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Global Action to Prevent War

Global Security Institute

International Action Network on Small Arms

Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Middle Powers Initiative

NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

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- All editions of the *First Committee Monitor*;
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- Research and analysis of critical issues related to disarmament and arms control; and
- News and information about civil society engagement for a nuclear weapon free world.



Editorial: Impatient realism

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As First Committee shifted from general comments on all disarmament issues to those strictly concerning nuclear weapons, delegations continued picking apart the myth that nuclear weapons provide security or that there is any justification for their existence. “Nuclear weapons are the heritage of an era and of a mentality that has already been overcome. We expect this First Committee to reflect, through its decisions and resolutions, this new reality,” said Ambassador Soares of Brazil on behalf of MERCOSUR (the Southern Common Market) and associated states.

The 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in May, while largely considered a success, did ignite frustration in the majority of governments with the nuclear weapon states’ intransigent attitude toward making verifiable, irreversible, transparent commitments to nuclear disarmament with any kind of time frame for action. “The NPT Review Conference in May reaffirmed that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use,” explained Ambassador Skorpen of Norway. “Yet, when non-nuclear weapon states call for more ambitious commitments on part of the nuclear weapon states towards this goal, we are told to be realistic and patient. But is patience really what is called for in today’s situation? We *have* been patient.” She pointed out that nuclear weapon states committed themselves to the elimination of their nuclear arsenals forty years ago when they joined the NPT and that the Cold War ended twenty years ago. “No wonder patience is wearing thin. And why should it be unrealistic to expect more from the nuclear weapon states? What we are asking for is fully achievable. Most states have never possessed nuclear weapons, some have renounced them. It is a matter of political choice and direction.”

Following along the lines of what Ambassador Skorpen described as “impatient realism,” many delegations made it clear that they expect the implementation of the NPT outcome document’s action plan on disarmament, between now and the next Review Conference, to lead to more concrete commitments to nuclear disarmament being made in 2015. Many in particular highlighted the requirement in the outcome document for nuclear weapon states to engage with each other to accelerate the implementation of their outstanding nuclear disarmament obligations and to report back to other NPT states party during the next review cycle.

When it comes to reporting on actions undertaken, however, most governments generally have a poor track record. In the context of the General Assembly, reporting does not receive a high priority by very many governments. In his address on 12 October, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte noted

that on average, only five percent of UN member states responded to each request made by the UN Secretary-General for their views when compiling reports on resolutions. This trend does not just indicate an aversion to or lack of capacity for reporting, but it also reveals a lack of urgency when it comes to disarmament and related security issues. This complacency is not aligned with the reality of the global situation—billions of dollars being spent around the world on building up military capacities while populations everywhere face real challenges of poverty, food shortages, violent conflict, disease, and the effects of climate change. In the midst of this, nuclear weapons still exist, a dangerous relic of the violent imaginations of generations past, maintained today for reasons of power, prestige, and the economic benefit of elite sectors of society.

Yet this status quo is being vigorously challenged. “Status and prestige belong not to those who possess nuclear weapons, but to those who reject them,” said the UN Secretary-General at the 65th Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on 6 August 2010. In First Committee, South Africa’s Ambassador Mabhongo argued, “Nuclear weapons are a source of insecurity, not security. They are illegal, inhuman, and immoral instruments that have no place in today’s security environment—a new reality marked by growing interconnectedness and common threats that transcend traditional boundaries. This reality requires a different approach that takes into consideration not only the narrow national security interests of states, but also the shared, international and human security dimensions.”

This is a task not only for governments, but equally so for civil society and other actors. As High Representative Duarte explained in his remarks on 13 October, “let us never forget that the real beneficiaries of disarmament—and the real victims of its failure to be achieved—are human beings. The business of disarmament is not just a vocation for the diplomats—it is very much the business of the peoples of the United Nations.” Ambassador Skorpen ended her remarks on similar note: “The threat that we face from nuclear weapons is a man-made problem. So, it can only be solved by men’s—and women’s—imagination, innovation, political will and perseverance.” •

Nuclear disarmament

Jim Wurst | Middle Powers Initiative

With the thematic debate on nuclear disarmament this week and issuing of the first draft resolutions, the contours of how governments plan to advance the issue became clearer: take the momentum from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and press for more comprehensive steps.

Ambassador Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines said the combination of individual and joint statements by global leaders and the outcomes of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences “all taken together, made it amply and unequivocally clear the agreement of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.” He added, “The task before us then is simply to implement, with a stronger sense of urgency, concrete and practical steps that will bring us to that world free of such inhumane arsenals.” Cabactulan, who was the President of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, focused on three steps in the action plan contained in the RevCon’s final document: the commitment by the nuclear weapon states (NWS) to further reduce “and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons” (action 3); “accelerate concrete progress” towards nuclear disarmament as specified in the 13 Practical Steps from 2000 (action 5); and encouraging an agreement among the NWS “on a standard form of reporting” (action 21).

“States must now also seriously consider the negotiations of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Such a convention has been included in the Secretary-General’s 5-point action plan and referred to in the 64-point action plan” of the 2010 RevCon, he said.

Austria also supported negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention (NWC) and highlighted actions 5 and 21, as well as the reference to the Secretary-General’s 5-point plan. Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting said, “The prospect of a legal framework, such as a nuclear weapons convention, is on the international disarmament agenda for the first time in an agreed document. This process has now begun, and it is up to us to identify the appropriate sequencing of steps.”

Ms. Maritza Chan of Costa Rica, raised the NWC as an imperative. “It is time to take the necessary steps and begin a preparatory process to obtain a universal and legally binding convention banning nuclear weapons. It has been done with biological weapons and chemical weapons. It must now be done with nuclear weapons. What these weapons of mass destruction share is that their use violates international humanitarian law.”

Ambassador Skorpen of Norway said the NPT RevCon reaffirmed the goal of total elimination, “yet, when non-nuclear weapons states call for more ambitious commitments on the part of the nuclear weapons states towards this goal, we are told to be realistic and patient....

We have been patient.” Noting that the NWS committed to elimination 40 years ago, she asked, “why should it be unrealistic to expect more from the nuclear weapon states? What we are asking for is fully achievable.... A world free of nuclear weapons should, realistically, be within reach provided sufficient political will.” She concluded, “on the basis of impatient realism, we have high expectations of the progress reports by the nuclear weapon states on the implementation of their nuclear disarmament commitments to the NPT PrepCom in 2014.”

Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo of South Africa welcomed the action plan in the NPT final document and said, “it is imperative that these undertakings now be turned into concrete actions in order to restore confidence in the NPT.” Such action should include “a fundamental review of security doctrines, as well as other transparent, irreversible and verifiable measures aimed at achieving a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.” In order to achieve such a world, he said, “It is incumbent upon us all to begin timely preparations that will culminate in the negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention or a framework of set of instruments for the complete and sustainable elimination of nuclear weapons.”

Not surprisingly, India had little to say about the NPT. Instead, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, member of parliament, drew a line from the 1988 Rajiv Gandhi “Action Plan for a Nuclear Weapons-Free and Nonviolent World Order” to the recent statements of world leaders, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s 5-point plan. While noting that if the Gandhi plan had been followed, 2010 would have been the year of its fulfillment, he said, “The one ray of hope is that there is a far wider measure of consensus on the imperative need to move towards that goal than there was 22 years ago.” He added, “Voices of wisdom, particularly on the part of those who were once the most ardent advocates of a policy of deterrence based on nuclear weapons, are beginning to be heard.... We believe that nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment for the global elimination of nuclear weapons.”

Switzerland also highlighted action 5, calling it “unquestionably a key provision. It involves concrete disarmament measures and builds on the achievements of the Review Conference of 2000. It represents necessary progress in quantitative and qualitative disarmament.” Ambassador Jürg Lauber said that since the action plan “is modest in scope makes its full implementation all the more important.” Ratifying new START is “of particular importance.... It will be difficult to implement certain measures included in the final document—such as new reductions and the integration of other states in the nuclear disarmament movement—until the process of ratification is completed.”

