 18, thus precluding any easy procedural solution to the present deadlock.

**In Brief: Missiles**

Michael Spies | Arms Control Reporter

- The European Union announced it would table a resolution on the Hague Code of Conduct on Ballistic Missiles for the first time since the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/62 in 2005.
- The EU noted the 2007 US-Russian joint statement on internationalizing the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and expressed interest in the March 2008 French proposal to negotiate a treaty banning short- and medium-range surface-to-surface missiles.
- Russia called for a legally-binding global missile regime and called for an active discussion and for states to submit proposals on realizing its proposal to globalize the INF Treaty. Russia also said that the issue of missiles should be discussed within the UN.
- Indonesia emphasized the conclusion of the Third Governmental Panel on Missiles that, due to the matter’s complexity, the issue should be further discussed within the UN.
- India stated any initiative to address missiles should proceed in a “sustainable and comprehensive manner” through an inclusive process.

**In Brief: Report on the International Panel on Fissile Materials**

Michael Spies | Arms Control Reporter

- The Princeton University-based International Panel of Fissile Materials released two new reports on Friday, 10 October, at an event moderated by Canadian Ambassador Marius Grinius focusing on scope, verification, and national perspectives on a Fissile Material (Cut-off) Treaty.
- The Global Fissile Materials Report 2008 focuses on technical aspects of a FM(C)T:
  - o Presenting the chapters updating global nuclear weapon and fissile holdings, Zia Mian emphasized the looming problems of naval stockpiles of highly enriched uranium and the growing civilian stockpiles of plutonium, which will pose verification challenges as the total number of nuclear weapons in the world declines.
  - o Jean du Preez presented the basic provisions of the Panel’s draft FM(C)T text, which includes both verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency and covers all pre-existing stocks of civilian fissile material as well as excess military stocks. The Panel’s definition of fissile material are those materials the IAEA considers “direct use” plus U-233.
  - o Alexander Glaser described the Panel’s perspective on verification challenges facing a FM(C)T, including: the shutdown of military facilities; retrofitting existing unsafeguarded uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing plants; accommodating challenge inspections at military sites; and dealing with highly enriched uranium in the naval nuclear fuel cycle.
- A companion report covers country perspectives on the challenges to a FM(C)T:
  - o Frank von Hippel described a key issue as India and Pakistan, which are both increasing their rate of fissile material production, deciding when they have accumulated a sufficient nuclear arsenal. Von Hippel also said most nuclear weapons were adverse to intrusive verification, but noted all but Israel subscribed to the fairly stringent measures contained in the Chemical Weapons Convention. He concluded that the significant technical challenges facing a FM(C)T are not as significant as the political issues.
- The reports are available in full at [www.fissilematerials.org](http://www.fissilematerials.org).

**In Brief: Nuclear Weapon Free Zones**

Madeline Woo | Reaching Critical Will

- High Representative Sergio Duarte, the Rio Group, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Africa Group, Mexico, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Turkey, and Sri Lanka all called for the expansion of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) to other parts of the world.
- Jamaica, Ukraine, and Senegal said NWFZs help establish mutual trust and reduce tensions.
- The New Agenda Coalition and Mongolia expressed the desire for a second NWFZ Conference to take place as part of the 2010 NPT conference, with Mongolia offering to hold a preparatory meeting to discuss focal points in the spring of 2009.
- Mongolia called for a second study on the effects of NWFZ has played and could play in promoting non-proliferation, conflict prevention, and nuclear disarmament. It also announced plans to submit a draft resolution to First Committee based on the first General Assembly resolution on NWFZ.
- Syria and Kazakhstan said the United Nations and the IAEA were the only organizations that could properly create NWFZs.

**Middle East NWFZ**

- 17 delegations, including the Non-Aligned Movement and all of the Arab states that spoke, called for a NWFZ to be established in the Middle East.
- They also called for Israel to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and submit their nuclear facilities to IAEA safeguards, as steps to creating a NWFZ in the Middle East.

**South East Asian NWFZ**

- ASEAN, Pakistan, Ukraine, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Singapore, and the Philippines called for support for the SE Asian NWFZ.
- Thailand specifically urged nuclear weapons states to give the Zone's states parties negative security assurances so that the treaty could go into force.

**Other NWFZs**

- The Africa Group, Sudan, and Nigeria expressed their support for the Treaty of Pelindaba and encouraged countries to sign the protocols so the Treaty can enter into force.
- Mongolia expressed the wish for China and Russia to sign their draft trilateral treaty on Mongolia being a NWFZ.
- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Venezuela called for support for the NWFZ in Central Asia.
- Fiji expressed interest in having a Southern Hemisphere NWFZ.

**In Brief: Terrorism**

Michael Kennedy | Global Security Institute

**Terrorist Access to Weapons of Mass Destruction**

- Many states raised concerns about the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorist and non-state actors.
- Turkey remarked, "Utmost attention should be paid to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear material and other components of these weapons."
- The United States went a step further, claiming that the potential for terrorists to acquire WMDs is the "primary security challenge" facing the world.
- Iraq reaffirmed its belief that "[T]he total elimination of nuclear weapons is ... the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction."
- The Philippines stated that the elimination of nuclear stockpiles would prevent terrorists and non-state actors from acquiring WMDs.

