



**INSTITUTE OF
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

web: www.issi.org.pk
phone: +92-920-4423, 24
fax: +92-920-4658

Report – Webtalk

“Issues and Debate at the Conference on Disarmament (CD): A View from Pakistan”

by

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi,

Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN, Geneva

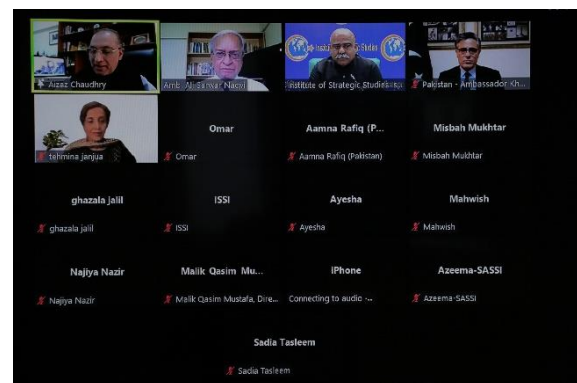
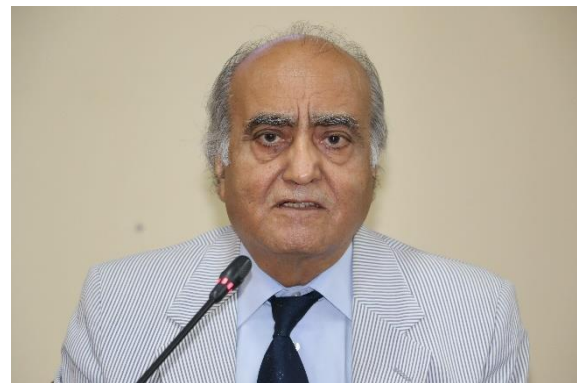
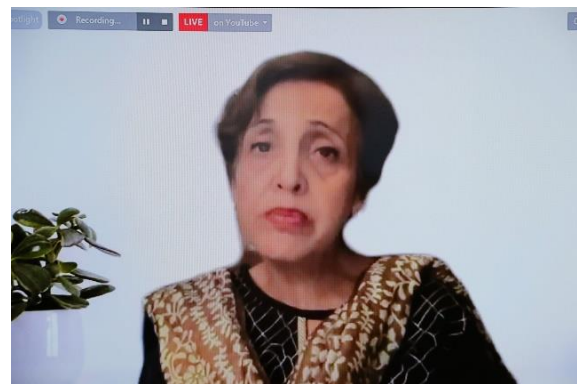
August 17, 2021



Compiled by: Ghazala Jalil

Edited by: Malik Qasim Mustafa

PICTURES OF THE EVENT



The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a webtalk on “**Issues and Debate at the Conference on Disarmament (CD): A View from Pakistan**” by **Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN, Geneva** on August 17, 2021. Ambassador Tehmina Janjua, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, was the discussant. Various distinguished national and international experts attended the webtalk. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, welcomed the participants. Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI, moderated the event.

Introduction by Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI

Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI, in his introductory remarks said that the CD was recognised as single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the international community. The CD conducts its work and adopts its decisions by consensus. Currently, with its 65 member states, the CD is primarily focusing on cessation of the nuclear arms race and comprehensive nuclear disarmament; prevention of nuclear war and arms race in outer space; effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons and transparency in armaments.

He noted that although the CD succeeded in negotiating the NPT, CWC, BWC and CTBT, however, the conference is facing deadlock for more than two decades for not reaching a consensus on its programme of work which includes the following four key areas: i) a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, ii). nuclear disarmament, iii). prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), and iv). negative security assurances. In addition to this, the new nuclear arms race, demise of arms control treaties and agreements, military modernisation and weaponisation of outer space, militarisation of emerging technologies and new emerging realities are also going to impact this impasse at the CD.

He highlighted that Pakistan attaches great importance to the CD and participates actively in its deliberations. Pakistan has time and again highlighted imbalance in the international arms

control and disarmament architecture and urged for non-discriminatory and equal security for all approaches. Pakistan wants the CD to adopt a comprehensive, objective and rule-based approach to break the deadlock and deal with the existing and emerging challenges.

With this premise, he said that the ACDC has organised this web talk by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi to explore the following questions:

1. What are existing and emerging issues related to arms control and disarmament, which require an effective response from CD?
2. How Pakistan views the ongoing debate in the CD? And
3. What role Pakistan can play to break the impasse at the CD.

Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, in his welcome remarks said that his exposure to the CD was very limited. It was during the Obama presidency and there was a focus on negotiating a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT), rather than discussing any disarmament commitments under the NPT. Inversely the focus was shifted to non-proliferation with double standards since India was not being subject to many of those restrictions. There was also a focus on nuclear security, in the context that given the war on terror if not secured nuclear assets could land in the wrong hands. It would be very interesting to get an update on what are the issues being discussed at the CD

Talk by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN, Geneva

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN, Geneva, said that from Pakistan's perspective, the CD does not operate in isolation. It is affected by the geopolitical developments at the national and international levels, policy choices of major powers and how the CD members perceive these developments impacting their national security.

Ambassador Hashmi pointed out the CD's membership and its composition of militarily significant countries, the rules of procedures and mechanisms, the agenda of achieving nuclear disarmament and the absence of civil society's participation are major and constant internal

variables that affect CD's working. There are ongoing debates regarding further extension of membership, revision of agenda and amendment of rules and procedures. Numerous proposals had been tabled but they did not get much attention.

