The EU and the future of the BTWC

Strategies towards and beyond the 8th Review Conference

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End of a special era

- **Collapse of the 5th RevCon (2001)**
  - 1st separate coordination by EU member states in 2001
  - EU contributed to salvaging the BTWC process → intersessional meetings
    - Focus on actionable programme items rather than on deepening treaty regime

- **Invasion of Iraq (2003)**
  - Highly divisive for EU
  - Fresh common ground for EU member states via *EU Strategy against the proliferation of WMD*

- **Privileged intermediary**
  - EU viewed as a moderating influence on the Bush administration
  - Gave EU a prominent role as an honest broker
  - Ended, however, with the election of President Obama
6th and 7th BTWC RevCons

- **6th RevCon: In-depth preparations**
  - Submission of in-depth EU working papers
    - 7 consensus documents of (then) 25 EU member states and presented by 1 or 2 states
    - No consensus on one document; presented as national working paper
    - Supported by concrete action: 1st Joint Action in support of the BTWC (2006 – 08)
  - Weakness of EU negotiating strategy
    - EU working papers generated great interest, particularly during 1st week of RevCon
    - 2nd week: running behind negotiations
      - Consensus-building process too cumbersome to adapt positions in function of debates
      - 3 decision-making centres: capitals, Brussels and delegation coordination in Geneva
    - 3rd week: decision time and irrelevancy of EU positions
      - No updated positions
      - No prioritising of positions (EU red lines & secondary preferences; fall-back strategies)

- **7th RevCon: No coherence among national positions**
  - Common position, but national working papers (no longer on behalf of the EU)
  - Less visibility for EU of follow-on Joint Actions (now via ISU / UNODA)
  - Some EU members shot down other EU member positions, even though in CP
  - Refusal of one EU member to support expansion of ISU, even though in CP
Final front bench (Dec 2010)
Towards 8th RevCon (2016) and beyond

• **In the making**
  - New common position for the RevCon
  - New Action Plan in support of the BTWC

• **Actionable programme elements**
  - Continuation of the intersessional process
  - Identify concrete programme elements that are red lines for EU members + common defence
  - Have priorities reflected in new Action Plan in support of the BTWC

• **Challenges for the EU member states**
  - The opportunistic coalition of the unwilling (or ‘PRIIC’s)
    - Need for coordinated tactical approach on how to introduce a proposal *(including prior to RevCon)*
    - Coordinated respond to their challenges or counter undesired proposals
  - 40th Anniversary of entry into force of BTWC (March 2015)
    - Russia re-emphasised its proposal to reopen negotiations using AHG mandate and create OPBW
    - USA laid out its red lines for the RevCon
  - EU RevCon consultative process: how to adapt common positions and strategy to evolving realities?

• **Long-term strategic thinking on the deepening of the BTWC regime**
  - **Bringing back disarmament**: What is the EU’s longer-term vision for the BTWC?
  - How can the EU help to modify the framework for debate in function of that vision?
  - How can the EU set up action programme in the field to engage partners worldwide on that vision?