



CHAPTER 7

The Relationship Between Humanitarian Disarmament and General and Complete Disarmament

Dan Plesch and Kevin Miletic

0 The Secretary-General of the United Nations' new agenda for disarmament
1 has greatly broadened the scope of humanitarian disarmament and in so
2 doing has returned it to its roots in the last century by reinventing GCD
3 for the twenty-first century. Coincidentally his recommendation to rethink
4 GCD at the end of his introduction echoes word for word the title of
5 UNODA Occasional Paper No. 28 which was designed and co-produced

[AQ1](#)

[AQ2](#)

Dan Plesch and Kevin Miletic lead the Strategic Concept for the Removal of Arms and Proliferation developed by the Centre for International Studies & Diplomacy at SOAS University of London www.scrapweapons.com, www.cisd.soas.ac.uk.

D. Plesch (✉) · K. Miletic
Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy,
SOAS University of London, London, UK
e-mail: dp27@soas.ac.uk

K. Miletic
e-mail: 603048@soas.ac.uk

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6 by the authors of this chapter. Until the initiative by Antonio Guterres
7 humanitarian disarmament in the early twenty-first century was concerned
8 with certain types of weapons that are indiscriminate in their effects or
9 cause unacceptable harm such as nuclear weapons, landmines, blinding
10 laser weapons and cluster munitions. However, this chapter contends that
11 the notion of humanitarian disarmament has not always been understood
12 in such restrictive manner. It will do so by analyzing humanitarian popular
13 movements from the late nineteenth until the late twentieth century which
14 were concerned by the humanitarian impact on combatants of what we
15 now call major conventional weapons namely tanks, artillery, helicopters
16 warplanes and warships.

17 The chapter will reflect on the popular disarmament campaigns to stop
18 the horrors of WWI and then prevent its recurrence in the interwar period
19 as nationalism resurfaced and states re-armed and the return to these issues
20 in the new UN Organisation after 1945 with the new incentive of nuclear
21 weapons. The addition of experts' and high-profile individual's voices to
22 traditional grass-root disarmament movements and their contribution to
23 both nuclear and conventional disarmament in reaction to the specter of a
24 global nuclear war. Then after the end of the Cold War civil society advocacy
25 for disarmament broke down into myriads of single weapons category.
26 This chapter will then conclude by a reflection on the complementarity of
27 general and complete disarmament (GCD) and humanitarian disarmament.

28 The chapter shows that since the late nineteenth century, civil society—
29 be it individuals, full-fledged NGOs or more flexible advocacy networks—
30 have pushed for comprehensive disarmament on humanitarian grounds
31 and at times with success by directly or indirectly getting states to integrate
32 humanitarian concerns in their disarmament policy. Acknowledging
33 that some forms of weapons control efforts are solely or predominantly
34 driven by reasons of strategic stability without concern for humanitarian
35 issues. It is clearly the case that the strategic studies discipline/discourse
36 and the governmental debate characterizes itself in this way. Nevertheless,
37 national leaders have often over the decades spoken of the humanitarian
38 and existential drivers of disarmament. The Non-Aligned Movement's and
39 the Kennedy administration's efforts as well as the Helsinki process are
40 cases in point.

41 In this chapter, attention will be paid to the concept of GCD a term
42 for comprehensive disarmament in the UN lingua franca. In keeping with
43 the definition of the Final Document of the First United Nations General
44 Assembly (UNGA) Special Session devoted to disarmament, GCD is

understood as follows “general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control shall permit States to have at their disposal only those non-nuclear forces, armaments, facilities and establishments as are agreed to be necessary to maintain internal order and protect the personal security of citizens and in order that States shall support and provide agreed manpower for a United Nations peace force”.¹ GCD means elimination of all WMDs and reduction and control of conventional weapons to the minimum level for national law enforcement purposes and UN peace force. It is important to note that GCD is not oblivious to the wider international security context and provides measures to strengthen institutions for maintaining peace and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.

PRE-WWI CONTEXT

Humanitarian concerns about the impact of industrialized warfare began in Europe with the events that led to the founding of the Red Cross in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Hague Conferences had as their convening intent a disarmament priority. At this time neither Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) nor air forces had been created, and naval forces produced far smaller human impact than land forces. Public political attention was therefore focused primarily on artillery and infantry weapons of armies while elite concerns also addressed naval armaments.

The convening statement from the Czar of Russia, spoke of the crushing economic burden of arms expenditure and the fearful thought of the “horror” that “inevitable” war would bring. The Hague conferences emphasized the humanitarian and strategic imperatives for disarmament.

Public pressure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included socialist and communist movements in Europe’s imperial states—whether absolutist or liberal—was a significant social driver seeking to combat nationalist and militarist social forces that interacted and drew leadership from the elites. Russia faced a reality of strategic military weakness with respect to the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires and this in itself provides a traditional realist motive for seeking weapons control.

¹United Nations. (1978, 23 May–30 June). *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly During Its Tenth Special Session*. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/A-S10-4.pdf>.

78 Across Europe though the rise of an educated working class in the face
 79 of serious economic dislocation in industrializing Europe gave rise to a
 80 critique of imperialism epitomized by Hobson (2005).

81 Traditional state rivalries and interests prevented the realization of the
 82 disarmament goal at The Hague. Nevertheless humanitarian conventions
 83 were concluded and sought to provide limitations on what was acceptable
 84 in land warfare, and even outlawed one form of weapon.

85 The weapon outlawed in 1899 was the so-called dum-dum or explosive
 86 bullet that was thought to produce an unnecessarily large wound on impact
 87 with the human body. This was largely adhered to by all sides through the
 88 subsequent two world wars.

89 The Hague initiatives certainly did not prevent the 1914–1918 war,
 90 nevertheless some tangible and enduring achievements were made at the
 91 Hague conferences that provide the foundations of international law of
 92 armed conflict, for the purposes of this argument it is most notable that
 93 there were a range of interrelated initiatives achieved in parallel and that
 94 the overall objective of general disarmament provided overarching political
 95 framework and momentum.

96 The Great War itself had been long predicted by a range of commenta-
 97 tors and civil society actors who at least theoretically anticipated the subse-
 98 quent devastation. Most liberal and social democratic movements became
 99 subsumed in their respective nationalist fervors in the early years of the war,
 100 though the British, for example, did not exhibit the rapture seen in Berlin
 101 at the prospect of a short jolly war.