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Nuclear disarmament (cont.)***New START***

The United States and Russia introduced their resolution on new START, “Bilateral reductions of strategic nuclear arms and the new framework for strategic relations” (L.28). Calling the Treaty “a singular achievement,” Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Marcie B. Ries said the Treaty was a “part of [the US and Russian] commitment under Article VI of the NPT.” The Treaty “is an important step in achieving reductions in nuclear weapons, and this resolution recognizes that achievement. However, the United States and the Russian Federation alone cannot create all the conditions necessary. Others must play their part, as well,” she said.

Victor Vasiliev of the Russian Federation said, “Russia and the US have clearly demonstrated once again their commitment to substantial reductions of strategic offensive arms.” He added, “Deep reductions in strategic offensive arms undertaken by Russia and the USA lead to a qualitative change” in nuclear disarmament, therefore “the narrowing numeric gap between stockpiles of our countries and the other P-5 members creates a need for other states possessing nuclear weapons to gradually join the disarmament efforts” so that “at a certain stage further progress in disarmament will simply not be possible without the engagement of other states,” meaning the nuclear weapon states outside the NPT. Vasiliev also raised their important caveat about any further reductions. “New START has brought us to a point where considerable lowering of nuclear capabilities makes deeper reductions impossible without due regard to all other processes in the area of international security,” notably ballistic missile defenses, he said.

The draft resolution welcomes the agreement and notes that the two powers “are committed to continuing the development of a new strategic relationship based on mutual trust, openness, predictability, and cooperation.” It also looks towards further bilateral negotiations as well as multilateral initiatives including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and fissile materials cut-off treaty.

Other countries also welcomed the signing of the Treaty and looked forward to its ratification in both countries.

Beyond the NPT

The joint initiative by ten states—Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates—was referred by those states. Building on the NPT action plan, Ambassador Paul Van IJssel of the Netherlands said the group will be developing “concrete and practical measures” to “advance the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agendas.” Ambassador Akio Suda of Japan also referred to Japan’s annual resolution, now re-titled “United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” which will emphasize “concrete and practical united actions to be taken by the international community towards

the total elimination of nuclear weapons.”

Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand said the NPT outcome “outlines a clear roadmap for action over the next five years.” NWS and NNWS “must seize this opportunity and begin work on implementing the action plan as a matter of priority.” She called the monitoring of the “systematic and progressive reduction of nuclear weapons” as a step “towards the fulfillment of their obligation to eliminate those weapons.”

Ambassador Aitimova of Kazakhstan said that “though positive, [the RevCon] is not an unquestioned success... Much more convergence of multilateral political will is needed implement rigorously all the key action areas to achieve the irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons.”

Not all countries seem optimistic that the international community is headed in the right direction. In one of the most critical addresses of the session, Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan said during the general debate that the international situation has “undermined the efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Instead of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has become the only goal. Even this goal is pursued selectively. Some states have been denied the right to peaceful nuclear cooperation while others are helped I promoting unsafeguarded nuclear programs as well as to build and upgrade strategic weapon systems, including anti-ballistic missiles as well as accelerating vertical nuclear proliferation.”

However, other stakeholders expressed interest in helping develop the paths forward. The general debate concluded with statements by two transnational groups with special status with the United Nations: the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Ambassador Anda Filip, the Permanent Observer of the IPU, said parliamentarians have not traditionally played a very prominent role in nuclear disarmament issues, but that is changing as more parliamentarians to exercising a more thorough oversight role. “There is growing recognition of the fact that, in order to build the political will and commitment needed to advance on nuclear disarmament, it is crucial to engage with legislators and to integrate their perspectives into national and international policy.”

Continuing its argument that nuclear weapons are incompatible with international humanitarian law, Mr. Robert Young of the ICRC said this recognition is having “profound implications” which “must now be translated into a wide range of actions that will progressively end the role of nuclear weapons in state security policies.” He said this also means beginning “a negotiating process, or processes, within agreed for a and timeframes.” Any progress must be based not only on power politics but “must equally be informed by the implications of these weapons for human beings, the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law and the collective future of humanity.” •



International humanitarian law and nuclear weapons

John Burroughs | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Week two saw an outpouring of observations regarding the application of international humanitarian law (IHL) to nuclear weapons. Perhaps most notable was the intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Last spring, prior to the NPT Review Conference, ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger stated that the ICRC “finds it difficult to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the rules of [IHL].” That position has considerable weight due to the ICRC’s well-deserved reputation as the guardian of IHL.

Speaking this week to the First Committee, ICRC lawyer Robert Young spelled out, in no uncertain terms, the implications of the NPT Review Conference’s recognition of the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” of use of nuclear weapons and the responsibility of all states “at all times to comply with applicable international law, including [IHL].” He said that the recognition and commitment “must now be translated into a wide range of actions that will progressively end the role of nuclear weapons in State security policies. They must also be translated into a negotiating process, or processes, within agreed fora and timeframes. [It is] essential negotiations be based not only on military doctrines and power politics. The debate must be equally informed by the implications of these weapons for human beings, the fundamental rules of [IHL] and the collective future of humanity.” (Emphasis supplied.)

Costa Rica also spoke to the implications of IHL for action. In calling for a “preparatory process to obtain a universally and legally binding convention banning nuclear weapons,” Maritza Chan, Minister Counsellor in New York, remarked: “It has been done with biological weapons and chemical weapons. It must now be done for nuclear weapons. What these weapons of mass destruction share is that their use violates [IHL].”

More general observations regarding the incompatibility of nuclear weapons with humanitarian values and law came from Norway, Switzerland, the Holy See, Algeria, Tanzania, Ecuador, and Cuba. Hilde Janne Skorpen, Norwegian Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs, stated that “the humanitarian consequences should a nuclear weapon ever be used, are widely recognized as so horrendous that few can imagine a situation in which such weapons actually would be used. Thus, if we agree on the inhumane character of nuclear weapons, it is a paradox that these weapons continue to play such a prominent role in security policies.” The Swiss Permanent Representative in Geneva, Ambassador Jürg Lauber, said: “Switzerland considers the use of nuclear weapons immoral and illegal with regard to [IHL] because such weapons cause massive damage and strike without distinction.”

For Algeria, S.E.M. Djamel Moktefi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, stated that the “advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 is there to remind us that the nature of nuclear arms does not conform to [IHL].” For the Holy See, Archbishop Francis Chullikatt said that the Court’s conclusion that threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to international law, in particular IHL, is a “fundamental principle in favour of security, peace and the very survival of the human race.” Mohamed Hamza, Director of the Tanzanian Foreign Affairs Office, also citing the opinion, declared that the “threat posed by the presence of [nuclear] weapons and the possibility that they could be deployed is simply illegal and unacceptable.”

Ambassador Diego Morejón Pazmiño, Ecuador’s Alternative Permanent Representative to the UN, said that “Ecuador considers that the use or threat of use of nuclear arms constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of human rights, [IHL], and the United Nations Charter.” Further, just the “existence of nuclear arms on the territory of a country represents, in itself, a threat to the integrity of other states and international peace and security.” Cuba’s representative stated that the use of nuclear weapons is immoral and illegal and cannot be justified under any circumstance.

Other states, including South Africa, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Austria, welcomed the Review Conference IHL statement. •



Operational status of nuclear weapon systems

Sameer Kanal | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

During the second week of First Committee, the topic of operational status of nuclear weapon systems grew in prominence. The week was marked by six statements directly referencing the topic, a side event focusing on operational status hosted by PND Nuclear Flashpoints with the missions of New Zealand and Switzerland, and the introduction of two draft resolutions on the subject.

On Wednesday, Turkmenistan spoke on behalf of the five Central Asian States, introducing the topic of de-alerting in a broader context of short-term steps to be taken towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Turkmenistan's speech, focused primarily on the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ), mentioned de-alerting specifically in the context of reduction of risk of accidental usage. Indian Ambassador Halid Ali Rao justified the need for de-alerting on the same basis; Ambassador Akio Suda of Japan also used this rationale, noting that keeping existing nuclear weapons "at the lowest alert level possible [...] reduces] the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch."