While underlining the external variables, he said that the primary rationale behind the CD was to negotiate the treaty of nuclear disarmament. However, the indefinite extension of the NPT somehow legitimised the possession of nuclear weapons and sowed the seeds of the existing stalemate at the CD. Other variables are the longstanding and well-founded frustration due to non-compliance of legal obligations, lack of forwarding movement on the issue of Negative Security Assurances (NSA), deliberate disregard for established norms of global arms control and disarmament regime, growing mistrust among member states and contest for prioritising the issues among major powers.

While highlighting the prospects, he opined that the progress at CD in terms of negotiating any treaty is difficult to achieve due to renewed global arms race, doctrinal shifts and growing competition and antagonism among major powers. Therefore, there is a need to reverse the policies that caused the stalemate and revive the old global consensus on the issue of nuclear disarmament. He also drew attention to the integration of Artificial Intelligence with existing weapons, nanotechnologies, synthetic material, militarisation of cyberspace, hypersonic missile race as matters of serious concern, which must be brought to the CD agenda. However, there is little appetite among major powers to bring them to the agenda. There has been a deliberate disregard of norms of the global non-proliferation regime including India specific waivers and breach of international rules and norms. This has affected the CD. He emphasised the need to have a robust rule-based international order. Clear violations and infringements of international norms and rules are not helpful.

He noted that progress on the Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) should be a priority since states are increasingly moving towards the weaponisation of outer space.

Ambassador Hashmi said that progress at the CD has remained difficult and would remain the same for foreseeable future. He emphasised that trust was needed among great powers for any progress. Growing competition and antagonism in the international arena has affected progress at

CD. He said that currently, there are no clear solutions and the global landscape for arms control and disarmament is not bright.

Discussant: Ambassador Tehmina Janjua, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan

Ambassador Tehmina Janjua, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, said that the CD should not be seen as ineffective and irrelevant. The CD is a forum where Pakistan's views are sought, heard, understood and greatly valued. It is an important strategic forum where Pakistan can bring to attention the security challenges it is facing in the region because of the special treatment given to India. Pakistan is focused on NSA and PAROS but the western countries view the non-proliferation and FMCT as the only negotiable issues. What Pakistan advocated is that the focus must be on non-proliferation. Regarding FMCT Pakistan says it should address existing stockpile asymmetries instead of focusing on capping fissile material production. She also spoke of Pakistan's support for the Russian proposal in the CD Convention against Biological and Chemical Terrorism.

She stressed the need to draw attention to the problems created for Pakistan because of preferential treatment meted out to India. Despite its shortcomings, Ambassador Janjua said that the CD is useful where important discussions take place.

Question and Answer Session

Q: How the Treaty on Prohibition of NWS (TPNWs) may have affected the credibility of the CD since this was negotiated by out skirting the CD. What is the general feeling amongst the CD members and can this new trend can be used as a template by some to take FM(C)T outside the CD?

A: There are two aspects to the TPNW issue. The indefinite extension of the NPT has been a factor. The Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) have legal obligations to reduce their nuclear arsenals. Instead, there has been stalling of disarmament negotiations. There is the continued existence of thousands of nuclear weapons in the inventory. The NWS have made their position very clear. They will not disarm. These are some of the ramifications of the deep sense of betrayal and frustration by members of the treaty. This was the backdrop that led some states to take matters into their own hands and negotiate the TPNW outside the CD.

Q: You have highlighted the need for nuclear disarmament negotiations and also clearly articulated the nature of challenges that the CD is faced with. It seems the CD won't be able to deliver any substantive results on disarmament. Given this situation, why Pakistan has joined the other nuclear-armed states in protecting the unfair nuclear order by categorically rejecting the more democratic TPNW, rather than arguing in favour of keeping all disarmament negotiations confined to a 'dysfunctional' CD?

A: TPNW is a by-product of the failure of the NPT. There is opposition from major states, Russia and the US, with 90 per cent nuclear weapons to abstain. While asking other countries with smaller arsenals to Join the TPNW. When treaties are taken outside of the CD, the acceptance and effectiveness of those treaties would be affected.

A: Rules-based international order is needed. It is supposed to operate under the UN Charter. There is increasingly a big gap in what is being said and what is being practised. There are treaties – clear principles of international law. They have been violated in one form or the other this was done to promote the interest of countries. There has been a promotion of informal arms control arrangements instead.

Q: In the backdrop of geopolitics where the US sees China as the main opponent and its claim that China has the fastest-growing nuclear programme, what does it mean for positive traction of negotiations at the CD?

A: Great power competition and confrontation have intensified in recent years. This is one of the major external factors that prevent the CD from delivering. For negotiations on any issue to begin a degree of trust is needed. That are many issues that need attention like new emerging technologies, integration of existing and new technologies. However, the arms control scene is not very bright due to the interplay of adverse relations between the US Russia and China.

Q: You have mentioned that there is a stalemate in the CD for the last few decades. What are the factors that are preventing progress on PAROS?

A: There is a large member of states that have highlighted the prevention of weaponisation of outer space. Thus, there is support for the initiative. Some states have strategic advantages and assets placed in outer space. Why would they give up their advantage? Why would they want to

negotiate their way towards any arms control arrangement that constraints or limits their strategic advantage? This is the reason why there is opposition to PAROS.

The UK has brought a new proposal recently. It argues for responsible behaviour in activities in outer space. It is deflecting attention from the formal treaties in outer space. Designed to shift attention away from weaponisation. However, one of the principles of arms control is trust and verification. Treaties and conducts can be verified, intentions cannot be verified.

Concluding remarks by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BOG ISSI

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BOG ISSI, said that the CD made major progress when conditions were right but from the last two decades, it is in a stalemate. New emerging technologies have provided challenges that must be addressed by the international community. One has to persist and make use of this forum. He hoped that relations between great powers would improve and make CD effective and fruitful again. He said that the CD remains an important multilateral body as it could play a greater role in dealing with the challenge of emerging technologies.