102 As the war stagnated and the slaughter intensified; various governmental
 103 and civil society political initiatives were made to try to bring the war to a
 104 halt. Some 1500 women from 12 countries gathered in the Netherlands in
 105 May 1915 to try to bring the war to an end. This meeting created the—
 106 the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), was
 107 awarded the Nobel Prize in 1931 and 1946.

108 INTERWAR PERIOD

109 The impact of the 1914–1918 war on disarmament and the humanitarian
 110 and social impact of war is hard to envisage after a century. The Austro-
 111 Hungarian, Russian, and Turkish Empires had existed for centuries as had
 112 Germany in its Prussian pre-history. They were all gone in a year. Today’s
 113 comparators might be the simultaneous collapse of the United States, the
 114 EU, and China.

115 While some parts of European society saw their futures in a revived
 116 and militarized nationalism, far more prevalent were liberal, socialist and
 117 communist ideologies opposed to militarism and channeling political hope
 118 for a less military and even pacifist future. The latter's argument that the
 119 war was a self-serving conspiracy of capitalists was exemplified by postwar
 120 revelations that the British business Vickers paid royalties to their German
 121 counterparts Krupp for the use of patented artillery technology throughout
 122 the war and after (Neylan 1926).

123 The political science literature of the early nineteenth century, which is
 124 not usually referenced in contemporary analysis, shows that disarmament
 125 was understood as a humanitarian concern. Thomas J. Walsh quite explicitly
 126 urges Congress to take the lead on disarmament to prevent the horrors of
 127 another world war which he predicts would bring more chaos, suffering and
 128 destruction than the Great War of 1914–1918. In his words, “[T]he world’s
 129 troubles would dissipate like the mist before the morning sun if it could only
 130 get rid of armies and navies maintained for international war, the expense of
 131 which appreciates constantly and alarmingly with the development of science.
 132 The horrors which characterized the last great war but feebly foreshadow those
 133 which will attend the next if in the Providence of God and the wilfulness of man
 134 there should be another world war. conquer the world, every military nation
 135 accepts them as certain to be features of the next war. They are all building
 136 submarines to prey upon unarmed commercial vessels; they are all perfecting
 137 their so-called chemical warfare service; and they are all developing, with
 138 fiendish ingenuity, aerial torpedoes and other like devices that, loosening their
 139 load of explosives and deadly gases, will annihilate the civilian population of
 140 unfortified cities” (Walsh 1921).

141 Taft warns against the risk of being taken hostage by endless technical
 142 military details when negotiating disarmament agreements and letting them
 143 overshadow the necessity to reach agreement in order to achieve our end
 144 goal of ensuring peace. He contends that “[W]e fall into the habit of weigh-
 145 ing in a fine balance, considerations of security; we permit our technicians to
 146 make close mathematical calculations concerning a balance of warlike power.
 147 (...) Wise statesmanship takes account of and gives due weight to such things
 148 as these, but knows better than the technicians the extent to which they are to
 149 be considered in making international arrangements for the preservation of
 150 the peace of the world” (Taft 1928).

151 When considering the rise in tensions between France and Germany in
 152 the 30s and the risks it poses to peace in Europe. Allen W. Dulles notes that
 153 “[W]e are faced with a practical situation of the utmost seriousness for the

154 *peaceful development of Europe (...) There seems only one solution, and that*
 155 *is through a general disarmament treaty under which France and Germany*
 156 *both agree upon the scale of their armaments” (Dulles 1932).*

157 The slow progress on disarmament in the 30s prompted Vittorio Scialoja
 158 to revisit the reasons why disarmament was included in the Covenant of the
 159 League of Nations and why disarmament treaties were made. He argues
 160 that “[I]n the eyes of those who framed the Covenant, disarmament was to
 161 consist first in an immediate return of all countries from a war footing to
 162 a peace footing; and then in a reduction of armies, navies and air forces to
 163 a minimum consistent with the maintenance of domestic order and security
 164 from attack. Those gentlemen never thought of that minimum as the mini-
 165 mum necessary for fighting an eventual war. War was regarded as out of the
 166 question, as some thing if not impossible at least very improbable, in view of the
 167 declarations which had been made in the various treaties and which in some
 168 instances had been fortified by legal sanctions (Scialoja 1932).” He goes on
 169 and says that “[I]n the treaties in question disarmament was considered as a
 170 duty to civilization, as a solid foundation for peace, and as a means of remov-
 171 ing causes of international discord. It was to be the means of devoting the huge
 172 sums spent on armies, navies, air fleets and fortifications to the promotion of
 173 human progress. This was the intelligence and the good sense of the matter
 174 (ibid.).”

175 Echoing those humanitarian concerns of part of the Euro-Atlantic intel-
 176 ligentsia, several ambitious international initiatives motivated by the impera-
 177 tive to avoid the occurrence of a second global war took form during the
 178 interwar period. At the end of World War I, the victors were quick at ident-
 179 ifying categories of weapons which had so much destructive power that it
 180 was deemed best to eliminate them or limit them. It was feared that their
 181 unchecked presence in national arsenals could tip the balance of power
 182 and precipitate the world down the path of yet another arms race result-
 183 ing in a catastrophic scenario where the abundance of those weapons could
 184 inflict major material and human damage upon both victors and vanquished
 185 alike. The Washington Naval Treaty signed in 1922 limiting the construc-
 186 tion of battleships, battle cruisers, and aircraft carriers and limiting tonnage
 187 of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines; and the Protocol for the Prohibi-
 188 tion of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of
 189 Bacteriological Methods of Warfare signed in 1925 are prime examples.

190 Other initiatives not only focused on the elimination or control of the
 191 means to wage war but on outlawing war itself as a tool of foreign policy.
 192 The Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928 is usually derided as a pipe dream that

193 failed to prevent WWII. Although it may not have ended all war, a Yale
 194 study shows that it was highly effective in ending the main reason countries
 195 had gone to war: conquest.² When it outlawed war, the Kellogg–Briand
 196 Pact changed nearly every rule that states had followed for centuries. Most
 197 important, countries could no longer establish right, justice, or title by
 198 brute strength. Because war was now illegal, except in cases of self-defense,
 199 states lost the right of conquest. Yes, an aggressor could still take a city by
 200 force, but doing so would no longer mean that as a matter of law, it became
 201 the aggressor’s city.³

202 Despite their ill-fated results, those initiatives established important
 203 humanitarian precepts for disarmament and the renunciation of war that
 204 influenced future states behavior. The Prohibition of the Use of Gases
 205 and Bacteriological Methods in Warfare introduced a taboo on WMD
 206 and served as a basis for the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the
 207 Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological)
 208 Weapons and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, and the 1993 Con-
 209 vention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling,
 210 and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Similarly, the effect
 211 of the Washington and London Naval Treaties upon the development of the
 212 disarmament work can hardly be overemphasized. According to traditional
 213 realism there should have been a naval arms race between the United States
 214 and the UK. The leading naval power should not have agreed to curb its
 215 naval supremacy to quell a potential arms race with the second naval power.
 216 The assurance of naval dominance as a matter of national security should
 217 have been a sufficient reason to engage in an arms race and possibly war.
 218 Yet, we have an example where the two naval superpowers of the time
 219 decided not to seek naval dominance but accepted to be on par.

