

The Thirtieth Annual

Virginia Model United Nations Conference

Presents...

United Nations Disarmament and International Security Committee

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Dear Delegates,

Let me be the first to welcome all of you to VAMUN XXX and to the Disarmament and International Security Committee of the General Assembly. My name is Brian Wolin and I will be chairing the committee along with my talented Dias. I am currently a 4th-year physics/mathematics double major harking from Williamsburg, Virginia, and I have been doing Model UN since my first year of middle school. Aside from actively participating in the International Relations Organization at The University, I engage in a diverse set of activities including backpacking, kayaking, parkour, and ultimate frisbee.

I have participated in VAMUN each year since arriving at UVa, including serving as Under-Secretary-General for Committees, but I am very excited to be chairing DISEC as my last committee. DISEC was always my favorite committee to be on when I was in high school and was by far the one I most excelled in. I am interested to hear your ideas and solutions to the topics I have chosen for the committee. Over the course of the conference, I am sure that you all will identify issues and offer up answers that none of the Dias members have considered, and which will stimulate us into further thought and reflection.

On that note, listen to each other and see this simulation not merely as a way to travel avoid school for a few days, but as a place to learn from your fellow delegates and discuss relevant topics in international affairs. As you debate, try to separate the opinions of the state you are representing from your personal opinions. Keeping dual thought processes going will allow you to properly represent your country while still thinking about what you personally think is the best solution.

Finally in this letter, I'd like to go over a few administrative matters. I strove this year to choose topics especially relevant to modern world affairs. In order to make the most of the simulation you must have a thorough grasp of the topics, your country's position in the matters and a general working knowledge of international relations. The former two of these you will demonstrate by writing a short (1-3 page) position paper detailing your country's positions and plans for action. Position papers must be turned into the Dias during the first session and will be taken into account when choosing awards.

Since DISEC will be a large committee, please make an effort to get to sessions early in order to facilitate a smooth beginning to debate. The disruption of many delegates arriving late to session is not something the Dias or the body as a whole should have to deal with. Thank you for taking the time to read this background guide. My goal is that it will serve well as a starting point for your research and a guide for debate during the simulation. If you have any questions about the committee, feel free to email me. Best of luck!

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Introduction

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the first of six main standing committees of the United Nations.

As the name implies, it deals with all matters pertaining to disarmament and international security. Each member state of the UN is represented on DISEC with equal voting rights (as opposed to the veto system of the Security Council). During this session, DISEC has an agenda consisting of three topics: establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East, reduction of military spending, and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

The establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East is a topic that has been debated for decades and continues to be relevant to peace in the region. World military expenditures are currently in free climb due in no small part to the United States' War on Terrorism escalations in other violent conflict. This increase in military spending presents challenges to those seeking funding for humanitarian and other ventures. Finally, the illicit trade of small arms fuels countless violent conflicts and supplies

terrorist groups with the tools necessary to commit heinous acts.

History of the Committee

The United Nations was established in 1945 by 51 nations “determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” (Charter). The General Assembly is detailed in Chapter IV of the charter and serves as forum open to all member states. Under the General Assembly, the Disarmament and International Security Committee was created to fulfill the UN’s stated goals of maintaining international peace and security, coordinating disarmament, and facilitating efforts by member states to address issues of peace and international security. DISEC also serves the Security Council in an advisory capacity for issues falling within its purview.

As a more specialized body, DISEC is the primary forum for the discussion of topics relating to international security. These topics range from nuclear disarmament and the use of chemical/biological weapons to preventing terrorism to the protection of civilians during armed conflict and ensuring the peaceful utilization of space. The topics

of this session will be trafficking of small arms and light weapons, reduction of military budgets, and the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones.

As a body of the General Assembly, resolutions passed by DISEC are non-binding upon the member states. Additionally, DISEC cannot impose sanctions upon states for non-compliance nor can it order the deployment of UN peacekeeping troops. However, as the highest committee dealing specifically with international peace and security, DISEC resolutions have great influence upon the debate of the other General assembly committees and upon the Security Council.

Every Fall DISEC meets for a 4-5 week session. Coming up this year will be the General Assembly's (and thus DISEC's) sixty-fifth session beginning on September 14th, 2010.

