

THE FIRST COMMITTEE

MONITOR

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General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security



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Contributing groups to **The First Committee Monitor** include:
Amnesty International; Educators for Social Responsibility; Friends of the Earth, Australia; Global Action to Prevent War; International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms; International Action Network on Small Arms; Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy; Middle Powers Initiative; NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security; Peaceboat; Quaker United Nations Office; and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.



The Monitor is a weekly report produced by the NGO Working Group on the First Committee, a collaborative effort undertaken by non-governmental organizations to make the work of the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security more transparent. *The Monitor* is compiled, edited and coordinated by Reaching Critical Will, a disarmament project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

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- Providing a link between the First Committee and NGOs who are not in New York.



Introduction

The 2006 First Committee made several major substantive contributions to disarmament and non-proliferation. Most significantly, it voted to begin a process moving “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty” (L.55) that would regulate trade in all conventional weapons—from tanks to guns—for the first time. (See ATT report) It also voted to continue the small arms and light weapons (SALW) follow-up process, which the 2006 Review Conference on the illicit trade in SALW was unable to do. (See SALW report) The First Committee also voted to provide support to the upcoming nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review cycle, starting with a 2007 Preparatory Committee meeting in Vienna from April 30-May 11. The First Committee vote on the traditionally consensual Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone resolution gave the first comprehensive picture of where the world stands since the controversial treaty was signed on September 8 of this year. The First Committee also condemned the North Korean nuclear test, in three different adopted resolutions, and in statements from across the regional groupings.

Behind the scenes, governments consulted to prepare for the 2007 Conference on Disarmament (CD) session. The annual report from the world’s sole multilateral treaty negotiating body was adopted by the First Committee without a vote, so the most interesting and significant exchanges on the future of the CD happened during the thematic debate on disarmament machinery. (See disarmament machinery report)

The First Committee also made progress in process. Process continues to be vital to disarmament and non-proliferation, as it significantly affects substantive outcomes. There was a more cooperative and optimistic spirit in the room this year, which, according to the UN Institute for Disarmament Research, helps negotiations. Governments also participated more in the general and thematic debates, as well as the interactive informal sessions. States that are often quiet during the First Committee spoke, and states were generally more willing to engage in extemporaneous debate. A range of experts gave valuable presenta-

tions to the First Committee, including the Chair of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, Dr. Hans Blix, and the Chair of a committee created by the First Committee. Non-governmental organizations also addressed the Committee on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the Arms Trade Treaty. (See Introduction, Week 3) Overall, thanks to the able and efficient Chair, Ambassador Mona Juul, and the Committee’s cooperation, procedures went remarkably smoothly, enabling substantive work instead of impeding it, as it should be.

Unfortunately, there were several negative signals as well, both in the Committee and in the backdrop of its meetings. North Korea shocked the world when it conducted a nuclear test on October 9, and possibly changed the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Negotiations over Iran’s nuclear programme broke down, and the Security Council began considering sanctions. The United States released its new space policy on October 13, continued its sole opposition vote to the annual “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” resolution, and moved to more unilateral positions on other First Committee issues.

However, as Dr. Blix remarked, the challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, though significant, are the exception. The overwhelming majority of states agree on where to go and on the first steps to get there. (See nuclear disarmament report) As the international community prepares for the 2007 CD session and NPT Preparatory Committee, it should keep this vast agreement, the cooperative spirit of the First Committee, and the success of the conventional and SALW processes in mind. Progress is far from impossible. Good faith is not created by a few, let alone a single state; it is the responsibility of the entire international community. We must continue inching forward, reinforcing existing norms on disarmament and non-proliferation, and negotiating new ones. We are the ones we have been waiting for—it is time to just do it.

-Jennifer Nordstrom, Reaching Critical Will



Nuclear Disarmament

The best light in which to see the debate over nuclear disarmament in this year's First Committee debate and voting pattern is that there still exists across a broad range of nations a general sense of what an agenda leading to nuclear disarmament should look like. That light dims considerably when that same voting pattern shows that an extremely small number of countries – most notably the United States – have such hardened positions on certain key issues that true consensus is currently impossible.

The three comprehensive nuclear disarmament resolutions this report has been following most closely all session - the Japanese draft on "Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" (A/C.1/61/L.32), the draft by the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden), and the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) text – all have at their hearts the same agenda: concrete disarmament and non-proliferation steps that in and of themselves reduce the risks posed by nuclear weapons and cumulatively lead to the elimination of those weapons as envisioned in Article VI of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Problems arise because so many of the most important steps have less than a handful of dedicated opponents: mention the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and you lose the US; mention the NPT and you lose India, Pakistan and Israel; use "verification" in conjunction with a Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and you lose the US. Then there are the ways to lose huge blocks of countries: do not mention "verification" in conjunction with the FMCT and lose the support of countries championing the ten-year old Shannon mandate; challenge hair-trigger alert and other aspects of US nuclear doctrine (and by extension, NATO nuclear doctrine) and lose the support of NATO and aligned countries. This last issue is behind many of the objections to the Indian draft on de-alerting "Reducing nuclear dangers" (L.49), "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" (L.51), "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against

the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" (L.45), and the NAM draft on "Nuclear Disarmament."

The US has placed itself in the tiniest of minorities on most disarmament resolutions. (See PAROS, NSA and SALW reports) The focus here is on the US minority votes on the Japanese and New Agenda drafts. The Japanese-sponsored "Renewed Determination" resolution (L.32) was adopted with 169 in favor to 3 opposed (the US, North Korea, and India), with 8 abstentions. The US said, "Of all the resolutions introduced on nuclear disarmament [this is] the most balanced and realistic," noting the draft's recognition of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, its call for negotiations on the FMCT and the condemnation of the North Korean nuclear test. The US nonetheless voted against it because of the endorsement of the CTBT.

In 2005, only the US and India voted no. Besides North Korea joining the minority, Iran also shifted from a positive vote to an abstention. The Iranian delegate said this was because the text was "not appropriately balanced," noting that the resolution only focuses on the FMCT as an item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, Iran noted, the reference to the FMCT is "not consistent with the previous agreements" on the verifiability of a treaty. The other six abstainers were Bhutan, China, Cuba, Egypt, Israel, and Myanmar. Egypt criticized the text for not fully reflecting the consensus commitment made in the 13 Practical Steps at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

The New Agenda Coalition resolution (A/C.1/61/L.13/Rev.2), "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments," was adopted with 148 in favor to 7 opposed, with 12 abstentions. This shows a slight improvement with countries shifting from abstentions to voting yes. The UK, US, France, India and Israel voted no in 2005; they were joined by North Korea and Pakistan this year. Speaking on behalf of the UK, US and France, the UK representative said the draft "takes account neither of the concrete progress nor

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Arms Trade Treaty

In a promising step forward, the First Committee adopted the resolution, “Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms” (A/C.1/61/L. 55) on Thursday, October 26. The number of co-sponsors of the text rose to an impressive 116 member states when Gambia, Azerbaijan, and San Marino were added just prior to the vote.

Formally introducing the resolution on Wednesday, October 18, the UK Ambassador John Duncan, speaking on behalf of the co-authors (Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, and Kenya) said, “we believe that [efforts to establish an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)] must be a discussion that involves both consumers and producers and that the UN is the most suitable forum for the discussion.”

The voting results on the resolution as a whole were: 139 governments in favor, 1 opposed, and 24 abstentions. Particularly strong support was demonstrated from across Africa, Europe, and Latin America. Among the supporters are a few major and emerging exporters of weapons, including France, Germany, Serbia, and Bulgaria, and countries that have been devastated by armed violence such as Colombia, Haiti, Indonesia, Liberia, and Rwanda.

The Control Arms Campaign, which lobbied states in support of the resolution and organized two campaign actions during the First Committee, said right after the vote: “This massive vote to develop a global Arms Trade Treaty is an historic opportunity for governments to tackle the scourge of irresponsible arms transfers. Any credible Treaty must outlaw those transfers, which fuel the systematic murder, rape, torture and expulsion of thousands of people.”

While there was notable support from a few states in the Middle East and North Africa including Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, and Tunisia, most of the abstainers came from these two regions. Several major arms exporting states such as China, Russia, and India also abstained from the resolution. The United States was the lone vote against the resolution.

On behalf of the EU, Finland highlighted the support for the effort earlier in the month when it said, “everyday, everywhere, people are affected by the side effects of irresponsible arms transfers. As there is currently no comprehensive internationally binding instrument available to provide an agreed regulator framework for this activity, the EU welcomes the growing support, in all parts of the world, for an ATT.”

During two open lunchtime meetings on the resolution, most of the concerns focused on procedural issues. For example, several major arms exporting states and one Middle Eastern state said the creation of a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) was prescriptive in nature and the next steps should come after a UN Secretary-General’s report that collects the views of governments, as is the traditional practice. The Control Arms Campaign said debate on the resolution was particularly strong among the Arab League. Initially, some of their expressed concerns were about the inclusion of the word “transparency” in earlier draft versions of the resolution. These concerns were allayed in later drafts of the resolution. Libya, on behalf of many Middle Eastern and North African states, also said that any effort on an ATT must be “non-selective” and “comprehensive”.

Responding to procedural concerns that were not resolved before the final draft of the resolution, the UK said the aim of the initiative is to start a discussion on the feasibility and draft parameters of an ATT and that those “agnostic” states will have a clear opportunity to engage in the process. After the vote, Algeria indicated that the effort must receive broad-based support from states and be based on the principles of the UN Charter.

Before the resolution is formally adopted, it must be approved by the UN General Assembly. The final vote is expected in late November or early December, and it is likely that the resolution will pick up more supporters as several of the resolution’s co-sponsors were absent during the vote in the First Committee.

- Colby Goodman, Amnesty International
(www.amnesty.org)



Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone

Action was delayed on “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia” (A/C.1/61/L.54/Rev.1) until Monday, October 30, while the co-sponsors sought increased support for the resolution.

In 2002, a resolution supporting the establishment of a Central Asian nuclear weapon free zone (CANWFZ) was adopted without a vote. Negotiations between the Central Asian countries produced a draft treaty in 2003 but the treaty was not signed until September 2006 due to opposition by the United States, France and the United Kingdom to certain provisions. The vote on the resolution this year, of 128 in favor, 3 opposed (France, UK, US), and 36 abstentions, reflected the fact that the Central Asian countries decided to move ahead despite concerns from the three NWS.

