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Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.

Cover image: Still of the "War Room" from the film *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*

Reaching Critical Will is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organization in the world. Reaching Critical Will works on issues related to disarmament and arms control of many different weapon systems; militarism and military spending; and gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and of disarmament processes.

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- Research and analysis of critical issues related to disarmament and arms control; and
- News and information about civil society engagement on disarmament and arms control.

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Reaching Critical Will

EDITORIAL: SECURITY AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

// Human civilization is stuck in reverse gear," said the ambassador of Zambia to First Committee. "While we have made quantum leaps in the development of the science and technology of weapons and the art of killing, we have been moving steadily, inexorably, in reverse in the development of the things that should edify us, as human beings."

In one of the most poignant statements to ever be delivered in this forum, Ambassador Kapambwe lamented our collective failure to protest the proliferation and use of weapons, the killing of other human beings, and the deliberate prioritisation of profits over people and peace.

This is indeed the crux of the problem. There are protests—sometimes represented by a few tenacious human rights defenders or environmental activists, sometimes seen in hundreds of thousands of people hitting the streets to demand social change. There is also concerted action by campaigners and advocates here at the United Nations, which has resulted in prohibitions of certain weapons, limitations on the arms trade, and condemnation of certain practices, especially those that harm civilians.

Yet billions of dollars are poured into the modernisation of nuclear weapons. Research and development of weapons that operate with decreasing human control, from drones and robots to the weaponisation of artificial intelligence and cyber tech, is on the rise. The arms trade continues to devastate communities and lives around, resulting in gun violence inside and outside of conflict, and the destruction of towns and cities through the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Our protests are necessary but have not been sufficient to curtail the harm to people and the environment caused by weapons and war. In part, this is because of the approach to security that many governments take. They have adopted and reinforced through their spending and their posturing that more weapons equals more security. This is a patriarchal approach to security, in which violence is strength and killing is power.

It is this approach that causes countries armed to the teeth with nuclear and conventional weapons to cry that "security challenges cause states to rely on" their weapons to protect them, as the US delegation did last week. This framing highlights the problem described by the Zambian ambassador—it is based on a conception of security that is about the security of the

weapons industry and the state government rather than its own or any other population. The money poured into the development and maintenance of these weapons, the damage caused by their use, and the risks they pose for our survival, all undermines the security of human beings. But it's great for those making profits or maintaining their privileged positions of power.

There is also, of course, an incredibly hypocritical double standard in this argument. While the United States, France, and others say that the "security environment" causes them to maintain their nuclear arsenal for "deterrence," would they accept this argument from other countries? They certainly have not accepted it from Iran or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Putting aside the sheer ridiculous victim-blaming perpetuated by nuclear-armed states saying the world is "forcing" them to retain their nuclear weapons even while the vast majority of other states have rejected the bomb and codified this rejection through the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the argument clearly shows the divergence in perspectives in play at First Committee.

One view of security, articulated by the nuclear-armed states and many of their allies, is that disarmament is something that will weaken their security—i.e. it will weaken their privileged position of weaponised power. The other is that disarmament will strengthen security—i.e. the security of states that don't use force to get their way in international affairs, as well as the security of people and the environment.

This wildly different worldview is at the heart of the challenge at First Committee. Only one of these perspectives will lead to peace through disarmament and dialogue. The other will lead us further down the path of violence, aggression, and despair. But it does not have to be this way. As the Zambian ambassador said, "War is neither a human condition nor imperative. We can change things." •

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Katrin Geyer and Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

In the first week of the Committee's deliberations, an overwhelming majority of states reaffirmed that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest priority in this forum. Delegations expressed grave concern at the continued modernisation of nuclear-armed states' arsenals and their continued inclusion of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. Many delegations also urged continued compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran and cautiously welcomed the recent rapprochement on the Korean peninsula. The overwhelming majority of delegations also celebrated last year's adoption of the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the rapid pace of signatures and ratifications.

All delegations seemed to agree that the upcoming Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2020 is a crucial opportunity to find common ground and achieve a successful outcome. However, many states expressed disappointment at the lack of progress achieved in particular with respect to Article VI of the NPT. While the vast majority of states agree the nuclear-armed states should have much more progress in eliminating their nuclear arsenals by now, nuclear supportive states argued that "current geopolitical realities" (Republic of Korea) or the "complex and uncertain security environment" (Australia) means nuclear disarmament can only be undertaken in a "pragmatic", "step-by-step" approach, based on the NPT. In this context, the United States reiterated its new approach, the Creating Conditions for Nuclear Disarmament, which ironically has the acronym CCND, which matches the long-held acronym for the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Taking a step back from the step-by-step approach, the US government is now advocating that non-nuclear-armed states have to make nuclear-armed states feel comfortable before they will take any actions or measures toward nuclear disarmament.

A handful of delegations called upon the US and Russia to uphold their commitments under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and to renew its mandate. However, both Russia and the US accused each other of not having honored their commitments. In their rights of reply statements, Russia stated that "without US compliance, an extension is unacceptable," while the US said that it is "difficult to ignore [Russia's violations of a number of Conventions] in deciding on an extension." Russia was also appalled at the "destructive consequences of the updated nuclear security doctrine" by the US, while the US condemned

Russia and China for "modernizing and expanding their nuclear capabilities ... [and] are becoming increasingly assertive in challenging the existing international order."

In the mist of their fighting, the nuclear-armed states also expressed their opposition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The US described the treaty as an "unrealistic and unproductive shortcut," suggesting that proponents naively believe that "we can skip to the final step of [nuclear disarmament]—simply banning nuclear weapons—and trust that the details will work themselves out." The United Kingdom argued that the TPNW fails to address technical challenges of nuclear disarmament and does nothing to increase trust among nuclear-armed states.

Many states have become tired of this narrative, and of the slow progress and excuses put forth by nuclear-supportive states. Close to 50 delegations positively referenced the TPNW, referring to it as an "historic" (South Africa), "ground-breaking" (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and "landmark" (African Group) treaty that is a "call to break the stalemate in nuclear disarmament" (Caribbean Community). Many delegations drew attention to the rapid pace of ratifications, reaffirmed their commitment to follow suit, and urged all states to join without delay. Ghana, Malawi, Nepal, South Africa, and Tanzania, among others, said they are in the process of ratification. Referring its full commitment to bringing the TPNW into force, Mexico exposed once again the double standard that "nuclear weapons cannot be considered beneficial in the hands of some, while pernicious in the hands of others." The Philippines expressed its firm belief that the TPNW delegitimises "once and for all, the use of nuclear weapons in any situation."

