

Report

Multilateral Cooperation for Security: The Example of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

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**THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES,
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On January 10, 2012 the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad conducted a joint seminar on “Multilateral Cooperation for Security: The Example of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)” in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of International Relations QAU, Institute of Strategic Studies Research & Analysis (ISSRA), the National Defense University, and the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI). The six speakers on the panel for the seminar were Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, His Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Uzumcu, Dr Irfan Yusuf Shami, Brig. Muhammad Khurshid Khan and Dr. Maria Sultan.

The seminar was chaired by Ambassador (R) Gul Haneef, Chairman of the ISSI. Following his welcome remarks, Ambassador Gul Haneef acknowledged the emergence and significance of a new generation of risks permeating the international system, both scientific and non-scientific. He opined that there has been a paradigm shift with more volatile phases of violence now characterizing conflict in the context of 21st century society. In particular, he said, the case of chemical warfare was central to the political and academic debate on disarmament law and negotiation, and cooperation amongst states on a multi-planar level. The Ambassador referred to chemical warfare as a poisonous method of waging war, but at the same time gave credence to the fact that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was now law in an overwhelming percentage of the world, 98% according to some estimates. Crucially, the Ambassador acknowledged, large stockpiles of dangerous chemical weapons had been successfully eliminated. Vis-à-vis Pakistan he said that Islamabad has extended full support to all draft resolutions under the Chemical Weapons Convention, in addition to the fact that it has consciously remained an abiding member of the Organization of Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council since 1977. Moreover, Pakistan has served as the Coordinator of the Asia Group within the OPCW’s Executive Council since 2004. However, even despite Pakistan’s significant contribution to this

international regime, the debate on chemical weapons now harbours renewed urgency. Fundamentally, he said that there was now there is the need to identify loopholes and grey areas within the scope of armed conflicts, and for the sustained support of the civil and scientific society vis-à-vis combating the destructive effects of these conflicts. Moreover, there is now a greater need to increase awareness at the societal level about progress and advances made by various scientific communities in order to ensure that the said advances in the field of biological and chemical technology were not turned to destructive purposes.

The next speaker, Dr. Irfan Yusuf Shami, Director General (Disarmament & CWC National Authority), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the CWC commended Pakistan's ongoing collaboration with the OPCW. Dr Shami began his presentation by saying that the CWC remained the only international treaty in recent history that has unilaterally and categorically called for the complete destruction of chemical weapons. According to Dr. Shami, Pakistan had been a state party to the CWC since 1993, and continues to comply fully with its obligations even today. He said that since its establishment in August 1977, the CWC National Authority of Pakistan has served as the national focal point for coordination with all relevant national stakeholders as well as a liaison with OPCW and other CWC state parties. In addition to submitting annual declarations and national protection programmes, Pakistan has responsibly witnessed the successful facilitation of several routine industrial inspections by OPCW and has participated in bilateral, regional and international CWC related events.

Dr. Shami contended that, with a view to facilitating Pakistan's implementation of the CWC, the National Authority has established a sophisticated and secure Wide Area Network (WAN) which serves as an electronic interface for all national stakeholders. In collaboration with OPCW, the National Authority has successfully organized a training workshop on electronic declarations for National Authorities in the Asian region in Islamabad in June 2011. Similarly, in collaboration with the OPCW, Pakistan successfully organized an International Course on Assistance and Protection in Islamabad in October 2011. He claimed that the enthusiastic response by CWC state parties has encouraged Pakistan to offer to host International Courses on Assistance and Protection on an annual basis.

Moreover, he said that Pakistan had accepted the OPCW's proposal to host a Sub-Regional Assistance and Protection Centre in Islamabad to cater to friendly countries in the Gulf and South Asian regions. Dr. Shami concluded by saying that Pakistan's permanent mission in The Hague has maintained an active profile both within NAM and China as well as in the deliberations held within OPCW; Pakistan has served continuously as a member of OPCW's Executive Council since 1998, and as Co-ordinator for the 51 CWC state parties of the Asian Region since 2004.

Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, Director Arms Control & Disarmament Division at SPD was the next speaker to address the seminar. In his presentation Commodore Banuri hailed the CWC as a most widely recognized and groundbreaking treaty due to the fact that its implementation was a robust example of effective multilateralism at work. He said that the OPCW, as the agency responsible for CWC implementation, has become a well-recognized entity in the realm of international security and disarmament. The work of OPCW that is increasingly viewed as a success story has assumed the status of a role model for other multilateral organizations. Pakistan attaches high importance to the unstinted and full implementation of CWC that comprehensively, and without discrimination, prohibits an entire category of weapons under international verification. The near universal acceptance of the Convention by 98% of the global population, he explained, was a significant milestone. Nevertheless, complete universality remains essential to ensure the safety and security of the world against the threat of chemical weapons. We must appreciate OPCW's consistent effort that has utilized multiple avenues for engaging the remaining eight states which are still not party to the CWC. Owing to the threat to international peace and security, the complete destruction of all Chemical Weapons (CW) including abandoned and old weapons, is an objective that must remain top priority. CW destruction, which is mandatory under the Convention, had become a challenge as the extended deadline would soon be violated. The near consensus achieved at the last Conference of the State Parties, after months of hard work, speaks volumes about the diplomatic acumen of the Director General OPCW and his team in their endeavor to resolve a highly complex issue amicably. While this effort offers a solution, it would remain important that CW possessor states

continue the ongoing destruction of their remaining stockpiles under verification by OPCW until full destruction status is achieved.

Mr. Banuri restricted his remarks to three areas of major importance. Firstly, a comprehensive and permanent ban on chemical weapons will only be achieved if advances in science and technology are effectively monitored and evaluated. The convergence of chemistry and biology has resulted in the production of different synthesis routes for existing chemicals and preparation of new toxic Chemicals of Biological Origin (CBO). Exchange of experience can help understand the new challenges that such advancements pose to the effective implementation of CWC. Moreover, Pakistan attaches high priority to the provisions of the Convention on international cooperation and assistance. It is hoped that the OPCW will facilitate fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment and technical information in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes. An agreed framework on the full implementation of Article XI relating to “Economic and Technological Development” would boost international cooperation centered activities. Moreover, the developed world must fulfill its commitment to share technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field and remove discriminatory restrictions which affect the Convention’s long term viability and may have an adverse impact on the trust existing between State Parties.

Mr. Banuri’s second point was concerned with the implementation of Article X of the Convention on assistance and protection against chemical weapons, which makes a significant contribution to countering the threat of the use of chemical weapons. Achieving and maintaining a high level of readiness for timely adequate and effective assistance and protection to states in situations of use or threat of use of chemical weapons requires further strengthening of Article X implementation through effective integration of various offers of assistance. Furthermore, OPCW’s intent to establish Regional Assistance and Protection Centers is an initiative that merits due appreciation. Such centers can help enhance the national and regional cooperation, capacity building and improving the response mechanism. Finally, as his third point, Mr. Banuri noted that the recent report of the advisory panel on future priorities was promising. Its recommendations sought to strike a balance in the future priorities of the