The UK, speaking also for France and the US, expressed concern over Article 12 of the treaty, which accords the Central Asian states the right to fulfill their obligations “under other international treaties which they may have concluded prior to the date of the entry into force of this Treaty.”

The UK, France, and the US argue that previous security agreements between the Central Asian states and Russia, which might possibly allow for deployment of Russian missiles in the region, were given precedence over the treaty. The US also expressed concern that the treaty could ban transit of their own nuclear-powered or nuclear-capable ships and aircraft through the region.

In its explanation of vote, the UK argued they have never been given a satisfactory rationale for the existence of Article 12, and by signing the treaty the five Central Asian states have frozen the text as it is. Therefore, the UK, France, and US cannot adhere to any protocol based on the treaty, though they stand ready to consult with the Central Asian states on the matter.

Other states that abstained from L.54/Rev.1 expressed related concerns. The Netherlands, speaking also for Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Turkey, explained they have consistently expressed support for

a CANWFZ, and welcome it in principle. However, they believe there are too many outstanding issues yet to be resolved before the treaty can successfully come into effect. Similarly, Canada explained that ambiguity in the treaty over preexisting security arrangements, suggested in Article 12 prompted its abstention. Spain also indicated that further consultations with nuclear weapon states (NWS) were needed.

Most of the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, South Asia, and Asia-Pacific voted in favor of L.54/Rev1. Japan, speaking also for Austria, Ireland, Lichtenstein, Malta, Sweden, and Switzerland, welcomed the forward-looking approach of operative paragraph five, which is “an important element in the culture of the treaty”. Chile argued that not supporting the Central Asian NWFZ would mean not recognizing the rights of states to live in compliance with their international commitments, which is a sovereign right of all independent states. Venezuela emphasized the need for all NWS to provide NWFZs with unconditional negative security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Brazil, Cuba, India, and Egypt hope to see a strengthening of the treaty through further consultations.

China and the Russian Federation, both NWS, voted for L.54/Rev1. China explained it respects efforts to establish NWFZs, and enjoys friendly relations with the CANWFZ. Russia sees the CANWFZ as an important step towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime, and believes any problems can be fully resolved during consultations. Russia also called upon all other states to help with the treaty’s practical implementation.

Both versions of L.54 note in operative paragraph five “the readiness of the Central Asian countries to continue consultations with the nuclear-weapon States on a number of provisions of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia.” In addition, Kazakhstan said it was willing to sit down with the NWS in the Conference on Disarmament in order to work toward their support.

-Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will
(www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



Small Arms and Light Weapons

Many states saw the First Committee as an opportunity to revive the UN Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) process after the failure to agree a substantive outcome document at the July 2006 United Nations Small Arms Review Conference (RevCon). Brazil said, “[t]he General Assembly should adopt a decision in order to ensure a proper framework for the continuous assessment of the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA), as well as measures to strengthen it.”

In a statement to the committee, the RevCon President, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, blamed its failure on various factors, including states’ lack of confidence in the UN’s ability to address disarmament issues; the unresolved issues of transfers to non-state actors and civilian possession of small arms; and an unreasonable interpretation of the consensus rule. At the First Committee, five of the six SALW resolutions required a vote, but all were overwhelmingly supported, with the United States as the lone opposition vote on any small arms resolution.

The annual “omnibus” resolution (A/C.1/61/L.15/Rev.1) on small arms was adopted with 172 votes in favor, 1 opposed (the US), and no abstentions. This resolution confirms a 2008 date for the next meeting of the UN small arms process, as stipulated in the PoA. The overwhelming support for this resolution completely justified the cosponsors’ decision to break consensus.

“Towards an Arms Trade Treaty” (A/C.1/61/L.55), one of the most high-profile and ultimately successful resolutions of the First Committee, was adopted with 139 votes in favor, 1 opposed (the US), and 24 abstentions. Although small arms are only one category of the conventional arms regulated by a future Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), their misuse is causing more devastation than any other weapons. This was recognized by Jamaica, which focused on small arms in its speech prior to the vote on the resolution.

“Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus” (A/C.1/61/L.26), which calls for a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in 2008 to “consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of conven-

tional ammunition stockpiles,” was adopted with 164 votes in favor, 1 opposed (the US), and 1 abstention (Japan). A separate vote on OP7, which calls for the establishment of the GGE, was similarly successful with 163 votes in favor, 2 opposed (the US and Japan), and no abstentions. After the vote, Japan explained that they could not vote in favor as they were skeptical of the utility of the GGE at this time, and questioned the judgment of expanding the UN budget to accommodate it. However, many states support the development of a separate process on ammunition control, especially since ammunition has had an uncertain place within the existing SALW process. While it was included in the PoA, it was removed from the scope of the 2005 Tracing Instrument.

The “Transparency in Armaments” (A/C.1/61/L.38) resolution, adopted with 141 votes in favor, none opposed, and 23 abstentions, invites states to provide information on international transfers of SALW when they report to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, as recommended by the 2006 GGE. This is an important step in promoting transparency, since existing international customs information does not provide reliable information on the quantities of small arms transferred, only the value.

Emphasizing the need for UN peacekeeping operations to engage in disarmament activities, the “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures” (A/C.1/61/L.37) resolution was adopted with 158 votes in favor, no abstentions, and 1 opposed (the US). This resolution also encourages states, including those donors comprising the Group of Interested States, to support international, regional, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in their post-conflict disarmament efforts. Additionally, the “Assistance to States” (A/C.1/61/L.25) resolution, was adopted without a vote for the ninth year in a row. This resolution encourages cooperation between civil society and states, in particular on National Commissions on SALW, and calls upon the international community to provide financial and technical support to both states and civil society in their efforts to curb the illicit trade in SALW.

Both of these resolutions recognize the valuable con-

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North Korea

The October 9 nuclear test of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a major challenge to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The test is the first since the Indian and Pakistani tests in 1998, breaking the global moratorium on nuclear testing. More importantly, it is the first time a non-nuclear weapon state party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has left the treaty and conducted a nuclear explosion. On October 9, the DPRK referred to the disarmament conventions as "good-for-nothing dead documents without any binding force, the main factor for plunging the world into a nuclear arms race."

The DPRK blamed the perceived US threat to its sovereignty for its nuclear test. Ambassador Kim Kwang Il said, "The US extreme threat of a nuclear war and sanctions and pressure compel the DPRK to conduct a nuclear test, an essential process of bolstering nuclear deterrent, as a corresponding measure for defense." The Six-Party Talks, initially intended to resolve the nuclear standoff on the Korean peninsula, broke down in 2005 after the US imposed financial sanctions against the DPRK for alleged involvement in money laundering and counterfeiting.

Across the political spectrum, the First Committee urged a return to diplomacy, and called for the DPRK to comply with its disarmament obligations. Many delegations renewed calls for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be brought into force. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), of which DPRK is a member, urged restraint and a resumption of the Six-Party Talks. Japan argued that the test "is not only in violation of Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration and the Joint Statement by the Six Party Talks, but also disregarding the spirit of UN Security Council [SC] resolution 1695 and the Presidential Statement of the Security Council dated October 7th this year." The European Union also affirmed that the test violated SC 1695 and the December 1991 North-South De-nuclearization Declaration. The DPRK acknowledged its commitments to the Joint Statement, but it did not mention SC 1695, the 1991 Declaration, or the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration.

The SC unanimously approved resolution 1718 on

Saturday, 14 October, imposing weapons and financial sanctions. The resolution forbids the export or import of material that could be used for nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction. It restricted funds and travel of anyone judged by a newly constituted SC committee to be related to the DPRK weapons or missile programs. The resolution also reinforces the importance of the NPT by underlining "the need for all States Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to continue to comply with their Treaty obligations." It did not authorize use of force.

Three resolutions before the First Committee specifically condemned the DPRK nuclear test. 169 countries voted in favor of Japanese-sponsored "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/61/L.32). Only the DPRK, the US, and India voted against. The resolution on the CTBT (A/C.1/61/L.48) was adopted with 175 in favor, two opposed (US and DPRK) and 4 abstentions. The New Agenda Coalition resolution, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments" (A/C.1/61/L.13/Rev.2), condemns all nuclear testing and "urges the [DPRK] to rescind its announced withdrawal from the Treaty." The UK, US, DPRK, France, India, Israel, and Pakistan voted against L.13/Rev.2.

On Tuesday, 31 October 2006, China announced that Six-Party Talks would resume, perhaps as early as November. According to the New York Times, the talks, which still aim to de-nuclearize the peninsula, would focus on the September 2005 accord. The DPRK's Foreign Ministry stressed that it is returning to the talks "on the premise that the issue of lifting financial sanctions will be discussed and settled between the (North Korea) and the U.S. within the framework of the six-party talks," as reported in Bloomberg news. Substantive issues remain to be surmounted in the Six-Party Talks. However, the widespread calls for diplomacy and the condemnation of the nuclear test prove that the international community believes a robust disarmament regime is possible.

-Neal Sandin, Middle Powers Initiative
(www.middlepowers.org)



Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

During this session of the First Committee, an overwhelming majority of states voiced support for the early entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to prevent nuclear testing. Originally opened for signature in 1996, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the CTBT. Many states agreed it is time for the ten remaining Annex II states to ratify the treaty. The 44 states identified in Annex II of the CTBT have significant nuclear programmes, so their ratifications are necessary for the treaty to enter-into-force. China, Colombia, North Korea (DPRK), Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and the United States have not yet ratified the treaty.

Entry-into-force became a major issue in the First Committee this year when North Korea proclaimed it successfully conducted a nuclear test. The incident was met with multilateral condemnation from the Republic of Korea, the US, the Russian Federation, the EU, Japan, India, Pakistan, Israel, Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Brazil.

Canada asserted, the “announcement by the DPRK underlines the necessity of a universal, legally-binding and permanent international ban on all nuclear test explosions.” The delegation added that the moratorium on nuclear testing is good, but “[t]here are no substitutes for a legally binding compact.”

In an effort to expedite the entry-into-force of the CTBT, Australia introduced “Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty” (A/C.1/61/L.48/Rev.1), co-sponsored by 44 other states. The vast majority of states voted in support of the resolution, and the First Committee adopted it with 175 in favor, two opposed (North Korea and the US) and four abstentions (Colombia, India, Mauritius, Syrian Arab Republic).

