

# Nuclear Disarmament and General and Complete Disarmament

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## Abstract

*The goal of “general and complete disarmament” has been deliberated in the international community for eight decades. It has been on the agenda of the UN General Assembly for almost 50 years and remains the “ultimate goal” of multilateral disarmament efforts. It appears in a dozen multilateral disarmament-related treaties and even some bilateral strategic nuclear agreements. Yet the goal is not widely understood and is often dismissed as utopian. This article clarifies the meaning of this term, shows how it has evolved in disarmament activities at the United Nations, discusses the goal’s relationship to nuclear disarmament, considers some implications, and concludes by underscoring its continuing value and relevance as a guide to action in the field of disarmament, for states and non-state actors alike.*

*Disarmament* is an incredibly complex activity, yet its goal is clear. In its strictest sense, it means the physical destruction or elimination of particular types of weaponry. Efforts short of elimination – including various confidence-building measures, limitations on range or yield, reductions in numbers, or rules for the conduct of tests – are more appropriately called “arms control.” Unfortunately, the terms are often used interchangeably both by diplomats and policy experts and this has only contributed to great misunderstanding of what disarmament seeks to achieve. As a result, disarmament is often viewed as a utopian dream, impractical, and just too idealistic to merit serious consideration in the real world.

This is especially the case with “general and complete disarmament” (GCD). The words “general and complete” suggest a goal that is fully comprehensive. In short, the term implies that literally every weapon would be eliminated, everywhere. Such a goal, of course, invites new caricatures and ridicule, and the familiar accusations of utopianism.

Yet GCD is based on a far more realistic assessment of world conditions than is commonly assumed. It has served for many years as a navigation aide for diplomatic initiatives to reduce or eliminate various types of armaments, and will likely continue to do so. It deserves closer attention in the

community of policy experts in the field of disarmament, especially those who work on the challenge of nuclear disarmament. It would benefit from advocacy by groups that seek to achieve the elimination of the world's deadliest weapons. And it merits the understanding and support of the general public.

This paper will therefore describe the origins of this term, trace its evolution over the years primarily in the United Nations, discuss some implications, and offer some thoughts on its future.

### **A Brief History of “General and Complete Disarmament”**

The early history of disarmament can be traced back centuries, even millennia. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries gave rise to many proposals to limit or outlaw the use of certain types of weapons, and efforts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century culminated in the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907, which focused, however, more on establishing limits in the conduct of war than on achieving disarmament. On 8 January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson outlined US war aims in his famous “Fourteen Points” speech – his fourth point was “Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.”<sup>1</sup> A year later, the League of Nations was established and its Covenant, while not addressing disarmament per se, stated that “the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.”<sup>2</sup>

Actively encouraged by groups in civil society, many members of the League of Nations sought to involve the new organization in promoting post-war disarmament goals. In 1925, the League decided to convene a world conference on disarmament (which later opened in 1932) and set up a Preparatory Commission for this purpose. On 30 November 1927, Maxim Litvinoff – then heading the Soviet delegation to the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission – formally presented a detailed proposal for “general and complete disarmament.”

The proposal was sweeping and included -- a call for the abolition of all land, naval and air forces; the ending of all military training and military service; the destruction of all fortresses and naval and air bases; the scrapping of all military plants and factories; the discontinuance of all military budgets; and even the “legislative prohibition of military propaganda.”<sup>3</sup> He proposed that this would be accomplished in one year following the conclusion of a Convention, though he also said it could be implemented in stages over a four-year period. Hinting at partial measures, he said his country would be willing to discuss “the limitation of armaments whenever practical measures really leading to disarmament are proposed.”<sup>4</sup>

He offered a resolution stressing that “the existence of armaments” and their growth “by their very nature inevitably lead to armed conflicts,” and hence the abolition of such armaments is “the only real means of guaranteeing security and affording a guarantee against the outbreak of war.” This resolution offers a good example of the view that arms and arms races can produce instabilities and insecurities that can lead to war. The opposing view is that arms are mere symptoms of deeper political conflicts, suggesting that disarmament must await the prior settlement of such conflicts. Much of the literature and policy debates on disarmament – even into the 21<sup>st</sup> century -- reflects one or the other of these two approaches.