220 These achievements may seem relatively simple in retrospect; in fact,
 221 they were revolutionary. The Treaty of Versailles had imposed restrictions

²Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro are professors of law at Yale and the authors of the forthcoming book *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World*. Retrieved from <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/opinion/sunday/outlawing-war-kellogg-briand.html?smid=fb-share&referrer=http://m.facebook.com>.

³Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro are professors of law at Yale and the authors of the forthcoming book *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World*. Retrieved from <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/opinion/sunday/outlawing-war-kellogg-briand.html?smid=fb-share&referrer=http://m.facebook.com>.

222 on a vanquished foe. Despite the arguable sincerity of Japan to respect the
 223 provisions of the Treaty, The Washington Treaty was a voluntary renun-
 224 ciation by the leading naval Powers of existing armaments and of their right
 225 to increase their naval force beyond prescribed limits. It showed that the
 226 limitation of armaments by international agreement was feasible; and the
 227 London Conference, by carrying the Washington principles still further,
 228 indicated that once an agreement is concluded, mutual reductions become
 229 easier (Dulles 1932). This rationale behind the Washington Naval Treaty
 230 has underpinned most major bilateral arms control agreements between
 231 the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War including the
 232 Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear
 233 Forces Treaty (INF) and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).
 234 Despite the failure of the Western Liberal democracies to use these early
 235 humanitarian-led initiatives to curtail the dictators (By for example full
 236 sanctions against Italy for the invasion of Ethiopia, Japan for Manchuria
 237 and Germany for the re-occupation of the Rhineland), it had a number of
 238 successes in conflict prevention in the interwar period and established last-
 239 ing innovations in creating international organizations and norms (Clavin
 240 2013).

241 The civil society organizations engaged both in a moral humanitarian
 242 stand against war and also engaged with the technical issues of disarmament
 243 and brought forward various initiatives designed to break the deadlock.
 244 Peace movements helped to initiate and legitimize, “realist” openings such
 245 as the Washington Naval Conference and the Locarno treaties to advance
 246 their normative agendas. The League of Nations Union (LNU) is a prime
 247 example of how British Peace Groups managed to influence their govern-
 248 ment into engaging seriously with disarmament through publicizing and
 249 campaigning. The LNU’s journal, *Headway*, insisted that “Washington is
 250 not a rival, but a complement to Geneva.” According to the US Embassy
 251 in London, public approval correlated with a change in the governmen-
 252 t’s attitude: “The public... is strongly in favour of disarmament, as being
 253 the obvious way in which to attain peace and economy. Lately, too, the
 254 attitude of the Government has changed from being lukewarm to being
 255 as enthusiastic as any British government can be expected to be regard-
 256 ing another government’s project (i.e. Washing Naval Conference).” The
 257 1924 Geneva Protocol which calls for a disarmament conference in 1925
 258 was also an object of British Peace groups’ campaigns. The LNU urged its
 259 branches to educate public opinion to support the Protocol and urged the
 260 British government to take the lead in promoting it. The National Peace

261 Council (NPC) devoted the first three months of 1925 to a campaign in
 262 favor of the Protocol. Campaigns were so effective that Chamberlain even
 263 agreed to receive a delegation from the LNU to press its case for the Pro-
 264 tocol. Chamberlain did however, impose conditions on the deputation to
 265 inhibit any propaganda value it may have wished to obtain; it was to be con-
 266 fidential, no reporters were to be allowed, only six LNU members could
 267 be present, and they could give no more than two speeches outlining the
 268 LNU position (Lynch 1999).

269 Perhaps, The League of Nations, which became the focus of internation-
 270 alist and much socialist political organization, best illustrates this point. The
 271 League of Nations had war prevention as its objective.

272 From its foundation, the League had a mechanism for the development
 273 of disarmament as envisaged in the Versailles Treaty. The League became
 274 a focus for unprecedented political activity from parties and a wide range
 275 of civil society.

276 The international public protest for peace and the engagement of elites
 277 produced enough pressure that in 1932 the League convened a World
 278 Disarmament Conference (WDC) that opened in Geneva in 1932.⁴ Both
 279 US Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt made proposals
 280 to the conference (Wilson 1963). Hoover proposed both one-third cuts
 281 in budgets in the strained times of the Great Depression and a focus on
 282 reducing offensive armaments.

283 The public civil society pressure included a global petition of eight mil-
 284 lion signatures. Until the digital age, the collection of signatures by activists
 285 going door to door or at tables on the street was a mainstay of polit-
 286 ical activism going back at least to the British Great Reform Act. Such
 287 literal nominal support may or may not have led signatories to further
 288 engagement, a context that critics of twenty-first century clicktivism might
 289 find reassuring as evidence of continuity of activism levels rather than their
 290 degradation.

291 WILPF exemplified the efforts of social movements. Its own description
 292 of activities at the conference has a very modern feel and illustrates tensions

⁴“We Want Disarmament All Round.” London, Pelican Press, 1931. “Programme of the national demonstration held on July 11th, 1931, (...) to promote the success of the World Disarmament Conference.” LON, Private Papers: Politis, P231-159. “Disarm or Rearm!”, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. New York Herald Tribune, Sunday 16 August 1931. LON, Private Papers, Politis, P231-159. Retrieved from <http://libraryresources.unog.ch/c.php?g=462667&p=3162632>.

293 familiar today (Adams, Undated). WILPF was aware of what was at stake
 294 and feared that a deadlock could have disastrous consequences. In their own
 295 words, “[W]omen watch with horrors and fear the increasing of armaments,
 296 fully convinced that they cannot but lead to war” (ibid.). To avoid this
 297 catastrophic scenario, WILPF mustered public support to put pressure on
 298 government delegates. WILPF alongside other pacifist groups, such as No
 299 More War Movement, created a transnational collaborative body called the
 300 International Consultative Group for Peace and Disarmament (ICG), in
 301 order to propound a unified line of policy. Under the ICG banner rallied
 302 “all the forces of peace, the communists, socialists, churches and pacifists
 303 against the militarists, governments and profiteers.”