Nuclear disarmament advocates also expressed opposition to the continued investment of billions of dollars into the modernisation of nuclear arsenals, the extension of their lifecycles, and the improvement of warheads and delivery systems. Some also expressed concern with the risk of lowering the threshold for using these devastating weapons. Sweden was worried about the "notion of enhanced usability," while the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Uruguay, Tanzania, and many others criticised that nuclear deterrence is still included in security doctrines. Cuba and Venezuela highlighted that military doctrines considered the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear-armed states.

Participating states seemed nearly unified in supporting the development of a weapon of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East—a promise that has been on the agenda for decades. To break the deadlock, the Arab Group announced its intention to table a resolution to initiate the negotiation of a treaty to establish this zone. During the right of reply segment, the US responded that it would only support an initiative that is driven by all concerned states in the region.

The US and Saudi Arabian delegations seemed to be alone in expressing their opposition to the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. Everyone else appeared unified in their commitment to preserve the agreement. Sweden stated that “Iran’s role in the region and its missile activities should be addressed separately and not at the expense of the JCPOA.” With respect to recent developments in the Korean peninsula, the majority of states supported and encouraged the rapprochement. Some states reiterated that sanctions and commitments under UN Security Council Resolutions should be upheld until concrete steps towards denuclearisation are being undertaken. •

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Around 50 statements referenced chemical weapons during the general debate. They all condemned—to varying degrees—recent use of these weapons and spoke of the erosion of the norm against use that had been, until recently, well respected within the international community as established by the 1997 Convention on Chemical Weapons (CWC).

The Nordic Countries, European Union, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Estonia, Ireland, United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Malawi, Georgia, The Netherlands, and United Kingdom specifically referenced the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The investigation of this use has been stalled since October 2017 when the Russian Federation vetoed a renewal in the UN Security Council of its Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). In this context, the European Union, Austria, Estonia, Ireland, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Italy, Finland, and Portugal welcomed the decision taken by CWC states parties at a special session of the Meeting of States Parties in June 2018 to enhance the capacity of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons and develop a universal attribution mechanism. “By enhancing the capacity and capabilities of the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and, by request, elsewhere, this decision will help to strengthen the implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention and help to end impunity for the use of these weapons,” Ireland noted.

The UN High Representative for Disarmament stated that anyone who uses chemical weapons must be held to account, adding that the decisions taken by CWC states parties has not lessened the need for the UN Security Council to find a common approach to tackle this issue. Finland called the decision on an attribution mechanism a milestone toward combating impunity, but argued that the final responsibility rests with the

UN Security Council—a responsibility that it has “not yet fully shouldered.” Sweden urged avoiding further politicisation, as it risks seriously impairing the work of the OPCW. Brazil urged caution about ensuring future investigations of violations of the CWC are “robust, balanced, and impartial,” a view echoed by Guyana and China, and said that the implementation of a Special Office for Attribution will require further and more elaborate discussions concerning its mandate, structure, and working methods.¹

The United States criticised Russia and Iran for “shamelessly” defending the Syrian government’s use of chemical weapons against its people. The United Kingdom stated that Russia has prevented action at the UNSC that would have held to account those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria and shown its contempt for global norms using chemical weapons on British soil. The Russian Federation condemned the use of chemical weapons in its statement.

The EU shared that it has imposed restrictive measures on Syrian high-level officials and scientists for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons and its Foreign Ministers will adopt a new regime of restrictive measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.

The Nordic Countries, Austria, Norway, and Poland referenced chemical weapons use in Malaysia and Iraq; they, as well as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Estonia, Ghana, the EU, and Georgia referenced the attack in Salisbury, UK. •

Notes

1. In October, the OPCW Director-General is expected to submit a progress report to its Executive Council on arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria in line with the decision taken in by CWC states parties.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Filippa Lentzos | King's College London

No country openly possesses biological weapons or maintains that they are required for national security. Yet, rapid advances in science and technology could potentially enable more capable and more accessible biological weapons. These developments have led the usual calls in the general debate for the universalisation, ratification, and national implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) to be complemented by a new focus on what happens if such weapons are actually used.

This new emphasis on preparedness, investigation, and response to a potential biological attack comprises the principal component of the UN Secretary-General's strategy to uphold the norm against biological weapons outlined in his Agenda for Disarmament. Drawing on this, New Zealand asserted in its general debate statement that the international community must "strenuously resist backward movement on legally-binding undertakings" in the biological and other non-conventional fields. Along with a number of other states, New Zealand supported the Secretary-General's proposals to establish an investigative capacity into alleged bioweapons use, and to develop a coordinated response framework to any actual use of biological weapons. Russia, however, pushed back hard against embedding multilateral investigative capabilities of alleged bioweapons use within the UN Secretariat. Noting that "measures in circumvention of the BTWC may lead to the replication of the negative experience of various 'alternative investigations'," Russia argued that investigative capabilities must be negotiated and developed within the framework of the BTWC.

Strengthening the BTWC through a legally-binding verification protocol was brought up by some, mainly Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), states. Brazil, a NAM

observer, maintained that such a protocol should be complemented by an expanded institutional framework, and specifically through the establishment of an implementing organization. No mention was made of where costs to cover such an organisation would come from.

This is particularly relevant because a pressing concern for the biological disarmament regime is its critical financial situation. In their respective statements, the European Union and the Nordic countries emphasised their serious concerns that non-payment of assessed contributions by some BTWC member states is putting the treaty's future operation, the next Meeting of States Parties and the very existence of the treaty's Implementation Support Unit at risk. The principal states in arrears are Brazil (\$124,370), Venezuela (\$43,446), Nigeria (\$14,186), Libya (\$13,681), and Argentina (\$13,644).

2018 saw the launch of the BTWC intersessional programme of work following the successful outcome of the Meeting of States Parties in December 2017 under the chairmanship of India. A number of states welcomed the constructive discussions and ideas generated during the first series of expert meetings in August.

Finally, in a right of reply on Friday, 12 October 2018, Syria accused Georgia of hosting secret labs for the use of biological weapons. The Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research in Tbilisi, Georgia has recently been similarly accused in Russian-speaking news outlets. The lab is the focus of an international peer review transparency exercise to be carried out in mid-November 2018 on invitation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. All states parties to the BTWC have been invited to apply for participation. •

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

An arms race in outer space is a realistic possibility. This stark reality was raised by the President of the General Assembly in her address during general debate. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Malawi each voiced concerns about the potential for weapons and warfare to invade a global domain dedicated to peaceful uses. But another view of the dangers facing outer space is also evident: one defined by challenges to the safety and sustainability of operations in the space environ-

ment that stem from what the UK describes as growing congestion. Predictably, these two visions proffer competing policy preferences.