**Security Council Resolutions**

- Many delegations referenced UN Security Council resolution 1540, which calls on all states to "[R]efrain from supporting by any means non-state actors that attempt to acquire, use or transfer nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems."
- As with last year, many states expressed their continued belief in this resolution as vital to combating terrorism.
- The European Union also congratulated the 1540 Committee, born out of the resolution, on its work so far. At the same time, the EU underscored the need for the Committee to achieve more success in its work, with special importance attached to strategically significant regions.
- Resolutions extending the Committee's mandate, including UNSC 1673 and 1810, also received support from some member states.

**Conventions and Agreements**

- The United States and Russia highlighted their joint partnership on the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which now claims 75 participating states.
- Other delegations highlighted the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Partnership Programme, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention.



## Biological and Chemical Weapons

Ann Lakhdhir | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

In contrast to the nearly universal agreement that there has been little progress in nuclear disarmament, many delegates asserted progress was being made in ridding the world of biological and chemical weapons.

### Biological weapons

The delegations of New Zealand and Canada, along with the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union, commended the intercessional meetings of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) for promoting “valuable high-level debate” (Canada) and “facilitating interactive exchange between scientific experts to assist with the Treaty’s implementation in the rapidly-developing world of biotechnology” (New Zealand).

Cuba’s representative asserted that “the follow up mechanism established by the Sixth Review Conference on the BWC is, beyond doubt, a useful tool for the exchange of national experiences and a consensus forum. However, Cuba considers the only way to really reinforce and perfect the Convention is through the negotiation and adoption of a legally binding protocol resolving the gaps that instrument still has.” The delegation of the Philippines also called for a legally-binding protocol and universal adherence to the BTWC, arguing, “biological ... weapons are just as lethal as nuclear weapons and if unleashed can cause untold sufferings.” The Non-Aligned Movement called for “an effective and verifiable BWC, which is implemented in a comprehensive manner,” and the Rio Group called for the universalization of the BTWC.

Biotechnology is progressing rapidly. It will be imperative for the BTWC to have a verification protocol and an agency with the capability to monitor and verify. It is unfortunate that the Security Council has ended UNMOVIC, the UN Monitoring and Verification Inspection Commission. UNMOVIC had a considerable capability to monitor and verify in Iraq that should have been maintained even though reduced in size. It will certainly have to be recreated at some point. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has retained a few of the UNMOVIC experts to maintain a database, but it has none of UNMOVIC’s instruments or records which are stored in a way that makes them largely inaccessible.

### Chemical weapons

The ambassadors of both Canada and New Zealand pointed to the success of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Canada’s delegate explained, “Un-

der its able Director General and Technical Secretariat, it is moving steadily towards the total elimination of chemical weapons by April 2012,” while New Zealand’s ambassador said, “This year’s Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention demonstrated that the Convention remains unique and relevant in the contemporary environment through the standards it sets in both disarmament and non-proliferation.”

*continued on page 15*

## In Brief: Verification and Transparency

Danny Thiemann | Middle Powers Initiative

- Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, set the tone for discussing verification and transparency issues when he emphasized, “studying the means to verify nuclear disarmament” is not enough and urged that further steps need to be taken.
- Many states answered his call in one of two ways. The majority responded with support for stronger verification and transparency regimes. For example, the African Group representative argued, “any nuclear disarmament process [needs to] be irreversible, transparent and verifiable in order for it to be meaningful and effective.” Other delegations, including the New Agenda Coalition, New Zealand, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Switzerland, and Indonesia, echoed this sentiment.
- The second response-type advocated support for specific, existing efforts towards verification and transparency. For example, the delegation of Belarus cited the UN Register on Conventional Arms and the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures as mechanisms to “maintain and develop confidence building and transparency measures.”
- The Holy See’s representative noted the increasing complexity of the arms trade and suggested the First Committee recall General Assembly Resolution 62/13, “Objective information on military matters and transparency of military expenditures.”
- The delegations of the European Union and Indonesia likewise supported existing efforts towards verification and transparency by praising the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The European Union attached particular importance to the IAEA verification standard and to “the verification regime established by the Chemical Weapons Convention.”

## Outer Space

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will

As in previous years, general debate statements on outer space security varied from recognition of the problems posed by its weaponization, to suggestions for solutions, to rejection of all arms control approaches to the situation.

Many delegations emphasized the relationship between an arms race in outer space and international security. For example, the Non-Aligned Movement representative said, "the threat of weaponization of outer-space" has among other things "contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security." The delegations of Myanmar, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Venezuela were among the other states voicing this dangerous connection between the weaponization of outer space and international security.

The delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, and Russia maintained that the development and deployment of missile defense systems, often considered a precursor to the weaponization of outer space, would have a destabilizing effect on international security and would have a negative impact on nuclear disarmament. Russia's ambassador argued, "the deployment of the US global missile defense bases in the Czech Republic and Poland will have a negative effect on the nuclear disarmament process."

