

## Transparency and General Disarmament

Presentation to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament on Transparency and General Disarmament by Dr Dan Plesch, SCRAP project, Center for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS University of London.

26 June 2014

Original: ENGLISH

---

Mr President,

It is an honour to be asked to present my research findings to the Conference on Disarmament.<sup>1</sup> This body has a great tradition of success in disarmament despite its present difficulties. You have a great responsibility; for the fate of humanity rests on our success in disarmament.

I was recently discussing disarmament and conflict prevention with Dr Henry Kissinger at a celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was much impressed by Dr Kissinger's conviction that disaster is guaranteed if we continue business as usual in negotiations and in bureaucratic practice; and that this was what had led him to support nuclear disarmament and an approach to security based on core human values founded in his conclusion that we survived the Cold War by luck.

It is unrealistic to think that we can fill the world with weapons and not have world war. Indeed, the self-styled realists assume that war is the natural state of humanity, but the realists dissolve into self-delusion when they argue that today there can be armaments but no world war.

Today, on behalf of the NGO SCRAP based at SOAS, University of London, I am presenting specific proposals on disarmament. I should be clear that the only reason that these ideas have been taken out of a purely academic context is the enthusiasm and determination of our student body drawn from some fifty countries.

I will offer you two very specific proposals for consideration by your delegations and in your capitals.

Our ideas have been developed with former UN and government officials and with NGO leaders including those from OXFAM International and Action on Armed Violence. The proposals provide a preliminary answer to the research question, "What might an effective agreement to implement the UN's objective of General and Complete Disarmament under effective control look like?"

The first of these proposals concerns Transparency. The second proposal is a draft negotiating text for General and Complete Disarmament.

The first proposal on Transparency concerns the establishment of a new norm for "technical accountability in arms control" that has been developed by my colleague at SOAS, Paul Schulte. I have here [a link to his recent paper on this topic for your reference.](#)

The proposal on transparency may be considered as part of the second proposal. In addition to this specific proposal on transparency which can increase confidence building measures between states, the second proposal on General and Complete Disarmament envisages that the implementation period for General Disarmament could be ten years. Each of the agreements referred to in the Basic Elements text contains comprehensive provisions on transparency.

It is this proposal on General Disarmament that is the main focus of my remarks today.

70 years ago in the UN Declaration of January 1942, at the height of the Second World War, all the Allies agreed that disarmament was a realist necessity for the post-war world." The fifty founding states of the UN Organisation then agreed in 1945 that a key task of the General Assembly was to develop such a programme. Since that time there have been considerable efforts to fulfill that objective and with some success.

As members of the Conference on Disarmament you and your predecessors have been engaged directly and indirectly in great campaigns that have moved disarmament forward.

From the Nuclear Test Ban and the Chemical Weapons Convention through to the Mine Ban, and the Arms Trade Treaty there have been great successes.

As individuals and as states you will have reacted to and helped shape waves of ideas for disarmament coming from civil society. Some have been mass campaigns.

Today you and your governments should be aware that as part of the effort on Humanitarian Disarmament, the SCRAP campaign on General and Complete Disarmament is becoming the next such movement.

Leaders of non-governmental organisations including Oxfam International and Action on Armed Violence along with former officials have crafted the BASIC Elements negotiating text on General and Complete Disarmament. We are delighted by the tremendous interest shown by successive Director Generals of the UN Organisations in Geneva in the SCRAP project and Basic Elements text; and by the interest of a number of delegations present today.

We have been heartened by the interest shown to me in the project by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

The key element that people are finding increasingly attractive is that it builds on and unifies tried and tested legal achievements in disarmament.