Many references made to the deteriorating security context in outer space called for some form of new, legal measure to restrict the deployment or use of weapons, including by the NAM, Arab Group, Egypt, Pakistan, Paraguay, Venezuela, Guatemala, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Nicaragua, and Malawi. Such a measure is



broadly related to the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) mandate of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Despite political gridlock within the CD over the last three decades, several governments urged the body to advance negotiations on a new arms control treaty.

In contrast, those concerned more with 'safety' than 'security' favour building what the UK describes as "trust and confidence through consensus, norms, principles, and guidelines" or what France referred to as politically binding measures. This approach has successfully been used to negotiate a set of Long-term Sustainability Guidelines within the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), noted by several speakers. The mandate of COPUOS does not extend to military or security uses of outer space. Efforts to elaborate transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs) in this context are taking place in the UN Disarmament Commission, based on support from last year's meeting of the UNGA First Committee. And yet, the desire for more cogent constraints is evident. As stated by Moldova, treaties "are the basis for our collective security."

Safety and security—and political and legal measures—are intimately related. Some statements, including those by Australia, Italy, and Moldova, indicated mutual support. But efforts to find common ground between them at a policy level have been frustrating. It is thus reassuring to hear significant support voiced for the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on PAROS, initiated last year by Russia and China to make recommendations on elements for a new, legally binding instrument. Although not universally favoured, there is tentative evidence that its work is reaching across policy divides, with states such as France noting participation in the process.

Overall, debate on outer space security seems more muted this year, perhaps as states wait and see what these various processes will yield. There is no time for complacency. No longer the preserve of the wealthy and technologically advanced, Malawi along with many others made clear that assured access to space-based systems and applications is essential for social and economic prosperity and public safety. Space is the future, and this future is threatened. •



Side Event

Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation in States and Territories Affected by Nuclear Weapons Testing in the Pacific

1.15-2.30pm, Monday, 15 October 2018.

Conference Room 9.

Featuring panelists from the Kiribati Mission, Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pace University's International Disarmament Institute, Harvard Law School and Article 36.



FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

The 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) opened with a strong call from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for states to urgently address the “multiple alarms” raised by future “weapons that can select and attack a target.” By doing so, he stigmatised the notion of permitting machines to take human life by calling this development “morally repugnant.”

During the first week of UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security twenty countries raised killer robots in their remarks: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, and Sweden. Four groups of states included killer robots in their remarks at First Committee: European Union, Non-Aligned Movement, Nordic states, and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Most references were brief and supported continued international discussion due to the serious challenges raised by killer robots. Ireland found that these weapons pose “considerable moral, legal and ethical dilemmas” and expressed its “firm belief that such weapons must always remain under meaningful human control.”

Cuba, Guatemala, and Peru reiterated the calls to prohibit fully autonomous weapons. China found that “old mentality and methods are no longer fit for dealing with emerging threats and the governance of new frontiers” and called for “necessary regulations

of the military application of such technologies under new international rules and norms developed through negotiations.”

Brazil reminded delegates of its proposal, with Austria and Chile, for the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) to move to a negotiating mandate and establish a legally binding positive obligation to ensure human control of autonomous weapons systems.

Following concerned outreach by national campaigners, Finland qualified its willingness to consider the call to prohibit fully autonomous weapons rather than rejecting such an objective outright, when it said the weapons “should not be banned if characteristics have not been agreed upon.”

Germany said that together with France it is proposing states agree on a political declaration “as a first step to commit states to the principle of human control over future lethal weapons systems.” This request to support its proposed political declaration was considerably weaker than Germany’s foreign minister’s call to action on killer robots at the UNGA’s high-level segment, where he urged states to support “our initiative to ban fully autonomous weapons—before it is too late!”

Pakistan’s foreign minister also raised killer robots in his remarks to the UNGA opening, reminding states of the essential need to swiftly develop new international law to deal with the challenges raised by fully autonomous weapons. •

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Laura Boillot | International Network on Explosive Weapons

As First Committee opened last week, a few participants brought attention to the rise in urban warfare and consequent humanitarian harm resulting from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), as well as actions needed to provide better protection to civilians and prevent such harm.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, highlighted that “as armed conflict moves from open fields to urban centers it is civilians who are the victims.” Nakamitsu emphasised that when explosive weapons are used in populated areas, destruction is caused to vital infrastructure and people are driven from their homes. Austria further described the impact on civilians when

explosive weapons are used in towns, cities, and other populated areas, stating that “short and long-term humanitarian effects cause far too many direct victims but also make affected areas de facto uninhabitable. The urban context is reinforcing the reverberating effects.” Austria insisted, “We cannot ignore that these effects are among the root causes for people being internally displaced or even having to flee their countries.” Austria urged all states “to avoid, or in any event minimize the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.”

Ireland reiterated similar concerns, and voiced its support for the UN Secretary-General’s recommendation to “develop a political declaration, appropriate limita-



tions, common standards and operational policies in line with international humanitarian law relating to the use of EWIPA.”

Germany expressed the “need to identify red lines and improved practices for the use of explosive weapons in populated areas,” referencing the “EWIPA Talks” workshops it has convened in Geneva on this theme earlier in the year. Germany also noted the attention given to this issue in the UN Secretary-General’s new Disarmament Agenda, issued earlier this year.

Recalling a regional conference for African states and organisations that took place in Mozambique late

last year, Angola reported that expertise on EWIPA was shared at the meeting, and steps at the political and operational level were identified, as well as highlighting the vital role of civil society organisations and African states in preventing the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Angola called for the collection of data and information, highlighting this as crucial for increasing knowledge of the impact on civilians. Angola concluded by stating its support for the process of developing a political declaration on EWIPA, asserting its commitment to promote cooperation to share good practices and expose harm caused by EWIPA. •

DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS

Foeke Postma | PAX

Depleted uranium (DU), a toxic and radioactive heavy metal, continues to be produced by a minority of states for use in armour-piercing incendiary munitions. The metal, which military research has proven to be carcinogenic and genotoxic, can contaminate sites through its fragments and dust after impact, creating long-term pollution risks.

The UN General Assembly has now passed six resolutions on the topic. The European Parliament has also passed numerous resolutions, including a 2008 text calling for a moratorium on its use. This year, the parliament has called for EU member states to work towards “the clarification and development of post-conflict obligations for the clearance and management of contamination from the use of depleted uranium weapons, and the assistance of communities affected by their use” during First Committee.

