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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: WHO'S AFRAID OF AN OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP?

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF and Thomas Nash | Article 36

Take it or leave it approach is not inclusive. Any initiatives for future steps on nuclear disarmament that don't involve the nuclear-armed states have no future. To seek piecemeal solutions outside the existing machinery is not the right way forward. An open-ended working group without consensus will not succeed.

The United Kingdom, Russian Federation, China, and United States made these assertions in opposition to the resolution tabled by Mexico and others to establish an open-ended working group (OEWG) next year in Geneva that seeks the development of new legal provisions and norms for nuclear disarmament. They and the other nuclear-armed states have consistently tried to characterise the humanitarian initiative as divisive and polarising. They accuse countries keen to pursue disarmament of being unwilling to “engage” the nuclear-armed states. Yet the nuclear-armed constitute a small handful of states that hold the threat of mass destruction over the rest of us, wield an absolute veto in the context of the UN Security Council and the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and refused to participate in the 2013 open-ended working group and most of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. It would seem that this approach is much more polarising, divisive, and non-engaging than a working group that is open to participation by all states and offers a veto to none.

These assertions are a desperate attempt by powerful countries seeking to retain their stranglehold over processes for nuclear disarmament. They have already lost their grip on the discourse. The humanitarian initiative has fundamentally undermined their already threadbare claims of legitimacy for nuclear weapon possession and the concept of nuclear “deterrence”. The establishment of an OEWG that operates under standard UN rules rather than consensus offers a chance for committed states to begin work to fill the legal gap with respect to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, as many have committed to do. Indeed, states that have endorsed the humanitarian pledge should make plans to use the OEWG that would be established by the Mexican-led resolution as a place to begin work to fulfill their commitment. It is this opportunity that has destabilised the nuclear-armed states and sent them into overdrive to squash any such work.

There is of course a second OEWG on the table, suggested by Iran. This working group would operate by consensus in New York over the next two years.

This is a curious set-up, as it seems to almost exactly replicate the dysfunctional UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Operating by consensus in New York in continuous three-year cycles, the UNDC has failed since 1999 to reach agreement on any recommendations related to nuclear disarmament. Establishing an OEWG that operates under the same parameters of the UNDC would appear to undermine the outcome of the first special session on disarmament, which established the UNDC. It would be a strange move, considering how important the NAM states, including Iran, consider that outcome. It is also strange in light of Ambassador Wood's position that the Mexican-led OEWG's purpose is to “subvert established disarmament machinery”—by the same rationale the US should have the same opposition to the Iranian OEWG.

Other key questions that could be raised by Ambassador Wood's assertion include: Is the Mexican resolution really all about “subverting” the existing machinery? Is it not actually about making progress on disarmament? Can machinery that has not produced results in 16 years (the UNDC) or 19 years (the CD) even be subverted? Haven't certain states already subverted it themselves by insisting on the application of the consensus rule as a right to veto?

As usual, it's all about the rhetoric. Whatever the nuclear-armed states say about the humanitarian initiative, or a nuclear weapon ban treaty, or an OEWG operating without consensus, they do not actually operate themselves in a way that is consistent with preventing humanitarian harm, making concrete progress on disarmament, or collaborating in an open and constructive spirit with all countries in the world. States committed to nuclear disarmament should not let the foot-stomping and fist-banging of the nuclear-armed states prevent them from moving ahead with progressive measures to make the world safer, more humane, and more just.

Regardless of whether or not the nuclear-armed states choose to engage, the rest of the world should continue to work towards a prohibition on nuclear weapons based on the humanitarian pledge that gathers committed states towards that end. These pledge group states should begin to discuss elements for a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and they can use the Geneva-based OEWG as one place to take forward this work. Such an instrument can be elaborated, negotiated, adopted, and implemented even without the participation of nuclear-armed states, if

they choose not to join. Such an instrument will have economic, legal, political, and social implications for the possession and deployment of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-armed states' increasingly frantic and arrogant opposition to the initiation of any work on such a treaty should give those in favour of progress some indication of the relevance and power of this approach.

"Most if not all initiatives are based on disappointment or disillusion, but emotions are the worst adviser in this kind of very serious work," cajoled Mr. Yermakov of the Russian Federation (if not the First Committee's most convincing orator, certainly its most entertaining). Nobody would disagree that this is serious work. The impulse for this serious work towards a prohibition on nuclear weapons stems from a rational consideration of the humanitarian evidence. It also stems from a recognition both of the illogical insanity of "nuclear deterrence" and of the risks to which it exposes all human beings every minute of every day.

Thoughtful states must continue to use every avenue to reject this irresponsible and immoral practice and the intellectually corrupt belief system propping it up. The nuclear-armed states will push back hard every step of the way, but this should be no surprise. History is replete with examples of the powerful few fiercely and jealously defending what they have convinced themselves to be in their interests. Fortunately, history is also punctuated by strong leadership and the achievement of social and political change. The achievements that are celebrated today on human rights, humanitarian law, justice, the environment were driven by those who would not allow their proposals to be extinguished by the most powerful. Each of these proposals for the common global good was once confronted by a haughty dismissal that: "It will not succeed." Those making such dismissals of the movement to prohibit nuclear weapons should heed the historical record that exactly this attitude of arrogance and hubris has spurred on movements for change. •

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Nuclear weapons are again the subject of the majority of resolutions put forward at this year's session of First Committee. In addition to updated versions of existing resolutions, five new resolutions have been presented: L.28 entitled "Effective measures on nuclear disarmament," L.37 entitled "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons," L. 38 entitled "Humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons," L.40 entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world," and L.52 entitled "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World." In addition, two resolutions to establish open-ended working groups (OEWGs) on nuclear disarmament have been tabled.