Let me present the

**"Basic elements of an international legally-binding arrangement on General and Complete Disarmament encompassing the elimination of strategic, intermediate-range, shorter-range and short range missiles; verification of the elimination of nuclear weapon manufacturing and stockpiles; verification of biological disarmament and verification of conventional armed forces, disarmament, holdings and manufacture, and for global and regional confidence and security building measures including military exercises and operations; open for broad international accession"<sup>1</sup>**

#### Preamble

The States Parties to this Arrangement, *Guided* by the objective of strengthening strategic stability both globally and regionally, *Convinced that* the measures set forth in this Arrangement will help to reduce the risk of outbreak of war and strengthen international peace and security, *Determined to act* with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict international control, *Emphasizing* the importance of the peaceful settlement of disputes between States laid out in [Article 33 of the UN Charter](#), *Recognizing* the right of States to self-defence under [Article 51 of the UN Charter](#), *Desiring* to contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, have agreed as follows:

#### Article I General Obligations

---

1 Chemical Weapons verified elimination is encompassed in the Chemical Weapons Convention

1. Each State Party to this Arrangement upon entry into force of this Arrangement and thereafter shall not produce or flight-test any strategic, intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles or produce any stages of such missiles or any launchers of such missiles.

2. Each State Party to this Arrangement shall eliminate all its strategic-range, intermediate-range and shorter-range and short-range missiles and launchers of such missiles, as well as all support structures and equipment associated with such missiles and launchers, being in its possession or ownership, or being located in any site or on any vessel under its jurisdiction or control, under categories subject to an agreement, so that no later than the agreed date after entry into force of this Arrangement and thereafter no such missiles, launchers or support structures and equipment shall be possessed by each State Party. The forgoing to include ground-to air, air-to air, space launched and anti-missile-missiles. Where states designate missiles as solely for the purpose of launching payloads into space these are included in these aforementioned categories for inspection purposes to ensure the prevention of space-based weapons whether using kinetic or other energy. (You may note that this encompasses the objective of the efforts to Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space).

3. Each State Party to this Arrangement shall permit inspections on its territory consistent with the relevant provisions developed for Iraq by [UNMOVIC](#) / [IAEA](#) with respect to nuclear and biological weapons and their production facilities to carry out the verified elimination of such weapons and supporting technologies and infrastructure according to a timetable agreed; and in conjunction with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

4. Each State Party to this Arrangement shall not produce or test any weapon system of category types described in the [Conventional Forces in Europe \(CFE\) Treaty](#) regardless of whether they are fitted to land, air or sea systems save where it is subject to prior notification and verification, updated as needed.

5. Each State Party to this Arrangement shall provide data to other States Parties to this Arrangement concerning weapon systems of all category types within the CFE Treaty whether operated from land or at sea.

6. Each State Party to this Arrangement shall adhere to the [Open Skies Treaty](#).

7. Each State Party to this Arrangement shall adhere to the [Vienna Confidence and Security Building Measures](#) developed by the [OSCE](#).

8. Each State Party to this agreement shall adhere to the [Arms Trade Treaty](#).

a. Each State Party to this agreement shall apply the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty to all conventional arms, munitions and ammunition, as well as to equipment used for military, police or national security purposes.

9. Each State Party to this agreement shall adhere to the [UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons](#).

10. Each States party to this agreement shall adhere to the [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects](#), and to its protocols.

11. Each State party to this agreement undertakes to negotiate the regulation of new technologies designed to have physical effect on persons, property or the environment.

#### Article II Rules of Accounting and Definitions of Types of Weapons systems

Provisions for Rules of Accounting and Definitions of Types weapons and supporting technologies are subject to an agreement pursuant to the adapted provisions of [START](#), [INF](#), UNMOVIC / IAEA, CFE.

#### Article III Limitations on numbers of weapons and supporting technologies are subject to an agreement

#### Article IV Exchange of Information Related to the Obligations

Provisions for exchange of an information under categories of data, related to the obligations provided for by this Arrangement, are subject to an agreement pursuant to the provisions of START, INF, UNMOVIC, CFE, [CSBMs](#) and drawing on the timetables therein.

Article V Elimination Procedures

Each State Party to this Arrangement shall eliminate all its strategic, intermediate range, shorter-range, and short range missiles and launchers of such missiles, and all support structures and support equipment associated with such missiles and launchers in accordance with the procedures which are subject to an agreement and weapons within the CFE categories based upon the elimination procedures of UNMOVIC, START and INF and CFE . Each State Party to this Arrangement shall reduce the other categories of weapon systems and supporting equipment and manufacturing capability subject to agreement.