Ambassador Dell Higgle of New Zealand, highlighting New Zealand's coordination of the Operational Readiness Group, "welcome[d] the commitment by the nuclear-weapon states [...] to 'consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems'" at this year's NPT Review Conference. Switzerland's statement, delivered by Ambassador Jürg Lauber on Friday, also praised the outcome document of the 2010 NPT RevCon for "addressing the need" to act on de-alerting.

Mani Shankar Aiyar, Indian Member of Parliament, referred to "de-alerting of nuclear weapons [and] increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons" as "progressive steps for the de-legitimization of nuclear weapons." This was a recurring theme among all states that referred to operational status: de-alerting and the reduction of nuclear weapons' role in security stances is an important step, but no more than a step, in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, both New Zealand and Switzerland highlighted their tabling of draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.42. This document contains similar text to 2008's A/C.1/63/L.5, which in turn was nearly identical to the 2007 A/C.1/62/L.29 in 2007. While the differences between 2007 and 2008's documents were mostly cosmetic, the 2010 version, co-sponsored by the Operational Readiness Group's Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Switzerland, includes some substantive changes. The preamble portion of the text that includes a provision "welcoming the steps taken [...] to support further reductions in nuclear weapons," now includes as a positive example the United States' decision to pursue actions that would "maximise Presidential decision time"

and diminish the likelihood of accidental or misguided usage. The preamble paragraph in the 2008 version welcoming bilateral initiatives, such as the proposed US/Russian centre for early warning, has been deleted. Additionally, the sponsors of L.42 included a new operative paragraph welcoming the final document of the 2010 NPT RevCon, specifically, "the commitments of the nuclear-weapon States" to consider "further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems," and to report on that effort to the 2014 NPT PrepCom.

In 2009, the sponsors of this resolution did not table it in anticipation of the US nuclear posture review, hoping that this decision would help facilitate the review process and "find a long-term solution to this complex issue." Unfortunately, the 2010 review maintained the alert status of US nuclear forces, though it did initiate studies that might lead to future reductions in such status. In 2008, the United States voted against the resolution, adopted as 63/41 in the General Assembly, as did the United Kingdom and France. 141 voted in favour and 34 abstained.

Ambassador Rao of India also introduced his delegation's draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.27, "Reducing nuclear danger," which includes a call for steps to reduce the risk of unintentional use of nuclear weapons through de-alerting and de-targeting. The text of the draft resolution was not available at time of writing.

The panel discussion on Wednesday, 14 October was chaired by Dr. Christian Schoenenberger of Switzerland and opened with comments from New Zealand's Ambassador Dell Higgle. Panel members included Colonel (Ret.) Valery Yarynich of Russia, Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists, Steven Starr of Physicians for Social Responsibility, and John Hallam of Nuclear Flashpoints. The panel discussion began with a discussion of a Foreign Affairs article entitled "Smaller and Safer," co-authored by Mr. Yarynich. The article's summary states, "The proposed nuclear arms reductions in the New START treaty are sensible, but the United States and Russia can and should go much further."

Mr. Starr highlighted the catastrophic and eschatological consequences of even a minor nuclear exchange, and Mr. Hallam stated that the largest risk of the existence of nuclear weapons is the risk of accidental usage, which is increased by their high-alert status. Mr. Yarynich explained that Russia and the United States use high-alert status as a means to achieve the perceived deterrence of nuclear weapons, but as the article noted, weapons could be de-alerted without sacrificing security for either Russia or the United States. Mr. Kristensen called for a "pullback" of high-alert deployed weapons, arguing that the current system is based on Cold War tensions. All speakers agreed that de-alerting is a practical and progressive step towards global nuclear disarmament. •

Nuclear weapon free zones

Georgie Bright and Sean Kelly | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

In a manner consistent with the opening week of the First Committee, several delegations continued to express their support and commitment to nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) through the conclusion of the general debate on 12 October and into the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, which commenced on 13 October.

During the second week, two draft resolutions pertaining to NWFZs were introduced. Egypt was the lead sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.1, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East." Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan all sponsored A/C.1/65/L.10, "Agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia."

L.1 contains only technical updates from the 2009 version. The issue concerning a NWFZ in the Middle East was highlighted again this week, receiving support from the delegations of Norway, Venezuela, Laos, Tunisia, Moldova, Nicaragua, Thailand, Russia, Egypt, Switzerland, Algeria, Iran, and South Africa. The Rio Group expressed frustration that progress has not been made on this issue in the 15 years since the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Oman's representative drew attention to the need for "Israel to accede to the Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the Comprehensive Control System" for progress to be achieved. Referring to Israel, the Palestinian delegation stated that "turning a blind eye on a State that is stockpiling and developing nuclear weapons while refusing to submit to international inspection is gravely dangerous and alarming." But during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, the United Kingdom asserted the need for progress towards a comprehensive peace in the Middle East in order to garner the confidence and trust required for the establishment of a NWFZ in the region.

The last resolution on the Central Asian NWFZ treaty was introduced in 2008 under the title, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Central Asia". The updated version welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on 21 March 2009; welcomes the 2010 NPT working papers on the Central Asian NWFZ and on the environmental consequences of uranium mining; and welcomes the first consultative meeting of states party to the Treaty that occurred in October 2009. As in the 2008 version of the resolution, the co-sponsors note their readiness to "continue consolidations with the nuclear-weapon States on a number of provisions of the Treaty."

The need for nuclear weapon states (NWS) to provide negative security assurances to signatories of NWFZ treaties was also a topic of considerable debate. Speaking extensively on this topic, the Rio Group called on all NWS that have not ratified relevant protocols attached

to NWFZ treaties to do so rapidly. Furthermore, the Rio Group asserted the need for all NWS that have signed or ratified protocols with reservations or unilateral interpretations to either modify or withdraw their reservations. The statement given by the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and Associated States echoed the call of many states to the NWS to withdraw their reservations regarding NWFZ treaties and provide negative security assurances. Speaking in reference to the recently established Central Asian NWFZ, Kazakhstan's ambassador stated, "it is crucial that nuclear powers extend full negative guarantees for the zone to be viable." The Philippines' delegation expressed its hope that NWS would ratify and adhere to the protocols of the Bangkok Treaty, which establishes a NWFZ in Southeast Asia.

Numerous delegations underscored the contributions of NWFZs to nuclear disarmament and to express support for increasing the number of NWFZs worldwide. The Lao People's Democratic Republic asserted, "the creation of nuclear-weapon-[free]-zones has significantly contributed to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as enhancing regional and global peace and security." New Zealand's ambassador announced her support for the resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere to be submitted this year by the Brazilian delegation. Mr. Geoffrey Shaw, representing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), stated that the Agency "can assist in the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, when requested." Tanzania noted that the entry into force of the African NWFZ has contributed to the momentum behind achieving the broader goal of complete nuclear disarmament. •



Nuclear testing

Jane Wolkowicz | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

During the second week of First Committee, delegates continued to push the states that have not yet done so to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Most notably, Mr. Javier Loyza, Deputy Permanent Representative to Bolivia, reminded delegates that until nuclear testing is banned, “there will be no humanity.”

Statements from Zambia and other delegations, although perhaps not as dramatic, strongly urged the remaining annex II states to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. Ambassador Anda Filip of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) offered suggestions on what parliaments can do to ensure “universal ratification of the CTBT”. His suggestions included the promotion of the UN Secretary-General’s five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament, supporting reductions of nuclear stock piles, establishing nuclear weapon free zones, and negotiating a fissile materials treaty.