Despite the widespread recognition of the potential health and environmental risks related to the use of DU weapons, political manoeuvring over semantics has stalled meaningful progress towards such obligations. After First Committee’s sixth resolution in 2016, The Netherlands and Norway argued that the phrase “potential” was not neutral enough, and that instead “possible” was to be preferred. *Possible* would suggest that health and environmental risks may not exist or happen at all, while *potential* means there is the capacity for these risks to develop in the future.

DU’s *potential* health risks are not just acknowledged by civil society groups and experts, but also by organisations such as the World Health Organisation and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Moreover, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Norway’s leading defence research institute, as well as the Dutch Ministry of Defence, all acknowledge and refer

to the *potential* risks of DU. In this light, questioning the word “potential” appears to be an excuse for inaction rather than an effort to come to an agreement on a text that reflects reality.

In a similar vein, in 2016 Sweden and Switzerland suggested that the “potential harmful effects” were not substantiated by conclusive evidence. This, however, is the result of absence of long-term research into the health effects on civilians exposed to DU, something that the resolution has sought to address in each of the six resolutions since 2007.

Finally, Germany justified an abstention on 2016’s resolution on DU by arguing that it featured language selectively quoted from a 2010 UN Environment Programme report “in a misleading way”. The resolution contained a summarised paragraph detailing how measurements of the impact of DU in the Balkans resulted in levels of radioactivity that were acceptable within international standards, but that there were still major scientific uncertainties over the long-term environmental impact, thus warranting a precautionary approach to the use of DU. Ironically, in 2012 when the language first appeared in the text, Germany had proposed its own selective version, and rejected a compromise that would have seen the report’s relevant paragraph quoted in full.

That the standard of debate on the resolution has been declining in recent years is a matter of concern, and examples like these are a distraction from measures to address the health and environmental consequences of DU munitions. The lack of long-term research on the potential environmental and health risks of DU should be an impetus to carry out such studies and address the concerns of affected states and communities, not an excuse to stagnate processes. •

LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

The Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention (or Mine Ban Treaty) is one of the most universally adhered to international instruments. States parties and other members of the mine action community have agreed to an aspirational deadline of 2025 to fully eliminate the weapon and address consequences of past use. During the first week of First Committee, almost 20 delegations spoke about the Treaty and expressed support for its humanitarian aims.

The Nordic Countries said that the Mine Ban Treaty has established norms that extend well beyond its states parties. Ukraine made a rare and noteworthy statement acknowledging the “fundamental character” of the treaty in “minimising the occurrence, risk, and effects of landmines.” South Africa encouraged further universalisation of the treaty.

Norway, which is seeking the presidency of the 2019 Review Conference, said it would use the conference to draw renewed political attention to the need to further strengthen the treaty. Poland also drew attention to the conference which should “be a key milestone in our collective efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.” The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) said the topic of antipersonnel mines requires sustained attention from the international community, while Por-

tugal encouraged all states to support and promote the treaty and its Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019.

Colombia, which is dealing with substantial contamination by improvised mines, provided in-depth information on its mine action programme, emphasising economic development projects for affected communities and other measures of assistance to victims. Thailand highlighted the collaboration between the government, local communities, and civil society when it comes to landmine clearance within the country. Angola, Sudan, and Vietnam also shared information on their demining efforts. Italy noted the importance of gender-sensitive assistance to victims.

The Netherlands mentioned the challenge posed by the increased use of improvised mines in urban areas. As this topic will be covered more extensively during the thematic debate, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines reminds states and partners that any device—manufactured or improvised—that can explode due to the presence, proximity, or contact of a person is an antipersonnel mine and falls under the scope of the Mine Ban Treaty.

There were several calls for sustained cooperation and assistance, which will be fully compiled in an upcoming summary. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) turns ten this year. Adopted in Dublin and signed in Oslo in 2008, the instrument provides a comprehensive framework for eradicating cluster munitions. During the first week of First Committee, delegations were overall very supportive of the Convention or of the aim of eliminating the suffering caused by cluster munitions.

Costa Rica and The Netherlands condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) stated its support for all international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions, and it asserted that any use of these weapons against civilian populations was a “clear violation of international humanitarian law.”

Italy said it attaches great importance to the universalisation of the CCM and to full compliance with its provisions. It noted the potential for further synergies between the CCM, the Mine Ban Treaty, and the

Convention on Conventional Weapons. Italy and the Netherlands were also the only states to mention their financial support to mine action during the general debate.

Lao PDR, which is the country most heavily contaminated with cluster munition remnants, spoke about its national 18th Sustainable Development Goal, that relates to the clearance of unexploded remnants of war. It called on the international community to support its clearance efforts.

Moldova listed the CCM as part of a series of “much needed and effective multilateral legal instruments.” Nicaragua spoke about its work to promote the universalisation of the convention.

The Nordic Countries shared their assessment that the CCM has established norms that extend well beyond its states parties, and Norway in particular mentioned that this norm is making “a substantial difference to human security.” •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Rose Welsch | International Action Network on Small Arms

Though recognising that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a scourge that fuels conflict, terrorism, crime, and other problems, most member states kept their remarks on these weapons relatively brief during the first week of the general debate of First Committee. States largely lauded the successful adoption of the outcome document of the Third Review Conference (RevCon3) on the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (UNPoA) held in June 2018.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Chile, Mexico, Ghana, Estonia, Costa Rica, and Guyana expressed satisfaction that the outcome document of RevCon3 included references to ammunition—an issue that had been contentious in the lead-up to and during the conference. Guyana said it hoped member states can reach consensus on the need to broaden the scope of the UNPoA to address the question of ammunition in a comprehensive manner, and Portugal expressed regret that there was no consensus at RevCon3 on the inclusion of ammunition in the UNPoA scope. Sweden also said that more needs to be done on the topic. Germany noted that its initiative in the framework of UNGA Resolution 72/55 places special emphasis on the improved control of ammunition in preparation for the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) scheduled to begin work in 2019.

Some delegations, including Sweden, Ghana, Portugal, and members of CARICOM were pleased that the RevCon3 outcome document recognised linkages between small arms issues and gender perspectives. Ghana specifically highlighted the new references to gender-based violence and gender equality in the document. Nepal, Guatemala, Ghana, Guyana, Portugal, and Sweden expressed satisfaction at the linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals.