Article VI Rules of Compliance Verification

Rules of compliance verification are subject to an agreement.

Article VII Definitions shall draw on the relevant paragraphs of the treaties listed herein

Article VIII The Organization for Implementation of the Arrangement

The States Parties to this Arrangement shall come to an agreement about mechanism of implementation of the subject and the objective of this Arrangement. A framework for discussion will be the timeframes for implementation of UNMOVIC, START, INF and CFE Treaties with a view to completion within a ten year timeframe.

Article IX Duration of the Arrangement

This Arrangement shall be of unlimited duration.

Article X Amendments, Signature, Accession, Ratification, Entry into Force, Reservations, Depositary, Authentic Texts

Amendments, signature, accession, ratification, entry into force, reservations, depositary, authentic texts are subject to an agreement.

The BASIC Elements proposal on General and Complete Disarmament is intended in part as a response to the statement of the current UN Secretary General,

"The world is facing acute challenges in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. I come from a country that has experienced first-hand, in my lifetime, the ravages of conventional war and the threats of nuclear weapons from North Korea, and other weapons of mass destruction.

Such threats are, of course, not unique to my region. There is widespread support throughout the world for the view that nuclear weapons must never be used again. We need only look at their indiscriminate effects; their impact on the natural environment; their profound implications for regional and global security.

Some now call this an emerging nuclear "taboo".

Yet, if these arguments are so strong, why do such threats persist? Why has disarmament remained only a noble goal, rather than becoming an historic achievement?

The answer requires a little historical context. Disarmament entails the physical elimination of certain weapons, as opposed to the regulation of armaments. Both goals are found in the UN Charter. In 1959, the United Nations adopted a resolution, a very historic resolution, on "general and complete disarmament under effective international control" -- also known by its acronym GCD. This resolution combined the two goals of eliminating weapons of mass destruction and regulating conventional arms. In 1978, the first special session of the General Assembly adopted GCD as the "ultimate objective" of States in the disarmament process.

As important as it is, however, GCD is not an end in itself. It serves an even broader global good: international peace and security. Unfortunately, I fear that few understand what this term GCD actually means. And I see little evidence that States are taking steps to ensure that their laws, policies, budgets, and bureaucracies are oriented to fulfilling this goal.

Part of the explanation no doubt lies in the many misunderstandings of the term. Critics caricature it as an attempt to eliminate literally every weapon on Earth. They have dismissed it as utopian. They have interpreted it as implying that disarmament must await the prior achievement of world peace. And they offer alternative approaches to

international peace and security, including those based on the endless pursuit of military superiority, the balance of power, doctrines of deterrence, technology restrictions, and other such measures.

All of these, however, have their own weaknesses. Typically, they advance the interests of only specific States, rather than the welfare and security of all.

The great advantage of the GCD concept is that it recognizes that the ability to achieve a WMD-free world will require both the elimination of such weapons and additional changes in the way that States produce, develop, transfer, and use conventional weapons. In many regions these are very closely related issues.

The Secretary General continues to see General and Complete Disarmament as [a priority for the international community](#).

The BASIC Elements draft negotiating text fulfils a range of objectives.

First of all. It does what it says it does. It is a practical tool for achieving what is often described as an impossible, utopian dream.

Because it is a precision instrument for disarmament it provides governments, NGOs and individual citizens a direct route to the technical mechanisms for a world of secured weapons.

Thus it gives a community that has already achieved much a new and badly needed focus.

The Basic Elements draft negotiation text is a comprehensive approach to realising global disarmament, building upon best practice. It can be implemented incrementally and supplement existing initiatives. It offers a rapid countdown to global zero nuclear weapons and can build on humanitarian disarmament initiatives to encompass conventional weapons stocks.

These Basic Elements includes the internationalization of Eur-Asian treaties governing tanks, artillery, helicopters and war planes and also applies them to the vessels of naval forces. At the regional level, it is important to recognize the efforts made by the UN, the African Union, and the Organisation of American States towards the objective of developing confidence and comprehensive security-building measures. The Basic Elements approach can be adopted incrementally and supplement those existing efforts.