This article will examine these new resolutions and updates to some ongoing texts, but it will not provide a comprehensive overview of all resolutions put forward addressing the subject of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, or nuclear weapon free zones.

Ethical imperatives

Starting from the 70th anniversary of the UN and the commitments agreed upon at its creation, as well as the long-standing efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation stemming from the humanitarian consequences of any use, L.40 outlines and acknowledges "the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world." In operative paragraph

(OP) 3 it declares that the global threat posed by nuclear weapons must urgently be eliminated; activities on these weapons must focus on their effect and be guided by the unspeakable suffering and unacceptable harm that they cause; greater attention must be given to the impact of a nuclear weapon detonation on women and the importance of their participation in discussions, decisions, and actions on nuclear weapons; and that "given their indiscriminate nature and potential to annihilate humanity, nuclear weapons are inherently immoral."

In its forward-looking part (OP 4 and 5), the resolution notes that the only way for responsible states to protect their people and each other "from the ravages of a nuclear weapon detonation" is through the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It further stresses that all states "share an ethical responsibility to act with urgency and determination, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, to take the effective measures, including legally binding measures, necessary to eliminate and prohibit all nuclear weapons, given their catastrophic humanitarian consequences and associated risks."

Humanitarian consequences

L.37 incorporates the statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons delivered by Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz during the 2015 Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation



Treaty (NPT) on behalf of 159 states. Among other points, it recalls all humanitarian statements that have been delivered over the past four years and welcomes the fact-based discussions on the effects of a nuclear weapon detonation that were held at the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna.

In the operative part it stresses that it is “in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances” and that total elimination is the only guarantee against their use. It further stresses that the “catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed” and the awareness of the catastrophic consequences of these weapons “must underpin all approaches and efforts towards nuclear disarmament.” Finally it calls on all states to prevent the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons, vertical and horizontal, as well as to achieve nuclear disarmament and to exert all efforts to “totally eliminate the threat of these weapons of mass destruction.”

L.38 is based on the Humanitarian Pledge, previously known as Austrian Pledge, which is currently endorsed by 121 states. The resolution stresses the importance of presenting the evidence on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to all relevant forums, urges all states parties to the NPT to “renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under Article VI,” and calls upon all states “to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal.” Further it requests all nuclear-armed states to take interim measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapon detonations and calls upon all relevant stakeholders to “cooperate in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in the light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.”

Open-ended working groups

This year two resolutions aim to establish open-ended working groups (OEWGs). However, they differ in their respective mandates.

L.13 builds on previous resolutions on “taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations” and on the work and report of the OEWG held in Geneva in 2013. It establishes an OEWG “with a view to reaching agreement on concrete and effective legal measures to achieve nuclear disarmament, in particular new legal provisions and norms to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.”¹ The group will meet for up to 15 working days in Geneva

as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly and under its rules of procedure. All member states are invited to participate.

New draft resolution L.28 also establishes an OEWG, but the group envisioned here will meet in New York for three sessions of ten working days each, one session being held in 2016 and two sessions in 2017, “to identify and elaborate effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including legal provisions or other arrangements that contribute to and are required for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons; the legal provisions could be established through various approaches, such as a stand-alone instrument.”²

Universal Declaration

L. 52 put forward by Kazakhstan adopts the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World annexed to the resolution and invites relevant actors to disseminate the Declaration and promote its implementation. It further calls on the UN Secretary-General to submit a report on the progress of implementation of the Declaration. According to Kazakhstan, the central purpose of this Declaration “is to draw together in one place a statement of the common ground shared by all States on the issue of global nuclear disarmament.” It addresses “what has united our nations in the field of disarmament, not what has divided us.”

United action

L.26 entitled “United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” is thoroughly revised from last year. The preambular section begins with a commitment to achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons and recalls that 2015 marks the seventieth year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and the end of the Second World War.

In its operative part, it among other things emphasises that the deep concern about the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons “continue to underpin efforts by all States towards a world free of nuclear weapons.” In OP 6 it calls on all states to take further “practical steps and effective measures towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, based on the principle of undiminished and increased security for all” and encourages Russia and the United States to negotiate further reductions (OP7). Later, in OP 11, it calls on all nuclear-armed states to address the risks of unintended nuclear detonations and encourages the nuclear-armed states of the NPT to continue their regular meetings with a view to facilitating nuclear disarmament and to enhance transparency and mutual confidence, including through more

frequent reporting. The resolution also encourages states to “engage in appropriate multilateral forums to further explore effective measures necessary for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.” Finally, it encourages “every effort to raise awareness of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons, including through, among others, visits by leaders, youth and others, to the cities devastated by the use of nuclear weapons, and testimonies of atomic bomb survivors (hibakushas).”

Towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world

L.41 entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments” builds on previous resolutions submitted by the New Agenda Coalition. Among other things notes with satisfaction the renewed attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and risks associated with nuclear weapons and the compelling evidence presented at the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. In particular, it highlights the findings presented to the Vienna Conference regarding the disproportionate and gendered impacts of exposure to ionizing radiation for women and girls.

In the operative part it specifically calls on nuclear-armed states to fulfill their commitment to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional, and multilateral measures; to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems; and to take concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies, pending their total elimination. It further calls on nuclear-dependent states to promote a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines, pending their total elimination. In OP19, it urges member states to “explore options and support efforts to identify, elaborate and negotiate legally binding effective measures for nuclear disarmament.” •

1 Since this article was written a revised version of this resolution has been issued, however it was not available in the document system. Reportedly, the group is now mandated to substantively address effective legal measures. While UNGA rules of procedures are maintained, an additional OP calls on the group to make its best endeavor at reaching general agreement.