304 The WILPF disarmament campaign was a combination of public advoca-
 305 cy and substantial involvement in solving technical disarmament issues.
 306 Indeed, it staged mass demonstration and presented 8 million signatures
 307 to Arthur Henderson, but it also ran technical workshops on the obstacles
 308 to disarmament in Geneva in a desperate push to revive the Conference. In
 309 the late summer of 1933, national branches of WILPF were told to press
 310 their respective governments and to support a six-point resolution advocat-
 311 ing no rearmament, qualitative disarmament, budgetary limitation, strict
 312 supervision, and a permanent supervisory organization. Despite the paci-
 313 fist movement’s best efforts, on 14 October 1933 negotiations collapsed.
 314 The German foreign minister announced that he felt “compelled to leave.”
 315 The World Disarmament Conference limped on until June the following
 316 year, but WILPF recognized all hopes for a peaceful political settlement in
 317 Europe were thwarted. Without German participation, the conference was
 318 meaningless (Adams, Undated).

319 The collapse of the World Disarmament Conference was an unparalleled
 320 blow for WILPF and the peace movement. WILPF blamed negligent govern-
 321 ments and a conference was convened to educate “public opinion...to
 322 understand the nature of the protest Germany had made.” A significant
 323 weight of expectation had been placed upon the conference and the grow-
 324 ing climate of war had made organization difficult, memberships drop, and
 325 placed a significant economic burden upon WILPF.

326 The failure of the 1932 WDC did not end WILPF’s efforts to rein in the
 327 arms trade and end war. External pressures forced WILPF to re-evaluate
 328 and refocus their efforts, ushering in a new forward-thinking generation.
 329 The diversity of members included men and more liberated women, who
 330 at one point even considered dropping “Women’s” from their title. WILPF
 331 became increasingly less dependent on the older suffrage personalities and

332 networks to forward the group. However, Jane Addams still promised
 333 “to defend those at the bottom of society who, irrespective of the victo-
 334 rory or defeat of any army, are ever oppressed and overburdened” (Adams,
 335 Undated).

336 POST-WWII AND COLD WAR

337 Disarmament survived the rise of the dictators and the collapse of the
 338 League. Freedom from fear (i.e. war) was a key part of Franklin D. Roo-
 339 sevelt’s (FDR) 4 freedom speech of 1941. Disarmament continued to rep-
 340 resent a part of the values brought together to motivate the war against
 341 fascism. It even featured in the Atlantic Charter and had enough interna-
 342 tional momentum that it featured in the new United Nations Organisa-
 343 tions (UNO). Article 8 of the Atlantic Charter issued by the US President
 344 Franklin D. Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister, Winston S. Churchill
 345 from the warships on which they were meeting off Newfoundland in August
 346 1941—before the United States was in the war—stated, “*They believe that*
 347 *all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must*
 348 *come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be main-*
 349 *tained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which*
 350 *threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe,*
 351 *pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security,*
 352 *that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and*
 353 *encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving*
 354 *peoples the crushing burden of armaments (Adams, Undated).”*

355 Such language is in some ways akin to that of the Versailles Treaty,
 356 disarmament of the enemy now, for the victors later. Nevertheless at such
 357 a desperate moment, with Hitler expected to conquer Moscow any day,
 358 and the Western Allies reeling from Egypt to the Pacific, it is remarkable
 359 that FDR felt any need to mention an end to armed violence. And here
 360 again it is evoked with the combined motives of realism and spiritualism
 361 (by which was meant morality and religion not seances). The motive was
 362 partly to rally people to the fight by offering a better future. And for sure,
 363 Hitler and Mussolini saw no need to espouse such sentiments to rally their
 364 followers.

365 This foundational document formed part of the 1942 Declaration by
 366 the United Nations. Indeed, all the states that were invited to the April
 367 1945 UN Conference on International Organisation at San Francisco to

368 create the charter that turned the wartime alliance of United Nations into
 369 the UN Organisation, had to agree to this document.

370 The UN Charter of 1945 puts disarmament on the agenda of the General
 371 Assembly in Article 11 and of the Security Council in Article 26.⁵ With
 372 the war over, and the 1932 WDC a sad note in the overture to World
 373 War realism, we might expect that there would have been no more talk
 374 of disarmament. However, the lesson appears to have been the opposite; a
 375 highly qualified acceptance of military power. From the preamble onwards,
 376 there is continued weaving of realist national interest in disarmament and
 377 peace and the humanitarian moral imperative to do so.

378 1945–1990

379 The insights epitomized by FDR’s wartime leadership to create the UNO
 380 soon ran foul of traditional realist and ideological competition known to
 381 history as the Cold War. The horrors of what soon came to be called “con-
 382 ventional war” became overshadowed by something more terrible. The
 383 specter of a resurgence of global conflict involving nuclear weapons, which
 384 could cause suffering on a scale not seen in human history, provided impetus
 385 for GCD at the UN in the 50s and 60s. A series of UNGA resolutions⁶
 386 called for the reduction and limitation of armaments, and later for GCD,
 387 on the grounds that it was a necessity to prevent the dangers of a new
 388 and disastrous war. GCD as historically understood by the UN is rooted in
 389 deep humanitarian motives that seek not just to reduce the harm caused by
 390 certain types of weapons and limit the risk or frequency of wars, but rather
 391 that seek to make such uses and occurrences impossible. This goal is fully
 392 consistent with the primary aim of the UN Charter to “save succeeding
 393 generations from the scourge of war”.

394 Those early post-WW2 humanitarian-inspired GCD efforts culminated
 395 in the 1961 joint US–Soviet McCloy and Zorin proposal calling for GCD
 396 and setting out guiding principles for future multilateral negotiations. The
 397 Soviet Union and the United States followed up on this agreement and sub-
 398 mitted separate proposals at the UNGA. The US proposal titled “Freedom

⁵United Nations Charter. (1945). Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/charter-United-nations/>.

⁶United Nations General Assembly Resolutions: UNGA 496 (V); UNGA 502 (VI); UNGA 1378 (XIV).