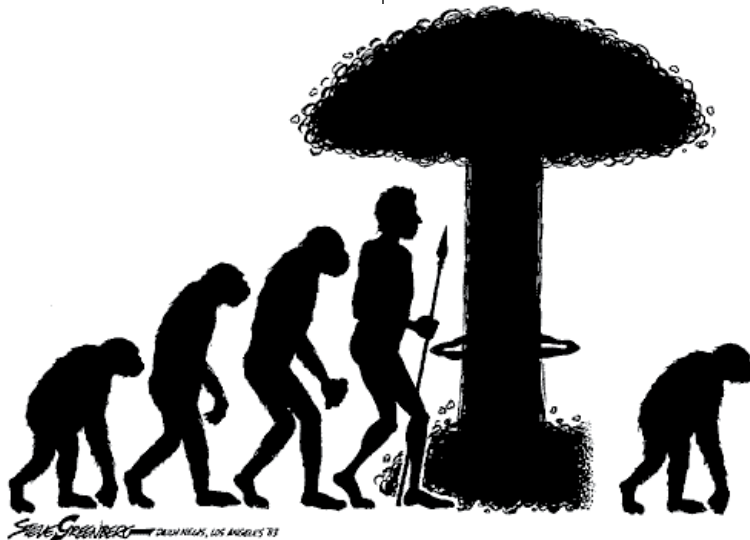
Throughout the thematic debate on nuclear weapons, the CTBT remained a front and center topic. Mr. Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), described the CTBT as a “unifying treaty around which the international community can rally.” Tóth also called on annex II states to rise to the occasion. “CTBT entry into force may pave the way to solving many of the current and future challenges facing the regime. But time is of the essence. The good will and momentum generated over the past two years needs to be met with equally good action. Action on your part; the member states; the stakeholders and owners of this process. Will we rise to the challenge?” he questioned.

Ambassador Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative to Kazakhstan, reminded delegates that Kazakhstan, once the world’s second largest nuclear test site, is today a country passionate about worldwide disarmament. Ambassador Aitimova announced her sup-

port and assurance that Kazakhstan will rise to the CTBTO’s challenge. “Kazakhstan supports the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty without further delay so that its Preparatory Commission becomes a full-fledged verification organization,” she stated. “My country is actively cooperating with the CTBTO to promote the development and functioning of the International Monitoring System and on-site inspection techniques with the contribution of our own 24-hour five tracking stations.”

Kazakhstan additionally announced that the International Day against Nuclear Tests, celebrated for the first time on 29 August 2010, gave the country “all the available tools of advocacy for mobilizing Governments and public opinion to get rid of nuclear tests and nuclear explosions.” Also, Ambassador Aitimova announced that Kazakhstan has taken the initiative to create a website and film promoting a worldwide call for disarmament.

Delegations from Thailand, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and others also asserted their role as major “stakeholders” in the CTBTO’s Preparatory Commission, and praised Indonesia for the country’s recent decision to ratify the CTBT. New Zealand’s delegation also announced, together with Australia and Mexico, that it would table the resolution on the CTBT at First Committee this year. “As in previous years, the resolution underscores the importance of entry into force of the CTBT,” New Zealand’s Ambassador for Disarmament, Dell Higgie, explained. At the end of the week, Ms. Marcie B. Ries of the US delegation assured the Committee of her government’s support of the CTBT. “The United States has reaffirmed its commitment to this treaty ... we believe that the United States, and all states, will be safer when the test ban enters into force, and we are preparing actively for the reconsideration of the treaty by the United States senate,” she announced. •



Fissile materials

Daniel Brunn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Over the course of the week, many delegations at First Committee highlighted their belief in the need to commence negotiations for a fissile materials treaty. In support of this, Ms. Julie Croteau from Canada announced that her delegation will present a slightly modified version of its 2009 resolution—adopted without a vote—which urged the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to adopt “a programme of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”. However, the week produced little to raise expectations that such a treaty will soon come to fruition and cast doubts over the ability of the First Committee to adopt such a resolution by consensus this year.

In one of the last few statements of the general debate, Pakistani Ambassador Zamir Akram elaborated on his government’s rationale for its opposition to launching negotiations in the CD for a fissile materials cut-off treaty. Mr. Akram once again stated that a treaty which only bans future production of weapons-grade material and does not address existing stockpiles is unacceptable to Pakistan, as it would “permanently freeze a strategic disadvantage for Pakistan”. Ambassador Akram went on to criticize what from Pakistan’s perspective has been an over-emphasis in the CD on non-proliferation and called for more attention to be directed at negotiating treaties which address nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, and the weaponization of outer space.

While some delegates, including Brazilian Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, speaking on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), agree that a fissile materials treaty should address the issue of existing stockpiles and that talks also take place regarding other arms control issues, Pakistan stands alone in insisting this be a precondition to beginning negotiations in the CD. Highlighting this, UK Ambassador John Duncan pointed out that while national security concerns “about what a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty [(FMCT)] might mean for individual countries are understandable ... blocking the work of the world’s only permanent negotiating forum for disarmament issues is less understandable. We therefore urge the remaining State yet to join consensus on starting FMCT negotiations to do so.”

Expressing concern over the CD’s paralysis, the body’s Secretary-General Sergei Ordzhonikidze underscored the critical need for a fissile materials treaty and even offered suggestions for breaking the stalemate (see the Disarmament Machinery report in this edition). Pakistan’s delegate, however, averred that the focus placed on a fissile materials treaty by Mr. Ordzhonikidze and the nuclear powers is unfounded considering that the first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I)

did not solely task the CD with negotiating an FMCT, but several other arms control treaties as well. Ambassador Akram further charged that “[t]hose attempting to present FMCT negotiations as the touchstone of the CD’s success are in fact seeking to divert the international community’s attention away from nuclear disarmament, which remains the key priority of the CD.”

Asserting that “[t]he UN disarmament machinery ... is not a handmaiden to the whims of the major powers,” Ambassador Akram asked, “Who is to decide which issue is ripe for negotiation?” Mr. Ordzhonikidze replied, asserting that it was the international community that had decided a fissile materials treaty should be a priority, citing General Assembly resolution 48/75L, which calls for “the negotiation in the most appropriate international forum of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”. Mr. Ordzhonikidze went on to pose his own question: How is it possible that CD member states adopt by consensus CD/1864 establishing a programme of work in 2009, and then fail to do so again the following year?

Exercising his right of reply, Pakistan’s representative echoed his claim from earlier in the week, when he said that Pakistan’s strategic position is being undermined by the actions of nuclear powers who “[o]ver the past few years ... have embarked upon an unfettered and discriminatory nuclear cooperation arrangement in gross violation of their international commitments”—a not so veiled reference to the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement. Ambassador Akram explained that this has “qualitatively altered the strategic calculus for Pakistan.”

Aside from the Canadian draft resolution, and the annual resolution on the Conference on Disarmament, a new resolution was introduced that contained references to fissile materials. The United States and the Russian Federation presented a joint draft resolution on bilateral reductions of strategic nuclear arms, which welcomes the signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. The resolution “notes with approval” that the Russian Federation and the US have stopped the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons, as well as expresses support for the early commencement of international negotiations on a verifiable treaty to end such production “within the framework of an approved programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament”. These unilateral moratoriums can assist in further developing an international norm against continued production of fissile material for weapons purposes. •

Beatrice Fihn of Reaching Critical Will contributed to this article.



Negative security assurances

Jessica Erdman | Global Security Institute

During the second week of the First Committee, several delegations re-stressed the importance of establishing negative security assurances (NSAs). Among others, the delegations of Ecuador, Nicaragua, the Rio Group, South Africa, Thailand, and Venezuela reiterated the importance of NSAs in nuclear disarmament. As stated in the previous week of debate, NSAs should be “universal, unconditional, and legally-binding.” However, the question still remained, what is the most effective method to establish such NSAs?

Both the Pakistani and Tanzanian delegations agreed that the best forum to establish NSAs is the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The Pakistani delegation pointed out the benefits of the CD as a multilateral tool for states to negotiate vital nuclear issues, such as NSAs.