Regarding its opposition, the US explained, “[w]e cannot support a resolution supporting the CTBT.” The US also voted against “Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” (A/C.1/61/L.32) due to its support of the CTBT. “Nevertheless,” the US delegate declared, “I would like to note our support for the position expressed in Operative Paragraph 5 (A/C.1/61/L.48/Rev.1), which

condemns the DPRK’s nuclear test and demands that the DPRK do [sic] not conduct further tests.”

Although strongly opposed to a nuclear test in North Korea, the US failed to mention its own sub-critical nuclear weapons testing at its Nevada Test Site, the last one of which was in August 2006. According to the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, these tests are necessary “to assure the safety and reliability” of the US’s nuclear weapons (p.55). Due to the policies in the Nuclear Posture Review, Iran accused the US of causing a “serious setback” to the entry-into-force of the CTBT. However, Iran is also an Annex II state that has not yet ratified the Treaty.

Despite the actions of the US and the test by North Korea, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) noted the “significant progress” the CTBT has made over the last year by attaining 10 new signatories. The CTBT also gained an important ratification from Viet Nam, the most recent Annex II state to complete this process. Three other Annex II states, Indonesia, Colombia and Venezuela, also made statements in the First Committee supporting the CTBT, despite prolonged delays in their ratification.

The CTBT verification regime has also had significant accomplishments. The International Monitoring System (IMS) is nearly complete and successfully detected the test in North Korea. Currently comprised of 189 of its intended 321 stations, the IMS is designed to detect signs of a nuclear blast from any corner of the earth; it also has useful civil applications, such as the early detection of tsunamis and volcanic eruptions.

Many consider the CTBT to be a vital step in the effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons. In his presentation to the First Committee on October 16, Dr. Hans Blix stressed, “[n]o measure could be more urgent, important in substance and as a signal that arms control and disarmament are again on the world agenda than the signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty by states which have not yet done so.”

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Disarmament Machinery

Even though most states expressed disappointment in the failures of the disarmament machinery, the First Committee still had a sense of hope for the future. States had concrete suggestions to implement their hopes for: the Conference on Disarmament (CD); the Disarmament Commission (DC); the First Committee; and revitalizing the disarmament machinery overall.

In debates on disarmament machinery, states disagreed whether the current impasse was a result of the machinery or lack of political will from member states. Dr. Patricia Lewis, Director of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was of the opinion that the disarmament community needs an “all-weather machine” that would allow work to continue even in times of disagreement. Pakistan believed the disarmament machinery was adequate and had huge potential for producing optimum results, while Canada pointed out that “[s]ometimes it is the machinery that is not responding properly, and in these cases, a proper tune-up can help get it going again.”

Conference on Disarmament (CD)

Despite having no programme of work, substantive progress was made in the 2006 CD session. Coordination among the six rotating presidents (known as the P6 initiative) resulted in structured, focused debates on all agenda items. The six presidents submitted a non-paper called “The P6 vision non-paper,” to serve as food for thought. This non-paper contains a snapshot of where the CD stands on a programme of work, and elaborates suggestions for moving forward. Both Switzerland and South Africa, two of the presidents of next year’s session, supported coordination among the 2007 presidents. South Africa, who will serve as the first president of 2007, held consultations with states during the First Committee to determine how to break the impasse on a programme of work in the CD.

South Africa also stated that the CD might not need a programme of work, but rather “a programme that

works.” Ambassador Zdzislaw Rapacki from Poland, the first 2006 President, suggested that the 2007 CD should establish subsidiary bodies to negotiate issues that are ripe, along with a “schedule of activities” for substantive discussions on all other issues on the CD agenda.

The six presidents of 2006 together tabled the draft resolution on the annual CD report (A/C.1/61/L.29). The resolution takes note of the increased deliberation of the Conference, the structured debates, the cooperation among all six Presidents of the Conference, and welcomes the decision of the Conference to request its current President and the incoming President to conduct consultations during the inter-sessional period. The resolution was adopted without a vote on October 25.

Disarmament Commission (DC)

The 2006 DC agreed on an agenda, which it had not been able to do since 2003, and created working groups on nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures in conventional weapons. However, the working groups were unable to agree on a working paper or any recommendations. In the plenary meetings, the DC discussed improving the effectiveness of its work, and agreed on recommendations, including electing the chair and bureau at least three months before the session begins. The Chair of the 2006 session, South Korean Ambassador Oh, said that this progress was modest, but with such an abundance of failure, even modest progress was welcome.

South Korea submitted the draft resolution “Report of the Disarmament Commission” (A/C.1/61/L.11), which decides to adopt the measures to improve the effectiveness of the Commission’s methods of work, reaffirms the importance of enhancing dialogue with the First Committee and the CD, and requests the DC to meet again to consider the same agenda from April 9-27, 2007.

The resolution was adopted without a vote on October 25. However, the United States (US) decided to

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Fissile Materials

It is now more than ten years after the UN General Assembly agreed by consensus on a negotiating mandate (GA/48/75L) for a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for use in weapons. Recent developments had led to renewed optimism on the part of many states who believe the time is ripe the commencement of such negotiations in the deadlocked Conference on Disarmament (CD). Yet, the outcome of the current session of the First Committee revealed that several long-standing disagreements still exist, and that the CD will face serious challenges if it is to finally take up this task.

In May, the United States introduced a draft Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and negotiating mandate to the CD. Consistent with the U.S. position first expressed in 2005, that “so-called ‘effective verification’ of an FMCT cannot be achieved,” the US draft text contains no verification provisions, and the mandate makes no reference to verification. In the First Committee’s thematic debate, except for the US, all states that spoke on the issue of an FMCT supported a verified treaty. There was disagreement on whether the US mandate provides a suitable basis for negotiation. Western states, notably Canada, the EU, and Australia, expressed their belief that the proposed mandate does not preclude verification from coming up in the context of negotiations. Many non-aligned states insist upon a verified treaty, in addition to an FMCT that addresses the issue of existing stocks.

At a non-governmental organization event sponsored by the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP) and the International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), Princeton physicist Frank von Hippel expressed skepticism about the US position on verification. In his presentation, Professor von Hippel described how such a treaty could be verified, regardless of the scope of the final treaty and whether it covers existing stocks. In response to government acclaim and interest in the project, Professor von Hippel said his group would undertake to develop a draft verification protocol by early 2007. A full discussion on the verification mea-

asures envisaged by the IPFM can be found in its 2006 Fissile Material Report, available at <http://www.fissilematerials.org/>.

The US negotiating mandate also breaks with the popular Five Ambassadors’ Proposal (A5) for a programme of work in the CD by dealing only with the topic of the FMCT. Many Western and developed states, including the EU, Canada, Japan, and the Republic of Korea believe that the FMCT is the only CD agenda item ripe for negotiation, and thus expressed support for proceeding on the basis of the U.S. draft mandate. Again, many non-aligned states, notably Pakistan, disagreed on this point and continue to insist that the CD should commence on the programme of work proposed by the A5, noting that progress on all four agenda items could happen at different paces.

Firmly believing that “[t]he time to act [on the FMCT] is now,” Canada tabled draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.23 entitled, “Prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”. The simple resolution urged the CD “to commence immediately negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.” Notably, the resolution did not reflect the 1995 Shannon mandate, which is “to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty” on the understanding delegates would not be precluded from raising issues relating to existing stocks. Canada’s resolution contained no reference to the negotiation of a verified FMCT, nor reference to existing stockpiles, consistent with the US draft mandate.

Citing the lack of consensus over the self-described “minimalist approach” taken by the draft text, Canada ultimately withdrew its resolution in the belief that a resolution passed without consensus would not send the right message to the CD. Citing the progress made in CD this year, Canada vigorously defended its resolution, believing that it would have been appropriate for the First Committee to make a contribution as well. While the fate of this resolution has no direct

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Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

For outer space issues, the First Committee's 61st session was essentially an echo of the 60th. While there was overwhelming consensus on the need to preserve outer space for peaceful and cooperative uses, there were also major polarized divergences on the method and scope of this preservation.

The majority of states recognize that the key threat to preserving outer space is the likelihood of its weaponization and a subsequent arms race. These states perceive the prospect of weapons in space as destabilizing for disarmament, non-proliferation, and international security, and agree that prevention is less costly than remedy.

As they did last year, several states called for further substantive debate and negotiations on a comprehensive, legally-binding PAROS treaty in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and for the reestablishment of a PAROS Ad Hoc Committee. Many states also called for space-capable states to guarantee transparency in their outer space activities and to engage in confidence-building measures. Others called for the strengthening and universalization of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, and for enhanced dialogue between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the CD.

Both space-related draft resolutions were adopted with an overwhelming majority. "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/61/L.10/Rev.1) and "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (A/C.1/61/L.36) were opposed only by the United States (US), while Israel abstained from both.

Once again, the US refused to acknowledge the prospect of an arms race in outer space. The US National Space Policy provides the backdrop for their First Committee position. The Policy, released in October this year, opposes "the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit US access to or use of space," and declares the US' intentions to "dissuade or deter others from impeding [its right to operate in space] . . . and deny,

if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to US national interests."

Research from space security experts, and documents such as Space Security 2006 from Spacesecurity.org and Weapons of Terror from the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Commission, were presented in various parallel events this session. The research indicates the key problem that will arise from ignoring the need for new legal regimes and approaches to preventing the weaponization of outer space. The WMD Commission argues that while "there are already a number of international treaties and instruments regulating space activities . . . they do not cover the challenges posed by space-based weapons or ballistic missile defence. In particular, although some agreements prohibit or restrict the deployment of weapons or use of force in outer space, the provisions are limited in scope and coverage. Moreover, none of the existing legal instruments unequivocally prevents the testing, deployment and use of weapons – other than nuclear, chemical and biological weapons – in outer space."

Research also suggests that space security is threatened not only by the development and deployment of dedicated space based weapons, but by the mismanagement of any aspect of outer space. Scott Lofquist-Morgan, a researcher for Spacesecurity.org and the Canadian Centre for Treaty Compliance, explained in an event co-sponsored by Canada, Spacesecurity.org, and Project Ploughshares that other threats to space security include space debris; a growing need for orbital slots and radio frequencies; proliferation of capabilities to attack ground stations and communications links; and increased ground-based capabilities to attack satellites.