While welcoming the RevCon3 outcome document, some states asserted that more work remains to be done. CELAC and Peru called for movement toward the adoption of a legally-binding instrument on marking, tracing, and brokering of SALW to prevent their diversion. Costa Rica said greater controls over the supply and demand of SALW are needed, as well as policies of greater control over civilian access to SALW. Kenya expressed concern about the lack of consensus in RevCon3 deliberations and called for a follow-up mechanism or informal discussions on contentious issues to avoid the need for voting. Malawi hoped the tradition of consensus will continue. Colombia called for practical and concrete measures to be applied to achieve results on the ground. Although it welcomed the RevCon3 outcome document, Kuwait asserted that it's important to maintain the scope of the UNPoA and to not insist on adding language from other agreements to it or restrict the rights of countries.

States took the opportunity to report on national efforts. The Central African Republic and Sudan are holding gun amnesty and weapon collection programmes, but Sudan noted that climate change and drought have hampered this as groups use SALW in fierce competition over dwindling resources. Kenya has strengthened policies and legislation to address legal loopholes and to improve national stockpile security. CARICOM stated that it's seeking to develop and implement national action plans and implement policies and legislation as part of its efforts to counter the illicit trade in SALW and their ammunition.

Colombia said it hoped member states would continue to maintain consensus on the annual omnibus resolution at the First Committee titled, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" that it presents with South Africa and Japan. •

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Aaron Lainé | Control Arms

The first week First Committee witnessed an overwhelming majority of states raising concerns over the effects of the poorly regulated and illicit trade in conventional weapons. In addition to citing the many negative consequences of illicit arms trafficking, including fueling armed conflict, terrorism, and organised crime, an increasing number of states including Jamaica, Ireland, Italy, Thailand, and Guatemala addressed the gendered impact of conventional weapon proliferation. Some, including Costa Rica, Trinidad and

Tobago, Chile, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), also recognised the role that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) can play in preventing these harms and highlighted the Treaty's object and purpose to reduce human suffering. Argentina underlined the Treaty's role in ensuring responsible production and trade in arms as well as in combating human rights violations.

Forty-two references were made to the ATT during the first week, with numerous states reaffirming their

commitment to it and calling on states not party to accede to and effectively implement the Treaty in a timely manner. Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand described the Treaty as “the most significant gain for international humanitarian law in the context of conventional weaponry during the current decade,” but brought reality into focus by asserting that “in its fourth year of operation, it is clear that the Treaty has some way to go—in terms of implementation as well as universalisation—before we can be confident that it is on track to make real inroads into the devastating impact resulting from illicit or irresponsibly traded arms.”

At least ten states, including Mexico, Japan, and South Africa, stressed the importance of effective ATT implementation. They highlighted its vitality in creating an effective mechanism capable of contributing to international peace and security. The Netherlands asserted that “transparency is key” and called on states parties to submit accurate and timely reports as mandated by the Treaty. Some states cited concrete measures and assistance in advancing ATT implementation. In this context, Guinea referenced a two-day regional seminar on ATT implementation legislation in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region that included parliamentarians active in

issues of defense and security. Mexico explained that “the national, regional, and international workshops organised by the United Nations for the effective implementation of the ATT are key elements to help all Member States to establish controls and safeguards against irresponsible transfers of weapons and to prevent their diversion into the hands of organized crime or terrorist groups.” Ghana, among others, called for financial and material assistance to be extended to developing countries.

Uruguay, Sweden, and Estonia were among the states that reaffirmed their commitment to the Treaty’s universalisation by calling on governments to take concrete steps towards ratification, while Angola and Thailand expressed commitment to ratifying the Treaty in the near future. Australia highlighted the particular importance of universalisation within the Asia-Pacific region, and Japan promised to “tackle the problems stemming from the diversion, unregulated proliferation, excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.”

Some states adopted a more cautious tone, with Viet Nam supporting the ATT while reaffirming the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture and use conventional weapons for states’ national defence. •

CYBER

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

References to cyber security and/or information and communications technologies (ICTs) during the first week of general debate largely emphasised the importance of progressing discussions within the UN on this subject, amid expressions of concern about the growing prevalence of the cyber threat.

The European Union, Australia, Republic of Korea, The Netherlands, Singapore, and Italy expressed specific support for the establishment of a new group of governmental experts (GGE). France reflected on the accomplishments of prior GGEs, yet stated that this normative work must continue by “reopening negotiations on this issue within the UN system and by implementing original forms of global governance so that all stakeholders are involved in the discussions.” Brazil said it supports a “mandate” to carry relevant work forward in this domain through “mechanisms as representative and inclusive as possible, and in a manner that will not prejudice or preclude different positions from being expressed and considered.” The Netherlands also stressed inclusion.

There were also positions put forward regarding the development of new instruments or frameworks.

Paraguay said it will support the adoption of “multilateral instruments that regulate advances in information and telecommunications in the context of international security,” with the caveat that they provide for the reduction of the technological gap between developed countries and developing countries. Pakistan, in listing out issues it would like to see addressed by the Conference on Disarmament (CD), urged bringing “cyber weapons ... under appropriate international regulations and prohibitions.”

Estonia supports further development of a “strategic framework for conflict prevention and stability in cyberspace that is based on international law, in particular the UN Charter, the development and implementation of universal norms of responsible state behaviour and regional confidence-building measures.”

The Nordic Countries, EU, France, Estonia, Kenya, and the Netherlands stressed the need to start implementing the agreements and norms set out by earlier GGEs.

The Nordic Countries, Qatar, Australia, Norway, and Portugal raised the applicability of international law to cyber space—which prevented agreement among



states in the most recent GGE. Portugal stated that for all new and emerging threats, including cyber, states should encourage transparency and adapt applicable international law or develop new regulatory multilateral security frameworks response to the objective of protecting civilian and human rights. The European Union will prioritise a consensus resolution that builds on past GGE reports including about the application of international law in cyber space, and that underlines the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in cyber space. Chile stated that international cooperation is essential to maintain “free, open and secure cyberspace” as based on international regulation that “preserves the rights of individuals and regulates the conduct of States in this dimension”. It’s not clear yet if these nuances in

preference about how to carry forward UN discussions will amount to significant disagreement over the format of a future entity, speak more to its mandate and composition, or do not indicate significant differences.

The EU expressed concern over a Russian cyber operation targeting the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, while Qatar described Syrian attempts to target the governmental information technology systems. The Caribbean Community described the significant growth in regional cyber crime. Its 2016 Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan seeks to resolve vulnerabilities and create harmonised regional practice in this area. France announced the launch of the “Paris Roadmap for Trust and Security in Cyberspace” in November. •

GENDER

Katrin Geyer | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

In the opening week of First Committee, a growing number of delegations drew attention to various connections between gender and disarmament.