The representatives of the European Union, China, Russia, Egypt, and Sri Lanka took a solutions-based approach to this problem. The EU delegation reiterated it is still working on a draft code of conduct for activities in space. The draft code "aims to reduce the risk of collisions and creation of debris, as well as strengthening mutual understanding between space faring nations and actors." Draft elements of this code can be found in the UN Secretary-General's report on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities," A/62/114/Add.1. The draft elements include general principles, scope, and participation.

Sri Lanka and Egypt promised to work together again to ensure the passage of the First Committee resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) this year. This resolution usually calls for states, especially those with space capabilities, to refrain from actions contrary to the objective of PAROS and to "contribute actively" to that objective. It argues for consolidation and reinforcement of the outer space legal regime, and says the Conference on Disarmament is the place

for a new treaty on PAROS to be negotiated. Other delegations voiced support for PAROS and/or preventing the weaponization of outer space, including the European Union, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, and Venezuela.

The delegations of Belarus, Myanmar, and Pakistan also argued for the development of legal frameworks regarding outer space. Pakistan's representative urged "recognition of the need for strengthening the international legal regime in order to prevent the militarization of outer space." The delegations of Belarus and Myanmar welcomed the draft treaty on the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in February 2008 by Russia and China. This draft treaty emphasizes the need to keep outer space free from "military confrontation" and open to peaceful uses and exploration for the "development of humankind." It also notes that while existing arms control and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space "play a positive role ... in regulating outer space activities," they are insufficient to "effectively prevent the placement of weapons and an arms race in outer space."

The draft treaty does not settle all of the questions government and non-government experts have asked over the years, such as the implications from the current militarization of outer space; the problem of "dual-use technologies"; the questions of ground-based weapon systems, including missile defense systems; the testing of space weapons; and the question of verification.

US Ambassador Rocca continued to oppose the development of arms control solutions to outer space security, arguing that the existing space security regime is sufficient. She reiterated her delegation's willingness to "consider initiatives based on voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to solve concrete problems related to the use of space." She explained that while the US is currently engaged in dialogue with the European Union on relevant measures, it was "unable to reach agreement with Russia and China on a draft General Assembly resolution to examine the feasibility of new voluntary TCBMs" due to "what the United States believes is a false and unacceptable linkage between expert assessments of pragmatic TCBMs and efforts to begin pointless negotiations on unverifiable space arms control agreements." The Russian delegation announced its intention to table "its traditional resolution" on TCBMs in outer space activities again this year.

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## Report on "Removing Nuclear Weapons from the Security Equation"

Ann Lakhdhir | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

On 9 October, the Middle Powers Initiative sponsored a panel discussion on the responsibility of the United States and NATO in "removing nuclear weapons from the security equation."

Roald Sagdeev, a Russian who worked on the development of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union and is now a professor of physics at the University of Maryland, explained that there is deep-rooted skepticism in Russia about the elimination of nuclear weapons. Russia is reasserting itself militarily, with the Russian navy in the Mediterranean, a military presence in Venezuela, and an unwillingness to talk about tactical nuclear weapons. Noting the comment by US Secretary of State Rice that Russians are paranoid, he outlined some of Russia's grievances:

- The first President Bush, to facilitate the withdrawal of Russian troops from East Germany, had agreed that NATO would not enter East Germany. There was no signed formal treaty but an informal understanding. The expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe, and its possible expansion into the Ukraine and Georgia, along with the agreement to place ballistic missile defenses in the Czech Republic and Poland, have undermined this understanding.
- There are still economic sanctions against Russia, enforced originally because of Russian restrictions on Jewish emigration, that have not been lifted.
- The crisis in Yugoslavia, the bombing of Belgrade, and the recognition of Kosovo have also added to Russian concerns. An article in February 2008 written by Eagleburger and Strobe Talbot expressed doubts about Russia's recognition of Kosovo's independence.
- US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, US development of space weapon technology, the downplaying of the START process and its SORT replacement, and the US dismantlement of treaty regimes, have also added to the feeling that Russia's interests are being overlooked and that there has been an effort to isolate Russia.

Sagdeev said there are some in Russia, including Alexei Arbatov, who have participated in the Luxemburg Forum, along with people like Hans Blix, Jayantha Dhanapala, and William Potter from the Monterey Institute, who are hoping to resolve some of these differences. Meeting some of Russia's concerns about US policy in outer space and proposing the joint withdrawal of US and Russian tactical nuclear weapons offer some possibilities.

Jean du Preez of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, who has considerable governmental experience on the delegation of South Africa, spoke about the European nuclear conundrum. He felt that Western concerns about Russia have been inflated. He also pointed to a February 2008 US Air Force review asserting that the remaining tactical nuclear missiles in Europe required additional resources. Du Preez indicated that the remaining tactical nuclear missiles in Europe are a liability and that all should be eliminated. The 200 that were in Greece have been withdrawn. There is a reported withdrawal from the United Kingdom and parts of Germany. Still, about 350 remain, in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Turkey. Du Preez highlighted Article I of the NPT that says the nuclear weapon states shall not transfer nuclear weapons to other countries. The United States argues these weapons are under US control. Du Preez expressed hope that Germany, which still has a few tactical nuclear weapons, would remove them. That could have an important effect that might lead Belgium and the Netherlands to remove theirs.

Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, referred to NATO's sixtieth anniversary and the articles in the Wall Street Journal by Kissinger, Schultz, Perry, and Nunn. She feels the world is in a new and dangerous nuclear era. There is less debate on NATO's objectives than there was in 1999. There was debate in the United Kingdom over the renewal of the Trident submarines, even though some of those voting for the building of new Trident submarines on 14 March agreed that the arguments for their renewal were thin. Blair has agreed that nuclear weapons would not deter terrorists. They are more likely to provoke, and are hardly an "insurance policy." Johnson called for the denuclearization of NATO, arguing that their removal might persuade Russia to withdraw its remaining tactical nuclear weapons. She asserted this should be done before the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

### Outer Space (cont.)

Ambassador Rocca did not reference the draft Russia/China space weapons treaty, though her delegation did submit some "preliminary conclusions" and comments on the draft to the Conference on Disarmament in August 2008.

*Danny Thiemann of the Middle Powers Initiative contributed reporting to this article.*

## Report on "The Middle East: Nuclear Future or Nuclear Free?"

Merav Datan and Sharon Dolev | Greenpeace

A panel discussion on current security challenges in the Middle East and their implications for global security took place on 8 October. The panel, sponsored by Greenpeace, the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, and Reaching Critical Will, a project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, explored questions about Iran, Israel, the nuclearization of the region, and the goal of a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) Free Zone. Dr Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, moderated the discussion.

Merav Datan, Mideast Political Advisor for Greenpeace International, gave an overview of nuclear politics of the Middle East and Greenpeace's work for a Nuclear Free Middle East. Two complementary approaches can help address nuclear and security related concerns in the region: the question of nuclear energy, and the challenge of regional security.

Datan said that it is important to recognize the growing demand for energy in the world and the right of every country and all people to sustainable development. Greenpeace works to contribute to informed decision-making in the region by providing information and analysis regarding the political, economic, health, and environmental implications of nuclear energy as well as the alternatives. Solar and wind energy provide attractive options for the Mideast, as explored in a regional energy scenario developed by Greenpeace. Another report, dealing with the hazards of existing nuclear facilities in the region, was also released during the *Rainbow Warrior II* ship tour of the region.

Regarding regional security, there is a long-standing deadlock between Israel and the Arab states over which comes first: peace and normalization (Israel's view) or nuclear disarmament (the Arab states' view). An interactive parallel track approach that focuses on enriching the debate, identifying openings for progress, and involving more players, including civil society, could help break through the deadlock. Greenpeace seeks to help do this through the "Nuclear Future or Nuclear Free" discussion series begun at the 2008 NPT PrepCom and continuing with a regional meeting with international participation entitled "Mideast Peace and Disarmament: Fusing the Visions," planned for late January 2008.

Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute, spoke about Iran, noting that there is a schism in international relations that must be resolved. He suggested a win-win-win approach

that could include:

- the acknowledgement of Iran's rights under Article IV of the NPT;
- the creation with the IAEA and Iranian leadership of much more intrusive verification and monitoring measures to be applied universally to enhance non-proliferation efforts and lead to a nuclear weapons free world;
- multinationalization of Iran's fuel cycle activities of concern;
- security assurances;
- expressed Iranian leadership in obtaining a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty with effective verification;
- honoring of suspension demands of the Security Council resolutions while simultaneously bringing these decisions before the International Court of Justice for review; and,
- commencement of negotiations regarding a nuclear weapon-free Middle East amongst all relevant states, including non-NPT members.

Granoff added that the greatest stimulus to the unacceptable spread of nuclear weapons is the intransigence of the nuclear weapon states to unequivocally move toward a nuclear weapons-free world based on legally-verifiable elimination.

Sharon Dolev, Peace and Disarmament Campaigner for Greenpeace Mediterranean in Israel, spoke about the challenges and successes of the disarmament campaign in Israel, where discussion of national nuclear issues must be qualified as "according to foreign sources." In media and daily discussions, nuclear dangers refer to Iran or Syria, not to the regional implications of Israel's nuclear program. A "culture of fear" permeates security issues and keeps Israelis—who otherwise take pride in their disregard for rules—from questioning security policy and nuclear issues in particular. For example, after the birth of her son, Dolev was released from the hospital with an "anti-chemical cradle" provided to new mothers. But despite the overt cultivation of this culture of fear, it is important to recognize that Israelis do have some real reasons for fear, and this is the key to engaging with Israel on security issues.

Dolev also explained why Greenpeace, with its ability to reach the mainstream, is well-situated to help build a disarmament campaign in Israel. When she began working on the issue a year and a half ago, only two volunteers were willing to take part. A recent Hiroshima anniversary demonstration, however, involved 50 volunteers. Other activities included chasing French President Sarkozy



around Israel during a three day visit, demanding "hands off the Middle East" and "non merci" to more nuclear technology in the region. An action that received massive international, regional, and national attention took place last year at a Tel Aviv University conference on regional nuclear challenges (referring only to Iran), where President Shimon Peres was guest of honor. On cue, activists throughout the audience stripped and held up banners saying "strip the Middle East of WMD" and "strip the Middle East of nukes." These were young Israelis with no disarmament background who conceived the idea because they instinctively recognized the regional nature of the problem.