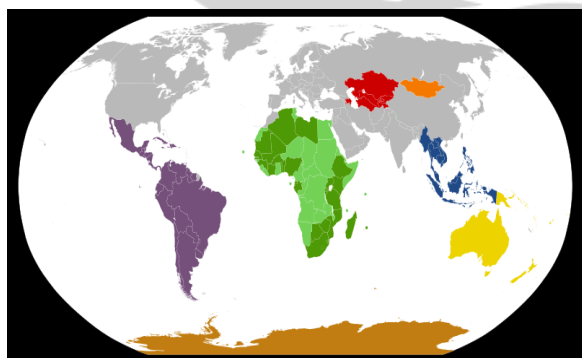


Figure 1: Nuclear Weapon Free Zones as of 2009

Topic 1: Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East

The General Assembly defined a NWFZ in its 1975 Resolution 3472 as a zone in which any group of states, freely exercising their sovereignty, establish a treaty which dictates a total absence of nuclear weapons in the zone and which creates a system of verification and control to guarantee compliance with the ban. These zones were originally conceived after the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1958 as a way to prevent new nuclear weapons states from emerging, especially in sensitive areas.

Currently there are nine established Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones (NWFZs) covering 84 million square kilometers and 115 states.

Three of these zones cover non-state areas: Antarctica, the international seabed, and outer space. The most recently created NWFZs are also the most noteworthy, namely East and Central Asia in 1997 and 2009 respectively and Africa in 2009 as well.

As early as 1974 leaders in the Middle East have been calling for a NWFZ in that region, but the original push for a treaty failed due to the dissent of Israel. More recent developments include Security Council Resolution 687, passed in 1991, which renewed the call for a NWFZ in the Middle East in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. Resolution 687 also introduced the idea of a Weapons-of-Mass-Destruction-Free Zone. Starting in 1992 and running to 1995, meetings of the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) working group saw Israel at the same table with its Arab neighbors discussing nuclear disarmament and security in general. These talks may have had the potential for the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East, but they eventually failed due to irreconcilable differences between the parties. Finally, the 1995 conference updating the NPT produced a call for the establishment of a Middle East NWFZ, but progress on that front has also stalled.

In 2007, Mohammed El-Baradei, then Chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) addressed a group in Algeria calling for renewed efforts to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East. This time, the issue centered around Israel and Iran with both

parties in a heightened state of tension and allegedly with unreported nuclear weapons programs. This call was met with agreement from the Security Council and the General Assembly, both of which currently support efforts to create a Middle East NWFZ.

Deeper Issues

As one might imagine, the issue of a Middle East NWFZ is not a cut and dry issue of preventing the scourge of nuclear war. The perpetual theme of tension between Israel and the Arab world has played a very large role in the history of the debate. As with many other issues, the establishment of a MENWFZ acts as a proxy issue in the general conflict.

In essentially every attempt at establishment of the zone, Israel has been the dissenting party, leading Arab leaders to accuse Israel of not negotiating in good faith and being committed to violence. On the other hand, Israel sees its nuclear weapons as its only sure deterrent against attack by the Arab world. Israel feels that its nuclear capabilities also act as a deterrent against increased terrorist activity and as a sign of strength in negotiations with its neighbors. As a result, only a lasting and sustainable peace could mitigate and satisfy this concern

to a degree that Israel might be willing to put its nuclear capability on the negotiating table” (Baumgart).

However, instead of seeing Israel’s refusal to give up nuclear weapons as a defensive tactic, Arab states interpret it as an offensive attempt to maintain military superiority. Thus Israel is not holding nuclear weapons as a last resort, but as a threat held over the entire Middle East and a means to continue their occupation and oppression without harassment.

Setting aside accusations and motives, several other issues have thus far hindered the establishment of a MENWFZ. Chief among these are trust/transparency and enforcement. As per the UN definition, any NWFZ must have a mechanism in place to assure the parties of mutual compliance. For states such as Israel and Iran, both of whom have refused or been uncooperative with IAEA inspections in the past, there is a high degree of uncertainty as to whether they will be refused in the future. Additionally, national sovereignty is an ideal often pitted against attempts to encourage compliance with any measure, let alone military issues.