Numerous delegations addressed the need for women’s equal representation in all disarmament fora and beyond. The UN Under-Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, reiterated the need for fair and effective institutions, “starting with the full and equal participation of women in all disarmament fora as a priority.” In her opening remarks, the president of this year’s UN General Assembly María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés called upon the international community to strengthen inclusion as a means to promote peace and security, which inevitably requires investing in women’s empowerment. Thailand pointed to the need to engage “women and girls to ensure inclusive perspectives on disarmament and non-proliferation.” In a similar vein, Nepal, Paraguay, Guyana, Jamaica, and others highlighted the important contribution of women in advancing disarmament. Australia reported that it already “champions full participation by both women and men in international security forums.”

Some states highlighted the gendered impact of different types of weapons. The New Agenda Coalition (NAC) referred to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as having been borne, amongst other concerns, from the increased knowledge about the devastating humanitarian consequences including the “strong gendered impact of a nuclear detonation.” Italy said it is committed to “promoting integrated, inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches to victim assistance in the implementation of mine action programmes.”

Mali and Uruguay described the high costs for women and children resulting from the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Chile recognised that SALW “exacerbate sexual and gender-based violence of millions of people.” Chile, Ghana, Finland, Guatemala, Portugal, and others welcomed the outcome document of the Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on SALW for including groundbreaking references to the gendered impact of SALW, gender-based violence, and gender equality in participation, ammunition, and sustainable development.

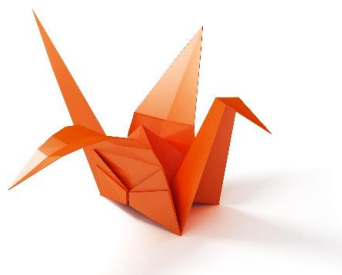
Norway, Estonia, Finland, and Ireland, amongst other states, highlighted the Arms Trade Treaty’s provision on gender-based violence. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was hopeful that this provision could significantly reduce “the suffering of ... countless people around the world, especially women and children, who live daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional arms.” Austria and Finland called for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the implementation of all security related treaties. CARICOM drew attention to the biennial resolution on *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control*.

Guatemala, among others, drew connections between disarmament, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and gender equality. CARICOM highlighted the contribution First Committee can make to realising the 2030 Agenda, and the realisation in particular SDG Target 5.2 to eliminate violence against women and girls. Chile welcomed the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda that also linked his Agenda for Disarmament with the 2030 Agenda, including objectives such as gender equality. •

International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group

Securing our common future:

Promoting gender-responsive disarmament and security



Side Event at UNGA73 First Committee

How can the UN system, Member States and other stakeholders act to improve women's participation in international security, and apply gender considerations in disarmament machinery?

We welcome you to a discussion on these timely questions, at a side event on **Monday 15 October 2018** from **13:15 to 14:30** in **Conference Room 4** at the United Nations in **New York**. *Lunch will be provided from 12:45.

This side event will provide the opportunity to engage on the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, to propose concrete measures to achieve the Agenda's call for the "equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament", and to advance substantive consideration of gender-responsive disarmament.

Keynote speech by Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Chaired by the *Ambassador of Ireland to the United Nations in Geneva*, Michael Gaffey with expert contributions from the *UN Women Chief of Peace and Security*, Päivi Kannisto, the *permanent representatives of Namibia and Trinidad and Tobago*, and selected speakers from *civil society*.

Organised by the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group in Geneva – including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the governments of Ireland and Namibia – and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

For any enquiries, please contact Renata Hessmann Dalaqua | renata.hessmanndalaqua@un.org

DEVELOPMENT

Ariana Smith | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

During the opening week of the First Committee, many states addressed the connection between disarmament and development. Delegations emphasised the humanitarian and socioeconomic benefits of disarmament, including better use of limited resources and environmental protection.

Member states focused on how disarmament can contribute to meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), along with Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Nigeria, Paraguay, and Samoa all discussed the SDGs, in particular SDGs 16 and 5. Goal 16 focuses on creating peaceful societies conducive to promoting sustainable development and recognises that regional armed conflict prevents this. The circulation of illegal weapons threatens the SDGs as a whole, Colombia said. Nepal called for recognition of the link between the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the SDGs. Chile also cited the “scourge” of illicit trade in SALW generally—describing its destructive effects on socio-economic development and human rights as “immeasurable.”

SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality. Multiple delegations recognised that empowering women leads to both successful disarmament and the promotion of sustainable development in their communities. Jamaica supported highlighting the role of women in disarmament and also spoke to the importance of development education and empowering youth to promote disarmament.

Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), called on the “major arms producing countries” to reduce their military spending and instead put those resources toward economic and

social development with particular focus on the fight against poverty. Many delegations, including Thailand, emphasised in their national capacities that they also align with the NAM statement and reiterated the call for immediate diversion of military spending to social development, universal health care, or other initiatives. Cuba, Kenya, Nigeria, Paraguay, Tanzania, and Venezuela also expressed concern about money already spent on and committed to weapon modernisation programs; they pressed member states to redirect excessive military budgeting to the SDGs. Development (and with it, poverty reduction and environmental protection) will be hampered so long as the international community delays disarmament in favour of military expenditures, said Indonesia. Eritrea further called for disarmament both to eliminate threats to security but also, because it “prevents diversion of scarce material ... from developmental efforts.”

Cuba cited increased military spending by nuclear weapon states as a cause for distrust and a challenge to effective multilateral efforts to disarm and develop. Tanzania and The Philippines additionally expressed alarm over the sheer size of several states’ military budgets and reproached those with modernising programs that improvements to tactical nuclear weapons will only make use of nuclear weapons more likely.

Many delegations expressed continued support for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), distinguishing it from other nuclear weapon related instruments because it operates against a backdrop of humanitarian and environmental concerns. Taking these into account, the TPNW recognizes that prohibiting nuclear weapons is a step toward full disarmament and will promote states’ abilities to reach their developmental goals. •

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CONNECTING DISARMAMENT WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR OF THE SDGS

Doug Weir | The Conflict and Environment Observatory

The UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament finds that “there is not yet a general understanding on the many areas where the successful achievement of disarmament objectives would benefit the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs).¹ As armed conflict is widely viewed as sustainable development in reverse, this should be a matter of concern for everyone at First Committee.

Nowhere is this lack of understanding more apparent than in the debate over the linkages between disarmament, the protection of civilians, and the environment—which is one of the three pillars of sustainable development. This is not entirely the fault of states, as the SDGs and their indicators lack the degree of specificity required to fully capture the environmental dimensions of conflicts and military activities.