China has called outer space "the commonwealth of humankind." Garrett Hardin, renowned for his work on the "tragedy of the commons," said, "ruin is the destination toward which all men [sic] rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all."

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Negative Security Assurances

In the First Committee, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was the most vocal in insisting upon legally binding negative security assurances (NSAs) for non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). During the general debate, the NAM repeatedly called for a legally-binding treaty on NSAs.

China, the only nuclear weapon state recognized under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that has made an unconditional assurance not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against NNWS or nuclear weapons free zones (NWFZs) at any time or under any circumstances, reiterated its support for a NSA treaty during the First Committee general debate.

In their military doctrines, the United States and France have declared that they maintain the option of using nuclear weapons as retaliation against an attack with weapons of mass destruction, including chemical or biological weapons. Reiterating civil society's support for a legally-binding treaty on NSAs, Ms. Merav Datan of Greenpeace International explained to the First Committee that "[n]uclear weapons are not a legitimate or proportionate response to either terrorism or the use of chemical and biological weapons."

Russia, the US and Israel did not mention NSAs during the First Committee's debate.

The European Union (EU), which includes two nuclear weapon states, the United Kingdom and France, supported "pursuing consideration of the issue of security assurances to the non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the NPT."

India, a nuclear-weapon possessing member of NAM, reiterated its nuclear doctrine of non-use of nuclear weapons against NNWS.

Pakistan introduced the annual draft resolution (A/C.1/61/L.45) calling for a legally-binding instrument for NSAs. The annual resolution has traditionally been adopted with large numbers of abstentions, primarily from NATO countries, but without any votes against it.

The US opposed the resolution for the first time this year. In their explanation of this sole vote against, they declared that they continue to oppose any proposal for an NSA treaty, or other global, legally binding security assurances regime. The US has made this explanation before, when they abstained, and they did not give any explanation as to why they changed to voting against.

The resolution was adopted with 108 votes in favor, one vote against, and 57 abstentions.

NSAs is still one of the four core issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, (CD) and most states believe it should be negotiated there. Hopefully the US vote against the resolution is not a signal that they will oppose considering NSAs in the 2007 session.

The international community is also preparing for another NPT review cycle. Giving legally-binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear states parties in compliance with the NPT would certainly be a significant incentive to remain a party to the treaty in good standing. It would also remove a major NNWS point of contention and bolster confidence at a time when the treaty regime desperately needs it.

- Beatrice Fihn, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (<http://www.wilpf.int.ch>)

CTBT. cont.

However, the US and North Korea have made it clear they oppose ratifying the CTBT. Additionally, other needed Annex II states, such as India and Syria, have remained cold to the CTBT due to concerns that it is unfair. Despite this, the international community should continue to push for the ratification of the CTBT. The North Korea's test shows that a moratorium on nuclear testing is not sufficient, and the entry-into-force of the CTBT is needed to turn the moratorium into international law.

-Jennifer Leigh Schwerer, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

Nuclear Proliferation

Taking place against the backdrop of two nuclear proliferation crises, involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran, the 61st session of the UN General Assembly First Committee highlighted the disunity of the international community on the issue of proliferation. Not coincidentally, in the general debate a large number of states reminded the First Committee that in 2005 states failed twice to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, at the 2005 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and at the World Summit.

Representatives of Western states, notably the United States, Australia, and the European Union, held the view that the Security Council should become more involved in matters of proliferation. Other states emphasized the need to address the "institutional deficit" of the NPT, which the Final Report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Commission noted is "the weakest of the treaties on WMD in terms of provisions about implementation." Addressing these deficits, Canada proposed annual meetings of the states parties and the creation of a standing secretariat for the NPT, while China advocated the adoption of concrete measures to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency. Other states, particularly from the developing world, expressed the belief that proliferation can only be successfully addressed by ameliorating its root causes and the motives driving states to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

As in previous years, draft resolutions only tended to refer to the issue of nuclear proliferation obliquely, when it was mentioned separately from disarmament at all. For example, the annual resolution sponsored by the New Agenda Coalition (A/C.1/61/L.13.rev.2) called upon all states parties to the NPT to "respect their obligations," which can be read to apply to both non-proliferation as well as disarmament. Japan's annual resolution "Renewed determination toward the elimination of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/61/L.32) took a more direct approach, specifically calling for "all States to redouble their efforts to prevent and curb the proliferation of" nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. This resolution also called for the universalization of comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and the Additional Protocol, and

for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540. However, the focus of both these resolutions is overwhelmingly on disarmament.

The case of Iran, in particular, underscored prominent divisions on the issue of nuclear proliferation within the international community. While all states seem to agree that Iran should not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons, there was ample evidence of disunity and disagreement on the basic nature of the dispute and how to address it. While the United States and Israel were alone in explicitly describing Iran's nuclear programme as a "threat," many Arab states declared that a diplomatic and negotiated settlement is the only way to solve the dispute.

Another telling sign of disunity was the noted lack of any language reflecting on the Iran situation in any draft resolutions. Particularly, the annual resolution sponsored by the Arab group, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" (A/C.1/61/L.2), substantively dealt only with Israel's nuclear programme. The exclusion of Iran from this resolution prompted several Western states, including Canada and the EU, to raise concern over its "lack of balance." Despite the deficiency, the resolution was adopted with 156 in favor, 4 against (Israel, Micronesia, Palau, and the US), and 6 abstentions, a similar margin as in past years. Yet, states were able to reaffirm consensus on a broader level, indicating that although there may not be agreement on the means, there remains a common end goal. In this broader context, Egypt's annual resolution, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East" (A/C.1/61/L.1), was adopted again without a vote.

In contrast to how states maneuvered around the Iran situation, several resolutions contained language specifically condemning the DPRK nuclear test explosion of October 9, 2006. Yet, in a telling sign of the state of multilateral treaty regimes, one such resolution, "Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty" (A/C.1/61/L.48/Rev.1), was opposed by only the DPRK and the US. In its explanation of vote against the resolution the US, a leading critic of the DPRK, unashamedly stated that it "cannot support a resolution supporting the CTBT," but nevertheless expressed support for OP5 which

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Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

Nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) featured prominently in discussion at this year's First Committee. The Central Asian NWFZ was established just before session began (see CANWFZ report), provoking discussion about possibilities for future NWFZs and about the procedures used to establish them. There are now seven regional and single state NWFZs, and 113 states are members of such zones. NWFZs have a growing appeal in the current international political context. Their potential to increase regional security, strengthen norms and controls against nuclear weapons, constrain the nuclear weapon states (NWS), and contribute to the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world is unmatched by most other disarmament measures.

Kazakhstan emphasized the contributions of NWFZs to promoting the principles and objectives of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement and additional protocol. Kazakhstan also contended that NWFZs are important confidence-building measures for enhancing regional cooperation and stability.

Many states and regions are interested in the prospect of establishing more NWFZs. During the general debate, Belarus renewed its proposal for a NWFZ in Central and Eastern Europe, which could include a number of non-contiguous European countries that are committed not to acquire or station nuclear weapons on their territories.

A number of governments, including Algeria, Bangladesh, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Viet Nam, and the Non-Aligned Movement, called for action on the proposal to make the Middle East a NWFZ or a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Iraq, Pakistan, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE believe that a nuclear weapon or WMD free zone in the Middle East would increase security in the region. The UAE argued, "international conditions require a NWFZ in the Middle East, [as it would] alleviate tensions and instability, renew dialogue and the peace process" over the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Iraq highlighted the need for treaties, guar-

antees, and assurances, and emphasized that a Middle Eastern NWFZ would offer all three to the international community and to the region.

However, during the non-governmental organization presentations, Merav Datan from Greenpeace International pointed out, "the deadlocked positions regarding a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East are as well known as they are entrenched." Israel pinpointed Iran's nuclear programme as the source of instability in the Middle East, describing it as one of the key threats to regional and international peace and security. While some other Middle Eastern states, such as the UAE, recognized the problem of Iran "pursuing nuclear energy outside the IAEA," most viewed Israel as the main impediment to a peaceful Middle East free from WMD.

While Israel did join consensus in adopting the draft resolution L.1, "Establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East," it emphasized that the process towards a Middle Eastern NWFZ cannot begin when some parties maintain a state of war and refuse to acknowledge the existence of other parties in the region. Meanwhile, the draft resolution L.2, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East," was rejected by Israel as being biased, unbalanced, and unfair towards Israel.

Viet Nam indicated NWFZs also struggle to convince the nuclear weapon states (NWS) to respect the protocols that restrict NWS from threatening to use or using nuclear weapons against member states or deploying nuclear weapons in the zone. Some NWS have either been reluctant to endorse these protocols, or have attached reservations to them in order to protect their nuclear deployment policies. The NWS have made such undertakings with respect to some zones (Latin America, South Pacific and Africa) but not all NWS have committed to negative security assurances to other zones (South East Asia and Central Asia). Only China has signed the protocols to the Southeast Asia NWFZ. The other NWS are concerned that to do so might prevent them from transiting the straits of Southeast Asia with their nuclear-armed submarines. France, the United Kingdom, and the United States

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International Court of Justice

Ten years ago, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) unanimously agreed that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”

During the general and thematic debates of the First Committee, some member states, including Mexico, Myanmar, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Georgia, Japan, and the Syrian Arab Republic, reaffirmed their commitment towards the implementation of the ICJ opinion.

There has been little progress towards the implementation of disarmament obligations on the part of the nuclear weapons states. In July 2006, a meeting of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and parliamentarians in the European Parliament discussed the ICJ opinion and a proposal to return to the Court for a follow-up case challenging non-compliance with the 1996 decision. Informal consultations on this proposal have begun between the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms and some interested countries.

The First Committee adopted one draft resolution on the ICJ this year. On October 10, Malaysia introduced “General and complete disarmament: follow-up to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons” (A/C.1/61/L.44). Similar to what Malaysia has introduced annually since 1996, this resolution reaffirms the ICJ opinion and calls upon states to commence negotiations that would conclude in a nuclear weapons convention (NWC). A NWC would prohibit nuclear weapons proliferation and provide for their elimination under international verification and compliance mechanisms. Costa Rica submitted a Model NWC to the UN in 1997 that demonstrates that nuclear weapons abolition, while difficult to achieve, is indeed feasible.