A draft resolution on NSAs was tabled by Benin, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, and Viet Nam. A/C.1/65/L.5, “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” notes “that in the Conference on Disarmament there is no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.” Despite disagreement about the CD’s effectiveness, some delegations still envision the CD as a successful forum for negotiations. The resolution remains unchanged from last year, when it was adopted in the General Assembly as resolution 64/27 with 118 votes in favour, none against, and 58 abstentions.

Delegations also debated the existing framework of NSAs. The South African delegation stated that NSAs should be pursued within the framework of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). South African Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo further explained that NSAs should be considered with reference to the 1996 International Court of Justice advisory opinion, which says that the threat or use of nuclear weapons “would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.” •

Nuclear energy

Lauren Patti and Tabitha Carlson | NGO

Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

A panel of several high-level officials joined Sergio Duarte, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on Wednesday, 13 October to discuss the “current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field.” Geoffrey Shaw, Representative to the UN of the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), warned that as the use of nuclear energy increases, the risk of non-state actors acquiring nuclear technology increases as well. Currently, the IAEA is notified approximately every two days of incidents involving nuclear material, such as theft or smuggling. Shaw stressed the need for strengthening “safe and secure” procedures to avoid these situations and curb proliferation.

Shaw also discussed the role of the IAEA in “ensuring the safe and secure use of nuclear technology”. Emphasizing that the “responsibility for nuclear security rests with each State,” he explained, “the Agency’s nuclear security program assists States to develop a sustainable nuclear security capability.” The IAEA assists states requesting “guidance, training and equipment” to prevent nuclear terrorism, particularly those needing assistance to enforce Security Council resolutions 1373 and 1540.

Kazakhstan’s ambassador highlighted the role of the IAEA on safety and security and also issue her government’s support for multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle. Kazakhstan “is ready to host a nuclear fuel bank on its territory under IAEA auspices, thereby enabling countries to purchase nuclear fuel, which ultimately will strengthen the non-proliferation regime,” said Ambassador Aitimova. Norway’s Ambassador Skorpen also promoted a multilateral approach, emphasizing the importance of developing “cooperative arrangements on production of nuclear fuel for civilian reactors and handling of nuclear waste.” She also echoed the joint statement made by Chile, Mexico, and Ukraine during the first week of the First Committee by calling for decreased use of highly-enriched uranium, asserting that civilian nuclear reactors should instead run on low-enriched uranium. •



Disarmament machinery

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

During the second week of the First Committee, the disarmament machinery debate continued and focus circulated around Pakistan and its position on a programme of work in the CD.

In his general debate statement, Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan laid out his government's reasons for opposing both the proposed programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) (see report on fissile materials in this edition) and attempts to revitalize the CD by some how circumventing the consensus rule. He stated that Pakistan was "dismayed by arguments from some states that the UN disarmament machinery, in particular the CD, has become dysfunctional owing to its rules of procedure. In reality the decade old stalemate in the CD and the overall international disarmament machinery, has nothing to do with rules of procedure. It is the lack of political will on the part of some major powers to pursue disarmament negotiations on the basis of equal security of all states as accepted in SSOD-I." Ambassador Akram further argued, "the UN disarmament machinery and the CD in particular, is not a handmaiden to the whims of the major powers or a device to confer legitimacy to their pursuit of discriminatory policies."

Ambassador Akram highlighted that the CD has not carried out any substantive work since the CTBT was negotiated, yet, "it is only now, after more than a decade that certain countries have questioned the relevance of the CD, seeking ways to revitalize its functioning and even proposing to seek alternative venues." Ambassador Akram asked why such advocates have been silent for more than ten years, and wondered if they realize that "by undermining the CD to pursue negotiations elsewhere on one issue on the CD's agenda, they would open up the possibilities for negotiating other CD agenda items in alternative venues as well?"

However, he did not reflect over previous attempts made already five years ago, when a group of states attempted to establish negotiating mandates on all core issues through the First Committee. Instead, Pakistan reiterated that it is not the CD and its rules of procedure that is keeping the CD from work, but that the problem is instead lack of political will. Ambassador Akram argued that those states that are opposing negotiations in CD on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, and outer space should come forward and explain their position.

After the general debate, the first thematic discussion took place, with a panel of high-level officials on the "current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field". One of the panellists, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the CD, commented on the stalemate and lack of progress by

stating that if someone wanted to make fun of the United Nations and its organs, the CD would be a good example. He pointed out that the international community has made changes in other bodies of the United Nations, but that no single change has taken place in the CD. Mr. Ordzhonikidze described the current situation in the CD as "the tyranny of consensus", and asked if member states wanted disarmament or consensus.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze also took the opportunity to propose three suggestions for moving forward: to implement a more flexible application of the consensus rule in order to avoid blockage of procedural decisions; to adopt the programme of work from 2009 since this was once a consensus document; and to consider commencing substantive work at plenary meetings even without a formal programme of work. Such acts would restore the international confidence in the CD and there would be no need to consider parallel processes or reforms.

Both the Brazilian and Pakistani delegation regretted that people called the CD inactive. Ambassador Soares from Brazil pointed out that the CD has spent a great deal of time trying to embark in negotiations, which is different from being inactive.

Ambassador Akram from Pakistan asked who decides what issue is ripe, and pointed out that a large majority of countries want to embark on negotiations on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, and outer space. He further argued that only a consensus decision in the CD would determine if an issue is ripe. Mr. Ordzhonikidze replied that the FMCT was considered ripe because all members of the United Nations adopted a resolution calling on the CD to start negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material at the General Assembly in 2009.

The comments from the Secretary-General were heavily criticized by Ambassador Akram in his statement during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons. He not only disagreed with the comments of the Secretary-General, but also argued that "it is also amazing as to why the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament has waited virtually till the end of his tenure to seek a change in the CD's rules of procedure to break a deadlock which has lasted for more than ten years" and continued by arguing that Mr. Ordzhonikidze's intervention was a "clearly motivated partisan approach" and "a disservice to the august body that he represents, which requires highest standards of professionalism and neutrality from international civil servants." Both the US and the UK delegations issued interventions to express their support for Mr. Ordzhonikidze's attempts to break the impasse and for reflecting the desire of the UN Secretary-General of taking forward progress.

Ambassador Eric Danon of France, on the other hand

continued on next page



Nuclear sharing and alliances

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF and Susi Snyder | IKV Pax Christi

This year as in previous ones, several delegations have expressed concern with the continuation of nuclear sharing and alliance practices and policies. In the opening week, the Non-Aligned Movement along with a few individual delegations expressed concern with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s nuclear alliance. Espen Barth Eide, the deputy foreign minister of NATO member Norway, said that his government is actively promoting a disarmament agenda in NATO through pushing for reducing the role of nuclear nuclear in the alliance's posture.

On Friday, 15 October, the delegations of Mexico and Switzerland both specifically highlighted the NATO summit in Lisbon as an opportunity for the alliance to revise and modernize what Mexican Ambassador Claude Heller described as an "archaic security concept". He emphasized that his delegation insists on the immediate removal of the almost 200 nuclear weapons currently located on the territory of European countries that are supposed to be non-nuclear weapon states, arguing that the current situation is not in conformity with article II of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Swiss Ambassador Jürg Lauber said he hoped that NATO would take the lead in reducing the role of nuclear weapons at its Lisbon summit, arguing that its decision there will be important for implementing other aspects of the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan, including those on "tactical" nuclear weapons. He urged NATO to take the outcome document of the Review Conference "into full account" during the deliberations in November.

A bit from Brussels

by Susi Snyder of IKV Pax Christi

On Thursday, 14 October Brussels was filled with Ministers—both Foreign and Defence—for a joint meeting at NATO Headquarters. Expectations were that this meeting would discuss and possibly get consensus on key contentious issues in advance of the November summit, including missile defence, NATO reform, relations with Russia, and NATO nuclear policy.