### **General and Complete Disarmament in the United Nations**

The UN Charter, signed in June 1945 just before the atomic bombings in Japan, contained two references to disarmament (Articles 11 and 47 concerning the functions of the General Assembly and the Security Council), while also calling for the “least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources” (Article 26). The Charter did not, however, address “general and complete

disarmament” and, like the Covenant, recognized the need for its member states to retain some types of weapons. Article 51, for example, recognized the right of self defence and Article 43 required states to make certain armed forces available to the Security Council for use in maintaining international peace and security.

Disarmament efforts in the United Nations have demonstrated a remarkable record of consistency in terms of basic priorities. The General Assembly’s first resolution, adopted on 24 January 1946, created a UN Atomic Energy Commission and identified the goal of the “elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”<sup>5</sup>

On 14 December 1946, the General Assembly adopted another resolution that recognized the “necessity of an early general regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces.”<sup>6</sup> It called upon the Security Council, in addition to pursuing the elimination of all atomic and other weapons of mass destruction, to formulate “practical measures ... for the general regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces.” The Security Council created the UN Commission for Conventional Armaments shortly thereafter.<sup>7</sup> Thus, since 1947, the UN has been pursuing simultaneously the goal of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction – with an emphasis on nuclear weapons as a priority – and the reduction or limitation of conventional arms.

The collapse of early post-war US and Soviet proposals for nuclear disarmament and international ownership of nuclear materials and technology, and the failure of the Commission for Conventional Armaments to achieve its own goals, led in January 1952 to the consolidation of these efforts into a new entity under the Security Council called the Disarmament Commission.<sup>8</sup> The Commission was charged to prepare a draft treaty “for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments, for the elimination of all major weapons adaptable to mass destruction,” and for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The resolution placed special emphasis on the need for “progressive disclosure and verification,” international inspection, safeguards, universality, and the need for an “international control organ (or organs)” to implement the treaty.

Shortly thereafter, the General Assembly referred to the Disarmament Commission a draft Soviet resolution calling for the immediate prohibition of atomic weapons and the simultaneous establishment of “strict international control” over its enforcement.<sup>9</sup> The Soviet proposal also called for a one-third reduction in armaments and armed forces, and the convening of a “world conference” on prohibiting atomic weapons. In April 1952, the United States presented its own “essential principles for a disarmament programme.”<sup>10</sup> This document stated that “the goal of disarmament is not to regulate but to prevent war by relaxing the tensions and fears created by armaments and by making war inherently, as it is constitutionally under the Charter, impossible as a means of settling disputes between nations.”<sup>11</sup> To achieve this goal, the US stated that armed forces and armaments must be reduced to such a point that no state will be in “a condition of armed preparedness to start a war.” The proposal also included the “elimination of all instruments adaptable to mass destruction.” Disarmament would be in progressive stages and would require international control.

Following a proposal by the General Assembly in 1953<sup>12</sup>, the Disarmament Commission set up in 1954 a five-power Sub-Committee (consisting of Canada, France, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and United States) to reach agreement on a comprehensive plan for disarmament.<sup>13</sup> Later that year, the General Assembly adopted a resolution encouraging the Commission to continue its work, and stressing that the disarmament programme must “be such that no State would have cause to fear that its security was endangered.”<sup>14</sup> The Soviet plan of 10 May 1955 was one of the most notable proposals before the Sub-Committee – it accepted the armed force ceilings that had been proposed by France and the UK and postponed the prohibition of nuclear weapons until later in the disarmament process.<sup>15</sup> This was probably the closest the great powers came at the time to reaching an agreement on a comprehensive disarmament

plan. From 1956 to 1958, the Sub-Committee focused more on what were widely called “partial measures.”<sup>16</sup>

The Sub-Committee met several times but was unable to reach a consensus and concluded its work in 1957. On 7 September 1959, representatives of France, the Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and United States issued a communiqué announcing the establishment of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament outside the United Nations to continue disarmament deliberations.<sup>17</sup> Membership was equally divided between the Eastern and Western blocs. The communiqué emphasized that the committee “in no way diminishes or encroaches upon the responsibilities of the United Nations in this field.” Its work would cover “all types of armaments and armed forces,” provide for “effective international control,” and constitute “a useful basis for the consideration of disarmament in the United Nations.”

The most significant event in 1959 for GCD, however, was the adoption by the General Assembly of Resolution 1378.<sup>18</sup> This resolution, which was co-sponsored by all UN member states (at the time numbering 82), put “general and complete disarmament” on the General Assembly’s agenda, where it has been ever since. Its preamble stated that “the question of general and complete disarmament is the most important one facing the world today.”