2 For this resolution, too, a revision has been issued, but was not made available to the author in time for the publication of this article.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

This year’s draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) reportedly posed a challenge to reaching a middle ground.

The final text of the resolution includes additional language noting the new states parties of the Convention in preambular paragraph (PP) 3. The PPs referencing the remaining actions with regard to the Syrian chemical weapons and the urging the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian authorities to resolve outstanding issues, former PPs 3 and 4, have been deleted.

New PP 7 takes note of the February 2015 decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW and of UN Security Council resolutions 2009 (2015) and 2235 (2015). New PP 8, modified former PP 7, now reaffirms the condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the use of chemical weapons “anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances,” which would violate international law, and expresses “its strong conviction that those individuals responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable.”

All other changes are technical. •

OUTER SPACE

Matilda Wölkert | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Three draft resolutions relating to outer space were presented again this year. Namely, on the “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” (L.3), “No first placement of weapons in outer space” (L.47) and

“Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities” (L.48). They remained identical to previous versions of these resolutions, except from some small technical updates. •



SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Joanne Mulligan | International Action Network on Small Arms

During the thematic debate on conventional weapons, states reiterated their concern for the destabilising accumulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stressed that the illicit manufacture, transfer, and circulation of SALW can be curbed with a balanced and full implementation of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA). In addition to the effective implementation of the instrument, some delegations reaffirmed that international cooperation and assistance are indispensable in determining the success or failure of national efforts to implement the UNPoA. Furthermore, the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) was deemed vital in reducing the illicit trafficking of arms.

Costa Rica expressed the need to adopt legally-binding instruments to combat the marking, tracing, and illicit brokering of SALW. It also noted that robust and obligatory stockpile management standards must be developed to address excessive levels in armament production, while Botswana stated that the destruction of surplus, seized, and forfeited weapons and ammunition could be a starting point for reducing weapon stockpiles available for illicit circulation. Ireland emphasized the need to address gaps in the control of weapons flows, including through the development of international tracing procedures, and further reiterated the need to have ammunition included in control systems.

A number of draft resolutions related to SALW will be voted on over the course of this week. L.6, "*Assistance*

to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them," is unchanged from last year. It aims to consolidate good governance and stability in the West African region and improve regional security. L.39, "*The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects*," which emphasises the importance of the continued and full implementation of the UNPoA and ITI, includes technical updates from last year, such as requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report to be considered at the sixth Biennial Meeting of States. It further includes as new preambular paragraph on the acknowledgment of efforts related to the transfer of conventional arms that may also contribute to the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in SALW.

Other relevant draft resolutions include L.16, "*Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus*," where small technical updates can be found. L.57, "*United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa*," welcomes the undertaking by the regional centre to provide capacity-building, technical assistance programmes, and advisory services to African member states on the control of SALW, including on stockpile management and destruction. Similarly, L.42, "*United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*," encourages the regional centre to provide support to states of the region in the national implementation of relevant instruments, such as the UNPoA •.

LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

The general acknowledgement that antipersonnel mines cause unacceptable suffering and must be eliminated is holding strong this year again at First Committee. The four regional groups (Arab Group, European Union, Non-Aligned Movement, and Union of South American Nations) and the vast majority of the 26 states that spoke on the subject during the debate on conventional weapons expressed strong support for the fight against landmines.

Discussions were marked by pledges of continued financial or technical contributions towards the full implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty or towards mine action, from Australia, China, Czech Republic, the EU, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. UNASUR highlighted examples of bilateral cooperation on mine clearance such as between Ecuador and Peru, while Thailand reiterated the importance of South-

South partnerships. The Arab Group, NAM, and Libya strongly called on past users to provide support for mine action.

Several delegations recalled that the 2014–2019 Maputo Action Plan must now be translated into tangible results. The Netherlands emphasised "our common political commitment to clear all antipersonnel mines before 2025 as agreed last year in Maputo," a goal also mentioned by Croatia. The EU, Italy, and Thailand underscored the rights of victims, while Senegal called on donors to support the socioeconomic inclusion of victims.

India and Pakistan reiterated their long-standing view that the Convention on Conventional Weapons addresses their "legitimate defence requirements" by restricting but not prohibiting the use of antipersonnel mines.

Draft resolution L.50 on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction is co-sponsored by the current, former, and future Presidents of the Convention (Belgium, Mozambique, and Chile). Tabled each year since 1999, it calls on all states to remain seized of the landmine issue at the highest political level, and

invites states not yet party to join without delay. This year's draft contains minor technical updates such as an invitation to the upcoming 14th Meeting of States Parties (Geneva, 30 November–4 December 2015). Each year, a large number of states not party vote in favour of the resolution, thus demonstrating their support for the aims of eliminating landmines and addressing their deadly legacy. •

CYBER

Richard Moyes | Article 36

Further discussions in First Committee on cyber issues, under the framing of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), reiterated many of the broad themes already presented in general statements.

Some 16 states addressed the issue directly, in addition to engagement on the theme in group statements from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Union of South American Nations, and the Arab Group. Brazil, as Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on ICTs in the Context of International Security (GGE), provided a summary of the conclusions of the group in support of the GGE report—a report which received strong support amongst those that spoke. Key issues highlighted by the GGE Chair included recognition of the importance of international law and the UN Charter, and the need to continue developing common understandings on the application of the law, and of norms, rules, and principles for responsible state behaviour.

