

A Confidence and Regional Security Building Process

Summary

The Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD), part of SOAS, proposes an international initiative on reviving and globalising conventional confidence and security building and disarmament, with a Middle East and Africa focus to further sustainable development. The project is intended to adopt an up-scalable, phased approach and include stakeholders who are regional or military experts or from academia, government or NGOs. Although the project is intended to be applicable globally it will include specific regional feasibility-case studies, probably focussing on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Cambodia/Thailand border region. This will build on CISD's Conferences on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone which looked at regional security and in particular the implications, obstacles and possibilities of such a zone. The project is part of CISD's Disarmament and Globalisation research programme and builds upon previous work.

As part of the project CISD plan to host annual large scale international scoping workshops; host annual Conferences on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone; co-sponsor and host a Common Security and a Nuclear Free Zone in the Middle East Workshop; conduct regional feasibility studies looking at regions such as Sudan and the Cambodia/Thailand border; develop a non-OSCE observer inspections programme; and develop an active education and knowledge sharing programme. Further details of these activities can be found in the 'Project Deliverables' section.

This document outlines the project's background, objectives, deliverables, and leaders and participants.

Project Rationale

There is a continued and growing threat to sustainable development from the uncontrolled proliferation, possession and production of major conventional armaments. There is also an increasing awareness in the international community that has risen out of the development of ongoing conventional disarmament work in the area of ATT, landmines and small arms.

For the last 15 to 20 years the humanitarian impact of weapons has brought a steadily increasing number of states and civil society organisations into a succession of global disarmament efforts. These have in turn addressed landmines, small arms and light weapons, and the trade in arms. One of the assumptions propelling the humanitarian disarmament activity was that the end of the Cold War would lead to diminishing concerns over large scale conventional conflict. Events in the Middle East and tensions in Africa and South and North East Asia have dispelled that confidence. Aside from the humanitarian and proliferation agendas, disarmament and confidence

building had almost disappeared from Western-led academic, civil society, and international political debate until the recent revival triggered by the election of President Obama, which has been heavily focused on nuclear issues, with a tacit assumption that progress on nuclear disarmament can be achieved without a general reduction in military tensions and distrust.

European agreements on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the associated CSBMs and Open Skies regime provide a strong and unprecedented institutional model for a major progressive expansion of collectively improved international security. It is important to note that these agreements, though under threat, have provided the basis in security terms for a peace dividend where European publics pay a historically low level of around 1% of GDP on the military. It is regrettable that such agreements are one of the few sets of regulations that neither NATO nor the EU have exported to the East and South.

The weak progress on both conventional and nuclear disarmament by the international community since the end of the Cold War compounds the current real world problems of conventional and low-intensity war and the threat of nuclear devastation. Destabilising accumulations of weapons, and needlessly large military establishments, damage the balance of rich economies and the development of poorer ones.

Objectives

The objective of this project is to help re-energise an international constituency capable of carrying through a realistic risk-based global confidence building and disarmament agenda based on applied international and development studies and public policy. As well as re-establish Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) and conventional weapons disarmament on the international agenda to facilitate, but not condition, nuclear and other WMD disarmament the project intends to build on humanitarian campaigns on specific weapons and on the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Initiative aims to:

- Develop new ideas with which to engage a wide range of stakeholders in practical consideration of a widened and accelerated disarmament process to move in parallel with efforts towards a global nuclear zero, to remove military impediments to strengthened regional security, and to assist economic and political development
- Begin re-creating a connected epistemic community across the disarmament field where general disarmament is again an item on the agenda of the international community
- Examine ‘best-practice’ for design and implementation of existing disarmament agreements-in particular the potential for globalisation of UNMOVIC/CFE and bi-lateral US-USSR missile disarmament mechanisms.

Best practice can also include the speed of effective implementation of CFE/INF for example

- Address the need to securitize the nuclear energy renaissance debate through interviews, seminars and technical studies
- Support public education and advocacy of conventional disarmament and confidence building via the web as a means of offering the public, opinion formers and policy-makers alike a challenge to engage with this road-map to general disarmament a realistically foreseeable timescale measured in a few decades at most, rather than as a pious indefinitely long-term aspiration
- One practical focused outcome might be fostering international support and advocacy for further initiatives such as the ambitious and far reaching Strategic Concept for Regulation of Arms Possession and Proliferation (SCRAP) proposal though this need not necessary condition the rest of the project. (<http://www.cisd.soas.ac.uk/index.asp-Q-Page-E-scrap--66814822>)

Project Deliverables

Completed Deliverables

To kick off the project the Centre held a Project Scoping meeting on 31 January 2011 at Senate House. The purpose of the meeting was to examine applicable lessons of Europe's experience in achieving mutual military transparency to lower suspicions and tensions, assist and strengthen political rapprochement, facilitate disarmament, and permanently lower military spending.