In December 1959, Philip Noel-Baker won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in disarmament. He criticized work on “partial measures” and recalled the words of former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, “The most dangerous thing in the world is to try to leap a chasm in two jumps.”<sup>19</sup> He went on to say, “Disarmament is not a policy by itself; it is part of the general policy of the UN. But it is a vital part of that policy; without it, the UN institutions can never function as they should.” His point concerned the costs that member states bear from the lack of progress on disarmament – rising military expenditures, diversion of resources away from more productive peaceful uses, risks of catastrophic wars, and other such externalities that hinder the achievement of many other goals of the Charter, notably in social and economic development.

On 20 September 1961, the US and Soviet Union jointly sent to the President of the General Assembly a letter containing an important document entitled, “Joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations.”<sup>20</sup> Called the McCloy-Zorin statement -- after John McCloy and Valerian Zorin, the US and Soviet representatives in bilateral disarmament talks – this statement outlined some common ground both on the goal of GCD and several of the steps to achieve it. It identified eight principles for disarmament negotiations:

1. Agreement on the goal of GCD, “reliable procedures” for the peaceful resolution of disputes, and effective arrangements for maintaining peace under the UN Charter;
2. The goal of ensuring that States will have only “non-nuclear armaments, forces, facilities and establishments,” and only as agreed “to maintain internal order and protect the personal security of citizens,” and to support a UN peace force.
3. The goal of eliminating: armed forces, military establishments, bases, stocks of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and military training and expenditures;
4. Timed stages, with agreement on verification at each stage;
5. Equitable balance, to ensure no advantage to anyone and security for all;
6. Strict and effective international control “from beginning to end”;
7. A UN Peace Force and strengthened measures to maintain the peace;
8. Efforts should continue on more limited steps, without prejudicing GCD.

The General Assembly published detailed proposals separately drafted by the US and Soviet Union to implement these goals.<sup>21</sup> The official US proposal referred to the “United States Program for

General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World,” which led one analyst to conclude that this title “conveyed the US conviction that disarmament might be possible only in conditions of assured universal peace,” whereas the Soviet proposal argued that disarmament would help to produce such peace.<sup>22</sup>

President John Kennedy’s address to the United Nations on 25 September 1961 was noteworthy for several reasons.<sup>23</sup> He affirmed that both the US and Soviet Union “now accept” GCD as a goal. The term “must no longer be a slogan,” he said, “it is now a realistic plan.” By addressing issues relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes and peacekeeping, the plan would “create machinery to keep the peace as it destroys the machinery of war” – adding later, “To destroy arms, however, is not enough. We must create even as we destroy--creating worldwide law and law enforcement as we outlaw worldwide war and weapons.” He cautioned that “Such a plan would not bring a world free from conflict and greed-- but it would bring a world free from the terrors of mass destruction.”

On 20 December 1961, the General Assembly welcomed the Joint Statement, called for the resumption at the earliest possible time of “negotiations on general and complete disarmament under effective international control,” and endorsed the creation of a new Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC) for this purpose.<sup>24</sup> Agreement on the basic goal, however necessary, was clearly not sufficient to achieve a treaty on GCD, as was soon apparent in the years to follow.

### **General and Complete Disarmament after McCloy-Zorin**

At the time of McCloy-Zorin, the Disarmament Commission had been working for almost a decade to negotiate a comprehensive disarmament treaty -- since 1954, through the work of its five-power Sub-Committee and later the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee – yet there was still no consensus.<sup>25</sup> Despite agreement of the United States and Soviet Union on many of the fundamentals of GCD, many of the same differences over various practical details (timing, stages, scope of verification, treatment of delivery vehicles, and other such issues) that hindered progress in these arenas also prevented the successful conclusion of any GCD agreement along the lines envisioned by McCloy-Zorin.

By 1965, the ENDC (and its successors) continued to view GCD as a primary goal, while focusing more on partial measures, most notably the negotiation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the pursuit of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, and the eventual negotiation of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions (opened for signature in 1972 and 1993 respectively). In sum, the world community had essentially concluded that if GCD could not be achieved at once, the alternative was a building-block approach, with GCD very much the internationally agreed “ultimate goal.”