399 from War: The United States Program for General and Complete Disarma-
 400 ment in a Peaceful World” draws on humanitarian considerations similar
 401 to those expressed in the UN Charter. While it is possible to doubt the
 402 sincerity of these initiatives and see them as mere propaganda, it is impor-
 403 tant to note that at this point the humanitarian discourse was embedded in
 404 the concept of GCD, and there was a public acknowledgment that GCD
 405 was, for humanitarian reasons, a sensible strategy to avoid disaster. Espe-
 406 cially considering the fact that these initiatives were tabled shortly after the
 407 start of the construction of the Berlin Wall which considerably increased
 408 tensions between the two blocs. Perhaps what best illustrates this point is
 409 the address of President John F. Kennedy to the UNGA in 1961. Kennedy
 410 emphasized the destructiveness that would result from a Third World War.
 411 In his words, “[f]or fifteen years this organization [UN] has sought the reduc-
 412 tion and destruction of arms. Now that goal is no longer a dream – it is a
 413 practical matter of life or death. The risks inherent in disarmament pale in
 414 comparison to the risks inherent in an unlimited arms race. It is in this spirit
 415 that the recent Belgrade Conference – recognizing that this is no longer a
 416 Soviet problem or an American problem, **but a human problem** [emphasis
 417 added] – endorsed a program of ‘general, complete and strictly an interna-
 418 tionally controlled disarmament’. It is in this same spirit that we in the United
 419 States have labored this year, with a new urgency, and with a new, now statu-
 420 tory agency fully endorsed by Congress, to find an approach to disarmament
 421 which would be so far-reaching, yet realistic, so mutually balanced and bene-
 422 ficial, that it could be accepted by every nation. And it is in this spirit that we
 423 have presented with the agreement of the Soviet Union – under the label both
 424 nations now accept of ‘general and complete disarmament’ – a new statement
 425 of newly-agreed principles for negotiation.”⁷

426 These early UN proposals and joint Soviet–US initiatives were both
 427 previewed and echoed by the emerging Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
 428 at Bandung. Whatever their political inclinations, all countries present at
 429 the 1955 Bandung Conference were adamant about the importance of
 430 disarmament and the United Nations for the preservation of world peace
 431 and international security. In the final communiqué, states parties declared:
 432 “[T]hat universal disarmament is an absolute necessity for the preservation of
 433 peace and requested the United Nations to continue its efforts and appealed to
 434 all concerned speedily to bring about the regulation, limitation, control and

⁷John F. Kennedy, *Address at UN General Assembly* (New York: 1961). Retrieved from <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/DOPIN64xJUGRkgdHJ9NfgQ.aspx>.

435 *reduction of all armed forces and armaments, including the prohibition of*
 436 *the production, experimentation and use of all weapons of mass destruction,*
 437 *and to control to this end.”⁸ Following the gathering in Bandung, NAM was*
 438 *formally established in 1961 at a conference in where 28 countries from the*
 439 *global South agreed a meaningful final communiqué. The summit stressed*
 440 *the paramount importance of disarmament and put it at the forefront of*
 441 *the group’s agenda. Indeed, the first NAM declaration frames disarmament*
 442 *as an imperative and the most urgent task of humankind. This declaration*
 443 *identifies several issues deemed of vital interest. Of particular interest are*
 444 *the adoption of a comprehensive understanding of disarmament whereby*
 445 *GCD meant the elimination of armed forces, armaments, foreign bases,*
 446 *manufacture of arms as well as elimination of institutions, and installations*
 447 *for military training, except for purposes of internal security; and the total*
 448 *prohibition of the production, possession and utilization of nuclear and*
 449 *thermo-nuclear arms, bacteriological and chemical weapons as well as the*
 450 *elimination of equipment and installations for the delivery and placement*
 451 *and operational use of WMD on national territories; and the call for the*
 452 *great powers to sign without further delay a treaty for GCD in order to save*
 453 *humankind from the scourge of war and to release energy and resources*
 454 *now being spent on armaments to be used for the peaceful economic and*
 455 *social development of all.*

456 This early awareness of the importance of disarmament lies in the repres-
 457 sive colonial history of the global South. As Europe was enjoying an
 458 unprecedented period of relative peace and prosperity (1815–1914) and
 459 expanded its colonial territory to engulf some 85% of the world, colonies
 460 and even independent countries located in the global South experienced
 461 the violent military might of European colonial designs (Prashad 2007).
 462 From the 1856 bombardment of Canton by the UK to the 1931 Spanish
 463 aerial bombardment of Morocco, the South experienced the damage and
 464 suffering caused by heavy weaponry (ibid.). Hence, the Global South saw
 465 first-hand the necessity to eliminate the lethal tools developed and used by
 466 the North to impose its will and inflict harm and destruction upon weaker
 467 societies (Westad 2014). Noteworthy also is the reference to the United
 468 Nations as the preferred institutional framework for tackling disarmament.
 469 Since the Western and Eastern blocs had just begun the Cold War and their
 470 conception of security was synonymous of modernizing and building up

⁸Final Communique of the Bandung Conference. (1955). Retrieved from http://franke.uchicago.edu/Final_Communique_Bandung_1955.pdf.

471 military capabilities, the global South sought to bring the North to the
 472 disarmament table; and they insisted that they be part of a joint UN effort
 473 to regulate, limit, control and reduce all armed forces and armaments.
 474 Newly liberated countries understandably prioritized state sovereignty and
 475 national defense even more than some major powers. They wanted to make
 476 sure that the right to self-defense would be included in UN-sponsored
 477 disarmament negotiations. And that disarmament should not represent a
 478 threat to national security, and in their case a fear of recolonization.

479 In parallel to efforts by countries to make progress in disarmament, high
 480 profile groups and individuals also adopted the same approach to disarma-
 481 ment. The 1955 Russell–Einstein Manifesto, which is usually considered
 482 as the founding document of the Pugwash movement, clearly establishes
 483 disarmament as a human imperative. They present themselves “*not as mem-*
 484 *bers of this or that nation, continent, or creed, but as human beings, members*
 485 *of the species Man, whose continued existence is in doubt.*” They ask a simple
 486 question: “*shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce*
 487 *war?*” Their final advice is to “*Remember your humanity, and forget the*
 488 *rest.*” Echoing their call for nuclear war never to be fought for the sake of
 489 our survival, Philip Noel Baker in his 1959 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance
 490 speech observes that “*science and engineering had destroyed the barriers*
 491 *of time and space; that the Arms Race by creating distrust and fear, must*
 492 *obscure the peoples’ understanding of where their true interests lay; that War,*
 493 *if it should come, might imperil, or indeed destroy, the great achievements, in*
 494 *literature, in medicine, in science, which our Western civilization had begun*
 495 *to show.*”⁹

496 The rationale for these initiatives came from the understanding that the
 497 applicability of traditional Realism vanished with the bomb, and that states
 498 needs should thus temper their actions in a Kantian manner out of Realist
 499 necessity, a replication of the logic that drove multilateral cooperation in
 500 the wartime years and the establishment of the United Nations (Plesch
 501 and Weiss 2015). In other words, old conventional thinking could not be
 502 applied to nuclear weapons, and all countries, in particular nuclear powers,
 503 for the sake of their own survival and the survival of mankind, needed to
 504 embark on a program of disarmament.