Significantly, while introducing the resolution, Malaysian Ambassador Hamidon noted that the obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament applies to all states, not only members of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In addition, he noted that, “We must address the issues and challenges confronting nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive, constructive and balanced manner.” On October 27, the First Committee adopted the resolution with a vote of 117 in favor, 27 opposed, and 26

abstentions. As in previous years, the resolution was supported by a variety of countries including some non-aligned, western, and nuclear-possessing. France, Israel, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States opposed the resolution.

There was a separate vote on operative paragraph (OP) 1, which “Underlines once again the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”. The almost universal support for OP 1 (adopted with 159 in favor, 4 opposed, and 3 abstentions) indicates a rejection of the US and French perspective that progress on nuclear disarmament is contingent on progress on general and complete disarmament. However, the fact that a smaller majority supported the resolution as a whole indicates some difference of opinion on how to achieve nuclear disarmament. Japan, for example, explained that while it supports the goal of nuclear disarmament, it believes that incremental steps are required prior to adopting a comprehensive approach culminating in a NWC.

The recently released Report of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction (Blix Commission) attempts to steer a middle path through these approaches, supporting immediate progress on incremental steps but at the same time calling on the nuclear weapon states to develop plans on how they could achieve comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

-Courtney Gugliuzza, Reaching Critical Will (www.reachingcriticalwill.org); and
Alyn Ware, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (www.ialana.net)

Fissile Materials. cont.

bearing on the procedures of the CD, its failure suggests that states will have to struggle to bridge these differences to commence negotiations when the CD reconvenes in 2007.

-Michael Spies, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy (www.lcnp.org)



Missiles

“Missiles” (A/C.1/61/L.3), the single resolution on this issue, was adopted by the First Committee on Monday, October 23. A vote on the resolution resulted in 105 votes in favor, 6 opposed and 55 abstentions making an increase of four oppositional votes and five abstentions. Israel and the United States, the two negative votes of 2005, were joined this year by Albania, France, Micronesia, and the United Kingdom. L.3 takes note of the Secretary-General’s Report on Missiles and decides to include missiles in the agenda of next year’s First Committee. The resolution also creates a third Panel of Governmental Experts to be convened in 2007, which will report to the General Assembly in 2008.

Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union, stated that the EU did not support the resolution because it does not mention any of the relevant Security Council resolutions adopted this year or the Hague Code of Conduct on Ballistic Missile Proliferation. The United States earlier noted that the work of the third Panel should be based on the final report of the second Panel- which is not yet completed- rather than starting from scratch or using the new report on missiles from the UN Institute for Disarmament Research.

With L.3 now adopted, the General Assembly will be able to continue contributing to the efforts to curb the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which, as the EU stated this past week, “puts at risk the security of all states and peoples.”

Throughout the First Committee, a small number of member states discussed issues related to missiles. The European Union, Australia, Kazakhstan, Libya, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Eritrea voiced their support for the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Adopted in 2002, the HCOC is a politically binding code curbing ballistic missiles and their development, testing, and deployment, and is intended to supplement the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Turkey supports the HCOC and believes “it constitutes a practical step towards an internationally accepted legal framework in this field...[and] wish[es]

to see the universalization of this endeavour.”

Established in 1987, the MTCR is a group of 34 states interested in the nonproliferation of missiles and related technologies. The Republic of Korea said export control regimes like MTCR should be strengthened, and the Hague Code of Conduct should be strengthened in the area of means of delivery.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in a statement delivered by Myanmar, referenced the urgent need for a comprehensive, multilaterally negotiated, universal and non-discriminatory agreement on missile proliferation, which Myanmar has called for in the last few sessions of the First Committee.

The EU referenced the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) recent ballistic missile test in the summer of 2006, stating that “the EU condemns the provocative missile test-launches performed by the government of the DPRK in July 2006 and calls upon the DPRK to re-establish the moratorium on long-range missile testing.” No one took the floor to question or condemn the testing and development of the Russian Topol - M missile or the US missile development system and Minuteman III missile test launches from Vandenberg Air Force Base.

In response to the DPRK’s announcement on October 3 that the country intends to conduct a nuclear test, the EU, Republic of Korea and Japan urged implementation of Security Council Resolution 1695, which demanded the DPRK suspend all related activities and required States to not trade goods that could fuel the DPRK’s missile or weapons of mass destruction programmes, and to return without precondition to the Six Party Talks.

First Committee work on missiles has been somewhat predictable over the last few years, and despite recent missile test-launches by member states, this session of the First Committee saw less dialogue and fewer resolutions than usual.

-Waverly de Bruijn, Global Action to Prevent War
(www.globalactionpw.org)



Disarmament and Development

In the First Committee this year, governments drew connections between disarmament and development in terms of resource allocation, peace and security, and the negative consequences of excess weapons. The First Committee adopted the “Relationship between disarmament and development” (A/C.1/61/L.8), with an overwhelming majority of 169 countries in favor, 1 opposed (United States) and two abstentions (Israel and France).

Heavy arms expenditures remain a hindrance to correct allocation of the world’s resources, including through aid to developing countries. In the First Committee’s general debate, several governments juxtaposed ever-rising arms expenditures with development issues, and diminishing budgets for the development agenda, particularly the Millennium Development Goals. Bangladesh noted that “it is appalling that the estimated global military expenditures exceeded US \$1 trillion in 2005 and [are] projected to keep rising. Most of these expenditures are the result of a frantic arms race that is increasingly having a negative impact on our development agenda.” Cuba reiterated its proposal to devote at least half of the current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development, through a fund managed by the UN. The rise in arms expenditures has also created the need for more monitoring and awareness-raising. Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Tanaka noted that use of the UN standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures is rising, calling this “an achievement that will be all the more significant as global military spending continues to rise.”

Ethiopia noted that disarmament also promotes an environment of security and boosts economic strength, both of which are crucial for development. It said peace and security are particularly important for the developing world, where disarmament measures “can create and nurture an ideal environment for development...to take hold and benefit the poor.”

Echoing statements by the European Union and Benin, Switzerland urged delegates to transform the adopted principles of the “Geneva Declaration on

Armed Violence and Development” into concrete measures. The Declaration, adopted at the Ministerial Summit on Armed Violence and Development in June 2006, elaborates the links between armed violence and development. Switzerland is preparing to coordinate a core group of 10 states to act on three levels. On the diplomatic level, the group will encourage states to join the declaration. On the research and knowledge-building level, the group will address linkages between armed violence and development. Thirdly, the group will work with donor and recipient countries to integrate the issue of armed violence into development programs.

Disarmament and development are also connected in terms of the negative effects of weapons. For example, landmines can significantly impede development and their removal makes way for investment and infrastructure. The Southern African Development Community pointed out that Africa is the most heavily mined continent, which disables the development of millions of acres of land, impeding economic recovery throughout the continent. Jamaica made the connection that excess weapons and crime impede development: “[w]hen a significant proportion of the national budget is used to tackle crime and violence, then there can be no question about the linkage between disarmament and development.”

Governments also cited the negative effect of the illicit arms trade on development. According to India, these effects include displacement, destitution, and prolonged underdevelopment as well as endangered national security, disrupted social harmony, and hampered growth and development. Morocco said the arms trade worsens the situation in conflict areas, jeopardizes lasting peace, and undermines efforts of post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. Suriname and Sierra Leone concurred, and added that the Programme of Action, adopted in 2001 at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), was an important tool to enable sustainable development. Pakistan pointed out that developing countries are the favored destination for arms sales (with 63.2% of arms sales from 2001-2004) in which “[n]ew markets are being explored,

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Disarmament Education

The draft resolution “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” (A/C.1/61/L.30) was adopted without a vote on October 25. The resolution follows up on the milestone UN Expert Group on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (DNP) Education, authorized by UN Resolution 55/33E of the General Assembly in 2000. After two years of meetings and contributions to the Study from academics and activists from all over the world, the Expert Group submitted their report (A/57/124) to the First Committee in 2002. In July of this year, the Secretary-General released a follow-up report reviewing the results of the implementation of the recommendations to the Study.

This year’s draft resolution added two new elements to the text from 2004 (A/C.1/59/L.53/Rev.1). The most important addition to the resolution emphasized “that efforts need to be continued to implement the recommendations of the Study and follow the good examples of how they are being implemented to stimulate even further long-term results.” The other addition encourages member states, the UN and other international and regional organizations, and civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to continue to apply the recommendations of the Study and continue to report to the Secretary-General on steps taken to implement the recommendations.

In its October 12 introduction of the L.30, Mexico called disarmament and non-proliferation education an effective tool for enhancing national and international security and has carried out disarmament education and training activities in accordance with resolution 59/93 of the Study. Mexico submitted an addendum to this year’s Report of the Secretary-General on “Disarmament and non-proliferation education,” with its national results of implementation of the Study’s recommendations.

Japan also made a statement on the importance of DNP education and Japan’s efforts in accordance with the 2002 UN Study on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education. Japan expressed appreciation and commitment to working with NGOs, which “play a significant role in this field”. Japan has been

implementing the recommendations, including by promoting awareness through a website for youth designed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve understanding of disarmament and non-proliferation issues, and publishing an annual White Paper on disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan urged member states, as encouraged in this year’s draft resolution, to continue to apply the recommendations of the Study and to report results to the First Committee. Others expressed the need to simplify the reporting mechanism.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/61/169) was released this July 2006 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/93, which requests a report reviewing the results of the implementation of the recommendations to the Study. The report records these implementations by member states, the UN and other international organizations, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, civil society, and NGOs. The document concludes that there is a strong interest from Governments and students at all levels of education to learn more about “weapons and their relation to and impact on politics, economics, social trends and the environment”. The conclusion also notes the persisting challenges of fundraising for all disarmament efforts, particularly for DNP education. Lastly the importance of implementation of the recommendations is stressed, particularly following best practices in order to stimulate even greater long-term results.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated, “Education is, quite simply, peace-building by another name, it is the most effective form of defense spending there is.” This year’s report shows there has been an increase in creative initiatives, especially in partnerships between governments and civil society, on education on disarmament and non-proliferation. However, as stressed in the crucial addition to this year’s resolution, even greater action needs to be taken towards application in addition to reporting on DNP education. While disheartening challenges to find support and funding persist in this essential field, member states, civil society, and NGOs should increasingly take ownership of this necessary aspect of peace-building

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Conventional Weapons

Statements made during the First Committee reflected a deep and continued effort by the international community to tackle the negative effects of conventional weapons. "The proliferation of conventional weapons is also a matter of increasing concern to the international community," said the Republic of Korea. Pakistan felt that the extreme focus on weapons of mass destruction and small arms and light weapons is diverting focus from conventional weapons, which they see as "becoming something of a blind spot of the international community." Discussion focused on the failed 2006 UN Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons (see SALW report), the upcoming Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and the draft resolution calling for a conventional Arms Trade Treaty (see ATT report), among others.

"Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons"

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) enjoyed continued support this year. According to the Arms Control Association the 1980 convention "aims to protect military troops from inhumane injuries and prevent noncombatants from accidentally being wounded or killed by certain types of arms." The European Union, China, Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa and Turkey made statements reaffirming the value of the CCW. On October 25, the resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (A/C.1/61/L.18), which had roughly 45 co-sponsors, was adopted without a vote as it has been in years past. In discussing the CCW, governments focused on the upcoming CCW review conference to be held in Geneva in November 2006, the anticipated entry-into-force of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), the conclusion of the discussion on Mines Other than Antipersonnel Mines (MOTAPM), and the question of negotiating an international, legally binding instrument to address cluster munitions.

Ambassador Rivasseau of France, the President-designate of the CCW Review Conference, was the guest speaker during the second thematic debate on conventional weapons. He felt that the CCW has been a relatively successful regime which, because of its flexible mandate and the proximity of the humanitarian effects

of conventional weapons on civilians, has somewhat escaped the disarmament crisis that other machinery has experienced.

With regard to the CCW review conference, Switzerland, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea and Austria, speaking on behalf of the Holy See, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and Sweden, urged conclusion to the discussion on cluster munitions through the creation of a legally binding instrument. New Zealand proposed five key elements which needed to be addressed: the persistent nature of failed cluster munitions; the use of cluster munitions in areas populated by civilians; indiscriminate use that attack both combatants and civilians; the way these weapons kill civilians and destroy civilian objects; and the proliferation and retention of "outmoded" cluster munitions. Austria made clear that "this is not a proposal for a total ban on cluster munitions." Denmark, too, voiced its support for the statements made on cluster munitions. During a side-event of the First Committee, Landmine Action launched "Foreseeable harm: The use and impact of cluster munitions in Lebanon: 2006". This report by Thomas Nash details the consequences of Israel's use of cluster munitions in Lebanon based on field research conducted September 6-11, 2006. Several states have already taken action to limit the grave humanitarian effects of cluster munitions. According to Arms Control Today, "Belgium has banned [cluster munitions], Norway has enacted a moratorium on use, and Germany has stopped procurement of new cluster munitions with plans to explore phasing existing systems out by 2015."

Furthermore, The Republic of Korea, Israel, Canada, China, and Switzerland welcomed the coming entry-into-force of Protocol V on the Explosive Remnants of War. As the Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs Nobuaki Tanaka stated, "the final success of this vital endeavour is now in states parties' hands - in the ability to achieve further progress in the implementation of the convention and ensuring its compliance." In the statement read by Finland, the European Union wished to see the universalization of Protocol V.

Reduction of Forces

There was some mention of the reduction of armed forc-

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Landmines

The First Committee adopted “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction” (A/C.1/61/L.47/Rev.1) with 157 votes in favor, none opposed and 15 abstentions. Fewer governments addressed landmines during the 2006 First Committee general debate than in previous years. Most statements urged universalization of the Ottawa Convention on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personal Mines and on Their Destruction (Mine Ban Treaty); reported on regional mine destruction and clearance; and called for continued financial assistance to mine-clearing operations and victim rehabilitation.

As President of September’s Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, Australia recapped some of the achievements and challenges concerning the Mine Ban Treaty. At the meeting, states parties adopted a process to assist states in fulfilling their obligations to clear and destroy all known landmines. To date, 38 million mines have been destroyed and another ten million are scheduled to be destroyed, and seven of 52 states parties affected by landmines have cleared their mined areas. As the first disarmament treaty that addresses the needs of survivors, states parties to the Treaty discussed practical measures to assist survivors. Australia also said it has initiated a universalization strategy.

Mines other than antipersonnel mines (MOTAPM), such as anti-vehicle landmines, are not banned by the Mine Ban Treaty. States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) have been considering the issue, and it is one of three subjects the states parties to the CCW will focus on at its Review Conference in November.

After five years of discussions and preparatory work by the CCW’s Group of Governmental Experts, progress on MOTAPM continues to gain momentum, albeit slowly. It remains unclear whether there is enough political will to reach an agreement to create a new legally binding instrument banning their use.

The President-Designate of the CCW, Ambassador Rivasseau of France, called Ambassador Carlos Antonio da Rocha Paranhos of Brazil’s (Coordinator of the CCW’s Working Group on MOTAPM) efforts to introduce a protocol on MOTAPM a “mission impossible”.

Pakistan also noted that differences remain in the areas of detectability, active life, recording and removal of minefields, and categorization of fuses and sensors. India said that even on these contentious issues, “a balanced approach could accommodate national security imperatives, humanitarian requirements, financial costs and technological constraints.” Switzerland, echoed by New Zealand, said that a new protocol on MOTAPM has added value for the Convention only if it contains norms that strengthen existing international humanitarian law. New Zealand added that this requirement will not be satisfied by optional provisions on mine detectability and active life.

Australia reintroduced last year’s draft resolution on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction to seek further reaffirmation of the Convention by state parties. The only major change from A/RES/60/80 was the inclusion of an operating paragraph that “[u]rges all States to remain seized of the issue at the highest political level and, where in a position to do so, to promote adherence to the Convention through bilateral, sub-regional, regional and multilateral contacts, outreach, seminars and other means”.

States which are party to the Mine Ban Treaty voted in favor of the resolution and states which are not party abstained from voting. In total, 157 countries voted in favor, ten more than did last year. No state voted against the resolution. Cuba, Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, India and South Korea reiterated that they cannot stop using landmines because of their security situations, but still sympathize with the spirit of the Treaty. They insist they are balancing military and humanitarian concerns by using landmines “respon-

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Biological and Chemical Weapons

During this year's First Committee, many governments expressed their approval of the progress of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (CCW). Like in previous years, the resolutions "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.27), introduced by Hungary on October 11, and "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.19), introduced by Poland on October 11, have been adopted without a vote, which bodes well for the abolition of biological and chemical weapons.

The resolution "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" (A/C.1/61/L.5), introduced by Indonesia on October 6, was adopted with 163 votes in favor, none opposed, and two abstentions (Israel and the US). In 2004, Israel and the USA, as well as the Marshall Islands, abstained from the resolution "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" (A/C.1/59/L.12). During this year's thematic debate on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, France introduced a non-paper encouraging withdrawal of reservations to the Geneva Protocol. According to France, "[o]nly 22 States still hold reservations that are often incompatible with the commitments made within the framework of the BTWC [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention] and CWC." A list of these reservations is available on France's website.

While the text of the resolution on biological weapons is largely similar to past years, several new elements have been added to the text of the chemical weapons resolution. The new operative paragraph 5 is particularly important, as it reaffirms the obligation of states parties to completely destroy their stocks of chemical weapons and facilities by the Convention's deadline.

Later this year, states parties will address the possi-

bility of extending the deadlines for destroying their chemical weapons stockpiles, presently set for 2012. Some states, including New Zealand and Canada, oppose such an extension, since, as South Korea pointed out, "the Convention clearly stipulates that in no case shall the deadline for a State Party to complete its destruction of all chemical weapons be extended beyond April 2012." Switzerland urged all signatory countries to "do everything in their power to destroy all their stocks of chemical weapons within the time frame envisaged in the Convention."

Switzerland also noted that "stocks of residual chemical weapons not only pose a threat to the environment and to populations but are also a possible source of supply, notably for terrorist groupings." In its October 12 introduction, Poland stated that the resolution on chemical weapons (A/C.1/61/L.19) is the first General Assembly resolution to have stressed national implementation of a disarmament treaty as a contribution to fighting terrorism.

States called for further universalization of the BTWC, to which 155 states are currently party. Finland, speaking on behalf of the EU, called for full compliance with all obligations, national implementation measures, and control over pathogenic microorganisms and toxins. The EU, as well as Australia, South Korea, India, Japan, New Zealand, and Norway supported continuing inter-sessional meetings between BTWC Review Conferences.

While the CWC "proved to be an effective instrument for prohibiting and eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under a strict and efficient international verification and control mechanism" (Turkey), the BTWC still faces gaps and challenges. Nigeria and Turkey noted that the BTWC needs an effective verification mechanism. Turkey also called for "effective implementation" of the BTWC, and Switzerland called for strengthened compliance with it. Many countries expressed their hopes that the upcoming BTWC Review Conference in November will be able to achieve further develop-

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Verification and Transparency

Verification and transparency remained a salient topic of discussion during 2006 and was a prevalent subtext throughout this year's First Committee.

Verification and transparency can serve preventive arms control as well as work to dismantle existing weapons. Consequently, during the first week of the session, the Russian delegation emphasized that "[t]ransparency and confidence-building measures can serve the purpose of discouraging the placement of weapons in space," and announced its plans to submit a new draft resolution entitled, *Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities*. The resolution was adopted with 167 votes in favor, 1 opposed (the United States), and 1 abstention (Israel). The US explained, "we see no reason for international institutions to address a non-existent arms race in outer space."

The committee also unanimously adopted a procedural draft decision welcoming the forthcoming report from the third United Nations Group of Government Experts on Verification (GGE), and called for the inclusion of an item into the provisional agenda for the sixty-second session regarding the findings of the GGE. Several delegations, while adopting the decision in the spirit of cooperation, raised concerns over the makeup of the panel, and the general role of verification as an independent mechanism within the global community.

On Monday, October 16, the First Committee heard presentations from Dr. Hans Blix, Chair of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Committee (WMDC), regarding its final report, and from Dr. John Barrett, Chair of the GGE, concerning its progress. Many delegations commended the speakers, and their presentations spurred spirited debates regarding the role of international verification, especially relating to the nature of the relationships between national and international intelligence, and between verification and compliance.