Much of the process leading up to the new strategic concept, this meeting included, has demonstrated that NATO is renewing its determination to engage in public diplomacy in order to prevent it from being recognized as obsolete or unnecessary. The new strategic concept, a "short and crisp" document, expected to be only a dozen or so pages, will not be much more than a broad overview laying out general conceptual agreements for the coming period. Details, such as how the alliance will engage with Russia on missile defence capabilities, or how the alliance will live up to its renewed arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation commitments, will be left out of the concept and kept away from the probing eyes of the public.

The public is growing increasingly more concerned with what the alliance is doing and how alliance operations are impacting their daily lives. Earlier this year, the government of one of the founding members fell because of continued involvement in Afghanistan. Strikes have wreaked havoc across the alliance in recent weeks because members are taking austerity measures and significantly reducing social services. While defence budgets were once seen as sacrosanct, defence ministers are having an increasingly difficult time explaining the expenditures associated with the alliance, and finding justifications for new costs. A public diplomacy strategic concept is meant to help them to do just that.

No clear consensus emerged from the joint ministerial on any of the issues under debate. It will be left up to the heads of state to take decisions when they meet in Lisbon. In the meantime, the alliance should consider a few simple things that could alleviate some of the monetary pressures they are feeling, including eliminating their nuclear sharing policy—which would save millions of euros in modernisation costs for planes, facilities, and the bombs themselves—and reducing the number of command centres. •

Disarmament machinery (cont.)

didn't want to make much of the "offensive personal attacks" from Pakistan, and appealed for "greater dignity in our debates." He also stated that Pakistan's reasons for not participating in the next stage towards reduction of arsenals did not convince France and argued that Pakistan's "analysis of the attitude and the vision of the nuclear States was marked by so many historical misinterpretations."

Aside from the heated debate concerning Pakistan's position in the CD, little was said on practical measures to move forward with the disarmament machinery. The Austrian ambassador, Mr. Mayr-Harting, announced that Austria has tabled a draft resolution on the "Follow-up to the High-Level Meeting held on 24 September 2010—Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations". While highlighting that the resolution will be formally introduced at the thematic debate on the disarmament machinery, Ambassador Mayr-Harting stated that the next year was crucial for the CD, saying, "it is clear that, in our view, the CD now has one more chance."

The annual resolution on the Disarmament Commission, A/C.1/64/L.9 has also been released, and recommends that the UNDC continue the consideration of its three substantive agenda items and requests the UNDC meet from 4–22 April 2011. •

Nuclear proliferation

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Emphasizing the connection between non-proliferation and peace and security, Archbishop Nuncio of the Holy See urged governments to implement non-proliferation measures “not only on a voluntary basis or from a commercial point of view, but also in line with the requirements of international peace and security.” Some delegations expressed disappointment with what they see as the selective application or interpretation of non-proliferation obligations. “In embracing notions of balance of power and containment and seeking monetary gains,” argued Ambassador Akram from Pakistan, “certain major powers have blatantly violated the so called non-proliferation norms put in place by themselves.” Other delegations pointed to specific proliferation concerns, with attention again being placed on the cases of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran, and Israel. These statements of concern were reiterated from last week and so are not reported on again here.

Enhancing the non-proliferation regime

On behalf of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Geoffrey Shaw explained that importance of universalizing IAEA comprehensive safeguards and additional protocol in order to accurately verify the non-diversion of nuclear materials to weapons purposes. Commending the importance of IAEA safeguards, a few delegations, including Georgia, Moldova, and Russia, also voiced their support for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 to prevent non-state actors from gaining access to nuclear materials. Some delegations, such as Thailand, expressed support for the convening of the 2012 nuclear security summit in the Republic of Korea. Moldova’s Ambassador Cujba also called on the international to build “adequate capacity for dealing with non-compliance of non-proliferation” obligations.

Mr. Shaw, along with MERCOSUR and UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte, also outlined the role of the IAEA in verifying nuclear disarmament. “With its knowledge and experience, the IAEA can facilitate disarmament by independently verifying that nuclear materials from dismantled weapons are never again used for military purposes,” Mr. Shaw explained.

The representatives of Algeria, Tanzania, and South Africa highlighted the importance of disarmament for non-proliferation, with Tanzania’s Ambassador Hamza pointing out that as long as some countries continue to possess nuclear weapons, others will continue to seek them. Oman’s representative argued that lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation—especially the failure of “major powers” to formulate agreements that would lend serious credibility to disarmament—“encouraged some countries to acquire such weapons under the pretext of safeguarding their independence and

national security.” Netherlands’ Ambassador IJssel described non-proliferation and disarmament as “two sides of the same coin” while India’s representative, a member of parliament, argued, “Progress on nuclear disarmament would reinforce non-proliferation like no other measure can. And progress on non-proliferation cannot be a precondition for progress on nuclear disarmament.”

Vertical proliferation

Pakistan’s Ambassador Akram argued that at the expense of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation has become the only goal, and that it is pursued selectively. He highlighted vertical proliferation, as well as the assistance to some states to develop their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems while others are denied their rights to develop nuclear energy, as two concerns in this regard. Some delegations, including Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela, criticized the nuclear weapon states for their plans to modernize their nuclear arsenals.

Resolutions on proliferation

So far the only resolution on proliferation available is the Arab Group’s annual resolution, entitled “The threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” (A/C.1/64/L.3) The resolution, which deals exclusively with Israel, has previously received criticism for failing to address the full scope of proliferation issues in the region. This year’s draft includes a new preambular paragraph noting with satisfaction the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. Likewise, operative paragraph one welcomes the conclusions on the Middle East of the 2010 Review Conference (updating it from 2000). In 2009, the General Assembly adopted the draft as resolution 64/66, with 167 states voting in favour, 6 against (Israel and the United States, accompanied by the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, and Palau), and 6 abstentions. •



Disarmament and development

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

As First Committee heard the last general debate statements and began thematic debate on nuclear weapons, delegations continued highlighting excessive military expenditure as a threat to international peace and security and a major impediment to development. A few delegations also suggested ways to overcome the scourges of war, poverty, and human rights violations through regional and global reductions of military spending and redirection of resources to meet human and environmental needs.

The representative of the Holy See, Archbishop Nuncio, called for governments to adopt a “political vision that understands the link between disarmament and the development of peoples.” He described current military expenditure as “astonishing,” pointing out that the UN Charter “seeks to ground security and peace not upon a balance of fear but upon the full respect for the rights and the fundamental liberties of individuals and peoples.” Minister Counsellor Maritza Chan of Costa Rica welcomed the UN Security Council’s presidential statement that resulted from the summit on the international security environment on 23 September, for underlining “the necessity to address the root causes of conflicts, taking into account that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.” Palestine’s representative, Mr. Ammar Hijazi, linked poverty to the lack of disarmament, arguing that deadly conflicts and the illicit arms trade will continue as long as the root causes of conflict go unresolved.

“The substantial resources, both human and material, committed to military purposes not only distract from but impede the promotion of authentic human development, the struggle against poverty and the ending of the present international crisis,” said the Archbishop of the Holy See. Bolivia’s representative likewise lamented that the trend to allocate ever more resources to military budgets flies in the face of the international community’s need to put its resources into fighting hunger and poverty and the delegations of Eritrea and Nicaragua expressed hope that these resources could be redirected to development efforts. Ambassador de Chamorro of Nicaragua highlighted the “symbiotic” relationship between disarmament and development.

Both the Holy See and Costa Rica cited article 26 as an example of how the UN Charter engages states to promote peace and security with the least spending on armaments. Ambassador Camilo of the Dominican Republic argued that resources should be used to address the socio-economic conditions that are at the root of conflicts, while Ms. Chan of Costa Rica called on states to “ethically rearrange their spending priorities, as well as their international cooperation priorities,” to reduce excessive military spending in the midst of the international finan-

cial crisis. Referencing SIPRI’s findings that every region in the world except for the Middle East increased its military spending in 2009, she expressed concern that Latin America could be nearing an arms race “without proper justification”. Similarly, MERCOSUR’s representative argued there was no justification for nuclear weapons in the new world order that is sought by the majority of the international community, suggesting “that if resources for nuclear weapon programs were spent to support social and economic development, this would revert to all mankind’s [sic] benefit.” Cuba’s representative called for the “enormous resources” being used to maintain and modernize nuclear weapons to be used instead to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

However, while many countries called for reduction and redirection of military spending, government transparency on these figures continues diminishing over time. UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte pointed out that fewer states are reporting data on their military spending to the UN’s database.