⁹Philippe-Noel Baker, *Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech* (Oslo: 1959). Retrieved from https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1959/noel-baker-acceptance.html.

505 The popular term for the new threat was a direct humanitarian reference
 506 to the worst aspects of the Nazis—a Nuclear Holocaust. The hundreds of
 507 atmospheric nuclear test explosions conducted by the superpowers as well as
 508 the British and French made the threat a daily reality as did the introduction
 509 of the Hydrogen Bomb. Mass protests ensued. As nuclear particles began
 510 to be detected in cows milk fed to babies the humanitarian pressure on
 511 elites became intense.

512 After the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (CMC) which brought the World
 513 close to nuclear Armageddon, the comprehensive disarmament agenda
 514 shifted in favor of partial measures. GCD was not at the front and center
 515 of disarmament initiatives anymore but remained the objective and served
 516 as the overarching principle guiding a multitude of partial measures. As
 517 stipulated in the final document of the 1978 UNGA’s first special session
 518 devoted to disarmament: “[T]he ultimate objective of the efforts of States in
 519 the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective
 520 international control. **The principal goals of disarmament are to ensure**
 521 **the survival of mankind** [emphasis added] *and to eliminate the danger of*
 522 *war, in particular nuclear war, to ensure that war is no longer an instru-*
 523 *ment for settling international disputes and that the use and the threat of*
 524 *force are eliminated from international life, as provided for in the Charter*
 525 *of the United Nations.”¹⁰ This connection between GCD and humani-*
 526 *tarian considerations form the cornerstone of almost all major disarma-*
 527 *ment agreements negotiated from the 60s through to the mid-90s includ-*
 528 *ing the Bangkok Treaty; the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC); the*
 529 *Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); the Comprehensive Nuclear Test*
 530 *Ban Treaty (CNTBT); the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); the Pelindaba*
 531 *Treaty; the Sea Bed Treaty; the Treaty of Tlatelolco; the Treaty on Nuclear*
 532 *Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia.*

533 This pairing up of humanitarian considerations and disarmament was
 534 also a pillar of a formidable effort to reduce tensions in Europe between
 535 the United States and the Soviet Union that took shape in the early 70s with
 536 the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in 1972
 537 which eventually turned into a full-fledged organization: The Organisation
 538 for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The first paragraph of
 539 the Preamble of 1975 Final Act of the 1st CSCE Summit of Heads of State

¹⁰United Nations (1978, 23 May–30 June). *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly During Its Tenth Special Session*. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/upoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/A-S10-4.pdf>.

540 or Government affirms the objective of “*ensuring conditions in which people*
 541 *can live in true and lasting peace free from any threat to or attempt against*
 542 *their security.*”¹¹

543 The human dimension became a central feature of the Helsinki process.
 544 The CSCE, from the signing of the Final Act in August 1975 until the
 545 Paris Summit of November 1990, was characterized by discussions and
 546 negotiations on human rights and issues in the humanitarian field, which
 547 collectively came to be known in the CSCE by the mid-80s as the “human
 548 dimension.” The gradual preeminence of the human dimension, from 1977
 549 onwards, was an unexpected development. It amounted to a shift from the
 550 original state-centric approach aimed at promoting detente to an inclusion
 551 of a human dimension in the European security matrix (Heraclides 1993).
 552 The human dimension went beyond the freedom from war, it also included
 553 individual human rights such as the freedom of thought, conscience, reli-
 554 gion, or belief. These human rights issues were considered in parallel with
 555 confidence-building measures, arms control, and disarmament issues. The
 556 Istanbul Charter for European Security illustrates this point. The first para-
 557 graph sets out a vision for “*a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE*
 558 *area where participating States are at peace with each other, and individu-*
 559 ***als and communities live in freedom, prosperity and security*** [emphasis
 560 added]. (...) *The Charter will contribute to the formation of a common and*
 561 *indivisible security space. It will advance the creation of an OSCE area free of*
 562 *dividing lines and zones with different levels of security”* (OSCE 2000). This
 563 vision for common and indivisible security space rests upon three pillars:
 564 The Human Dimension, the Politico-Military Dimension, and the Eco-
 565 nomic and Environmental Dimension. Interestingly, disarmament, arms
 566 control and confidence and security building measures are heavily empha-
 567 sized under the Politico-Military Dimension: “*Disarmament, arms con-*
 568 *trol and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) are important*
 569 *parts of the overall effort to enhance security by fostering stability, transparency*
 570 *and predictability in the military field. Full implementation, timely adapta-*
 571 *tion and, when required, further development of arms control agreements and*
 572 *CSBMs are key contributions to our political and military stability.”*

573 Despite the breaking down of the comprehensive GCD agenda into
 574 partial measures during the period 60s until 90s, the examples of the mul-
 575 tilateral disarmament agreements and the Helsinki process show that the

¹¹ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. (1975). *Final Act*. Retrieved from <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?download=true>.

576 “disarmament for humanitarian imperative” rationale was still an important
 577 driver of progress. This rationale is perhaps best expressed in the words of
 578 two Nobel Peace Prize Laureates: Sean MacBride and Alfonso Garcia Rob-
 579 bles. In his acceptance speech of 1974 titled “The Imperatives of Survival,”
 580 Sean MacBride issues a stark reminder of “*the threat that hangs over all*
 581 *humanity at the moment. War destroys all human values and is the greatest*
 582 *danger to everything which human beings desire and cherish. Peace then has*
 583 *to be the DESPERATE IMPERATIVE of humanity.”*¹² His number one
 584 suggestion to achieve peace is GCD. In a preemptive response to critics, he
 585 adds that he “*can already hear many say Utopia. Impossible of achievement.*
 586 *Of course, it will be difficult but what is the alternative? The nearly certain*
 587 *destruction of the human race.”* Similarly, Alfonso Garcia Robbles, in his
 588 1982 acceptance speech, makes a plea for when the Nobel Peace Prize is
 589 awarded, “*the highest priority be given to the contribution which the candi-*
 590 *dates, be they individuals or non-governmental organisations, have made to*
 591 *disarmament.”*¹³ He justifies this suggestion by profusely citing the text of
 592 the 1978 Final Document of the UNGA First Special Session devoted to
 593 disarmament that places disarmament at the center of the UN mechanism
 594 for the maintenance of peace and security. He notes that “*as the General*
 595 *Assembly of the United Nations rightfully proclaimed - and it did so by consen-*
 596 *sus - if it continues to be true that security is ‘an inseparable element of peace’,*
 597 *at present ‘the increase in weapons, especially nuclear weapons, far from help-*
 598 *ing to strengthen international security, on the contrary weakens it’, inasmuch*
 599 *as ‘the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today consti-*
 600 *tutes much more a threat than a protection for the future of mankind’. Thus,*
 601 *it is evident that the time has come to seek security in disarmament.”*