Many states supported the idea that critical infrastructure and emergency response capacities deserve particular protection from cyber attacks. Even though the GGE report makes protection of infrastructure subservient to existing legal obligations, its emphasis on such protection seems to have promoted a growing recognition that a norm could be developed in this area.

A central line of state positioning concerns whether the issue is best addressed through better understanding of how existing law should be applied, or whether more specific legal provisions might be needed. The NAM called for the “development of a legal framework to address these issues ... within the UN [and] with the active and equal participation of all States.” The USA stressed that “international cyber stability [is] best advanced by established international law, in conjunction with additional voluntary cyber-specific norms of responsible State behavior in peacetime”—a distinction that was echoed by others. The USA also stated directly that it could not support approaches that would “only serve to legitimize repressive State

practices.” China framed cyber security as part of a broader issue of global governance and saw the need for a new security paradigm. Whilst continuing to promote an “International Code of Conduct for Information Security,” China also saw the outcome of the GGE as a solid basis for further work.

Many statements emphasised the role of national action, international cooperation, and confidence-building measures. Further debate also saw some states reiterate the need to preserve respect for privacy, reject spying and interception of communications, and to not “impede” cyberspace in the process of addressing threats. Venezuela sees a line between ensuring peaceful use of cyberspace and managing the militarization of that space, with the latter, to their mind, presenting a slippery slope from which it would be difficult to recover.

A number of statements emphasised the need to make further work by the GGE more inclusive, including more participation from developing countries. Some also noted that developing countries might benefit from technology transfer and capacity-building measures.

Other states emphasised ongoing discussions on these issues outside the framework of the GGE, as part of a broader, complimentary process. Switzerland stressed the value of bringing in perspectives from the private sector, academia, and civil society, and noted that there are action points in the reports produced to date that should help to turn discussion into practice.

Resolution L.45 on “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” has a diverse group of co-sponsors. It calls on states to endorse the report of the previous GGE and seeks the continued work of a GGE in 2016 to build on the work to date. Given the strong support for the work of the previous GGE, and the lack of any directly dissenting voices (except warning voices regarding inclusivity), it seems highly likely that such a process will be taken forward. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

The month of October has seen continued use of cluster munitions in Syria and by the coalition led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen, highlighting the urgency of further universalising the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

During the debate on conventional weapons, four regional groups (the Caribbean Community, European Union, Non-Aligned Movement, and Union of South American Nations) reiterated their support for the international community's efforts to address the suffering caused by cluster munitions. The 25 other states that spoke about the weapon expressed a similar support and numerous delegations emphasised the need to further universalize the CCM. Sweden specifically called on users and producers to join. Conversely, Pakistan and Singapore expressed the view that the issue of cluster munitions should be dealt with in the forum of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The First Review Conference of the CCM was held in September 2015 and the topic was covered at length during the debate on conventional weapons, with states warmly welcoming its outcome documents—the Dubrovnik Declaration and the Dubrovnik Action Plan (DAP). This included even states not yet party to the CCM such as Jamaica and Thailand. Switzerland summarized the general sentiment by noting that the DAP “offers a crucial roadmap for the next five years” while Senegal said that it was “of critical importance”

that the DAP be implemented “in a comprehensive and efficient manner.”

Several delegations called for enhanced assistance to survivors of cluster munitions. The EU in particular highlighted “the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,” while Italy called for “the full realization of victims’ political rights, their economic inclusion, and adequate social protection measures.” A number of donor states committed to stay involved in clearance and victim assistance in the long run and Lao PDR, the world’s most affected state, expressed hope that clearance efforts would contribute to eradicate poverty and allow it “to graduate from under-development status.”

The new draft resolution L.49 on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions urges all states outside the Convention to join as soon as possible, and expresses strong concern with the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world. The Cluster Munition Coalition, a global network of NGOs working in some 100 countries to end the suffering caused by these weapons, calls on all delegations at First Committee to vote in favour of the resolution. States that have not signed the CCM can vote in favour of the resolution to demonstrate their support to the Convention’s humanitarian aims and their acknowledgement of the unacceptable harm caused by cluster munitions. •

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Thomas Nash | Article 36

The First Committee’s conventional weapons debate provided a further opportunity for states to call for action to the humanitarian problems posed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Austria again led the way in this endeavour, with support from Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. Norway had already given strong support in its statement to the high-level debate of the UN General Assembly as well as the First Committee’s general debate.

Describing the problem of bombing and shelling in towns and cities as one of “extreme gravity,” Austria explained that the problem cannot be restricted to areas affected by conflict. “The growing numbers of refugees that are currently leaving their war-ridden home regions testify to this,” argued Ambassador Kmentt. “Many people are desperate to find shelter abroad, precisely from the violence and the use of explosive weapons in their countries of origin and the lack or breakdown of protection for civilian populations.”

Mexico and Guatemala echoed these sentiments, with Mexico reflecting on the plight of millions of displaced people and “the widespread destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and infrastructure” and Guatemala noting the “devastating humanitarian consequences” caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Ireland also raised these concerns about casualty rates and damage to infrastructure, calling for “the urgent further consideration of all aspects of this question, including possible gendered impacts.”

Recognising the need for a response to this pattern of harm, Austria recalled the significant support that states expressed at September’s recent Vienna expert meeting for the proposal to work towards an “international political declaration to prevent civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.”

Costa Rica said that it “fully supports” this initiative, adding that the problem must be urgently addressed. The Netherlands called for a “focus on concrete and practical measures in order to limit casualties and

damage,” while New Zealand agreed with the UN Secretary-General in calling for states to find ways “to address this issue and minimise this harm.”