Nevertheless, the strength of the SDG framework's generality is that it allows for flexible interpretations that can serve as entry points for more meaningful analysis and, hopefully, action. For example the Agenda highlights the impact of contamination from remnants of war, and the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, on SDGs 14 and 15—on life on land and in the sea. However, curiously it stops short of making the connection between the illicit arms flows referenced in SDG 16, arms transfers and the environment. This is in spite of recent research by INTERPOL that has found that the illicit exploitation of natural resources is the single largest overall category of finance to conflicts today, estimated at a 38 per cent share of illicit flows to armed groups in conflict. When combined with their illicit taxation and extortion that figures rises to 64 per cent.²

That the Agenda draws attention to the means through which the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) can cripple infrastructure and cause environmental contamination—as was the case with Islamic State's deliberate attacks on Iraqi oil infrastructure—is welcome. As are the Agenda's references to the environmental consequences of unplanned explosions at munitions sites, and the reverberating impact of explosive weapons. And yet its implementation plan contains no explicit references to the environment, or the pressing need to determine and articulate the

environmental costs of weapons throughout their lifecycles.

You do not have to look particularly closely at any given disarmament issue to begin to ask these questions. Consider cyber attacks on industrial facilities; the use of cheap drones to sabotage environmentally risky targets; the ability of autonomous weapons to judge the environmental consequences of attacks; or the need for reviews into the environmental risks from emerging technologies that go beyond the overly permissive framework of international humanitarian law. Aligning the global disarmament agenda with the SDGs is a worthwhile goal. But it is a goal that will first require far more attention to the environmental dimensions of weapons. States, civil society, and the UN should welcome this challenge, because the insights that it can provide could offer new avenues to address the harm that weapons cause to civilians, to ecosystems, and to sustainable development itself. •

Notes

1. *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, 24 May 2018, https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf.
2. See the "World Atlas of Illicit Flows" published by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2018, <http://globalinitiative.net/world-atlas-of-illicit-flows>.

THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF THE ATOMIC BOMBINGS ON ALLIED POWS AND OCCUPATION FORCES IN JAPAN

Matthew Bolton | International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

This article is the second in a series that First Committee Monitor will run over the coming weeks that summarizes new research by Pace University's International Disarmament Institute on the importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in addressing the humanitarian, human rights and environmental impact of nuclear weapons. On 15 October, the International Disarmament Institute will co-host a lunchtime side-event in Conference Room 9 highlighting research on the particular impact on Pacific states.

The US atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki immediately killed an estimated 214,000 people. However, the effects of ionising radiation have resulted in persistent humanitarian concerns that extend far beyond the vicinity and moment of the explosions themselves, new reports from Pace University's International Disarmament Institute show.

More than 200 Allied prisoners of war (PoWs) held in Nagasaki survived the nuclear attack (152 from the Netherlands, 24 from Australia, 19 from the UK, and an unconfirmed number from the USA).¹ After the Japanese surrender, according to the US Department of Veteran Affairs, 195,000 US troops participated in the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; they, along with American PoWs in the two cities, are recognised as "Atomic Veterans."²

In the months immediately following the atomic bombings, Australian military forces were deployed to Hiroshima and other Japanese locations as an initial occupying force. They paved the way for around 45,000 soldiers from Australia, pre-partition India, Nepal, New Zealand, and the UK who served in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), as well as Australian and British members of the Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma).



A recently-released report on Australia, written by Dimity Hawkins and published by the International Disarmament Institute, describes how from 1946-1952, 16,000 Australians, some with family members, served with BCOF. Veterans of these operations claimed to have health problems consistent with radiation exposure. After a long campaign for recognition, in 2017 the Australian government extended access to "Gold Card" medical services for all Australian veterans of the occupation forces.³

The International Disarmament Institute's new report on Aotearoa New Zealand shows how 12,000 New Zealander members of "Jayforce" served in BCOF. One of Jayforce's initial deployments was at Eta Jima Island, parts of which are within 10 miles of Hiroshima's city limits. In 2007, the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs established a list presumptively-accepted injuries and illnesses to help resolve War Disablement Pension claims from nuclear veterans of Jayforce and nuclear testing.⁴

The TPNW not only bans nuclear weapons, it provides a new normative framework for addressing harms they have caused. It obligates states parties to assist victims, remediate contaminate environments, and engage in international cooperation and assistance to help affected countries.

Of the countries whose people may have participated in the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Aotearoa New Zealand is a state party; Bangladesh and Nepal are signatories. Australia, India, Pakistan, the UK and the US boycotted the treaty negotiations. Our reports recommend strong international advocacy and diplomacy to universalise and implement the treaty. •

Notes

1. Mick Broderick and David Palmer, "Australian, British, Dutch and U.S. POWs," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no. 3, 10 August 2015,.
2. "Are You an Atomic Veteran?" US Department of Veteran Affairs, 2012, <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/radiation/atomic-veteran-brochure.pdf#>; Jennifer LaFleur, "Atomic veterans battle against illnesses and for recognition," *The Oregonian*, 5 August 2016, http://www.oregonlive.com/today/index.ssf/2016/07/atomic_veterans_battle_against.html.
3. Dimity Hawkins, *Monte Bello, Emu Field and Maralinga Test Sites*, 2018, International Disarmament Institute. <https://bit.ly/2NqQhQ4>.
4. *Addressing Humanitarian and Environmental Harm from Nuclear Weapons: Nuclear Veterans and Radioactive Fallout: Aotearoa New Zealand*, International Disarmament Institute, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2OLG7hB>.

MISREPRESENTING THE NUCLEAR BAN TREATY—WHY?

Richard Lennane | Geneva Disarmament Platform

It is no secret that the nuclear-armed states and their allies don't like the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). They have been making their unhappiness plain during the First Committee general debate. There is nothing inherently wrong with arguing that a particular disarmament treaty or approach is misguided or unlikely to succeed: reasonable minds can differ on the best way forward on nuclear disarmament. But the criticism levelled at the TPNW this past week raises some puzzling questions about the opponents of the treaty and their motivations. Let's take a closer look, focusing on the US statement as it handily manifests in one concise package all the phenomena we need to study.

Incomprehension or mendacity?

The most immediately striking feature of criticism of the TPNW is that it so fundamentally mistakes the purpose of the treaty. The US statement is typical in characterizing the TPNW as an attempted "silver bullet"

or "shortcut". Other critics have used the term "magic wand", while a slightly less moronic formulation casts the TPNW as an attempt to "impose disarmament".