Underlying the enforcement issue is the problem of trust among the concerned parties. Certainly the past has given both sides little reason to participate in any venture requiring mutual trust. Given the national security aspect of the issue, Middle East states are hesitant to share information with neighbors they have so recently been and possibly may be so soon in armed conflict with. Too much transparency may be detrimental to a state’s national defense plans and as such, Middle East states tend to err on the side of caution.

Possible Solutions

Over the last 40 years, two major proposals for a MENWFZ have been presented and failed for various reasons. Yet despite their failures, these propositions may serve as a vital jumping-off point for the committee’s discussion. As one might guess, the Arab world (spearheaded initially by Egypt and Iran) proposed one resolution, Israel the other.

In 1974, at the behest of Iran, “Establishment of a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Region of the Middle East” was included on the agenda of the 29th session of the General Assembly. Iran, along with Egypt, introduced a proposal to DISEC outlining

three points: 1. States should not produce or acquire nuclear weapons; 2. States already possessing nuclear weapons should refrain from introducing them into the Middle East and from using them against any state in the region; and 3. An effective international safeguards system should be established affecting both nuclear weapon states and states in the Middle East (Pande).

Intentionally left out of the proposal were any measures restricting the use or development of civilian nuclear technologies.

The “Egyptian Proposal” as it came to be called, received wide-spread regional and international support. The United States and the other nuclear weapon states voted for the resolution along with most of the Arab states. Fearing over-commitment and wishing to safeguard its nuclear deterrent option, Israel abstained. The proposal passed on December 4th, 1974 and in 1975 the Secretary-General invited the states involved to share their views on implementing the legislation. All seven Arab states which responded affirmed their intentions to comply with the resolution, with some stressing that Israel must join the NPT. Israel, too, affirmed its support, albeit in a cooler manner. Israel proposed a

regional conference to negotiate the exact details of the NWFZ. In the end half-hearted commitment, political timidity, and animosity on both sides led to a faltering and eventual bogging down of the proposal.

In 1980 Israel introduced its own draft of a resolution calling for a MENWFZ. This proposal concentrated on the need to specifically negotiate the terms of the NWFZ instead of simply declaring one and ex post facto deciding upon the terms of compliance and enforcement. The Israeli proposal differed from the Egyptian one also in the realm of inspections. Whereas the Egyptians favored IAEA involvement and inspections more intrusive than those mandated by the NPT, Israel favored a negotiable, mutually agreed upon new system. After Arab opposition and persuasion from its allies, Israel dropped its proposal. Indeed the proposal was seen in retrospect by some as merely an attempt by Israel to distract Arab states from its plans to strike an Iraqi nuclear reactor, which it did in 1981.

Issues to Consider

The key to devising a workable solution is analyzing where the numerous previous efforts have failed. For example, under

what circumstances will Israel feel it no longer requires its nuclear deterrent? How can both parties be encouraged towards effective transparency and still retain their national defense abilities? What can be done to foster mutual trust between Middle East states? What will be the role of international and regional groups/states? How will the NWFZ be enforced and what will be the repercussions for violation?

With these questions in mind, I challenge you to seriously attempt a resolution of the issue. With tensions between Arabs and Israel as high as ever there has been no lack of motivation for outside stake-holders, only a lack of ingenuity. With your effort and dedication, DISEC may serve as a valuable forum and means through which the threat of nuclear war will be forever lifted from the Middle East.

Bloc Positions

With few exceptions, all groups are ostensibly in favor of curbing the spread of nuclear weapons. How certain blocs of countries feel in this particular matter is well correlated with where they stand on issue of

the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some key positions include

Middle East (not including Israel): Most of the Middle East states would be willing to adopt a solution generally resembling the original Egyptian Proposal. States like Egypt, Iran, and Saudi Arabia are regional leaders on this topic.

Europe: Europe is generally split but leans slightly against Israel with the possible exception of the United Kingdom. They generally favor any solution that will ensure stability in the region, even if it is not one progressive towards the goal of establishing a NWFZ

United States: The United States is a staunch supporter of Israel and its main ally against the collective will of the Arab countries.

Africa / Asia: Excepting countries with large Muslim populations, neither Africa nor Asia hold particularly strong opinions on this topic. They will vote generally in favor of any effective legislation or will use voting on this issue to gain support on topics that concern them more directly.

