
A New Farewell to Arms: Basic Concepts and Understandings

Dr Jean Pascal Zanders
Research fellow
EU Institute for Security Studies

Working Group on the Future of Disarmament
Paris, 23 March 2009

Basic goal

- n Understand disarmament and non-proliferation in the present security context
- n Challenge:
 - n Cold war concepts, tools and processes
 - n Think out of the box!
- n What is the 'box'?

Definitions

n Disarmament

- n Total elimination of a discrete category of weaponry
 - n No residual capability
- n Core goal: elimination of weaponry from military doctrine
 - n Loss of skills on how to use the weaponry over time
 - n May be most important impediment to future armament

n Arms control

- n Management of agreed quantitative or qualitative levels of weaponry
- n Residual (or increased!) capacity
- n Weaponry remains integrated in military doctrine

The fundamentals of disarmament and arms control

- n Limitations on weaponry with the potential to destabilise international security relations
 - n Impact of science, technology and industrialisation on war-fighting capabilities
- n Quantitative and qualitative limitations on certain types of weaponry
 - n Introduction of transparency-enhancing mechanisms, including confidence-building measures (CBMs) and off-site and on-site verification.
 - n Adoption of tools and procedures to communicate intent
- n Explicit decision by a state to reverse an armament dynamic
- n Security must be ensured through alternative, non-prohibited means
- n Voluntary engagement
- n Parties are committed individually to the treaty

Why arms control; why disarmament?

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

The bipolar world

- n Global security dominated by the rivalry between the USA and the USSR + respective allies
 - n Strong domestic pressures and pressures in allies to reduce risks of war
 - n Limitations on armaments was an important aspect of enhancing stability
 - n Interest in primarily in arms limitation and reductions
 - n Bilateral, regional and global negotiations

- n States outside the East-West confrontation
 - n Feared the consequences of major war between East & West
 - n Realisation that armaments consumed resources that could not be used for development
 - n Primary interest in global arms control and disarmament and application of resources savings to development and assistance
 - n Development of regional initiatives to prevent the deployment of (nuclear) weapons
 - n Pressure on the superpowers and their allies via resolutions in the UN General Assembly

Unipolar, multipolar world

- n Dominance of the United States as global actor
 - n Few incentives for the USA to reduce armaments
 - n Second-tier powers seek to offset US dominance
 - n Challenges to the US position by emergence of China and re-emergence of Russia => new pressures for armament

- n Predominance of regional security
 - n Power realignment in many regions
 - n Not conducive to (global) arms control & disarmament

- n Most of the arms control / disarmament dynamics are understood in the (bi-polar) cold war security context; the understanding of their contribution in a uni- or multipolar world is still poor

Evolution of negotiations

- n Arms control and disarmament became very technical
 - n Verification: weapons control began to reach deep into civil society (e.g., chemical and biotechnological industry; scientific research)
 - n Started to have serious implications for economic and scientific competition between states

- n With the end of the cold war, the security imperative disappeared and economic considerations began to dominate the negotiations

- n Return to humanitarian issues (landmines, small arms, cluster munitions, etc.)

Nature of arms control and disarmament agreements

n **Global (multilateral)**

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

n **Regional (multilateral)**

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

n **Bilateral**

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

Future options

- n Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)
- n Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT)
- n Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC)
- n BTWC Protocol
- n Follow-on to START 1
- n Geographical expansion of the INF - treaty

The non-proliferation paradigm

- n Prevention of the diffusion of certain (weapon-related) technologies
- n Goals
 - n Countering destabilisation on regional or global level
 - n In support of existing arms control and disarmament agreements
 - n Prevention of weapon acquisition by non-state actors
 - n Preservation of one's military-technological advantage in a particular area
- n Became the dominant paradigm at the end of the cold war
 - n 1989 Canberra Conference: 'Australia Group pending the entry-into-force of the CWC'

Moving into a post-non-proliferation phase?