With stakeholder input from Embassy representatives (including Minister Erling Alvestad of the RNMFA), the OSCE, NGOs, military experts and academia, a broad range of project thoughts and reactions were discussed as well as viable next steps, project activities and working partnerships. Some of these activities and partnerships are outlined below.

Future Deliverables

A number of core project activities are proposed over the next three years. These are:

1. Workshops and conferences

Three Annual International Scoping Workshops (date tbc)

These will be held with governmental support and supported by, amongst others,



SOAS academics. It is envisaged that the initial workshop will expand and scale-up the following:

1. Knowledge sharing to inform on past and current activities in the disarmament sphere
2. Discussion of spectrum of potential activities to create a framework for an up-scalable, phased approach which stakeholders can 'drop-in' and 'drop-out' of where they may be most effective or have greater interest
3. Stakeholder sector interests such as development, conflict prevention and post-conflict nation building
4. Regional Interests and applicability to regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Eritrea, Yemen, Somalia, South Asia and the Middle East.

Follow on workshops and will build upon the output from the first workshop and may follow a similar format.

Three Annual Conferences on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (MEWMDZFZ)

The Centre will continue its long standing research and public policy project on a MEWMDZFZ and host its annual London Conferences in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Following the outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference there is great need to sustain dialogue, both public and private, in the run-up to the 2012 Conference convened by the UN and depositary States, and attended by all regional states. It is equally important that this dialogue continues post 2012 Conference.

Common Security and a Nuclear Free Zone in the Middle East Workshop (Autumn 2011)

In collaboration with the Palestine Israel Journal (PIJ) SOAS are preparing to organise a workshop on Common Security and a Nuclear Free Zone in the Middle East. This workshop is part of an eventual goal of a public Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME) in 2014 organised by PIJ and a CSCME working group.

The workshop will address two issues. Firstly, how to move forward towards a WMDZFZ in the Middle East in the run up to the 2012 Conference? Secondly, how to simultaneously move forward on a towards Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab comprehensive peace, based upon the Arab Peace Initiative? Workshop participants will comprise of members from the three sponsors – SOAS, PIJ and a CSCME working group.

East West Institute Annual Worldwide Security Conference (Oct 2011)

SOAS have been invited by our working partners, the East West Institute (EWI), to present a panel at their Annual Worldwide Security Conference. The conference is a platform to reframe perceptions of international security threats and opportunities and mobilizes experts from governments, businesses, NGOs, and academia to make practical recommendations for policy change.

2. Regional Feasibility Studies of the Sudan region and Cambodia/Thailand border

Investigating further the regional applicability of the project, the Centre will conduct feasibility studies focussing on the Sudan region and Cambodia/Thailand border. These studies will evaluate the viability of an up-scalable, phased approach to reviving, publicising and globalising conventional confidence and security building and disarmament at the regional and wider level.

3. Non-OSCE observer inspections programme

In collaboration with the RNMFA the Centre seeks to develop a programme for assisting non-OSCE member states to act as observers in inspections to help build an epistemic community. SOAS could play an important role facilitating liaison and knowledge sharing meetings between programme partners and potential observers. Such programme partners could include the OSCE and the Joint Arms Implementation Control Group (JACIG).

4. Education and Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is a vital component of the Centre's initiative. As such, a number of knowledge sharing activities are proposed:

- a. Develop a network of 'Arms Control Implementation & Information' groups
- b. OSCE briefing session on the ATT in New York prior to 2012 UN Conference on ATT
- c. With working partner Oxfam, the Centre can use OSCE educational material to develop a core educational strand to the project
- d. Produce a three minute compilation video (by a former BBC editor) with the aim of promoting the practical achievements of past regimes including CSBM, CFE and UNSCOM UNMOVIC
- e. Promoting the 'confidence and regional security building' agenda as an objective of the 2012 Annual Carnegie Conference
- f. Partner with Oxfam also to raise awareness of the lack of resource funding for arms inspection and control groups, such as JACIG



5. Developing Project Partnerships

In addition to working partnerships with the East West Institute and Oxfam, the Centre is seeking to both develop further existing institutional links and build new ones.

Project Leaders and Participants

Martin Butcher (ATT Lead, Oxfam)

Martin is a policy advisor for Oxfam on Arms and the Arms Trade Treaty. He was formerly interim Director and Senior Visiting Fellow, British American Security Information Council.

Dan Plesch (Director, Centre for International Studies & Diplomacy, SOAS)

Dan has been involved in NGO leadership and landmines & small arms since the 1980s.

Paul Schulte (Non-Resident Senior Associate, Carnegie Europe and Carnegie Nuclear Policy)

Paul is also Senior Visiting Fellow for the Disarmament and Globalisation Programme in the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS, and Senior Visiting Fellow in the Centre for Defence Studies at King's College London.