

# **Disarmament and Arms Control**

## **An overview of issues and an assessment of the future**

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# Defining the concepts

- Disarmament:
  - Reduction of levels of specified weapon categories to *zero*
  - Removal of the weapons category from military doctrine
  - Essentially requires international cooperation, although unilateral disarmament is possible
- Arms control (inc. arms reductions):
  - Management of levels of weapons within specified quantitative or qualitative boundaries
  - Weapon category retains (residual) value in military doctrine
  - Essentially requires international cooperation, although unilateral policies are possible

# Why arms control; why disarmament?

- Legitimacy of use of a weapon in war
  - CBW: basically delegitimized in 1925 (Geneva Protocol)
  - Nuclear weapons:
    - 5 possessor states
    - Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (1996)
  - Conventional weapons
  - 'Inhumane weapons'
- Humanitarian arguments
  - Macro versus micro-level of appraisal
- Emergence of non-proliferation approach
  - Different perceptions of proliferation before and after World War 2
  - Relevance in areas where there is no total prohibition on weapons
- Impact of perception of technology
  - Value neutral => 'use' of technology needs to be controlled
  - Having impact on society => technology itself is viewed as problematic

# Nature of arms control and disarmament agreements

- **Global (multilateral)**

Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT, 1963), Outer Space Treaty (1967), Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1968), Seabed Treaty (1971), Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC, 1972), Moon and Other Celestial Bodies Agreement (1979), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC, 1993), \*Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT, 1996), Mine Ban Convention (1997), \*Cluster Munitions Convention (2008)

- **Regional (multilateral)**

Antarctic Treaty (1959), Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE Treaty, 1990), Nuclear Weapon Free Zones: Tlatelolco (1967), Rarotonga (1985), Bangkok (1995), \*Pelindaba (1996), \*Semipalatinsk (2006)

- **Bilateral**

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty, 1972), Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I (SALT I, 1972), \*Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II (SALT II, 1979), Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty, 1987), Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I (START I, 1991), Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II, 1993), Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, 2002)

# Future options

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- Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)
- Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT)
- Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC)

# Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)

- Mandate for negotiation in December 1993; stalled since then
- Aim: global, verifiable ban on production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices
- Problems:
  - Reduction / elimination of FM in existing weapon stockpiles
  - Non-inclusion of tritium, which enhances nuclear explosion (half life of 12 years => would immediately affect existing weapons)
  - Non-inclusion of other radioactive materials

# Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT)

- Aim to prevent future arms race in space
- Options are being explored within UN system
  - Treaty proposal by Russia
  - Strong opposition from the USA to any regulation
- Other states are also expanding space capabilities for military purposes

# Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC)

- Exciting new area
  - Recognition of limitations non-proliferation policies
- Debate is being launched from the USA
  - Bi-partisan support
  - In Barack Obama's platform as President-Elect (<http://change.gov> => foreign policy)
- Need for fundamental shift in debate
  - Belief in feasibility will create enabling context
  - Search for alternative security policies is critical
  - Research into verification concepts & options required
- May be phased in time
  - Timeframe: up to 25 years?
  - Initial reductions in US and Russian stockpiles to 1000 nuclear weapons (not carriers)
  - Phase to bring in other nuclear weapon states (NWS) and nuclear-armed states (NAS)
- Support in EU, notably from UK
  - Will still produce vigorous debate in EU
    - Role of French stockpile
    - New EU members in East Europe
  - Impact on missile defence debate

# Upcoming review conferences

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- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (2010)
- Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (2011)
- Chemical Weapons Convention (2013)

# Old weapons, new threats

- New security actors
  - Criminals, terrorists with potential interest in BCNR materials
  - Existing treaties require re-interpretation by states parties to make them relevant to those new challenges
- Difficult area for the UN
  - Does not involve the governance of inter-state behaviour
  - Emphasis on *national* implementation of existing treaties controlling particular weapon categories through treaty review conferences by states parties with UN support
  - UN Security Council Resolutions relating to terrorism
    - E.g., UNSC 1540 (2004)
      - Advantage: applies certain treaty obligations to **all** states
      - However, danger of UNSC interfering in domestic legislative processes
      - Enforcement of resolutions may be difficult
- Development of UN Secretary-General mechanisms to deal with allegations of use of certain proscribed weapons