Possible solutions include combining peace and disarmament efforts through the WMD Free Zone goal and the Arab Peace Initiative (API, endorsed by 22 members of the Arab League). In her capacity as chair of the Regional Peace Movement in Israel, Dolev discussed the significance of the API, which offers Israel peace and normalization but to which Israel has yet to respond officially. Most Israelis are not aware of this initiative, or of the fact that Israel supports the annual Mideast NWFZ resolution of the UN General Assembly. Plans for 2009 include promoting civil society support for peace and disarmament through these initiatives,

and international engagement is invited.

At the conclusion of the event a video showing local and regional campaign activities was shown by Theodora Karchovsky, Communications Officer for Greenpeace Mediterranean in Israel.

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### Bio/Chem Weapons (cont.)

The Non-Aligned Movement also commended the CWC's Second Review Conference and emphasized the role of the CWC as a disarmament treaty. Cuba's delegation said the report on the Second Review Conference of the CWC "reflects in a quite balanced way the stands and concerns of the States Parties." Meanwhile, the delegation of the Philippines expressed its hope that the deadlines, as extended, for the destruction of all chemical weapons would be met.

The European Union said, "the CWC has an essential role in countering the threat of chemical weapons. The CWC, which bans an entire class of weapons of mass destruction in a verifiable way, is unique amongst the disarmament and non-proliferation treaties."

"We should be grateful to the authors of *Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security*, who remind us so powerfully of the dangers that remain from our own government's nuclear weapons, and of the vital centrality of international law as our weapon to abolish these instruments of terror globally."

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Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy  
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## Cluster Munitions

Allison Pytlak | *Religions for Peace* on behalf of the Cluster Munitions Coalition

Three dozen delegations spoke about cluster munitions during the general debate of the First Committee and the vast majority of them commended the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a significant humanitarian achievement. New Zealand's delegation formally announced that it will sign the CCM when it opens for signature in December 2008 at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway. Others gave updates on their progress towards signing. Iraq's delegation noted that the "ratification of accession of the CCM is under progress before the Iraqi Parliament" while Japan's government is "currently considering concrete measures" to be able to sign. Australia's delegation expressed confidence that it will be in a position to sign this year. Representatives from Qatar and Jamaica both looked forward to the opening of the signature for treaty but neither state has yet made a formal commitment to do so. Norway's delegation invited all UN member states to attend the signing ceremony.

Some delegations did not comment on their position towards signing the CCM but expressed their support of its humanitarian aims, among them Canada, the Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Philippines, and Tanzania. The Holy See's representative described it as a positive example of multilateral work on disarmament. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, committed the UN to do all it can to support the goals of the CCM.

A few delegations encouraged other countries in their respective regions to join the treaty. Fiji's representative called on all "like-minded states" to do so and the Indonesia delegate hoped that the countries in Southeast Asia "would consider joining this Convention." The delegations of Zambia and Mexico, whose governments have announced they will sign the treaty, encouraged others to follow suit.

Most statements acknowledged the discussion taking place regarding a new protocol on cluster munitions within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The delegations of China, Israel, the Republic of Korea, and Pakistan indicated that this is their preferred forum for addressing this weapon and its effects. Their view was summed up by Israel's statement that the CCW discussions are attempting to "achieve an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and military necessities".

However, the majority of those states who men-

## Small Arms and Light Weapons

Mark Marge | International Action Network on Small Arms

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) remains a significant priority for many states—during the high-level opening sessions of the General Assembly, several heads of state made references to the need to combat the illicit trade in SALW, including those of Jamaica and Liberia. During the general debate of the First Committee, most delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Programme of Action on SALW, and spoke of the negative impact of SALW on international peace, security, and development.

Most delegations expressed their satisfaction with the 2008 Biennial Meeting of States (BMS), which agreed on a substantive outcome document, unlike the failed 2006 Review Conference. Unusually for the UN SALW process, the BMS outcome document was agreed by a vote rather than consensus. During the general debate several states acknowledged this healthy break in tradition while none spoke negatively of it. New Zealand's ambassador said the BMS "illustrated this year that consensus should not be a goal in itself," and Canada's ambassador similarly remarked that the break of consensus "is a precedent which the UN might wish to invoke more general in order to advance near-universally agreed objectives."

On 9 October, the co-authors of the annual SALW omnibus resolution held an open consultation with member states to discuss this year's draft resolution. The new resolution seeks to keep the small arms process on track by affirming that the next BMS will be held in 2010 and the next Review Conference in 2012. Additionally, the resolution endorses the report adopted by the 2008 BMS and calls for the convening of a Group of Government Experts no later than 2011 to address "key implementation challenges and opportunities relating to particular issues including international cooperation and assistance." During the open consultation, delegates from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Cuba, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe spoke favourably of the new resolution, while India's delegate spoke on the need for consensus. Iran's delegation, while endorsing the resolution's timeline for future meetings, expressed some reservations regarding procedural matters. During the general debate, the European Union publicly supported a Review Conference.