But here's the thing: no supporter of the TPNW has ever made such claims for it. Only opponents of the treaty describe it in such terms. The real aims of the TPNW are set out clearly (if a little long-windedly) in its preamble. Its purpose is to outlaw, delegitimise, and stigmatise nuclear weapons on the grounds of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences. The treaty cannot impose disarmament on anybody; no state can be forced to join it. Nuclear-armed states will disarm if and when they calculate it is in their national interest to do so. The TPNW is intended to influence that calculation. That is all it does.

There is no secret plan, no magic spells, no silver bullets. This has been evident from the beginning, to anyone who cares to look. Why then are the critics continuing with this sorry parade of strawmen? Do

they really not understand the purpose of the treaty? Or are they deliberately misrepresenting it? Neither possibility reflects well on them, but more to the point, neither possibility would seem to be in their own national interest. What do they hope to gain?

An addition, not an alternative

Another typical misrepresentation is to present the TPNW as some kind of substitute intended to replace all the other more “realistic” disarmament measures. As the US statement put it, “The choice being presented by TPNW advocates—between doing nothing and pursuing unrealistic hopes for a simpler solution—is a false one. Our CCND initiative offers a practical way forward. Progress toward nuclear disarmament and enhancing all states’ security is hard work, but it is important work and the stakes are too high to avoid it in favor of unrealistic and unproductive shortcuts.” It is often implied that TPNW supporters are pursuing their fantasy treaty at the expense of sensible steps like negotiating a fissile material treaty, bringing the Comprehensive nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force, strengthening Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards, exploring verification options, and—in the latest US offering—“creating the conditions for nuclear disarmament” (CCND).

But this is the real “false choice”. The TPNW is not intended as a substitute for these worthy measures, but as an addition—to help move them forward, out of their current rather moribund state. All these steps are supported by TPNW signatories, and have been for decades. It is not the TPNW supporters who are obstructing fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations, refusing to ratify the CTBT, violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, or holding up implementation of the disarmament part of the 2010 NPT Action Plan. Neither are TPNW supporters using chemical weapons, modernising their nuclear arsenals, or annexing parts of neighbouring countries.

There is no reason that TPNW signatories will not continue to support and participate in the various steps

of the “progressive approach”, and conversely, there is no reason that champions of the “progressive approach” could not also sign—or at least offer support in principle to—the TPNW. There is simply no need to choose.

What’s the point?

Which leads us to the question, what are opponents of the TPNW actually trying to achieve? Resisting and obstructing the entry into force of the TPNW will not help them to advance the “progressive approach” or “create the conditions for nuclear disarmament”. If anything, the effect of such obstruction will be to antagonise TPNW supporters and make them less sympathetic to the concerns of the nuclear-armed states, and less inclined to cooperate in the NPT, Conference on Disarmament, and other settings.

In contrast, if TPNW opponents just shrugged their shoulders, filed the treaty under “well-meaning ideas unlikely to succeed”, and got on with pursuing the disarmament measures that they consider more likely to bear fruit, everything would work better—including the NPT. Much of the unhelpful division and friction could be removed at a stroke, for example, if the P5 nuclear-weapon states just said something like:

We will not be in a position to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the near term. But in line with our unequivocal undertaking under the NPT to achieve the total elimination of our nuclear arsenals, and our commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, we welcome all efforts to implement the NPT and strengthen the international norm against proliferation of nuclear weapons. We look forward to working with the parties to this new treaty on practical steps to help achieve our common goal.

Whether or not it proves effective as a disarmament measure, the TPNW is a reality. Resistance really is useless—not because resistance is doomed to fail, but because it simply doesn’t help anybody, including the nuclear-armed states. •



WOMEN, DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION, AND ARMS CONTROL: AN INTERVIEW

Kaja Grabinksa | IANSA and Nonviolence International-NY

Every two years, the Mission of Trinidad and Tobago tables a First Committee resolution on Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. This interview is with Charlene Roopnarine, First Secretary at the Mission.

How did the resolution on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control (General Assembly resolution 65/69) come about and why is it significant?

The resolution was the initiative of the first female Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) in 2010 during her maiden address at the UN General Assembly. As the country with lead responsibility for matters relating to Crime and Security in the Quasi-Cabinet of the Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and in recognition of the challenges faced in the CARICOM region in countering the scourge of gun violence, she called for the international community to focus more on the vulnerability of women in situations of armed violence and armed conflict. The resolution was also born in recognition of the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Significantly, the resolution connects three fundamental issues of national, regional, and international importance: the equal rights of women and men; the contribution of women at local, national, and sub-regional levels in the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict; and the attainment of sustainable peace and security. We are proud to contribute to the international lexicon on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.

Why is the issue of women, disarmament, and non-proliferation important to T&T and CARICOM?

As a region, CARICOM has become a significant casualty in the diversion of small arms and light weapons (SALW), which has led to an increase in armed violence. Deaths and injuries that occur in non-conflict settings are the greatest burden of armed violence.

Many result from gang and gun-related violence. CARICOM and T&T are not manufacturers nor large scale importers of SALW, yet continue to suffer the debilitating effects of this illegal trade. It places a tremendous burden on women—economically, socially, and psychologically. This problem, however, involves the entire international community. A systematic approach is required to appropriately address the challenges of SALW proliferation.

Further, T&T is a strong advocate of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and as a Small Island Developing State, is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are pleased that language on these important issues has found its place in the last iteration of the resolution.

What led you to become involved in advocacy for women in disarmament?

For T&T, like many countries of the region, the devastating effects of the misuse of SALW on homes, families, the economy, and the social fabric of society is not an obscure condition, but a sad daily reality. The illegal use of SALW has contributed significantly to violence and instability, which imperils citizen security.

My country has expended significant resources to help alleviate this scourge. However, like many others, I believe the problem cannot be addressed without the full and effective involvement of women from the grassroots local levels to policy-making and implementation levels. I am proud that my introduction to this field was made possible because of the initiative undertaken by a former female Prime Minister.

Whether it be in the attainment of a nuclear weapon free world or the non-proliferation of illicit SALW, there is a place for women to serve in various capacities. It is often said that we cannot create agreements for the entire international community and not consider half of the world's population. Truer words have not been spoken. •

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, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
Cluster Munition Coalition
Control Arms
Geneva Disarmament Platform
International Action Network on Small Arms
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
International Disarmament Institute, Pace University
International Network on Explosive Weapons
King's College London
Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy
Nonviolence International-NY
PAX
Project Ploughshares
The Conflict and Environment Observatory
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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