organization between regulatory aspects, including industry verification & national implementation on the one hand and international cooperation in chemistry on the other. The retention of OPCW capacity to prevent reemergence of chemical weapons and prevention of possible use of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes is also an appropriate recommendation. This pragmatic report can be a useful guide for state parties in chalking out future priorities of the OPCW. In his conclusion, Mr. Khalid Banuri reaffirmed that Pakistan was committed to making optimum contribution towards the effective implementation of the CWC; seventeen industries had been declared where all routine inspections – eleven so far – had been judged at high standards. Pakistan's National Authority at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been most vibrant, through a multifaceted approach involving firstly awareness, both within the chemical industry as well as the public at large including academia; secondly international cooperation and training, including offering experienced professionals as inspectors and other staff to OPCW; and finally coordinating its activities at all tiers within the government, industry and the public at large. Such efforts signify not only the seriousness that Pakistan accords to CW disarmament, but also its contribution to the multilateral efforts for promoting peace, maintaining requisite safety, security and accountability. Mr Banuri suggested that Pakistan's cooperative effort in collaborating with OPCW for hosting international trainings give it the confidence to offer to host such events on a regular basis. In fact, Pakistan has immense potential and the expertise to host a regional centre to provide an enabling environment for interested regional partners to enhance their response potential. Ultimately, the OPCW continues its core task of destruction, while at the same time advancing, in a balanced way, other key priority areas such as deepening international cooperation, strengthening assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

Brigadier Khurshid Khan, Director Internal Studies & Centre of Excellence for 4th Generation Warfare (ISSRA) then proceeded to present his paper entitled "Applying the OPCW Model on Current and Emerging International Security Threats". In his presentation, Brigadier Khurshid touched upon the implications of chemical warfare not only for Pakistan but also for the world at large. According to him, the CWC has managed to make tremendous progress in spite of a myriad of challenges. One pertinent

challenge that still exists within the CWC was that there were a number of state parties who had signed but not yet ratified the treaty; moreover, these states were exceptionally vulnerable to conflict due to precarious internal domestic and political situations, and had failed to meet the set timeline to destroy their respective stockpiles of chemical weapons. Brigadier Khurshid proceeded to enumerate current challenges faced by the CWC regime; however he also commended Pakistan's conscious effort to serve as a frontline of international security against weapons expansion – according to him, Pakistan was one of the few countries that had successfully evolved stringent mechanisms to prohibit chemical weapons expansion. Amongst the challenges voiced by Brigadier Khurshid were, the careless handling of radioactive material, unmonitored trafficking taking place across the globe, as well as the rise of terrorist agencies and Non-State-Actors as immediate threats to international security. This threat is amplified by the fact that the US Security Regulatory Commission annually receives 200 reports of lost, stolen or abandoned radioactive sources, with more than half of such substances never being fully recovered. Brigadier Khurshid also estimated that according to a recent European Union Commission report, 30,000 disused sources are at risk of being lost from regulatory control. He observed that if this was the extent of safeguards in reasonably developed countries then one could well imagine the perilous case existing in developing countries. Brigadier Khurshid stressed that every possible preventive step that could be taken sensibly must be taken, especially due to the proximity of India and Pakistan as regional rivals to prevent an accidental mishap from potentially jeopardizing regional stability. He also mentioned the tangible threat posed by bioterrorism as a real possibility for destabilizing international security. He said that the bioterrorism convention signed 36 years ago was outdated, and needed to be revamped and modeled according to the blueprint offered by the CWC regime.

Dr, Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, QAU, discussed the implications of increasing globalization and fast paced development. These two factors, he said, have made it extremely difficult to control and monitor the proliferation of weapons. In particular he pointed to the dual use of technology and how this phenomenon coincided with increasingly porous borders to make the

proliferation of chemical and biological weapons a very serious threat to mankind. Dr. Jaspal referred to the 1995 Tokyo tragedy as well as the 2001 Anthrax episodes in Washington as examples of chemical terrorism. He said that the biological weapons convention of 1972 was grossly ineffective because it had been undercut by serious violations since its inception that had gone undetected for many years. Moreover, the Biological Weapons Convention has also failed to address new emerging threats with regard to bio-security. He argued that the reason why CWC worked so well was because the OPWC had refrained from dividing states into Category A and Category B etc.