Dr. Blix concluded his statements by affirming his

endorsement of independent international verification as an "important and economic tool". Furthermore, he declared that international verification "does not stand in any contradiction to national means of verification. Rather these two means of fact-finding supplement each other." Indeed the WMDC report itself, affirms that "[n]ational surveillance systems may supplement international verification but, as experience has repeatedly shown, particularly with Iraq, such systems do not offer a panacea." (See *Verification and Transparency, Week 2*)

On October 23, Canada withdrew its draft resolution on a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, primarily over disagreements about verification. (See *Fissile Materials report*)

Verification continues to be a nuanced issue that is continually being reassessed from different perspectives that are not necessarily contradictory. Its scope extends into almost every arena of disarmament and international security, proving it to be a contentious issue in those treaties in which it has been included, and a glaring deficiency in those without it. Most states continue to express support for treaties that include systems of verification, while calling for verification in those treaties that don't provide for it, such as the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention, and in those yet to be negotiated, such as a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty. The 1996 UN Disarmament Commission agreed to 16 principles of verification, one of which states, "Verification arrangements should be addressed at the outset and at every stage of negotiations on specific arms limitation and disarmament agreements."

-Eric Sorenson, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (<http://disarm.igc.org>)

Terrorism

Despite the absence of a clear and universally accepted definition of terrorism, the 2006 First Committee extensively addressed its threat, concentrating primarily on the possible acquisition by non-state actors of different types of weapons.

Most member states reiterated the importance of Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) as the main international instrument to enforce legal and regulatory measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by state and non-state actors. Significantly, the General Assembly adopted a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on September 8, 2006. However, several countries, including China, the European Union and Norway, believe that more can be done to address the threat of terrorism. They promoted signing and ratifying the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and implementing the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and Nuclear Facilities. They also noted the consensus adoption of the UN Comprehensive Anti-Terrorism Convention.

The majority of member states linked the threat of terrorism to non-state actors possibly acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD), fissile materials, biological and chemical weapons, and small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Several member states regard the possibility of non-state actors' acquisition of nuclear weapons as another reason to work towards complete disarmament and abolition. Many states explicitly expressed that the only guarantee against the proliferation of WMD and their use or threat of use is their total elimination.

Aside from highlighting the importance of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism proposed by President George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin in July 2006, the EU asserted the need to support several measures to prevent terrorists from accessing fissile materials, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, as well as the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and

International Atomic Energy Safeguards Agreements. To combat nuclear terrorism, Norway also suggested strengthening the control of fissile materials and nuclear technology by converting civilian nuclear reactors from highly-enriched to low-enriched uranium facilities.

While many states seem to be primarily concerned with the frightening prospect of non-state actors acquiring nuclear weapons, some member states expressed an immediate concern over acquisition of both biological and chemical weapons and small arms and light weapons. Member states, including New Zealand and Canada, advocated for the review, reaffirmation, and reinforcement of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) to prevent terrorist acquisition of biological and chemical weapons.

Many states expressed concern about the illegal trafficking, stockpiling and transfer of SALW to terrorist groups. Cameroon, India, Jamaica, and the EU pointed to the global effects of SALW and commented that their proliferation fosters criminality, drug trafficking, and terrorism. Australia also stressed the importance of addressing the potential transfer and unauthorized access of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) to terrorist organizations.

This year, the First Committee adopted three draft resolutions that address terrorism, each of which were presented and adopted last year as well. The only resolution which was not re-introduced this year was "Preventing the risk of radiological terrorism", initially introduced by France on October 12, 2005.

"Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.52), proposed by India and adopted without a vote, calls for the drafting of reports on measures undertaken by international organizations to address the connection between terrorism and WMD. It also urges states to effectively implement the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. "Reducing Nuclear Danger" (A/C.1/61/L.49) stresses the need to review nuclear doctrines and calls upon

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Nuclear Disarmament, cont.

the concrete efforts underway by the three countries” in fulfilling their Article VI obligations, nor mentions their willingness to negotiate an FMCT.

The NAM’s draft on “Nuclear disarmament” (L.39) was adopted 105 votes in favor to 45 opposed, with 6 abstentions. This represents a slight improvement over last year’s essentially the identical resolution, yet it remains the most divisive of the omnibus nuclear disarmament resolutions. Because it contains such a sweeping list of recommendations, there is something to offend many countries: it calls for negotiations on a verifiable FMCT; for the entry-into-force of the CTBT; for legal instruments “on adequate security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States” and for “a joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons”; for de-alerting and a diminished “role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines”; and for the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament next year.

The US, UK and France opposed, Russia abstained, and China voted in favor of L.39. India and Pakistan abstained, citing the references to the NPT. NATO countries and the former Soviet republics voted no or abstained. The New Agenda countries split, with the two European countries in the coalition (Ireland and Sweden) abstaining, while the others voted yes. Japan, which abstained, said the resolution “lacked certain elements,” an oblique reference to the failure of the draft to include recognition of what states consider positive elements, such as the reduction of strategic arms by the US and Russia.

In one of the last votes of this year’s session, the draft on the 2010 NPT Review Conference and its preparatory committee (L.21/Rev. 1) was adopted 163 to zero with the three usual abstentions – India, Pakistan and Israel. North Korea did not vote. Weeks of negotiations between the US and EU resulted in the decision to hold the first session of the preparatory committee (April 30 to May 11) in Vienna. There was no drama nor debate over this essentially technical resolution. The drama and debate will start next year

when delegates take the lessons learned to Vienna and try to find the common ground that alluded them this month.

-Jim Wurst, Middle Powers Initiative
www.middlepowers.org

Bio & Chem Weapons, cont.

ment in those fields and “will contribute to enhancing transparency through strengthened confidence-building measures,” in the words of Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. Canada promoted a working paper entitled “An Accountability Framework,” which included “proposals for enhancing the effectiveness and authority of the BTWC” and covered issues such as annual meetings, improvement of confidence-building measures, and implementation support.

Several states mentioned the danger connected with the rapid technological advancements in the field of biotechnology and genetic sciences during the thematic debate in this year’s session. Some of those countries also called for a reflection of these developments in the Review Conference.

This year’s session of the First Committee reaffirmed the global prohibition against biological and chemical weapons. The two resolutions on biological and chemical weapons were once again adopted without a vote, and the resolution on the 1925 Geneva Protocol was adopted by a large majority with only two abstentions, one less than in 2004. Many states reaffirmed their support for the CWC and the BTWC. There is hope that the upcoming BTWC Review Conference in Geneva will push the BTWC forward, ideally on verification, including the possibility of on-site inspections, and on reporting requirements.

-Lizzie Herzog, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (<http://disarm.igc.org>)



Conventional Weapons, cont.

es and military expenditures in conjunction with discussions on conventional weapons. Pakistan placed special emphasis on the balanced reduction of forces and conventional armaments, noting that this should be “the prime objective of arms control” and citing the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty as an important example. Benin agreed, remarking that humankind must devote fewer resources to weapons. Russia noted its regret that the CFE Treaty’s entrance-into-force has been delayed, and urged its partners to continue to move forward on this.

“Transparency in Armaments”

The Netherlands introduced the draft resolution on Transparency in Armaments, which acknowledges the success of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an international security and confidence-building measure. At various junctures during the First Committee, Switzerland, Argentina, the Holy See, the Republic of Korea, and Turkey spoke of the progress made with the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

New in the draft resolution is reference to the optional standardized reporting form adopted by the 2006 Group of Governmental Experts on the UN Register of Conventional Arms (GGE) and a request “to ensure that sufficient resources are made available for a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2009 to review the continuing operation of the Register.”

The Chair of the GGE, during his address to the First Committee, recognized the relatively high level of participation by member states: 170 countries have participated in the arms register since its inception. The Republic of Korea and Indonesia noted with satisfaction the GGE’s reduction of the minimum size of warships from 750 to 500 metric tons, which will increase the number of warships reported, while Israel and Japan applauded the 2003 GGE’s inclusion of Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) as a sub-category of Missiles within the Register.

Separate votes on Operative Paragraphs (OP) 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7b, and 9 of Transparency In Armaments were called. The resolution was adopted as a whole with 141 in favor, none opposed, and 23 abstentions, which is an increase of roughly 20 votes in favor and 2 abstentions from last year.

Syria, speaking on behalf of the Arab League (whose members abstained on the vote), stated that L.38 does not take into account the special situation in the Middle East. For any mechanism to succeed, Syria said, it should be balanced, transparent, non-discriminatory and strengthen the security of all. In its explanation of vote, Cuba stated its concern with the increased emphasis on small arms and light weapons without thought to including weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the Register. These concerns were also registered during the vote on the resolution “Transparency in armaments” during the 2005 First Committee.

Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS):

Though there was no resolution focusing on MANPADS this year, Israel, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Belarus highlighted the dangers of their proliferation and unauthorized use. Australia urged countries to continue progress on creating effective controls over the illicit transfer and unauthorized use of MANPADS.

Information on Confidence-Building Measures

“Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms” (A/C.1/61/L.40), introduced by Argentina, was adopted without a vote as it was in 2004 and 2005. Whereas the 2005 resolution requests the establishment of such a database, the 2006 resolution welcomes the establishment of the electronic database and requests the Secretary-General keep the database updated.

Arms control at regional & sub-regional levels

“Conventional arms control at the regional and sub-regional levels” (A/C.1/61/L.43) was adopted with the following results: 166 in favor (voting record indicates 165, though Spain stated immediately following the vote that it had intended to vote “yes”), 1 opposed (India), and 1 abstention (Bhutan). India and Bhutan also opposed and abstained, respectively, last year. After the vote was taken, India again explained its opposition, asserting that the threats to states often extend beyond regional boundaries. Furthermore, L.43 requests the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to consider principles for regional agreements on arms control, and India views the CD as a forum for international rather than regional agreements.

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Disarmament Machinery, cont.

not participate in the vote. It did not explain why, but in its final statement of the 2006 DC session, it questioned whether the Commission had “finally outlived its usefulness.” During the 2006 DC session, Cuba implied that the US had proposed eliminating the DC in the mandate review process then taking place.

First Committee

Governments discussed First Committee reform less this year than in years past, and no one submitted a resolution on reform. While most governments have simply supported implementing previous years’ resolutions on improving the First Committee’s working methods, some made further suggestions. The Chair and the Norwegian delegation highlighted specific reforms for priority implementation, such as having fewer resolutions and better follow-up to the adopted resolutions. Norway also complimented the value of the NGO participation this year, and was convinced the debates would benefit from even more contributions by civil society. Sierra Leone called for more debates and more interactive exchange among delegates in the First Committee, as well as interaction with other committees, particularly the Third Committee. The United States said that member states should oppose efforts to convene Groups of Governmental Experts when other groups on the same topic had not been able to agree on any outcome. The US also said the revitalization of the First Committee remained incomplete, and called on the General Assembly to formally adopt the thematic clusters.