Indeed, since 1963, the following treaties have been concluded that contain preambular language referring to this goal: Partial Test Ban Treaty; Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions; Environmental Modification Convention; NPT; Seabed Convention; and the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco), Africa (Pelindaba), Southeast Asia (Bangkok), and Central Asia (which was signed in Semipalatinsk in September 2006).<sup>26</sup>

In 1969, the General Assembly – prompted by Secretary-General U Thant<sup>27</sup> -- requested the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD, the successor to the ENDC) to intensify its efforts to reach agreement on collateral measures, while “at the same time” working out a “comprehensive programme” dealing with all aspects of disarmament.<sup>28</sup> Like its predecessors, however, the CCD also proved unable to reach a consensus during its deliberations from 1970 to 1978 on such a programme.

Article VI of the NPT (which entered into force in 1970) specifically obligates all states parties “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”<sup>29</sup>

### **The First Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament and its Legacy**

In contrast to the prevailing trend toward negotiation of partial measures, the General Assembly’s first Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I) in 1978 strongly underscored that “the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective international control.”<sup>30</sup> It stated that partial measures “should be conducted concurrently” with comprehensive measures.<sup>31</sup> It specifically clarified that the priorities in disarmament negotiations shall be:

*... nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and reduction of armed forces.*<sup>32</sup>

Echoing much of the language of McCloy-Zorin, the Programme of Action of SSOD-I also described what states would retain after the ultimate goal was achieved:

*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.*<sup>33</sup>

The Final Document also called upon the “Disarmament Commission” – a deliberative body established by the General Assembly to succeed the Commission established in 1952 – to “consider elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament” and to report its recommendations both to the General Assembly and the Committee on Disarmament (CD, the successor to the CCD).<sup>34</sup>

The UN Disarmament Commission has since 1978 focused only on a limited number of issues, though it did reach a consensus in 1979 on “Elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.”<sup>35</sup> These recommendations drew heavily on the work of SSOD-I, including the need to strengthen international procedures and institutions for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the effectiveness of the security system of the Charter, and UN peacekeeping.

Despite vigorous efforts between 1980 and 1982 by distinguished diplomats including future Nobel Peace Laureate Alfonso García Robles (Mexico’s permanent representative to the CD in Geneva) both at the CD and in its Ad Hoc Working Group, the CD was unable to agree on this comprehensive programme. In 1982, the General Assembly held its second Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-II), which could only agree in its Concluding Document to refer the issue back again to the CD.<sup>36</sup>

In establishing the Committee (later Conference) on Disarmament as the “single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum” in 1978, the General Assembly included in its mandate “the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament encompassing all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in a world in which international peace and security prevail and in which the new international economic order is strengthened and consolidated.”<sup>37</sup> The Committee’s original “Decalogue”

of disarmament agenda items included the comprehensive programme leading to GCD.<sup>38</sup> The eight items on the Conference's recent annual agendas, while not specifically mentioning GCD, do include the item, "comprehensive programme of disarmament."<sup>39</sup> Much of its work also remains focused on nuclear weapons, consistent with the disarmament priorities established in SSOD-I.

Nuclear disarmament was also addressed bilaterally -- though only briefly -- in the years following SSOD-I. Twenty-five years after McCloy-Zorin, the two existing super-powers again took up directly the issue of nuclear disarmament. In January 1986, Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev made a detailed proposal for achieving nuclear disarmament by the year 2000, and for reducing conventional weapons and armed forces. He also proposed renouncing "space strike weapons."<sup>40</sup> The goal of eliminating strategic nuclear weapons was discussed at the Gorbachev/Reagan summit in Reykjavik in October 1986, but the leaders could not agree on the issue of strategic missile defence.<sup>41</sup>

At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the states parties adopted a decision that identified in its preamble, "the ultimate goals of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."<sup>42</sup> By contrast, the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference included the following as step number 11 of the 13 agreed steps for nuclear disarmament: "Reaffirmation that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective international control."<sup>43</sup> This brought the agreed language back into line with the consensus at SSOD-I and usage in the treaties listed above.

Though GCD has not been in recent years a subject of active negotiations, it remains the ultimate goal of the combined activities in the UN disarmament machinery. It has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1959.<sup>44</sup> It was cited in eleven resolutions of the General Assembly in 2006.<sup>45</sup> In his proposal in 2007 to establish an Office for Disarmament Affairs in the UN Secretariat, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon affirmed that "general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control remains a central issue on the global agenda."<sup>46</sup> In August 2007, he termed GCD "the ultimate strategic goal of the United Nations" in disarmament and arms regulation.<sup>47</sup>

## **Implications**

This article has sought to clarify the concept of GCD, its origins, and how it has evolved as the primary focal point of multilateral efforts in this field.