Palestine’s delegation, as well as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, highlighted the economic aspects of the arms trade and militarism. Mr. Ordzhonikidze noted that some people are benefiting from the increase in global military expenditure, as the arms industry is the second most lucrative business in the world. Mr. Hijazi of Palestine called for the international community to “combat the cynical exploitation of some States of on-going conflicts in exchange for blood money, through illicit or illegal arms funding.” He argued that at the same time as states are combating the illicit arms trade, they must ensure that disarmament efforts adhere to instruments of international humanitarian law in order to result in true peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement tabled its draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.13, “Disarmament and development,” the text of which remains unchanged from last year. The resolution, inter alia, urges the international community “to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries” and to “make greater efforts to integrate disarmament, humanitarian and development activities.” The resolution has been adopted by consensus in the General Assembly for the last two years, though the UK and French delegations tend to object to its description of disarmament and development as “symbiotic”. •

Depleted uranium weapons

Beatrice Fihn | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

While not a frequently mentioned topic in the general debate this year, the tabling of a new resolution on depleted uranium weapons shows that this issue is still on the agenda for many delegations. This year's resolution has been submitted by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and is contained in A/C.1/65/L.19.

Previous resolutions on this topic were submitted in 2007 and 2008, both adopted by the General Assembly through a vote. In 2008, the resolution on depleted uranium was supported by 141 states with 36 abstentions. Only four states voted against—the US, UK, France, and Israel. The US, UK, and France jointly explained their rationale, saying that none of the reports on the topic of depleted uranium from international organizations “has been able to document long-term environmental or health effects attributable to use of these munitions.”

However, this year the resolution contains three additional preamble paragraphs and two additional operational paragraphs. L.19 recognizes the importance of implementing recommendations by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN Environmental Programme, and the World Health Organization to mitigate potential hazards to humans and the environment from contamination of depleted uranium. The resolution also considers that studies conducted so far have not provided a detailed enough research on the magnitude of long-term effects of humans and the environment of the use of such depleted uranium. In its operational paragraphs, the new resolution encourages member states to follow closely the development of studies and research from relevant international organizations on the topic of depleted uranium.

The most significant amendment is the resolution's invitation of member states that have used armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium in armed conflicts to provide the relevant authorities of affected states with information about the location of the areas of use and the amounts used. This should be done with the objective of facilitating the assessment of such areas, and be as detailed as possible. •

Biological and chemical weapons

Emma Bjertén | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

During the opening week of the general debate, many states had welcomed Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey to his new position as the Director-General of the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In the second week, Ambassador Üzümcü for the first time since assuming his position addressed First Committee about the progress and challenges in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Director-General Üzümcü declared, “In terms of disarmament, to which OPCW currently devotes 85% of its inspection efforts, over 62% of the total declared stockpiles of chemical weapons have already been verifiably destroyed.” The Director-General also addressed his appreciation for the United States and Russia's “steady progress towards fulfilling their disarmament obligations under the Convention.” He explained, however, that despite their commitment to the CWC these states have indicated that they will not meet the final destruction deadline.

The Director-General declared that the OPCW states party have been consistent in implementing their obligations to the CWC when compared to other disarmament instruments. As states party approach total elimination of chemical weapons, Director-General Üzümcü said the OPCW would concentrate more of its resources on the dimension of non-proliferation. He said this will require that all states party “establish and reinforce the administrative and legislative measures necessary to prevent and redress any breach of the Convention by their nationals and in any area under their jurisdiction and control.” The OPCW has a programme of technical assistance, which supports governments and parliaments providing guidance on administrative measures and in the preparation for comprehensive legislation.

He also explained that the OPCW “will need to continue refining and taking to an adequate level the number and intensity of industry inspections, so as to ensure that all categories of relevant facilities adequately covered by its verification regime.”

Finally, he declared that the surveillance of transfers and trade of chemical weapons needs to be more restricted. The OPCW has regular training programmes for customs officials in states party, which he expects will be further enlarged.

The statement by the Director-General focused on the Organisation's work on disarmament and non-proliferation, but he also highlighted the OPCW's role to assist and protect CWC states party from chemical weapons. This was something Mr. Muyambo Sipangule, Deputy Permanent Representative of Zambia, mentioned last week, saying, “Chemical and Biological weapons pose a threat to developing countries in the absence of technology to mitigate abuse.” In this regard, Mr. Sipan-

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Missiles and anti-missile systems

Alicia Godsberg | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The issue of missiles and anti-missile systems continued to receive little attention at First Committee in the second week. Furthermore, when speaking about the overwhelming general lack of reporting by states on previous General Assembly resolutions, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte pointed out that the resolution entitled “Missiles” [A/59/137 and A/59/137 Add.1] was one of only two resolutions with no sponsors reporting this year (the other resolution was on the seabed and arms control issues). In total, one less state reported on the Missiles resolution this year than reported on that same resolution last year. Eleven reports were submitted containing at least one reference to missiles or anti-missile systems. The report entitled “Missiles” [A/65/127] provided the reports of the only three states on last year’s resolution: Mexico, Qatar, and Serbia.

In the last two days of general debate, Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan delivered the only reference to the topic. In the context of denouncing double standards in the application of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, Ambassador Akram said, “Some States have been denied the right to peaceful nuclear cooperation while others are helped in promoting unsafeguarded nuclear programs as well as to build and upgrade strategic weapon systems, including anti-ballistic missiles as well as accelerating vertical nuclear proliferation.”

The thematic debate on nuclear weapons began this week; only three statements mentioned missiles or anti-missile systems: those of the European Union, China, and the Russian Federation. Cuba, Iran, Norway, the United States, and France did not mention missiles or anti-missile systems as they had done in their statements during this thematic debate last year.

Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium spoke on behalf of the European Union and reiterated the EU’s concern over the nuclear and missile program in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). The EU strongly condemned the DPRK’s firing of missiles in violation of Security Council resolutions, saying that such actions undermine the stability of the Korean Peninsula and represent a threat to international peace and security. The EU called on the DPRK to comply with UN Security Council Resolutions in this regard.

Mr. Victor Vasiliev of the Russian Federation repeated verbatim the two paragraphs on missile defence from his statement during the general debate last week. The paragraphs mention the interrelationship between strategic offensive and strategic defensive arms, the need to consider the security of neighbouring countries when developing regional missile defence systems, and the development of strategic delivery vehicles for conventional

weapons. As in the previous statement, the Russian Federation again called for a “broad international dialogue on missile defense issues,” with a goal to establish a collective system to deal with and prevent missile threats. China’s delegation simply urged states to “abandon” the

Biological and chemical weapons (cont.)

gule declared that Zambia is committed to the CWC and Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and called for these weapons’ total elimination. Tunisia’s Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa said that Tunisia right now is hosting a seminar, in line with article X of the CWC (Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons), on provision of assistance with 30 states parties and 70 observers.

While the discussion on the CWC showed certain progress, some states seemed to be concerned regarding the implementation of the BTWC. Georgia and Pakistan’s delegations highlighted the importance of the upcoming Review Conference on BTWC. Pakistan’s Ambassador Zamir Akram emphasized that the conference must seek to enhance the implementation of the Convention and address the issue of a verification protocol.

Relevant resolutions will be reported on next week, along with the thematic debate on biological and chemical weapons. •



Small arms and light weapons

Nadira Khudayberdieva | Quaker UN Office
Jimmy Wall | IANSA

During the last two days of the general debate, the majority of delegations referenced the issue of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in their speeches. Mr. Sipanule of Zambia stressed that the problem of SALW “has continued to be one of great concern.” Similarly, Ambassador Alberto of the Dominican Republic called the problem of illicit SALW as “one of the biggest challenges for arms control and disarmament” of their country.