Dr. Jaspal also briefly touched upon the two contours that were the nuclear non-proliferation regime (NPT) and the Nuclear Supply Group (NSG) respectively. He argued that both entities lacked fundamental strengths, manifested by the case examples of North Korea and Iran, and the US-Indo nuclear deal. Moreover, a Commission headed by Bob Graham submitted its findings to President Bush, the findings of which stated that there existed explicitly a very real possibility of the use of a biological or “dirty bomb” as opposed to a chemical attack. Thus Dr. Jaspal argued that it was necessary to formulate a strategy to control of counter such threats. He suggested 3 contours of strategy to counter such a threat:

1. Non proliferation
2. Counter proliferation
3. Defense

Dr. Jaspal opined that a collective approach of all 3 contours needed to be assumed for the successful application of this strategy at the international level. He suggested a layered defensive approach that saw the protection of defense materials, the disrupting of unlicensed connections between facilitators, and the equipment of law enforcement agencies within and outside the state to deal with and punish crimes pertaining to chemical warfare. Moreover, he said that emergency response mechanisms required the development of emergency plans at both the national and international levels in order mitigate the effects of a potential attack. He concluded by saying that the global reach of the CWC regime needed to be complimented by an equally global approach.

The fifth speaker to address the seminar was Dr. Maria Sultan, Director of the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute. Whilst commending her colleagues for their detailed presentations, she also stressed upon the importance of continued interface. She outlined how 188 state parties were members of the CWC treaty, and how the CWC effectively embodied all the key institutional elements of successful multilateral arms control. At the same time she insisted that the CWC was not a self-implementing treaty; rather, states needed to continue to work together to ensure their full treaty compliance. Dr Sultan also said that there seemed to be a disconnect between the current mandate of the CWC, and the narrative of next-generation threats. She explained that the CWC was essentially an organization of state parties, and did not as such deal with the mandate of non-state actors. This issued therefore demands further attention. Moreover, Dr. Sultan commended the OPWC for having taken tremendous initiatives, but also said there needs to be continued working on policy making at the micro and macro levels in order to create a successful interface for effective negotiation. She stressed on the need for a multi-disciplinary approach in order to create an effective strategy within this domain, as well as the need to sustain a viable conduit or mechanism through which interface could continue to promote the effectiveness of non-proliferation and verification regimes.

The final speaker was His Excellency Dr. Ahmet Uzumcu, Director General of the OPCW, The Hague. Dr Uzumcu expressed his sincere gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for its invitation to visit Islamabad. He acknowledged Pakistan's immensely constructive role in helping the OPCW reach its target of a world free of chemical weapons. In his address, he recognized that the value and importance of multilateralism depended greatly on sustainable progress especially since there was no alternative to multilateralism in combating current and future international challenges in the context of a globalized world. Dr. Uzumcu said that the case of chemical weapons in particular should provide hope and encouragement. He described the objective of the CWC as singularly encompassing peace and security as the collective responsibility of all member states, and verified the destruction of over 71% of international weapon stockpiles. He stated that the development of national preparedness was an essential task so

that states could respond appropriately in the eventuality of an attack or accident. He said that more than 2000 verifications had been conducted in over 80 countries. He ended by acknowledging the support extended by Pakistan to the OPWC, and projected that by 2016, only 1% of weapons will remain to be destroyed.

Ambassador Gul Haneef, Chairman of the ISSI, then opened the floor to Questions and Answers. The general trend of the questions was regarding the reasons for the relative success of the CWC as compared to other weapons conventions. According to Dr. Maria Sultan, the success of the CWC could be explained in that there has been no politicization of issues within the convention, and hence state parties were distinctly able to agree on a unified framework. Moreover, the OPWC and the Technical Secretariat had both shown credibility and professionalism, and this had prevented core issues from being hijacked by politics. She reasoned that there had been a good balance between disarmament and non-proliferation, and sustained assistance to technological development of various industries. Finally Ambassador Gul Haneef thanked the speakers of the panel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and most importantly the audience, and expressed his hope that engaging debate on the issue would continue beyond the corridors of the Institute.

*Prepared by
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