GCD, in summary, does not require the elimination of literally every weapon on earth. Its goals include – (a) the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as a priority, and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems; and (b) the limitation and reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces to levels sufficient to maintain domestic order and to sustain contributions to international peace support operations. Initiatives in these areas must not diminish the security of any State. To ensure this, reductions must be subject to verification and strict and effective international control, accompanied by strengthened measures for the peaceful resolution of disputes. This is what GCD means.

These goals are to be pursued concurrently, not sequentially. There is nothing in the history of GCD to indicate that the elimination of nuclear weapons or any other weapon of mass destruction is to await the prior establishment of world peace and security, or the elimination of any other type of weapon. As John Burroughs once put it, this would be "a formula for making nuclear disarmament contingent upon the achievement of heaven on earth."<sup>48</sup> There are indeed substantial grounds for concluding that progress in eliminating such weapons would itself contribute to world peace and security.

As Dag Hammarskjöld once stated, “Disarmament is never the result only of the political situation; it is also partly instrumental in creating the political situation.”<sup>49</sup> Similar views have been expressed by the Hans Morgenthau, one of the leading proponents of realist strategic thought:

*As the armaments race aggravates the struggle for power through the fear it generates and the burdens it imposes, so disarmament contributes to the improvement of the political situation by lessening political tensions and by creating confidence in the purposes of the respective nations. Such is the contribution disarmament can make to the establishment of international order and the preservation of international peace.*<sup>50</sup>

Though it is now well established in treaty law and remains widely accepted as a goal, GCD is not a concept that is frozen in time – it will certainly continue to evolve in the years ahead.

The track record of the international community on eliminating weapons of mass destruction is mixed. Chemical and biological weapons have been outlawed, though their respective treaties have yet to achieve universal membership and there are occasional allegations of non-compliance. Over three decades after the NPT entered into force, and over six decades after the General Assembly adopted the goal of nuclear disarmament, some 26,000 weapons reportedly remain – the exact number is unknown given the lack of transparency over these stockpiles. The treaty, however, is very close to universal membership and allegations of non-compliance have only been made against a very small number of states.

In the field of conventional arms, the General Assembly took a step forward on 6 December 2006, when it requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of states on the feasibility of a “legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.”<sup>51</sup> A UN Conference in 2001 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons produced agreement on a Programme of Action for curtailing that trade, followed up by biennial meetings of states to address implementation issues.<sup>52</sup> There are treaties to abolish landmines and to prohibit inhumane weapons. There are no multilateral treaties, however, for missiles or even any negotiations underway to create such a treaty.

Since 1946, the UN has been pursuing restraints in conventional arms alongside efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), world military expenditure exceeded \$1.2 trillion in 2006, representing a 37 percent increase over the decade since 1997.<sup>53</sup> SIPRI has also reported a 50 percent increase in the volume of major conventional arms transfers over the last four years.<sup>54</sup> While progress on nuclear disarmament is urgently needed and cannot await the prior achievement of conventional arms control, this is not an argument for postponing indefinitely progress in reducing conventional arms, armed forces, and military expenditures – or in strengthening institutions for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The quantity and quality of conventional weapons in the world can have significant implications for the future of both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. In an Annual Report issued in 1998, US Secretary of Defense William Cohen surveyed many threats facing his country and added, “Complicating all of these challenges is the increasing likelihood that US dominance in the conventional military area is encouraging adversaries to seek asymmetric means for attacking US forces and interests overseas and Americans at home.”<sup>55</sup> Eliminating nuclear weapons threats in various regions is also difficult to achieve without considering its implications for the balance of conventional forces that would remain after nuclear disarmament.

Some of the basic conceptual building blocks of GCD will also require some further refinement in the years ahead. The act of lowering of armaments and armed forces to levels suitable for maintaining domestic order will inevitably lead to significant variations among states with respect to their remaining force levels after the achievement of GCD. For the foreseeable future at least, states will remain their own judges of what constitutes sufficiency for such domestic security purposes. Larger states will logically demand more arms – how will this affect the interests of smaller states, especially if ambitious proposals for an international peace force fail to bear fruit?<sup>56</sup> There are also many bridges to cross in strengthening the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including the establishment of compulsory jurisdiction for the International Court of Justice. Difficult problems of transparency, verification, and irreversibility remain to be solved.