Looking beyond First Committee, states should now seek to intensify their work on a political declaration to prevent harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The forthcoming International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to be held in Geneva from 8-10 December, will be an important opportunity to further this work.

In relation to the use of barrel bombs in Syria, France asserted that “indiscriminate bombing with barrels of explosives is the primary cause of numerous victims as well as significant flows of refugees.” France did not provide evidence for this statement that barrel bombs are the “primary cause” of victims. Given the difficulties in disaggregating casualty data by type of explosive weapon, it is unclear how such a statement could be substantiated. What is certainly clear is that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is the pri-

mary cause of civilian casualties in Syria. In this regard, Handicap International reacted to France’s new push for a Security Council resolution on the topic of barrel bombs by calling for the resolution to recognise the broader pattern of harm cause by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Turning to the wider set of problems related to explosive weapons, France, Pakistan, and the United States, as well as the European Union, indicated they would continue to engage in work within the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) on the question of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), on the basis of Amended Protocol II on mines, booby traps, and other devices. France voiced support for Afghanistan’s First Committee resolution on this topic, L.36, “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices”. This resolution seeks to promote steps to stop the production of IEDs, apply existing international rules, and encourage dialogue amongst states on this topic, including in the context of the CCW. •

ARMS TRADE TREATY

Allison Pytlak and Raluca Muresan | Control Arms

It’s been an active year for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and this was reflected in the numerous and substantive references to the new agreement during the thematic debate on conventional weapons. The vast majority of the over 60 statements made on the ATT welcomed the Treaty’s entry-into-force on 24 December 2014. Many delegations described it as a “milestone” for arms control and in the words of Ghana, a “significant achievement in ensuring accountability, transparency and responsibility in the arms trade.” Alongside welcoming the entry-into-force, states confirmed the importance of universalisation and implementation as key priorities.

Most statements also took note of the first Conference of States Parties (CSP) that was held in Cancun, Mexico from 24-27 August 2015. Several congratulated Switzerland as the host of the ATT Secretariat and the appointment of Dumisani Dladla as its Provisional Head, and thanked Mexico for hosting the CSP.

While the first CSP achieved many of its goals, states parties failed to agree or adopt reporting templates. This was noted in some statements, such as by Switzerland and the Netherlands, which said that transparency and reporting will be key to the Treaty’s future success. Lithuania and Costa Rica specifically linked the concept of transparency to making Treaty reports public. A more general call for transparency was echoed by others, notably the European Union, Italy, Japan, Moldova, Morocco, Slovakia, and Spain.

Several governments used their statements as a way of sharing information about funding opportunities for Treaty-related activities, or recent or upcoming

meetings. France noted its plans for upcoming work with Francophone African states. Australia, the Netherlands, and Spain referenced contributions made to funds such as UNSCAR or the EU’s ATT Outreach Project, or to the UN regional centers. New Zealand spoke of the model implementation law it has developed over the last year for use by Pacific states, while Jamaica described similar efforts underway in the Caribbean.

Ghana, Mozambique, Singapore, Thailand, and Turkey provided updates on their domestic ratification processes, expressing the hope of becoming states parties soon. Serbia described new legislation that is being passed as part of implementation.

There were many statements this year that linked the ATT to other instruments and resolutions, from the EU, UNASUR, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel, Lithuania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Romania, South Africa, Spain, and Zambia, among others. These other instruments included the UN Programme of Action and UNSC resolutions 2117 and 2220 on small arms and light weapons. As well, there were statements describing the linkages between arms flows, gender, and development. Ireland called the ATT “ground-breaking in its recognition of the gendered impact of illicit arms proliferation”. Austria is convinced that the ATT will contribute to significantly reducing gender-based violence and the European Union stated that “the ATT introduces the concept of serious acts of Gender Based Violence as a factor to take into account when making export assessments.” In speaking about the problem of conventional arms more generally, Mozambique urged greater commitment to respond to Goal 16 of

the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals, which was also noted by a few other states.

Ecuador asserted that it would like to see the ATT implemented in a “balanced” manner and Bangladesh called for balanced implementation, which refers to there being equal responsibility for exporters, importers, and transit or transshipment states. Cuba described the Treaty as imbalanced.

The role and contributions of civil society in the ATT process were referenced by a number of states including Finland, France, Jamaica, Japan, Lithuania, and Mexico.

This year, the ATT resolution L.54, led by Mexico and Nigeria, was drafted as a substantive resolution containing language on compliance with Treaty provisions and their implementation, in an attempt to push for more transparency and accountability in the arms trade. Furthermore, complementarity between the ATT and other international instruments on conventional arms as well as strengthened cooperation with civil society organization in order to facilitate effective implementation are encouraged. There is a growing

number of co-sponsors to the resolution, although notably absent among co-sponsors so far is the United Kingdom, previously a lead author of ATT resolutions.

Five other resolutions include references to the Arms Trade Treaty this year. Resolution L.6, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them,” as well as resolution L.39, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” both welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the ATT. L.16, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,” welcomes the ATT provision on establishing and maintaining national control systems to regulate the export of relevant ammunition and munitions. L.53, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” and L.57, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” acknowledge the work and assistance provided by the UNRCPD in Asia and the Pacific and respectively by UNRCPD in Africa towards the Treaty’s universalisation and implementation in these regions. •

AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

More states have raised autonomous weapons concerns at the 2015 session of First Committee than in the previous two years. At least 32 states and five regional and other groups of states have raised autonomous weapons concerns at First Committee as of 31 October, including 26 states in the course of the first day of the conventional weapons debate (26 October). Some 23 states raised killer robots concerns at the last First Committee in October 2014, while 16 did so for the first time in 2013.