The European security treaties from around 1990 enabled a 'peace dividend' for European tax payers over the last decades but neither states nor NGOs have sought to export or extend these models. We should note that the decay of these agreements has made the current crisis in Ukraine less controllable.

The Basic Elements text addresses Nuclear and Biological Weapons by drawing on the technical aspects of the UN mandated inspection process for Iraq's WMD and the US-Russian strategic nuclear agreements (START).

Present humanitarian initiatives are regarded by many states as part of a process for G&CD, for example proposals for [halting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects](#) are made in this context. G&CD has long been a goal of the developing world to boost to sustainable development through the concept of [disarmament and development](#).

The Basic Elements text focuses on a rapid and holistic approach is designed to demonstrate the practicality of this unified approach, so helping change the paradigm of present activity from a

fragmentary and step-by-step approach to one which offers a highly challenging and yet demonstrably practical message to vested interests.

The Basic Elements approach moves the application of humanitarian concern from the trade in weapons to their deployment, possession and production. An initiative on conventional weapons and CSBMs can also help bypass real and diplomatic obstacles to nuclear disarmament. Most countries that seek or possess nuclear weapons have regional security concerns around conventional weapons threats: Israel, Pakistan, China and Russia for example. Ignoring this dimension damages the credibility of nuclear only disarmament campaigns. Diplomatically, the argument over linkage between the nuclear and general disarmament clauses of NPT Article VI can be overcome once it is realised that conventional disarmament is practical and introducing it into the debate is not just another roadblock to nuclear disarmament.

With respect to nuclear and related 'WMD', the necessity for prevention of humanitarian catastrophe is clear. The Basic Elements text takes the world's most effective, proven and comprehensive mechanism for WMD disarmament, the UN authorised regime imposed on Iraq, and suggests that the International Community including the UN Security Council voluntarily accept the Iraq inspection regime to apply to themselves. Notwithstanding the highly politically controversial nature of the inspection regime and the war, the inspection system itself worked and this should be used as a foundation for global application.

Recent initiatives on nuclear disarmament including the new START Treaty, along with the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty show a significant commitment across the spectrum of the disarmament agenda. It has been noted before<sup>2</sup> that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin.

There is and should be no linkage between conventional and WMD control and elimination strategies there is much to be gained by developing them in a mutually reinforcing manner. We should recall that in the late 1980s and 1990s many negotiations were conducted in parallel and these were successful partly because they generated synergy.

There are now latent and converging national and institutional interests in addressing major conventional weapons holdings as well as nuclear weapons. Globally, the core constituency actively pursuing nuclear and WMD non-proliferation and disarmament is usefully combining with the broader coalitions interested in

---

2 <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Infoservice/Presse/Interview/2006/061111-Namensartikel-D-NOR.html>

controls on conventional armaments in the context of weak states and poor levels of development. Zero nuclear weapons in the world will be accomplished in a climate of confidence and controls on conventional armaments and new technologies.

The Nuclear Weapons States speak of the need to create the conditions for zero nuclear weapons but have no concrete plan to that end. The Basic Elements text presents them with one.

There are a number of convergent global issues and interests that can be brought together to provide the political momentum to make this agenda a reality. These include: (1) Efforts to achieve zero nuclear weapons will be made much easier where attention has been given to conventional forces and confidence building measures regionally and to those capable of strategic intervention across regions; (2) holdings and production of conventional arms in general are emerging as an issue (if only rhetorically) in debates on the Arms Trade Treaty and on weapons systems or categories under small arms and light weapons (SALW) and Cluster Munitions; (3) some states see progress on 'General and Complete Disarmament' as linked to nuclear disarmament in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - and globalisation of some provisions of the CFE/CSBMs and Open Skies offer a means of realising this NPT provision rather than regarding it as an obstacle to progress on nuclear disarmament; (4) recession driven defence cuts in the shorter term will provide strains on US international commitments and other nation's budgets that regional arms control agreements may sooth; (5) a major expansion of effective arms control is an effective preventive measure to the well-known conflict pressures arising from international economic dislocation; (6) the European agreements on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the associated Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) and Open Skies regime provide a strong and unprecedented institutional platform for expansion that should not be allowed to collapse through NATO-Russia disputes.