Other Disarmament Machinery

There have been various calls for possibilities to overcome the impasse in disarmament. Sierra Leone tabled a new draft resolution entitled “Declaration of the Fourth Disarmament Decade” (A/C.1/61/L.17), to mobilize more intensive global efforts to reverse the current trend in the field of disarmament. The resolution was adopted by 116 votes in favour, one against (the US) and 51 abstentions.

The Non-Aligned Movement submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/61/L.4) to convene an open-ended working group to discuss a fourth special session on disarmament. The resolution was adopted by 166

votes in favour, one against (the US) and no abstaining. Indonesia pointed out that the same resolution was adopted in 2004 (59/71) by consensus and that member states had the responsibility to fulfil the mandate entrusted to them by the General Assembly. The US did not explain its vote.

The First Committee adopted the following draft resolutions on other parts of the disarmament machinery without a vote: “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament” (A/C.1/61/L.9); “United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services” (A/C.1/61/L.12); “Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean” (A/C.1/61/L.14); “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa” (A/C.1/61/L.24); and “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific” (A/C.1/61/L.28).

- Beatrice Fihn, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (www.wilpf.int.ch)

Landmines, cont.

sibly” and protecting civilians from them as much as possible. According to Pakistan, adhering to the Mine Ban Treaty will not be possible without a replacement defense system.

It is a positive sign that these countries abstain from the resolution instead of voting against it. Though a universal norm against the use of these indiscriminate weapons continues to grow, challenges in universalizing the Treaty continue as some countries, often neighboring ones, refuse to give up mines as a relatively cheap yet indiscriminatory form of self-defense. Banning MOTAPM and further implementing the Mine Ban Treaty are practical disarmament measures that will ultimately release economic resources and ending civilian suffering.

-Heikki Hietala, Reaching Critical Will (www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



Disarmament & Development, cont.

created and sought after.”

Germany stressed the significance of the “Practical Disarmament” approach to post-conflict development, originally introduced by former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in his “Agenda for Peace”. This approach emphasizes the relevance of practical disarmament measures, such as SALW ammunitions, de-mining and conversion, as well as demobilization and rehabilitation processes in post-conflict environments.

On October 25, the First Committee voted on “Relationship between disarmament and development” (A/C.1/61/L.8), largely identical to last year’s version, introduced by Indonesia on October 20. The resolution was adopted with 169 countries in favor, 1 opposed (US) and two abstentions (Israel and France), the same voting record as in 2005. The US reiterated its position that disarmament and development are two distinct issues that should not be linked. While the United Kingdom supported the resolution, it explained that it does not see an automatic link between the disarmament and development. The UK also does not completely agree with the Group of Governmental Experts’ findings, which did not fully explain the complex relationship between disarmament and development.

The First Committee also adopted “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty” (A/C.1/61/L.55), as presented by the UK. It linked controlling the arms trade with peace, security, and the UN member states’ proclaimed efforts to “[p]romote social progress and better standards of life,” as stated in the UN Charter. The text “recognizes that the absence of common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is a contributory factor to conflict, the displacement of people, crime and terrorism, thereby undermining peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development.” (See ATT report)

As these voting results show, there is significant po-

litical acknowledgement of the relationship between disarmament and development. More concrete measures, however, are needed. Problems remain, especially with the continuing proliferation of SALW undermining efforts to reach sustainable peace; the scourge of landmines contributing to slower development; and arms spending consuming much-needed funding for development programmes. The First Committee has taken positive steps: it created a Group of Governmental Experts to study an Arms Trade Treaty; it continued political support for the disarmament and development resolution; and it supported enhancing development goals through practical disarmament measures.

-Heikki Hietala, Reaching Critical Will
(www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

Disarmament Education, cont.

with greater implementation and action. When disarmament and non-proliferation education becomes an integrated aspect of every school, state, organization and community, humanity will come closer to sustainable peace. As the Secretary-General said in the 2002 report on disarmament and non-proliferation education:

“There has never been a greater need for education in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially with regard to weapons of mass destruction, but also in the field of small arms and international terrorism. Since the end of the cold war, changing concepts of security and threat have demanded new thinking, such new thinking will arise from those who are educated and trained today.”

See <http://disarmament.un.org/education/study.html> for a full list of recommendations

-Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, Educators for Social Responsibility; (www.esrnational.org/home.htm) and Allison Boehm, Peace Boat US (www.peaceboat.org/english/index.html)



SALW, cont.

tribution made by civil society, also emphasized by Nigeria, which commented on the “prominent role” of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), the global network of NGOs working against gun violence, in its speech prior to the vote on the ATT resolution.

In her presentation to the First Committee, Rebecca Peters, Director of the IANSA, highlighted the devastating effects of the proliferation of SALW. Speaking of the murder of peace activist Dr. Vincent Mekanju, a Nigerian IANSA member shot dead on 11 October, she underlined the important role the UN SALW process must play in preventing similar tragedies.

Two new SALW initiatives were outlined during the First Committee. Canada hosted an informal side event with states and NGOs to discuss a meeting on controlling international SALW transfers, to be hosted by Switzerland, June 18-22, 2007 in Geneva. Intended to be complementary to the formal UN SALW process, this meeting will “identify and/or refine global principles to govern the transfer of SALW throughout the world,” and will discuss further the principles proposed by government experts at an international meeting on transfer controls in Nairobi, April 2006.

The other initiative is being led by Switzerland, which intends to coordinate a core group of 10 states to follow-up the “Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development,” adopted at a Ministerial Summit in June 2006. The group will encourage states to join the declaration; promote research addressing the links between armed violence and development; and work with donor and recipient countries to integrate armed violence prevention into development programs.

The results of the First Committee are extremely promising, indicating the value of rejecting the distorted interpretation of consensus used to date during the UN Small Arms process. The PoA has been used as a starting point for states to reform policies and practices in combating the proliferation and misuse of SALW. The resolutions at First Committee have ensured that this process will continue and expand into some key areas where PoA commitments require

further elaboration. Building on the achievements of this First Committee will ensure that progress at the UN will not fall behind regional and national progress.

There is still much work to be done, with up to 1,000 people killed at gunpoint every day. As the Secretary-General remarked in his opening statement to the 61st General Assembly, “[i]n far too many parts of the world – especially the developing world – people are still exposed to brutal conflicts, fought with small but deadly weapons.”

-Mark Marge, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) (www.iansa.org)

NWFZ, cont.

have similar concerns about the CANWFZ.

The fact that NWFZs do not require the immediate support of the NWS to enter-into-force has, however, been vital in their establishment. For example, it took ten years after entry-into-force of the South Pacific NWFZ for France, the UK and the US to sign its protocols. That all NWS eventually signed, is a positive example for other regions to follow and to proceed in establishing NWFZs even when there is a lack of support from the NWS.

The CANWFZ treaty was signed without support from NWS, and while this caused many states to abstain from the draft resolution L.54/Rev.1 regarding the CANWFZ, most states, including those that have experienced difficulty in establishing their own zones, argue the CANWFZ is valid and commendable.

All NWFZs have overcome obstacles to their establishment. One can hope that even where nuclear weapons currently exist, the international community’s desire for a world free from nuclear weapons will eventually prevail over any impediments.

-Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will; and Alyn Ware, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (www.ialana.net)



Terrorism, cont.

nuclear states to de-alert and de-target their nuclear arsenals, in an attempt to both reduce the risk of their accidental use and prevent non-state actors from acquiring nuclear components. Proposed by India and adopted with a vote of 105 in favor, 50 opposed and 13 abstentions, the resolution also advocates changing the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies of nuclear states.

Proposed by Poland and adopted without a vote, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/61/L.19), contributes to the fight against terrorism by advocating the implementation of the Convention and its provisions at a national level.

Although the adoption of these resolutions represents a positive step for global security, a comprehensive and legal definition of terrorism could further prevent the politicization and use of "terrorism" as a justification for the implementation of some member states' foreign policies.

-Alessandra Miraglia, NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (<http://disarm.igc.org>); and
-Courtney Gugliuzza, Reaching Critical Will (<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org>)

Conventional Weapons, cont.

Conclusion

Resolution L.55 "Towards an Arms Trade Treaty" caused quite a stir on conventional weapons issues, and resolutions introduced again this year continued forward movement to control conventional weapons. As was aptly stated by some member states, nuclear weapons may cause mass-scale destruction and death; conventional weapons kill scores of civilians every day. The international community and individual member states should do whatever they can to standardize arms transfers and production and increase confidence-building and transparency measures in order to prevent the illicit access to and trade in these weapons.

-Waverly de Bruijn, Global Action to Prevent War (www.globalactionpw.org)

Proliferation, cont.

"condemns the DPRK's nuclear test" and demands that the DPRK not conduct further tests. Additional resolutions condemning the DPRK test included both Japan's resolution, "Renewed Determination," and the NAC resolution. (See North Korea report)

Beyond these rare and specific cases of proliferation, which disproportionately stand out among the vast majority of NPT non-nuclear weapon states parties that have not acquired nuclear weapons, broad coalitions of states, including the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the NAC, reaffirmed their belief in the inextricable link between the pursuit of non-proliferation and disarmament goals. Wary of other imbalances that threaten to overshadow cooperative approaches to security, Russia noted, "depression in the disarmament efforts, naturally, negatively affects the process of containing proliferation." Critically, as stated by Egypt, on behalf of NAC, "there is no doubt that the international disarmament efforts have not lived up to our collective aspirations and shared commitments." Thus, the ability of the international community to respond collectively and comprehensively to the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons will remain in peril as long as progress toward the total elimination of nuclear arsenals remains an unfulfilled promise.

-Michael Spies, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy (www.lcnp.org)

PAROS, cont.

Protecting all states' access to outer space for peaceful uses means preventing the weaponization of outer space. The European Union declared that PAROS "is an essential condition for strengthening strategic stability and for . . . the free exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes by all states." The First Committee will have the chance again next year to initiate this kind of preventative diplomacy; hopefully it will not simply echo this year's stalemate.

-Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will (www.reachingcriticalwill.org)