Although most of the statements during the general debate focused on process, namely the

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## Conventional Weapons

Kavitha Suthanthiraraj | Global Action to Prevent War

High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte highlighted in his opening statement, “We must never forget that conventional weapons take a huge toll on human lives everywhere.” Many member states echoed this deep concern over the negative impact of conventional weapons in their statements. Discussions in the first week of general debate focused on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the UN Register of Conventional Arms, landmines and the Ottawa Convention, cluster munitions and the Oslo Process (see cluster munitions), and the Arms Trade Treaty (see ATT).

Ambassador Sergeyev of Ukraine voiced strong support for the CCW, which restricts or prohibits the use of conventional weapons that are deemed to be excessively cruel or indiscriminate. He explained, “My country shares the need of strengthening the effectiveness of the CCW and its Protocols ... as the important instruments aimed at reducing the negative consequences coming from both conventional warfare operations and on their aftermath, both to combatants and to civilians.” The CCW, described as a *chapeau* agreement, contains only general provisions. Its protocols, a series of optional agreements annexed to the Convention, contain restrictions on the use of specific weapons, including certain types of fragmentation weapons, mines and booby-traps, incendiary weapons, and blinding laser weapons. The latest protocol, Protocol V, provides a framework for the use and clearance of explosive remnants of war. The delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement, Switzerland, Egypt, and Belarus discussed the importance of Protocol V and encouraged states to join it. Belarus’ delegation confirmed its ratification of Protocol V, stating that at this point it has acceded to all protocols of the Convention.

As in past years, delegations praised and supported the Ottawa Convention on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (also known as the Mine Ban Treaty). The delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bangladesh, Australia, Indonesia, Switzerland, Canada, New Zealand, Egypt, Malaysia, Turkey, Ethiopia, Zambia, Belarus, and South Africa all supported the destruction of anti-personnel mines and many urged states to ratify the Convention. Australia, as the past President of the Mine Ban Convention, will once again present the Mine Ban Convention resolution (with co-sponsors Jordan and Switzerland). While noting the success of this multilateral instrument, Canada’s

ambassador expressed his concern that several countries were unable to meet their Article 4 and 5 obligations and that in November at the meeting of state parties, extension requests for mine clearance will need to be considered.

High Representative Duarte highlighted the importance of the UN Register of Conventional Arms. Established in 1991 by UN General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, “Transparency in Armaments,” is a database to which UN member states submit information on international arms transfers, procurement through national production, holdings, and relevant policies. It comprises seven categories of major conventional weapon systems: battle tanks; armored infantry combat vehicles; large-calibre artillery systems; combat aircraft; attack helicopters; warships (including submarines); missiles and missile-launchers. Duarte explained, “In an era of growing arms transfers and military expenditure, [this tool is] becoming all the more indispensable.” The delegations of Belarus, Pakistan, and Turkey also recognized the need for this confidence-building and transparency tool.

172 states have participated in the Register one more more times. However, participation is voluntary and three of the top 15 military spenders for 2007—India, Republic of Korea, and Saudi Arabia—have never submitted a report to the Register. The Register also does not have an agreed-upon definition of the term *transfer*. The Register’s 1992 Panel of Government Technical Experts instead provided guidelines on how to report arms transfers to the Register, which have been supported by subsequent Groups of Governmental Experts. Thus, each country recognizes the transfer of arms based on their national rules, regulations, and procedures. Varying definitions have led to discrepancies in reports to the Register. In order to use this tool to its maximum potential, more states need to participate more consistently with the Register and clarify the definition of transfer.

Ray Acheson of Reaching Critical Will contributed to this article.

### Small Arms (cont.)

BMS, some states made substantive recommendations. Nigeria’s representative supported a global ban on international SALW transfers to non-state actors, and the ASEAN statement prioritised stronger regulation of weapons in private possession.

## Arms Trade Treaty

Kavitha Suthanthiraraj | Global Action to Prevent War

During the First Committee general debate, many delegations continued to express support for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that would better regulate the proliferation of conventional arms. Bangladeshi Ambassador Ms. Ismat Jahan explained, "An effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will ensure a responsible transfer of conventional weapons. This mechanism will prevent the spread of such weaponry. As a country committed to disarmament and non-proliferation, Bangladesh would welcome conclusion of such a treaty." Nigeria's representative advocated for the ATT to be "a legally binding international instrument," a sentiment echoed by the delegations of Brazil, Switzerland, New Zealand, Kenya, and the Dominican Republic in their statements.

The report by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on an ATT received much-warranted attention from many member states. The GGE was established by Resolution 61/89, "Towards an Arms Trade Treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms," to examine the scope, feasibility, and draft parameters of such a treaty. Unfortunately, the report of the GGE does not include any conclusions on these matters. On 28 August 2008, the group explained, "In view of the complexity of the issues of conventional arms transfers, further consideration of efforts within the United Nations to address the international trade in conventional arms is required on a step-by-step basis in an open and transparent manner to achieve, on the basis of consensus, a balance that will provide benefit to all."