Topic 2: Reducing Military Spending

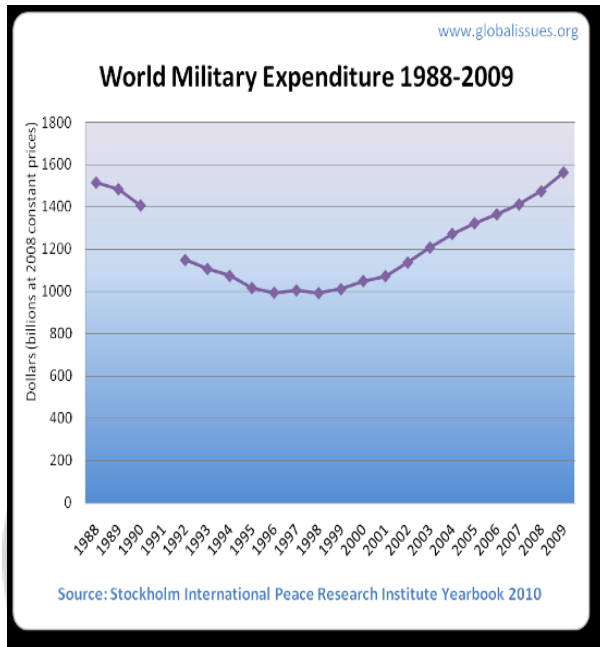


Figure 1: World Military Expenditures 1988-2009.

Current Trends

Following a period of decline and stagnation at the end of the Cold War, one can see in Figure 2 that world military spending has been increasing steadily and rapidly since the turn of the century. Much to the chagrin of groups looking to curb military spending, this rise seems only to be quickening.

Below are outlined several trends in military spending that point toward an uncertain future.

In 2009 the United States alone spent \$712 billion (USD) on its military, 65% more than

it did in 2001 (Shah). The top five military spenders (the US, UK, China, Russia, and France) account for 64.6% of the total global military expenditure, some \$989 billion USD (*ibid.*). This alarming fact is coupled with an increasing concentration of military expenditure. That is, a small number of states are accounting for higher and higher proportions of the world military expenditures.

A second alarming trend comes from examining expenditures by developing states. When analyzed as a percentage of GDP, countries like Chad, Sudan, Uganda, and Djibouti rise to high places on the list. Thus states with all the more reason to invest in development and infrastructure are instead spending on the military. Fortunately, this trend is reversing in some areas. For example, Venezuela cut military expenditures by 25% in 2009 compared to 2008 (SIPRI).

Effects & Efforts

The most obvious effect of increased military spending is less money to be spent elsewhere. To put this into perspective, total annual expenditures by the United Nations

come out to less than 2% of the 2009 military spending. Even a few percentage points of the \$1.5 trillion spent on militaries put toward humanitarian efforts would save countless lives, deliver millions from hunger, protect the environment, and improve education across the world. Recent assessments of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals show they may not be reached on time due to lack of funding. The World Bank estimated that only a small increase in funding commitment would be required to reach the 2015 goals. By urging nations to cut their spending on war, and instead apply it to humanitarian and development efforts, DISEC can help achieve these goals.

In light of these facts, the United Nations (with DISEC in particular) has renewed efforts to collectively curb military spending. These efforts come often in the form of a discussion of disarmament and development. Reducing military expenditures is a way of moving towards conventional disarmament thereby reducing the number of armed conflicts around the world and simultaneously freeing up funding to sew back into development goals. Thus both long-term security objectives can be met and effort can be put into relieving

the burdens of the millions worldwide afflicted by disease, hunger, or poverty.

Deeper Issues

Nearly all states acknowledge the benefits of disarmament and reducing military spending. Indeed, in a widely cited 1982 study, Inga Thorsson and colleagues demonstrated a competitive relationship between military expenditures and humanitarian goals. However, when humanist principles run up against security, high ideals fall by the wayside for a variety of reasons.

As with the first topic, states balk at any initiatives that could possibly compromise their national security. A successful collective reduction of military spending requires mutual trust between the parties. No state wishes to agree to reduce its military capabilities only to have other states renege on their commitments, thereby leaving the first state at a military disadvantage. This leads to a risk-averse stance on the part of most states, especially those with the highest military expenditures who already see themselves as threatened.

High military spending—and the military power that goes along with it—is also a

means of obtaining and displaying geopolitical power. With the threat of military engagement as a bargaining chip, certain states are able to better achieve their other policy objectives. This becomes an incentive for less powerful, and often less developed, states to increase rather than decrease military spending.