- n Is there a non-proliferation norm?
 - n If so, definitely challenged: transfer of all technologies (commodities, knowledge, skills) becomes securitised
 - n Non-inclusive standard (select membership) & unequal obligations
 - n Subjective in addressing security threats
 - n No finality

- n Non-proliferation arrangements work as long as there are no alternative sources for technology

- n Today: growing distribution of technological capabilities
 - n Codes of conduct, norms and rules often emerged among non-possessors.
 - n Possessors of technology usually aware of advantage; few rules emerged from them
 - n **Today**: certain non-possessors try to offset technological superiority of the dominant power(s)

- n Consequences: shift to unilateral / plurilateral measures (e.g., non- and counter-proliferation)

New challenges

- n New security actors intent on harm
 - n Criminals & terrorists
 - n Have potential interest in CBRN materials

- n Economic imperatives have replaced security imperatives
 - n Sub-state economic units.
 - n Industry, shipping agencies, etc.
 - n Research institutes
 - n Researchers, students, etc.
 - n Transnational economic units
 - n Multi-national corporations
 - n State (agencies)
 - n International organisations

Conclusions

- n Complex set of factors to be taken into consideration
- n Is there clarity about the security goals?
 - n New search for global stability and parity
 - n Regional jockeying for strategic pre-eminence
- n How does one deal with new security actors
 - n Threats by terrorist and criminal entities
 - n Integration of new actors in the disarmament / arms control regimes (e.g., industry, scientific communities)
- n Is it possible to reconcile security and economic imperatives?
 - n Is there still a (clear) linkage between disarmament and development?
 - n What are its consequences for cooperation under disarmament and arms control treaties
- n Economic crisis
 - n What resources are states willing to commit to complex disarmament and arms control treaties?
 - n Which challenges do they pose for existing treaties

Appendix: Theoretical foundations

Disarmament and gains

- n Absolute and relative gain consequences
- n Removal of all *relative gains in terms of the function of the weapon category* under consideration

Functional equivalence

Functional equivalence of a particular class of weaponry between two or more political entities is attained when these political entities assign this class of weaponry a similar function in their respective military doctrines.

Importance of FE for disarmament

- n Necessary catalyst if the security environment is conducive to arms control or disarmament
- n Enables the isolation of a security issue
- n Creates the context for an absolute gain, enabling cooperation
 - n States will respond to attempts to change the status quo with respect to the weaponry under consideration
 - n This increases the opportunity costs for all to maintain the increased capability

Impact of functional equivalence

- n Weaponry in functional equivalence is characterized by the fact that any change in its constitution in one political entity would be countered by a similar change in an adversarial political entity
 - n Otherwise: relative gain for first political entity
- n Conversely, changes in the constitution of weaponry not in functional equivalence in one political entity would elicit an asymmetrical (in terms of the weapon category) or no response from an adversary
- n A class of weaponry in functional equivalence between the major political entities concerned can be factored out as a security issue

Effect of a disarmament treaty

- n Condition of presence → irrelevance
 - n Weapon no longer part of security equation
 - n (*Arms control: existence → existence!*)
- n Condition of irrelevance → irrelevance
 - n Weapon not part of the security equations
 - n Importance of non-security clauses
- n Condition of non-existence → non-existence
 - n Hence importance of *positive* security guarantees if a state joins nonetheless
- n Formalized functional equivalence
 - n Formal acceptance of presence → irrelevance

Regional security perspective

- n Global disarmament treaty views all states as equal units
- n Regional security interactions may be very intensive
 - n Greater relative security concerns
- n Complex calculations about the regional and local security impact of a global disarmament treaty
- n Absence of functional equivalence: importance of non-security clauses to achieve universality

Long-term implications

- n The existence of functional equivalence may be transitional
- n Changes in the international security environment may occasion a shift from the condition of presence to non-existence
- n Such a shift will place a great strain on existing arms control and disarmament treaties
 - n New opportunities for relative gains or new fears of relative losses
 - n E.g., BTWC, ABM treaty

EU-ISS



#On the web

www.iss.europa.eu

#E-mail

jean-pascal.zanders@iss.europa.eu