Delegates from Australia, Brazil, Switzerland, Japan, Russia, Ukraine, New Zealand, Dominican Republic, and Kenya welcomed the report by the GGE and its consensus-based recommendation to engage in further discussions. Australia further voiced its support through co-sponsoring a resolution seeking to establish an open ended working group in 2009. While Switzerland supported the outcomes of the report, the Swiss ambassador noted that as a member of the GGE, "we would have favoured more substantive recommendations." Indonesia's delegation also expressed concern that despite agreement on the report, the outcomes remained inconclusive.

Some points of contention became clear during the general debate. For example, the delegations of Egypt, Brazil, and Pakistan highlighted the right of states to self-defence and argued security must be preserved in any discussions towards an

ATT. Supporting the GGE's recommendations for further consideration, Egypt's representative cautioned against "the hasty arrival at a new international regime that obstructs current international disarmament priorities or one which is based on subjective criteria affecting the right of States to self defense, or threatening the regional balance in the conventional armament field, which relates to other factors beyond the considerations of this proposal."

On 7 October, the United Kingdom delegation, as a co-sponsor of anticipated new resolution on the ATT, held a lunchtime session to discuss the draft resolution with member states. The resolution seeks to establish an open-ended working group to commence further discussions towards a global ATT, to commence in 2009. Some member states expressed their concern that the GGE process was not inclusive and thereby the open-ended working group needs to ensure wider consultations. Other delegations questioned the mandate of the group and requested changing the meeting venue from Geneva to New York.

Control Arms, a project of Oxfam, Amnesty International, and the International Action Network on Small Arms held a side event this week discussing the need for an ATT and its impact on states' ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. A former refugee from Sudan discussed the impact of irresponsible and illicit transfers of arms on his community. He called on member states to pursue a speedy development of an ATT and stem the massive loss of human life.

### Cluster Munitions (cont.)

tioned the protocol felt that its language should match the CCM. Bulgaria's representative sees these two processes as "mutually reinforcing" and the Turkish delegation expects the CCM to lead to a protocol that is "not identical but rather complementary to the Oslo document." Delegations from Australia, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, the Rio Group, and the Non-Aligned Movement, along with Mr. Duarte, argued that both processes have value. The EU representative also stressed that "the future instrument will have to be compatible with the text of the Convention adopted in Dublin by two-thirds of the States Parties to the CCW" and that a successful outcome there would serve to re-establish the CCW as a "forum of choice" for addressing difficult questions that bridge disarmament and international humanitarian law.



## Disarmament and Development

Mariah Quinn | Global Action to Prevent War

During the opening week of First Committee, delegations repeatedly cited bloated arms expenditures and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as hindrances to social and economic development. Kenya's delegation, noting that disarmament and development are "inextricably linked," posited that disarmament will prove an important tool in achieving sustainable development, human security, and human rights. The delegations of Colombia, El Salvador, and Bangladesh expressed their hope that the relationship between disarmament and development will be rigorously examined and addressed in this session.

Several states maintained that the vast resources allocated to military expenditures—totalling 1.3 trillion USD in 2007—distracts from and ultimately undermines the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The delegations of Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, Indonesia, and the Dominican Republic asserted that a reallocation of these funds would greatly advance social and economic development. Other states, including Tunisia, Sudan, and Sri Lanka, likewise lamented the inadequate funding dedicated to the MDGs even as arms expenditures continue to increase annually. Nigeria maintains that exorbitant military expenditures ought to be regarded as one of the "greatest challenges of the international community."

Bangladesh (noting that 1.3 trillion USD is equivalent to 2.5% of the world GDP) urged the major military powers to redirect funds from arms expenditures to poverty alleviation in developing countries, so that the MDGs might be achieved. Cuba stated that the MDGs could be attained with a mere 10% of the current military expenditures, and put forth a proposal that at least half of the current military expenditure be devoted to social and economic development and distributed through a UN-managed fund.

A few delegations and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte referred to the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures as "indispensable" in this "era of growing arms transfers and military expenditure." The Instrument, established in 1980 by UN General Assembly resolution 35/142 B, "Reduction of military budgets," invites states to submit data on expenditures for military personnel, operations, maintenance, procurement, construction, research, and development. 120 states have reported to the Instrument one or more times. However, reporting is voluntary; two of the top military spenders for 2007, India and Saudi Arabia, have never submit-

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## Report on "Banning Uranium Weapons"

Doug Weir | International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons

On 8 October, the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) held a well-attended lunchtime seminar to raise awareness of depleted uranium (DU) weapons, in advance of a probable second resolution on the issue at First Committee. Last year, an overwhelming majority of states backed a resolution highlighting health concerns over the use of conventional weapons containing depleted uranium and ICBUW is keen for further steps to be taken on the issue.

The seminar considered the legal and political steps open to NGOs and states working on DU issues. It also responded to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), World Health Organization (WHO), and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)'s positions on DU.