There will also be many challenges ahead in integrating GCD into the domestic laws, regulations, and policies of States. While there is widespread agreement on the “ultimate goal,” there remains a gap between this goal and concrete national initiatives to achieve it. This gap is seen in the paucity of governmental departments or agencies of disarmament, the lack of legislation or budgets for disarmament-related activities, and other such measures to give disarmament a stronger institutional infrastructure.

These and other such concerns do not negate the value of GCD, but instead only underscore the urgency for progress on all of its fronts, in particular nuclear disarmament, given the human, political, economic, and military implications from the use of only one nuclear weapon. This is perhaps why, of the many high-profile disarmament proposals floated in 2007, most all of them stress specifically the need for new progress in nuclear disarmament, without mentioning or emphasizing the need for progress in achieving other important goals of GCD.<sup>57</sup>

Without doubt, much can be achieved in the nuclear realm even without significant progress in these other areas. Yet eventually, the larger issues of security in disarmament, the relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons, and chronic political disputes at the regional level will ensure that GCD will almost surely remain as an internationally agreed means to integrate the various strands of disarmament into a coherent, comprehensive framework. If the concept did not already exist, it would have to be invented.

## Endnotes

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- 1) President Woodrow Wilson, Address to Congress, 8 January 1918,  
<http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/1918/14points.html>.
- 2) The full text of the Covenant is available at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/leagcov.htm#art8>.
- 3) Statement by Maxim Litvinov, League of Nations, Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, Fourth Session, document C.667.M.225.1927.IX, 30 November 1927.
- 4) Article 47 of the Soviet draft convention, introduced on 15 February 1928, also provided for a “Permanent International Commission of Control” to supervise disarmament activities. This body would be composed of “an equal number of representatives of the legislative bodies and of the trade unions and other workmen’s organisations of all the states participating in the present Convention.” Trevor N. Dupuy and Gay M. Hammerman (ed.), A Documentary History of Arms Control and Disarmament (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1973), p. 152.
- 5) General Assembly Resolution 1(I), 24 January 1946.
- 6) General Assembly Resolution 41(I), 14 December 1946. The resolution clarified that it was “directed towards the major weapons of modern warfare and not merely towards the minor weapons.”
- 7) Security Council Resolution 18 (1947), 13 February 1947.
- 8) General Assembly Resolution 502 (VI), 11 January 1952.
- 9) The draft Soviet resolution is located in General Assembly Document A/C.1/698, 12 January 1952. The resolution was General Assembly Resolution 504 (VI), 19 January 1952.
- 10) United Nations, Disarmament Commission, DC/C.1/1, 24 April 1952.
- 11) Emphasis added.
- 12) General Assembly Resolution 715 (VIII), 28 November 1953.
- 13) For further discussion, see The United Nations and Disarmament: 1945-1970 (New York: UN, 1970), p. 50-51.
- 14) General Assembly Resolution 808 (IX), 4 November 1954.

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15) The United Nations and Disarmament: 1945-1970, p. 55-57.

16) Ibid., p. 62.

17) Disarmament Commission, document DC/144, Annex, 8 September 1959.

18) General Assembly Resolution 1378 (XIV), 20 November 1959.

19) Philip Noel-Baker, Nobel Lecture, 11 December 1959.

20) Official Records of the General Assembly, Agenda item 19, A/4879, Annex, 20 September 1961.

The statement followed two earlier proposals by the UK and the Soviet Union on 17 and 18 September respectively.

21) Ibid., documents A/4880 and A/4891 (US), and A/4887 and A/4892 (Soviet Union)

22) Jozef Goldblat, Arms Control: A Guide to Negotiations and Agreements (Oslo: PRIO, 1994), p. 36.

23) John F. Kennedy, address to the General Assembly, 25 September 1961, available at

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/003POF03Unit+edNations09251961.htm>.

24) General Assembly resolution 1722 (XVI), 20 December 1961.

25) For further discussion of GCD deliberations in the United Nations during the 1960s, see The United Nations and Disarmament: 1945-1970, p. 78-125.