Several states noted the rapid technological developments as good reason for diplomacy to keep up a similar pace. Almost all expressed support for further deliberations at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), with calls to deepen, expand, and intensify deliberations on autonomous weapons. Several states proposed that an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts be established ahead of the CCW’s Fifth Review Conference in December 2016. States will decide on the mandate for 2016 at their next annual meeting in Geneva on 13 November.

India suggested that proposed autonomous weapons concerns be assessed “not just from the view point of their compatibility with international law including international humanitarian law but also on their impact on international security if there is dissemination of such weapon systems.” Several states requested that meaningful human control be considered further next year, including Israel, the Netherlands, and South Africa.

Pakistan described the introduction of lethal autonomous weapons systems as “illegal, unethical, inhumane and unaccountable as well as destabilizing for international peace and security” and said that it “would have grave consequences”. It affirmed its support for a pre-emptive ban on the development, production, and use of autonomous weapons, while Cuba and Ecuador also reiterated their preference for a preemptive ban.

The strong interest in addressing autonomous weapons concerns came after outreach by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, including a UN side event briefing held with Costa Rica on 20 October. The campaign supports the proposal to establish an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts to step-up the work though expanded, formalized, and more substantive discussions. During the 2015 First Committee, campaign representatives discussed autonomous weapons concerns with UN Secretary General’s Acting High Representative for Disarmament Mr. Kim Won-soo. Several media outlets reported on the campaign’s media briefing, including *The Guardian*, *Motherboard*, *Newsweek*, and *VICE News*.

Poland is leading on resolution L.24 on the work of the CCW, which this year “notes with satisfaction” the decision to convene the 2015 meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems and welcomes the informal discussions. This annual CCW resolution is usually adopted without a vote. •

ARMED DRONES

Thomas Nash | Article 36

A number of states raised concerns during the conventional weapons debate over the use of armed drones.

Ireland welcomed continued discussion on the use of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), "including the relevant principles and norms of international law across both CCW and human rights spheres." Costa Rica noted its concern with "the use of armed drones to carry out selective killings outside of armed conflict zones." Referring to the recent study conducted by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Study on Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles," Costa Rica said this study "should serve as a basis for a much wider debate on this topic." That debate "should be framed by considerations of the humanitarian impact of armed drones, among these human rights, international humanitarian law and the dimensions of human security, as well as moral and ethical standards."

Pakistan argued that "the dual nature of new and emerging technologies," including armed drones, "present unique challenges in terms of definitions, scope, application and interpretation of existing international law." Pakistan suggested such technologies would lower the threshold for armed conflict because "they reduce or eliminate the risk of human casualties for the user states."

Ecuador encouraged the international community to "deepen the debate about armed UAVs and fully autonomous armed robots." Highlighting the high number of victims from the use of drones in civilian areas and their use for extrajudicial executions, Ecuador called for urgent and serious discussion in this area. Israel's concerns on this topic were limited to the transfer of drones to "terrorists". •

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Thomas Nash | Article 36

A number of states noted the impact on development of the trade and use of conventional weapons. Ireland linked progress on conventional disarmament to the achievement of the sustainable development goal's target for "a significant reduction in death from violence and related deaths everywhere." Similarly, the Moldovan Chair of the Meeting of Government Experts on the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons noted, "the linkage between the need to address the illicit flows of arms for development has now been recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

Others noted the specific relationship between disarmament and development, with Indonesia introducing the NAM's annual resolution on this topic. "NAM stresses the importance of the reduction of military expenditures, in accordance with the principle of un-

diminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and urges all states to devote resources made available from there to economic and social development, in particular in the fight against poverty," said the Indonesian representative in tabling resolution L. 10.

Cuba suggested that disarmament and development are "two major challenges facing humanity, especially given the global nature of the deep economic, social, food, energy and environmental crisis affecting us all." Cuba reiterated its proposal for a UN fund to direct half of the current global military expenditure "to support the economic and social development of countries in need". Cuba also recalled its support for the Plan of Action adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1987. •

GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Sofia Tuvestad | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Swedish Section

The debate on conventional weapons at First Committee saw stronger and more elaborate statements on gender than previous weeks. But they were still far too few.

Austria and Somalia both spoke about the "gender implications" of weapons, violence, and conflict. The use of the term gender is important, as it implicates that this is not an issue about women, but rather about a multidimensional system of ideas and behaviour that affects all people in different ways. Italy said that we must ensure that "relevant gender and ALL diversity aspects are taken into account," and Annika

Thunborg of Sweden rightly highlighted that "the use of weapons affects women and men, and boys and girls differently. It is paramount to address the male social roles that in many cases shape armed violence, and the increased levels of violence against women that follow in its wake." The introduction of a discussion on masculinity norms is a critical next step in the process of making the world of disarmament less gender blind. More states should follow.

Ambassador Mr. Toshio Sano highlighted in Japan's statement the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation

of the UN Programme of Action (BMS5), which acknowledges the need to facilitate women's participation in policymaking, planning, and implementation processes related to small arms and light weapons (SALW). On a similar note, Ambassador Patricia O'Brien of Ireland importantly held out that "we must show leadership to also recognise women's agency as a powerful force for change in disarmament," and Austria as well as Somalia spoke about the importance of full and equal participation of women and men at all stages and levels of decision-making. Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the "indispensable role" of women and the engagement of civil society in preventing the spread of SALW.