602 From 1972–1989, the two-armed blocs attempted to negotiate reduc-
 603 tions on conventional forces, as comments from British negotiators high-
 604 lighted by the UK National Archives, the talks were a site for actions of a
 605 highly technical nature took place only because of various political pressures

¹²Sean MacBride, *Nobel Lecture* (1974). Retrieved from https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1974/macbride-lecture.html.

¹³Alfonso G. Robles, *Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech* (1982). Retrieved from https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1982/robles-acceptance.html.

606 concerned with Alliance cohesion, financial pressures and an underlying fear
607 of the failure of deterrence and human destruction.¹⁴

608 The Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) was replaced by
609 the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe negotiations “CFE” rather than
610 “CAFE” for short to avoid the derision of an image of a “Vienna Cafe”
611 talking shop. These, within 18 months, had produced a Treaty that verified
612 the destruction of tens of thousands of tanks, artillery, combat aircraft, and
613 helicopters.¹⁵ These agreements came together in the Charter of Paris of
614 1990 which formally ended the Cold War confrontation in Europe.

615 POST-COLD WAR CONTEXT

616 The disarmament achievements and agenda of the early twenty-first century
617 have shrunk compared to that of the decades of the 1990s and 1980s.
618 Western “victors” in the Cold War paid little attention to the contribution
619 of disarmament and arms control in reducing and helping end the conflict.
620 Russia’s continued reference to the US unilateral abrogation of the Anti-
621 Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 as destroying the end of the Cold War
622 rapprochement finds little echo among Western states and NGOs.

623 This is not the space to discuss why this has occurred though we may
624 speculate that rather than the obduracy to agreeing the supposed “next-
625 steps” on a new and Western defined narrow path to disarmament by a few
626 minor powers the “imperial hubris” in Washington may play a larger part.
627 Certainly, also in the aftermath of the collapse of communism there was
628 a brief moment where the idea of major conventional war was regarded
629 widely as a matter of the past—despite the war over the invasion of Kuwait
630 and the dominance on the battlefield of major conventional weapons in
631 the wars of the Western Balkans. In the West an attachment to NATO and
632 muscular liberal intervention in the world’s banlieu legitimated Western
633 military power.

634 Western governments, Foundations, and NGOS largely ceased to be
635 concerned with major conventional weapons possession and deployment
636 by their own states. Despite the decade long Iran–Iraq war and Western

¹⁴Archives Retrieved from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080314211946/http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xeelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029395645>.

¹⁵OSCE *Documents on Confidence and Security- Building Measures*. Retrieved from <https://fas.org/nuke/control/osce/text/militar2.htm>.

637 and Soviet support for Iraq including its WMD programs and the subse-
 638 quent Iraqi annexation of Kuwait and its expulsion under a UN Chapter
 639 VII mandate. Non-proliferation eclipsed disarmament and became the top
 640 priority in weapons control for Western governments and NGOs.

641 Concern also shifted to the trade in weapons following the public out-
 642 rage at the supply of weapons to Saddam Hussein by the P5 members of the
 643 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Concern was managed through
 644 the introduction of the UN Arms Register of CFE TLE transfers which
 645 controlled nothing.

646 Some NGOs in the United States and the EU began a process that would
 647 culminate in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) a decade and half later. In this
 648 context weapons holdings by the P5 themselves and their allies ceased to
 649 be an issue save in the gradual weakening of the Vienna document—still
 650 for a time referred to officially as a foundation of European Security.

651 Events in the Balkans took center stage and US and NATO military
 652 force and power projection—as in the liberation of Kuwait—were widely
 653 regarded as a force for good among Western political and NGO circles.
 654 Transfer cascades of surplus weapons from Europe to Greece and Turkey
 655 and even in the case of the GDR navy—to Indonesia attracted little notice.
 656 Nevertheless—a mini CFE—formed part of the Dayton agreement that
 657 ended fighting in the Western Balkans.

658 NGO attention became focused on weapons that were doing the
 659 killing—especially anti-personnel landmines. This succeeded in the norm
 660 of prohibition among a coalition of the willing. The achievements of land-
 661 mines and cluster munitions norms have had clear and concrete results.
 662 Manufacturers have found that the market for these weapons has collapsed
 663 and militaries who argued they could not exist without them, no longer
 664 do so. This is particularly noteworthy because in the US military, improv-
 665 ised landmines were tagged as IEDs—Improvised Explosive Devices. The
 666 United States and its allies have been partly defeated at a tactical if not at
 667 the strategic level by these weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan although this
 668 occurrence has not entered the Landmine ban debate or produced new
 669 demand for landmines among NATO powers.

670 CONSIDERING THE UTILITY OF GCD IN THE 671 TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

672 In conflicts around the world major conventional armaments—artillery,
 673 tanks, and warplanes continue to make a decisive impact on the conduct of

674 war and all too often on the combatants and civilian population alike. The
 675 broken bodies and minds in the devastated cities of Libya, Syria, and Iraq
 676 have resulted in large part from the impact of these types of weapons.

677 At present no treaties or negotiations outside the Organisation for Secu-
 678 rity and Cooperation in Europe area provide for the control of tanks,
 679 artillery, warplanes, warships, and missiles or provide military Confidence
 680 and Security Building Measures. But these conventional weapons are killing
 681 people daily around the world, and enable major powers to threaten and
 682 invade others with dire humanitarian consequences as is the case in Syria.

683 The European security treaties from around 1990 enabled a “peace divid-
 684 idend” for European taxpayers over the last decades but neither states nor
 685 NGOs have sought to export or extend these models.