The representative from the Dominican Republic referred to the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS4) as one of the “undoubtedly tangible actions” that the international community is taking in hope of irreversible disarmament. Likewise, Ghanaian Ambassador Leslie Kojo Christian applauded the outcomes of BMS4, which looked at the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA).

Several delegations expressed their support and commitment to the PoA. The delegation of Eritrea stated that it sees “no better instrument than the [PoA] since its adoption in 2001” that could tackle the proliferation of and easy access to SALW. Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan emphasized the importance of strengthening the PoA rather than creating parallel tools to address the growing concern of illicit trade of SALW. Some delegations, such as Oman, declared successful implementation of the programme in their countries. Others, however, outlined several problems related to the PoA’s full implementation. There were several calls for international assistance in strengthening national and regional implementation from countries who have limited resources to enforce laws against illegal trafficking. Bolivia and Zambia in particular expressed their concerns in this regard.

Many developing countries highlighted the negative impact of the proliferation and illegal trade of SALW to peace, security, development, and human rights. The delegations of Burkina Faso and Ghana highlighted the close linkage of illicit proliferation of SALW to terrorism, crime, and exacerbation of conflict. Palestine’s representative noted that countries in conflict are taken advantage of when it comes to illicit arms trade.

As draft resolutions started to become available at the end of last week, Mali, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States, issued its annual resolution, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (A/C.1/65/L.11). The draft resolution remains substantively unchanged from last year, when it was adopted in the General Assembly without a vote as resolution 64/30. The text, *inter alia*, encourages governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations to facilitate or support relevant programmes and initiatives. •

Conventional weapons

Global Action to Prevent War

While awaiting concrete resolutions for discussion in the coming week and thematic debate on conventional weapons, there were some interesting developments in the conventional arms area during the last few days of general debate, specifically in the linkages between disarmament, development, and civilian protection.

The Holy See’s representative, for instance, underscored that an aspect of conventional disarmament must include the right of victims to assistance and called for banning weapons that cause “unacceptable damage” to civilians. The International Committee of the Red Cross called on states to pay special attention to “mitigating or ending preventable suffering” caused by the use of specific conventional weapons, and called on states party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to ensure that this framework is attentive to humanitarian problems caused by the weapons covered under the Convention. At the end of last week, Ambassador Mbaye of Senegal, who was Chairperson of the 2009 Meeting of High Contracting Parties of the CCW, gave a report on efforts to implement and universalize the CCW and its protocols. He highlighted the efforts of high contracting parties to make the CCW “an indispensable piece of humanitarian and arms control machinery.”

Nicaragua’s ambassador, noting her country’s role as a “transfer point” for arms heading north, reaffirmed the implicit linkages between disarmament and development, specifically urging that resources freed up as we renounce our excessive dependence on weapons be used to fight poverty. The delegation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic linked disarmament efforts to the international community’s ability to fulfill Millennium Development Goals, while Eritrea’s representative made clear that “easy access” to conventional weapons, especially small arms, threatens social and economic development.

Georgia’s representative noted that illegal trafficking of conventional weapons can be addressed effectively through robust regulation of the legal arms trade. Georgia is among the states particularly concerned about the transfer of arms to “terrorist groups”. In a similar vein, Ambassador Alexandru Cujba of Moldova described his country’s efforts to control conventional weapons stockpiles, an effort that it says is being stymied by a “secessionist regime in its Eastern part”. Tunisia’s delegation highlighted the rise in the proliferation of light weapons that are the consequences of armed conflict, criminality, and violations of embargoes.

UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte made an important intervention as well, with implications for all facets of the disarmament agenda, including conventional weapons. Specifically, he noted the “growing gap” between disarmament expectations and resources. He also highlighted the degree to

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Arms trade treaty

Global Action to Prevent War

As the international community moves closer to negotiations on the global arms trade and the weapons systems which an arms trade treaty (ATT) would seek to regulate, more governments made statements on the topic as general debate continue into the second week.

As his delegation did during the July 2010 ATT Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan reiterated his country's preference for strengthening the consensual framework of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons rather than "trying to supplant it with other mechanisms or creating parallel instruments." Without naming the ATT explicitly as that "other mechanism," Ambassador Akram called for an approach to the ATT that is "gradual, step-by-step, inclusive, universal and consensual." Pakistan is one of several states concerned that the ATT process might erode a state's "right to self-defense" as enshrined in the UN Charter.

The Holy See's delegation reflected the aspirations of many delegations when it reinforced "the deep ethical and social implications" of the arms trade, a trade that is not to be equated with the trade of other goods in the marketplace. In a similar vein, Palestine's representative made explicit links between poverty and disarmament, noting that the illicit arms trade is likely to continue so long as the root causes—including poverty—go unresolved. The International Committee of the Red Cross

delivered one of several statements that underscored the relationship of a viable ATT process to the prevention of "serious violations of international humanitarian law." The increasing willingness of states to highlight the human rights implications of efforts to regulate the arms trade is a welcome development that bodes well for the February 2011 negotiating sessions.

Ghana was one of the states concerned specifically with border issues, specifically controlling arms traffic across borders. The Ghanaian delegation also expressed hope that a future ATT would "close loopholes" that would allow diversion of weapons from the legal to illicit market. The diversion issue was a core concern during the July Preparatory Committee and throughout much of First Committee's general debate focused on the regulation of the global arms trade. •

Conventional weapons (cont.)

which states have been remiss in reporting key information needed to help set and fulfill the UN disarmament agenda with special mention of military spending figures and armaments reported to the UN Register of Conventional Arms. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs continues to assist states in a variety of ways to fulfill disarmament obligations but needs more response on reporting by states. •

UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH

UNIDIR

UNIDIR is pleased to invite you to the seminar

Improving the Effectiveness of the PoA *Implementation Challenges and Opportunities*

Wednesday, 20 October 2010, 13:15–14:30
Conference Room IV

A moderated discussion will follow the presentations
Sandwiches will be available prior to the beginning of the panel

IDEAS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY



FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR



Calendar of Upcoming Side Events

www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/1com10/calendar.html

| When | What | Where |
|---|--|---|
| Monday 18 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Routes to Elimination Sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN and the Middle Powers Initiative | Conference Room A |
| Monday 18 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Seminar on “The Role of Regional Organizations in Implementing the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Ways Forward” Co-organized by Small Arms Survey and the Permanent Mission of New Zealand, in cooperation with UNODA | New Zealand Permanent Mission 600 3rd Avenue, 14th Floor |
| Monday 18 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Development, Humanitarian Response and Campaigning Sponsored by Oxfam International | Conference Room 4 |
| Tuesday 19 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament Sponsored by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Global Action to Prevent War, and Reaching Critical Will of WILPF | 866 UN Plaza First floor Bahai Center |
| Tuesday 19 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Convention on Cluster Munitions Sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Laos and Japan | Conference Room 4 |
| Wednesday 20 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Briefing: Military Budgets and Prospects for the Future Sponsored by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and the NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security | Conference Room A |
| Wednesday 20 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Improving the Effectiveness of the PoA: Implementation Challenges and Opportunities Sponsored by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research | Conference Room 4 |
| Thursday 21 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Shooting Poverty: Screening of Three Short Documentaries - <i>Bang for your Buck</i>, <i>Grosso Calibre</i>, and <i>April 6th</i> Sponsored by Oxfam International | Conference Room 6 |
| Thursday 21 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Next steps in the UN process on small arms Sponsored by the Geneva Forum (RSVP: muriel.baum@diplo.de) | German House 871 UN Plaza Conference room |
| Friday 22 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Promoting International Stability and Security through Disarmament Sponsored by the EastWest Institute and the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the UN | Conference Room 7 |
| Monday 25 October 1:15-2:45 PM | Humanitarian Law Versus Nuclear Weapons Sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, and the Global Security Institute | Conference Room A |
| Monday 25 October 3:00-6:00 PM | Civil Society Presentations to First Committee | Conference Room 4 |