So it seems that efforts to collectively reduce military expenditures must be widely multilateral in nature and involve schemes to ensure cooperation and trust. DISEC provides a great forum for the widest possible scope of disarmament initiatives. Coordination and negotiation on a global level may be key to producing legislation which enacts lasting and effective measures to reduce military spending.

Issues to Consider

What motivations to states have for increasing military spending or keeping it at high levels? How can these motivations be counteracted? What model can be used to determine which states are spending too much on their militaries? What incentives will there be for states to meet their disarmament goals? What sanctions for failing to meet them?

How can trust be built between states (especially adversarial ones) such that they will be more likely to agree to disarmament? How can supranational, non-governmental, and civil society organizations be leveraged to achieve reductions in military spending?

All these questions and more are crucial to determining the success or failure of proposed legislation. Indeed, the issue of reduced military spending is all the more delicate due to its intimate and direct connection to national security.

Bloc Positions

Europe: Once again, Europe is divided on the issue. Smaller countries and those not engaged in violent conflicts already have relatively small military budgets and would encourage others to do the same.

United States: A large percentage of the total world military expenditure comes from the United States alone. The US feels this spending is essential to its security goals and will not be easily persuaded to reduce it.

Asia: Rising Asian countries such as China and India have high military spending both

to gain international clout and to solidify their security

Africa: Many developing states in Africa spend large amounts on their militaries due to ongoing internal and regional conflicts. They will be very hesitant to support unilateral reductions and will want to be sure that reducing their spending will not put them at a strategic disadvantage.

Topic 3: Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

Devastating Effects

It is very clear that the illicit trading and trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a well-organized and international operation. Every year some 500,000 people are killed by 639 million small arms currently in world circulation, over double the population of the United States. The black market trade in small arms alone totals to an estimated \$1 billion-a-year (USD) business (Stohl). These figures are as shocking as they are disregarded as states continue to focus on higher profile trafficking issues such as nuclear and biological/chemical weapons.

Small arms and light weapons are often considered together in arms control matters, but it is important to distinguish between the two. Small arms are any low-caliber hand-held firearms. These include handguns, shotguns, rifles and assault rifles such as the ubiquitous AK-47. Light weapons on the other hand refer to larger caliber weapons and explosives such as hand grenades, mortars, anti-aircraft weapons, mines, and rocket-propelled grenades. All of these items are operable by a single or small group of people. Every government army and militant group makes heavy use of SALW because of their low cost, durability, simplicity, deadliness, and concealable nature (Stohl).

The large role of SALW in conflicts is well known, with 60-90% of armed conflict deaths coming from these weapons (Schroeder). In addition, a large proportion of terrorist attacks involve the use of SALW. Even when there is no open conflict, the presence of SALW promotes regional instability. When conflicts end, these weapons remain and encourage a return to violence or are spread to surrounding areas (Stohl). Thus a cycle of violence and destabilization feeds on itself and creates the

conditions where states fall into ruin or become breeding grounds for more militant or terrorist groups.

Roadblocks to Progress

However, stopping the proliferation of these deadly pieces of hardware is extremely difficult for many reasons. One of the foremost is the fact that demand is so high and profit margins are large enough that there is no shortage of people willing to get into the business. When major players or rings are caught and stopped, there is no shortage of similar operations waiting to step up and fill the void. Also the arms trafficking business has in many ways integrated into other illicit trading businesses such as the drug and human trade. The infrastructure of smugglers and go-betweens used for one is often used for the others as well, making it difficult to address only one form of illicit trade.

SALW are manufactured, traded, and used for legitimate military and law enforcement purposes. States have the right to defend and police themselves and must be able to produce, trade, and stockpile SALW for these purposes. Thus solutions like the bans on producing chemical/biological weapons are simply untenable. However, as

technologies advance, new weapons are produced and it is often cheaper to simply stockpile the obsolete weapons instead of destroy them. The problem of illicit trading of SALW cannot be outright solved and so complex solutions to control and minimize the problem are required.

Not all states are truly dedicated to ending the illicit trade of SALW. Embargoed states such as Ivory Coast, DR Congo, and Somalia rely on the illegal arms trade as their only source of weapons. Other states benefit from legally selling large amounts of weapons, knowing that many of them will eventually find their way onto the black market.