"The gender implications of specific types of weapons, including conventional weapons, are issues that deserve more attention and focus in research and in the political debate," said Ambassador Alexander Kmentt of Austria. We could not agree more. Developing a more rigid research base on gender-specific impacts of different types of weapons will be absolutely key in ensuring the UN Arms Trade Treaty, as well as programs and other initiatives on disarmament and arms control, are fully and fairly implemented. Mr. Vorapong Vadhanasindhu of Thailand spoke about a "striking gender and age element in the conventional weapons agenda," where women are disproportionately affected. He also urged all victim assistance efforts to take this into account. Ambassador Awale Ali Kullane of Somalia also highlighted gender implications of different weapons as a problem "that warrant more vigilance and focus in research and in the political debate." Introducing Italy's statement, Ambassador Vincio Mati argued that the specific needs of

women must be taken into consideration when addressing the impacts of cluster munitions, mines, and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The Italian delegation elaborated on this further in its statement during the "other disarmament and international security" issues cluster, noting that consolidated research has shown that conflicts do not have the same impact on men and women. "Men typically constitute the primary victims of direct armed violence; at the same time, women and children usually make up the majority of so-called "collateral damage" and of refugees and internally-displaced people. They also suffer more than men from the indirect impacts of conflict." Thus to add a "gender dimension" to disarmament means to address these differences through programmes for disarmament and reintegration of fighters, and to ensure "equal access and full participation of women in decision-making processes and efforts aimed at both preventing and resolving conflicts."

While recognizing the differential impacts on women of the use and trade of weapons is crucial, it is also critical to not simply categorise women with children as a vulnerable group. Such an approach only victimizes women, reinforces violent masculinities and increases men's expendability, and undermines women's equal participation in disarmament and conflict resolution efforts. These challenges were presented by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom at a side event hosted with the Permanent Mission of Denmark last week, which launched WILPF's new report on "Women, weapons, and war" (see www.reachingcriticalwill.org). •

SIDE EVENT: LAUNCH OF THE ATT-BAP ONLINE TRAINING

Allison Pytlak | Control Arms

The ATT Baseline Assessment Project (ATT-BAP) supports effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by providing clear guidance on the obligations contained within the treaty text and establishing an initial assessment of states' abilities to implement the treaty. On 28 October, Rachel Stohl and Paul Holtom—the developers of the project—launched a new online training course meant to assist states in completing their initial implementation report as required by the ATT in Article 13.1.

Chaired by Ambassador Quinn of Australia, a strong supporter of the project, the side event provided background on ATT-BAP and a demonstration on the new online training course. ATT-BAP includes a survey for states to complete that helps identify how their current policies, practices, and systems align with treaty requirements. ATT-BAP also provides guidance on treaty obligations as well as an understanding of what measures still need to be taken in order for states to become treaty compliant, and creates indica-

tors for monitoring the ATT's impact. To date, 51 of the 77 states parties have completed the survey, as well as ten additional signatory states and two non-signatories.

Stohl and Holtom presented the new online training guide, noting that its benefits include guidance for officials as they prepare their initial reports on ATT implementation, ensuring that treaty obligations are being met, and highlighting good international practice. They then provided a live demonstration of the online course. The course contains nine modules, each of which corresponds with core obligations of the ATT, including those related to the export, import, and transit/transshipment of arms, as well as the national control system and list, brokering, enforcement, risk assessment, prohibitions, and diversion. Testimonies from government experts from Austria, Costa Rica, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, and the United States are featured throughout the course to

provide examples of national practice and sources of information to complete the initial report. Each video module has a corresponding written guidance note to assist states further in completing their reports.

Discussion at the event largely focused on how the ATT-BAP survey relates to the initial reports that states parties must complete—the first group of which will be submitted in December of this year—as well as overall next steps for the project. There is not yet an agreed template for the initial report and therefore

some have suggested that states submit their ATT-BAP survey to fulfill this requirement, given the breadth of questions included in the survey and the fact that a large number of states parties have already completed the survey. In 2016, ATT-BAP will focus on trainings for reporting at meetings and seminars in several global regions by request. It was suggested that a ‘training of trainers’ could be a helpful way to increase the number of people able to provide this type of assistance. The training is available online at www.armstrade.info and on USB, available by request. •

SIDE EVENT: APPLYING SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION CONTROL GUIDELINES IN CONFLICT AFFECTED AREAS

Joanne Mulligan | International Action Network on Small Arms

During this event, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, Director of UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), introduced UNIDIR’s project to improve the accessibility and applicability of control measures that apply to both small arms and their ammunition in order to enhance the capacity of field practitioners tasked with supporting the management of arms and ammunition in a conflict or post-conflict setting. This project is set to develop a package of tools under one interface, the International Small Arms and Ammunition Guidance Platform (ISAP).

Mr. Himayu Shiotani from UNIDIR stressed the need to explore how to efficiently apply guidelines in conflict settings. The panelists, Dr. Vincent Choffat from the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, Dr. Patrick McCarthy from International Small Arms Control Standards ISU, Ms. Gillian Goh from UN Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and Mr. Stephen Pritchard from UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), were presented with questions that tested the practicality of the tools for solution: How could existing global guidelines and standards be applied in conflict affected settings where capacity and technical knowledge may be limited? If a requirement from the global guidelines cannot be met, what alternative option could be considered? How might the interpretation and application of the global guidelines change when operational contexts evolve rapidly? How can all stake

holders ensure that there are no wide varying technical interpretations of the global guidelines control requirements?