What is needed is to unite the most recent progress in humanitarian disarmament with a renewed 'classical' process based on treaty and rule of law methods - with the associated principles of equity, objectivity, universality and transparency.

Such an approach should fill dangerous gaps in the pattern of coverage and effort, and minimise the double-think and double standards that are rife in current policies and practices.

Much can be done to advance<sup>3</sup> the Basic Elements for a legally binding agreement on general and complete disarmament - including setting deadlines to conclude negotiations and implement agreements.

It took just eighteen months to overcome the ideological and technological issues governing the Cold-War armies and air-forces.<sup>4</sup> Today, with this precedent as a guide and no ideological barrier comparable to the confrontation with communism, a 'general disarmament agreement' could be scheduled within two years of the talks starting. The basis for a global-disarmament compact is provided by the current agreements we have itemised.

There have been arguments for and against timetables. One notable success was the 1996 CTBT, agreed by a date set at the 1995 NPT meeting.

The implementation process might build on that in the CFE Treaty. 75% of all stocks would be verifiably "Scrap'd" in two years; the remaining quarter would be cut again by 75% in the next two years; until, a lower limit is agreed enabling state internal security and monopoly of force within a state and to provide for peace enforcement and peace keeping operations.

A policy research agenda needs to be developed further. This needs to include the definition of what states are entitled to retain for internal reasons pursuant to the duty of the state to retain a monopoly on the use of force, holdings by private contractors, the interface between small arms and light weapons categories and the lower sizes of weapons under the existing CFE arrangements and lessons learned to be shared between the experiences of European arms control and humanitarian disarmament processes.

The bonus for citizens in every country, taxpayers, the poor and the global economy as a whole would be immense.

We are looking forward to developing relationships with more states to bring the Basic Elements text formally into the Conference on Disarmament, towards the General Assembly and into the Non-Proliferation Treaty review to fulfill the entirety of Article VI of that Treaty.

As it is better understood the Basic Elements text on general disarmament re-frames the understanding of what may be possible.

Of course the time is not good, international relations are in a poor state. Perhaps we should wait for them to improve. Or rather by pressing ahead with the disarmament agenda we can redefine the possible, take control of our destiny rather than merely sit as

---

3 [http://books.sipri.org/product\\_info?c\\_product\\_id=346](http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=346)

4 <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/about/index.cfm>

spectators at a tragedy. And what great tragedy could there be than to proceed into twenty first century disasters having lost all institutional memory of the great achievements in disarmament that were built with such effort and success in the late twentieth century.

When it comes to General Disarmament we do not need to re-invent the wheel. The wheels have already been built. In the Basic Elements we have assembled the wheels into the design for a vehicle that public opinion will want you to drive and which will make states able to travel in security and comfort.

Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

Dr Dan Plesch

Reader, Director of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS University of London.

[www.scrapweapons.com](http://www.scrapweapons.com)

[dp27@soas.ac.uk](mailto:dp27@soas.ac.uk)

44-(0)771 2833909

SCRAP is part of the Disarmament and Globalisation research programme at the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at SOAS, University of London. For more information about the Centre please visit our website at: [www.cisd.soas.ac.uk](http://www.cisd.soas.ac.uk)

### **Treaty Links**

- i. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml>

- ii. 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

<http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010>

- iii. Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty)

[http://www.nti.org/e\\_research/official\\_docs/inventory/pdfs/cfe.pdf](http://www.nti.org/e_research/official_docs/inventory/pdfs/cfe.pdf)

iv. Treaty on Open Skies

<http://www.osce.org/library/14127>

v. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I)

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf>

vi. New START (START II)

<http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/starthtm/start/start1.html>

vii. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

<http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/inf2.html>

viii. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

<http://www.state.gov/t/avc/trty/16411.htm>

---

i Originally developed in Dan Plesch, *The Beauty Queen's Guide to World Peace*, (London) Politics, 2004, Chapter 8 and subsequently in research working papers at [www.cisd.soas.ac.uk](http://www.cisd.soas.ac.uk).

ii Dan Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*, (London, I.B. Tauris, 2011)