26) The Rarotonga (South Pacific) Treaty does not refer specifically to “disarmament,” only the “goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.” The Bangkok Treaty refers to the general and complete disarmament “of nuclear weapons.” Neither the Bangkok nor Pelindaba Treaties refers to “under strict and effective international control.” The defunct ABM Treaty also referred to general and complete disarmament in its preamble, as did the un-ratified SALT II (1979).

27) Secretary-General U Thant, “Introduction to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization,” A/7601/Add.1, September 1969, para. 42. He specifically urged the General Assembly to “establish a specific programme and time-table for dealing with all aspects of the problem of arms control and disarmament.”

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- 28) General Assembly Resolution 2602E (XXIV), 16 December 1969. The resolution clarified that “comprehensive programme” was intended to “provide the Conference with a guideline to chart the course of its further work and its negotiations” (para. 4).
- 29) In 1996, the International Court of Justice issued an Advisory Opinion that clarified the existence of an obligation to pursue – and bring to a conclusion -- negotiations on nuclear disarmament per se. The treaty’s preamble, however, refers to the elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles “pursuant to” a treaty on GCD. For a further discussion, see John Burroughs, “Conventional Disarmament Isn’t Linked to NPT,” Los Alamos Mirror, 23 May 1996, p. 4, available at <http://lcnp.org/wcourt/exchange.htm>.
- 30) General Assembly, Final Document, Tenth Special Session, S-10/2, para. 19. The document is available at <http://disarmament.un.org/gaspecialsession/10thsesmain.htm>.
- 31) Ibid., para. 38 and 109.
- 32) Ibid., para. 45.
- 33) Ibid., para. 111.
- 34) In 1984, the CD was re-named the “Conference on Disarmament,” its present name (2007).
- 35) A/34/42 (1979). The text is also available in A/51/182/Rev.1, 9 June 1999, pp. 3-10. In 1998, the General Assembly decided that the Commission would normally address only two items on its substantive agenda, with one dealing specifically with nuclear disarmament. General Assembly Decision 52/492, 8 September 1998.
- 36) For further discussion, see The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook (New York: United Nations, 1983), vol. 8, p. 72-85.
- 37) SSOD-I, Final Document, para. III-109.
- 38) CD/12, 12 April 1979. The comprehensive programme was item X in the Decalogue.
- 39) The CD’s current agenda is found in CD/1807, 24 January 2007.

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40) Statement by Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, 15 January 1986, in Documents on Disarmament (Washington, D.C.: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1986), p. 10-19.

41) For an excellent compilation of declassified official US documents on this summit, see <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB203/index.htm>.

42) Decision Two, “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament,” NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Annex, available at <http://disarmament.un.org/wmd/npt/1995dec2.htm>.

43) Final Document, 2000 NPT Review Conference, NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Part I), p. 15.

44) The agenda for the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly (2006) is found in document A/61/251, item 90.

45) Resolutions 61/56, 61/57, 61/60, 61/61, 61/62, 61/67, 61/69, 61/74, 61/80, 61/88, and 61/96.

46) General Assembly document A/61/749, 15 February 2007.

47) Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization, A/62/1, 31 August 2007, para. 18, p. 18.

48) John Burroughs, note 29.

49) Dag Hammarskjold, remarks at a press conference, United Nations, 19 May 1955.

50) Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, Sixth Ed. (New York: Knopf, 1985), p. 439.

51) Resolution 61/89, 6 December 2006.

52) For further details, see <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/salw.html>.

53) SIPRI Yearbook 2007, at <http://yearbook2007.sipri.org/chap8>.

54) *Ibid.*, Chapter 10.

55) Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress, 1998, available at <http://www.dod.mil/execsec/adr98/chap1.html>.

56) Immediately after Litvinov’s GCD proposal in 1927, the French representative, M. Paul-Boncour addressed this issue as follows: “Supposing you had total disarmament, if there were no international organisation taking charge of security, if you had no international force to ensure the maintenance of this

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security, if you had no international law such as we are endeavouring to lay down here, a powerful and populous nation with great resources would always have the means of imposing its will, when it wished to do so, on a small nation – equally disarmed, but less populous and less well equipped to resist an attack which might be made upon it.” (League of Nations, note 3.)

57) George Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” Wall Street Journal, 4 January 2007; former UK Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett, “Keynote Address: A World Free of Nuclear Weapons?”, Carnegie Endowment Annual Conference, Washington, D.C. 25 June 2007; and “The Rome Declaration of Nobel Peace Laureates,” 7<sup>th</sup> World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, 2006.