In response to the first question, Mr. Choffat stressed the importance of conforming to the standards in order to achieve specific long term goals, while Mr. McCarthy noted that setting the bar on a level achievable by all UN states is vital. He emphasised that standards may not be applicable in certain areas and that a broader outlook to accommodate all UN states may be needed. In discussing the second question, speakers noted that the main alternative practices observed are abandonment, adjustment, and postponement. Mr. McCarthy stressed that abandonment is not a strategy to use but welcomed the use of temporary resources with an aim to move to permanent policies. Ms. Goh encouraged a certification course to be established whereby potential experts could be trained in partnership with countries that are in situations where global guideline requirements cannot be met. Mr. Choffat remarked that no matter the circumstances, the implementation of the standard policies should never be compromised. Addressing the final question, Mr. McCarthy acknowledged that explicitly defining all terms is vital for ensuring a common understanding of requirements and noted his support for accessibility of software that gives states easy access to information on requirements and guidelines. •

SIDE EVENT: ATT IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Raluca Muresan | Control Arms

Considering Nigeria’s presidency of the next Conference of States Parties (CSP) of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the important role African states played in the Treaty negotiation process, it was fitting that a side event was dedicated to promoting imple-

mentation and universalisation in Africa. Co-hosted by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Permanent Missions of Sweden and Nigeria, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), and Control Arms, this event brought into focus the need for assistance

towards ATT universalisation, and more importantly, available assistance and capacity-building resources. As the event's chair, Ambassador Paul Beijer of Sweden mentioned "often it is not a matter of money, but of expertise" and urged states to use available support programs such as UNSCAR, the EU ATT Outreach Project, or SIPRI's resources database.

With "conflicts that subside and conflicts that emerge, in a cyclical manner Africa provides a good example of the consequences of the unregulated arms trade," stated Ambassador Emmanuel Imohe of Nigeria, the President-designate of the second CSP. He urged African countries to "come on board the ATT train" and to use the resources and assistance made available by international and regional organizations (UNODA, UNREC, and African Union) as well as by civil society organizations (SIPRI, FES) aimed to assist them in this process.

Nounou Booto Meeti, speaking on behalf of Control Arms, provided an overview of the work done by African civil society organisations and offered the same dedication and support to Ambassador Imohe in his efforts to promote the Treaty's universalisation

campaign, and in preparing for the next CSP. She highlighted the important role that civil society organisations play in maintaining momentum and focus on ATT, especially considering that bureaucratic processes can sometimes impede progress.

Mahamat Abderaman from the Permanent Mission of Chad highlighted the need for assistance in order to finalise his country's implementation plans and urged neighboring countries to accede to the ATT in order to help prevent the diversion of arms to terrorist groups such as Boko Haram.

Answering some of the concerns raised by the panelists, Mark Bromley, Co-Director at SIPRI's Dual-use and Arms Trade Control Programme, stated that "what we lack is a centralized source of information and concrete training programs focused on core ATT provisions and issues like diversion of small arms and light weapons (SALW) or stockpile management." SIPRI and UNREC are compiling such a database aimed to help stakeholders build upon past activities and avoid duplication. Initially focused on Sub Saharan Africa but with plans to cover other regions, this project will be offered to the ATT Secretariat for easy access. •

SIDE EVENT REPORT: SECONDS TO STOP THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Ghazal Rahmanpanah | PeaceWomen of WILPF

The all-male panel discussion, hosted by the Chilean Permanent Mission to the UN, focused on the risks of the use of a nuclear weapon. Carlos Olguin introduced the event briefly and Aaron Tovish moderated the event overall. Alan Robock spoke on the climate effects that will result from the detonation of a nuclear missile. While the direct effects are clear, the indirect impacts are rarely discussed and addressed in terms of the long-term, wider range impact. Expressing a scenario based on the use of 32 nuclear weapons, the effects would last within the upper atmosphere for over a decade and through climate change.

Mark Romeo introduced a short clip from a film documenting the fatal consequences behind the "close calls" that were behind the Okinawa and Cuban Missile Crises. Following the film, John Bordne spoke briefly on his experiences that were highlighted in the film. Bordne stated that he submitted an official memo regarding the events surrounding the events that occurred in 1962 surrounding the Okinawa Crisis. While the US government did not redact any information from this report, there is still apparently a lack of transparency regarding to what exactly happened in Okinawa.

Daniel Ellsberg spoke about his personal experience working for the US government as part of the Pentagon excom network during the lead-up to the Cuban

Missile Crisis. Within the military strategy that existed prior to 1962, any option for war with the Soviet Union also included attacks against all major cities in China as well. After 1962, the strategy did shift, however, the original mentalities still existed. Furthermore, Ellsberg spoke on the process, described by Bordne, regarding a series of envelopes required before sending the missiles. This strategy included many major gaps open to all for access and often highlighted a disregard for protocol (i.e. having two men at each positions, etc.). 325 million in USSR and China; 100 million in East Europe from the fallout—the launch of a nuclear-centric military strategy would result in "ten holocausts" according to Ellsberg with regards to impact and consequence. This "command and control" vulnerability that existed then still exists now and is formula for global-scale mass destruction of civilisation and humanity.

Bruce Blair concluded by reiterating the numerous vulnerabilities left open within the "command and control" system implemented surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis. For one, the system was poorly designed and was not equipped for managing a crisis such as the one that occurred. When the alert raised the DEFCON2, the system became even more decentralised and disorganised. Ultimately, during this time, many of the safeguards are often shed and priority shifts away from non-use to use. •

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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

Contributing organizations and programmes to this edition:

Article 36
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
Cluster Munition Coalition
Control Arms
International Action Network on Small Arms
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
PeaceWomen of WILPF
Reaching Critical Will of WILPF
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