In her introductory remarks, US ICBUW member Tara Thornton highlighted the 17 states with DU stockpiles and locations of DU use: Iraq, the Balkans, and possibly in Afghanistan. She explained that since its formation in 2003, ICBUW has grown to represent 96 NGOs in 26 countries and outlined its goals for a uranium weapons free world, identification and decontamination of sites, and medical and financial assistance for communities affected by their use.

Dr. Katsumi Furitsu from ICBUW's Science Team and Japanese NGO Campaign Against Radiation Exposure criticised the WHO and IAEA for focusing solely on lung cancer incidence and chemical toxicity to the kidney in their reports on DU, and for basing their risk assessments on the International Basic Safety Standards (BSS). Dr. Furitsu argued, BSS models take a cost-benefit approach to assessing risk, which is of little reassurance to civilians living in contaminated areas. She observed that standard radiation risk models are also based on the average man, despite pregnant women and children being much more at risk from ionising radiation.

Gretel Munroe, also an ICBUW Science Team member and member of US campaign group Grassroots Action for Peace—based in Concord, Mass., the site of massive DU contamination from a manufacturing site—introduced delegates to UNEP's studies on DU contamination. Mrs. Munroe explained the justification for UNEP's concern over DU in groundwater in the Balkans from when munitions fired from aircraft missed their targets and remained embedded in the topsoil. Mrs. Munroe also reminded delegates of UNEP's concern over the trade in contaminated scrap metal and the

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## Uranium Weapons (cont.)

lack of public health controls in post-conflict environments. She concluded her presentation with a brief critique of US veteran studies, which the US Institute of Medicine have found unreliable due to their small sample size and lack of control groups—yet the US government continues to promote them as proof that DU is harmless.

Alyn Ware, Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, spoke in depth about the legal and political status of uranium weapons. He began by noting that while there is no specific treaty prohibiting uranium weapons, DU weapons may breach several principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) because of their impact beyond the field of conflict and on civilians and the environment. Mr. Ware felt that the Precautionary Principle could be a useful guide when dealing with uranium weapons—that states should not use DU munitions until they are proven safe. However, Mr. Ware said it is likely that, because of the efficacy of uranium weapons, user-states would argue vigorously that military necessity overrides IHL.

Mr. Ware also discussed Belgium's recent law banning the use of uranium in conventional weapons. A similar parliamentary approach is being taken in New Zealand. Unlike a purely administrative approach, which is inevitably influenced by defence ministries, a parliamentary approach includes foreign ministries, which bring a wider understanding of international law and processes to the table.

Ria Verjauw of the Belgian coalition Stop Uranium Wapens introduced delegations to the European Parliament's recent resolution on uranium weapons calling for a moratorium, an international treaty, monitoring of contaminated sites, and victim assistance. It passed by 491 votes to 18, with 12 abstentions. Mrs. Verjauw also highlighted the position taken by EUROMIL, the umbrella organisation for European military unions, which has repeatedly called for a ban, citing the health concerns of its members.

ICBUW Coordinator Doug Weir closed the seminar with a call for action. Mr. Weir painted the issue in the broader context of toxic remnants of war, stating that action now will limit the future proliferation of other uranium weapon systems. Accepting that some evidence remains contentious, he explained that there is more than enough data to support action on a precautionary basis. He pledged that ICBUW would work closely with all states and called on those present to offer their

expert assistance in striving for a ban treaty. Mr. Weir ended by cautiously suggesting that by 2011, the twentieth anniversary of the first major use of uranium weapons, the international community should be in a position to take concrete and spirited steps towards tackling what is an indiscriminate, inhumane, and ultimately unnecessary weapon.

## Disarmament and Development (cont.)

ted a report to the Instrument. In order to use this tool to its maximum potential, more states need to participate more consistently.

Several states explored the adverse effects of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) on sustainable development. Kazakhstan and Fiji's representatives noted that SALWs result in negative ramifications for security, human rights, and socio-economic conditions. The Philippines' delegation highlighted that SALW tend to aggravate conflicts and, in so doing, stunt the economic development of the affected communities. Colombia indicated that attempts to combat the illicit trafficking of SALW consume resources that would otherwise be devoted to development. To address this ongoing problem, the representatives of Colombia and Senegal underscored the pivotal role of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms. Ethiopia's delegation specifically noted that the proliferation of SALW in the Horn of Africa thwarts development initiatives, and called for regional cooperation to address the problem.

Switzerland's delegation spoke about the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which has been signed by 42 countries since 2006. The Geneva Declaration aims to "promote sustainable security and a culture of peace by taking action to reduce armed violence and its negative impact on socio-economic and human development." Thailand and Switzerland, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, organized the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Armed Violence and Development in May of this year. The meeting produced the Bangkok Declaration, which was signed by 23 states. In September, 85 states convened in Geneva for the Ministerial Review on Armed Violence and Development, in which the interconnected nature of development, peace and security, and human rights was reaffirmed.

*For more information on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, see [www.genevadeclaration.org](http://www.genevadeclaration.org).*

*Ray Acheson of Reaching Critical Will contributed to this article.*