686 With respect to nuclear and related “WMD,” the necessity for preven-
 687 tion of humanitarian catastrophe is clear. The Strategic Concept for the
 688 Removal of Arms and Proliferation (SCRAP) developed by the Centre for
 689 International Studies & Diplomacy at SOAS University of London takes the
 690 world’s most effective, proven, and comprehensive mechanism for WMD
 691 disarmament, the UN authorized regime imposed on Iraq, and suggests
 692 that the International Community impose it on itself. Notwithstanding the
 693 highly politically controversial nature of the inspection regime and the war,
 694 the inspection system itself worked and this can be used as a foundation for
 695 global application.

696 Similarly, while there is and should be no linkage between conventional
 697 and WMD control and elimination strategies there is much to be gained by
 698 developing them in a mutually reinforcing manner. There are now latent
 699 and converging interests in addressing major conventional weapons hold-
 700 ings and proliferation as well as WMD. Globally, the core constituency
 701 actively pursuing nuclear and WMD non-proliferation and disarmament
 702 can usefully combine with the broader coalitions interested in controls on
 703 conventional armaments.

704 Writing off GCD as anachronistic misses the point. There is still a
 705 humanitarian imperative for GCD. The UNSG’s agenda on disarmament
 706 reminds us that “GCD remains the ultimate objective of the UN and it is
 707 now critical for the international community to reconceptualize this fun-
 708 damental goal” (Guterres 2018). Securing Our Common Future issued by
 709 Antonio Guterres the UN Secretary-General is an inspiring visionary doc-
 710 ument produced after extensive consultations with governments and civil
 711 society. For those with no prior knowledge but now seeking less-military
 712 solutions to global and regional problems the Guterres agenda is at one

713 and the same time an introduction and a handbook: A “Rough Guide” to
 714 world peace. In clear terms, Guterres surveys potential for world disarmament,
 715 from “Hand grenades to Hydrogen Bombs. He brings disarmament
 716 back in the diplomatic frame by establishing it as a cornerstone for the pre-
 717 ventation of war, the promotion of the sustainable development goals and
 718 the advancement of humanitarian principles. Compared to the succinct five
 719 points of his predecessor, his 70 + pages agenda provides a comprehensive
 720 vision of the role of disarmament and principles for its implementation.
 721 Never has the UN Secretariat produced such a substantive document on
 722 disarmament. It terms of strategic thinking it can be compared to Defence
 723 White Papers, except this document is about preventing wars, not fighting
 724 them. While critics point to the lack of detailed action points on technical
 725 issues and may find themselves a bit uneasy at grappling with the com-
 726 prehensiveness of the agenda, it should be understood more as a rallying
 727 point that can foster momentum for disarmament efforts of all sorts and
 728 can create synergies among different constituencies which are not usually
 729 working together.

730 Such a renaissance should be based partly on the new wisdom of weapons
 731 control developed over the last decade but should have at its core a devel-
 732 opment of the tremendous existing achievements and continuing prac-
 733 tices of disarmament. In particular, the period 1987–1996 represents a
 734 golden decade where numerous effective and verifiable treaties were made
 735 to reduce and remove armaments of many kinds. The daily humanitarian
 736 devastation caused by major conventional weapons and small arms and the
 737 unanticipated return to conventional warfare in the conflicts in the Middle
 738 East should focus the international community’s attention to produce an
 739 integrated strategy of general disarmament using the realistic and proven
 740 mechanisms already created. Such an approach is the necessary positive
 741 response to the laundry list of problems: the breakdown in US–Russian
 742 relations and associated arms agreements, the continuation of civil wars in
 743 some of the poorest parts of the world and the continued militarization—
 744 including nuclear weapons developments—among both strong and weak
 745 states and terrorist organizations. A reappraisal of the disarmament agenda
 746 which places it firmly in its humanitarian context will provide a stimulus to
 747 stakeholders (both governmental and non-). The international challenge
 748 is to ensure that this is not a false dawn similar to the rejection of nuclear
 749 weapons by General Butler and others in the mid-1990s.

750 Again, what is needed here is the integration and reconciliation of cur-
 751 rently fragmented approaches, especially with a view to filling dangerous

752 gaps. The humanitarian and development imperatives that have brought so
 753 much of international civil society to support work to control the trade in
 754 conventional arms, address small arms proliferation and mobilize resources
 755 for landmine-UXO removal should also be applied to the reduction in
 756 holdings of major conventional armaments and to help shape the institu-
 757 tional reforms to secure safer uses and sustainable disarmament. But the
 758 reworking of conceptual and policy frames needs to go deeper.

759 It may be useful to compare and contrast the interwar effort for disarma-
 760 ment culminating in the failed 1932 conference with the situation today.
 761 We may consider technical issues, institutional and expert contributions,
 762 organized political forces and wider social interest and movements.

763 Then and now governments and civil society engaged with technical
 764 issues. Many states made detailed proposals concerning what are now called
 765 “conventional” weapons, and these were engaged with by the global civil
 766 society movement. However, at this time, with rare exceptions, there were
 767 no effective technical agreements in place governing weapons systems.
 768 Nowadays, there are detailed technical arrangements and supporting insti-
 769 tutional capabilities concerning a wide range of weaponry.

770 Civil society and political engagement by major powers and alliances is
 771 at a low level. WILPF cannot now bring 1500 delegates together despite
 772 both increased ease of travel and new warnings of a nuclear Holocaust.
 773 The coalition for the nuclear ban treaty was not able to match the 6 million
 774 signatures of 1932 nor were there major street demonstrations as occurred
 775 in the 1960s and 1980s. Few governments maintain disarmament depart-
 776 ments and gone are the days when such departments were led by senior
 777 officials of cabinet rank.

778 Nevertheless, there are encouraging signs amidst the international
 779 gloom of 2018. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to a civil society
 780 organization continues to have a positively disruptive impact on the atro-
 781 phied world of disarmament diplomacy. The confrontations between the
 782 UN and Iran, and North Korea produce only rare and promptly denounced
 783 calls for preemptive (nuclear) war. The United Nations Secretary-General
 784 (UNSG) Antonio Guterres has announced new initiatives on disarmament.
 785 His outline of a combination of disarmament, human rights, and develop-
 786 ment offers the potential for a three front effort combining a large part of
 787 international society. The long awaited Fourth Special Session of the UN
 788 General Assembly on Disarmament might consider globalizing the pro-
 789 visions of the Charter of Paris of 1990; including the Open Skies Treaty
 790 envisioned by US President Eisenhower and agreements missiles and WMD

791 materials.¹⁶ Such measures can, as in prior eras, proceed in parallel with-
 792 out linkages offering progress on a broad front with mutually reinforcing
 793 synergies.

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