Finally, even when smart plans are created it is difficult to put them into practice in the field. Arms dealers are rich and clever enough to bribe or trick government officials, such as in 2001 when an Israeli arms dealer tricked the Nicaraguan government into selling him 3000 AK-47s and 2.5 million rounds of ammunition (eventually destined for militant groups in Colombia) after convincing them he was an agent of the Panamanian National Police (Schroeder). Under-paid Government officials in the poor countries where illicit

arms shipments often pass through are usually eager to supplement their incomes with bribes from traders.

The Process

The vast majority of SALW passing into the black market were produced and traded legally before being diverted into the illicit trade network (Stohl). This transition occurs in many ways including direct shipments to embargoed states, theft from individuals or from government stockpiles, or soldiers selling their arms for money. Also guns may be legally bought in countries with loose laws regulating the number and frequency of weapons purchases and then brought to countries with stricter policies or put into the general market.

Once obtained, illicit SALW enter the general black market along with drugs, diamonds and other commodities commonly traded illegally. Complex networks exist by which brokers acquire weapons and direct them around the world. Using forged End-User Certificates (which document where arms shipments are going and constitute proof of legality) and by smuggling them in a variety of ingenious ways, brokers are able to transport weapons virtually anywhere, but

especially to the hot spots in Europe and Africa.

Often poor border security and/or corrupt government officials allow smugglers to simply walk between countries with their shipments. Money is all transferred secretly through the various financial havens and brokers are notoriously well versed in the loopholes and particulars of trafficking laws in the countries in which they operate.

Past Legislation

The United Nations and other supranational organizations have crafted many documents concerning the illicit trafficking of SALW. Modern efforts began in 1995 with General Assembly resolution A/RES/50/70 which called for an investigation into the issue of SALW use and trafficking. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from this investigation were introduced in resolution A/52/298 in 1997. This resolution noted the individualities and commonalities between regions with many SALW-fueled conflicts and many of its recommendations – such as establishing a system by which all weapons would be uniquely marked upon manufacture – were put into effect in subsequent legislation.

Following developments in the late 1990s, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade In Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held in New York in 2001. This resulted in the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (commonly referred to as the PoA) which was reviewed five years later in 2006 and is set to be reviewed again in 2012. The PoA describes efforts to be taken at the national, regional, and global level including ensuring proper records of manufacture, stockpiling and destruction are kept, encouraging regional transparency, and promoting education and public awareness programs. Implementation of the PoA is supported by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs along with other organizations.

The United Nations is by no means the only group working to eradicate illicit SALW trafficking. The Organization of American States, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (and many others) have all enacted legislation regarding controlling arms trafficking. Non-governmental organizations like the International Action Network on Small

Arms (IANSA), and the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT) also work tirelessly to combat the scourge of illicit SALW trafficking.

Issues to Consider

It is clear that the illicit trafficking of SALW is a complex and deeply rooted problem that cannot be solved instantly. Therefore the committee will have to consider what measures will be most effective in combating the problem.

Where is the best place to stop arms trafficking? Is it to prevent arms from being obtained in the first place or in preventing them from getting to their destinations? How can the international smuggling and financing networks that support the arms trade be found and destroyed? What can be done to make the international arms trade less profitable and therefore less attractive?

What about countries that illegally benefit from the arms trade, how can they be convinced or coerced into adhering to previous/future legislation? How can transparency be promoted between countries through which weapons are commonly transported?

What steps can be taken to encourage states to destroy their stockpiles of SALW? Or to stop manufacturing more? How can national, regional and global organizations and resources be leveraged to create meaningful advances toward ending the trade?

Block Positions

Africa: Africa is a major destination for illegal SALW, sometimes to the governments themselves. Some states are hurt by the arms trade, but many benefit and will therefore be opposed to stricter arms control measures.

Europe: Many western European countries manufacture and supply arms across the world. They will be concerned with keeping this source of income. Armed conflicts in Eastern Europe are a destination for illegal SALW and some governments will be concerned with maintaining their own security while cutting of supplies from opposition groups.

Americas: Colombia especially will be interested in preventing the FARC from continuing to obtain weapons to be used against the government. Also, across Central and South America drug cartels use

illegally obtained SALW to maintain their operations.

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