

## **The question of the role of science and technology in the context of International Peace and Security**

### **Introduction**

“Affirms that scientific and technological progress should be used for the benefit of all mankind to promote the sustainable economic and social development of all States and to safeguard international security and that international cooperation in the use of science and technology through the transfer and exchange of technological know-how for peaceful purposes should be promoted.” This is one of the resolutions that was adopted at the 69<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly in 1999, which demonstrates how, historically, there is an international will to promote the role of science and technology in the context of International Peace and Security. This was further reinforced by the central role that technology played in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where issues regarding the employability of new tools to increase safe-keeping and optimize government responses were addressed... So, where does the issue lie?

### **Deciding on Technologies**

First of all, it is essential that the UN decides upon which technologies are beneficial to implement in order to enhance its practices. It is also important to take into consideration a deeper topic which is, if, by implementing this new technology, to what extent is the United Nations including third parties into its affairs? A lot of discussion has been surrounding these issues which have, at its core, the ultimate question of the origins of the technology. Where should the technology come from? Who will decide on the utility of this technology? Who will control the technology? Delegates should be reminded to not forget their country's stance on these issues and the degree of national pride that is involved in such discussions, for delegations usually seem to stop seeing eye to eye on such topics in the moment where these questions start to be asked.

### **Regulating Technologies**

The matter of regulation of these technologies should also be debated, for different countries define 'ethical' under various labels and this starts to be a matter of global concern when public safety is put into question. Should the UN have the right to interfere with a country's mass surveillance programs, and if so, to what extent? In recent years we have seen the debate on this matter grow, especially after Edward Snowden exposed NSA files that revealed how the USA was violating individual's privacy with the technology that it had to 'protect individuals' and 'safeguard the peace of the nation'. The world became aware of what the USA was doing but other countries can easily be following its path, which reinforces just how crucial adequate regulation for this technology is.

### **Access to Technologies**

Peace and security is intertwined with the economic prosperity of a country and the technological revolution serves to widen the gap between rich and poor. Despite calls from the UN for greater access, the world's poorest countries are being left behind and this imbalance is a threat to global peace. When given the opportunity and resources, young people can use technology to effect change.

In the early 2010s the world got a glimpse of the power and influence of technology on the political stage when the Arab Spring revolution sought to bring radical change to the Islamic world. Mass demonstrations were organised using social media platforms and young

people had a voice in how their country should be led. The outcomes of the Arab Spring were multitude, from regime change in Tunisia to a more hard line approach in Egypt, but nevertheless the question of technology and its influence to effect change was raised. The Arab Spring sought democracy; next time it could be extremist groups. Is the world prepared for a new technologically led uprising?

### **Climate Change**

Our recent history has been dominated by migrants, be they political refugees fleeing war or economical migrants looking for a better life. However, the world must prepare for a new wave of migrants; climate migrants. The movement of people commonly increases tensions in the world, and generally forms political agendas be they wall building or Brexit. Climate change, in an indirect way, has the capacity to affect peace and security in the future, so the world must act now and use its combined science and technology tools to plan for and limit the possible consequences.

### **Conclusion**

Technology and science can, therefore, revolutionize the ways in which peace and security are maintained on a global scale, but, without adequate ponderation and regulation of these, they can become the biggest threat to the very same thing they were purposely built to maintain, peace.

Websites for reference:

UN Digital Library- <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/399865?ln=en>  
Independent Commission on Multilateralism: Discussion paper-  
[https://www.icm2016.org/IMG/pdf/new\\_tech\\_paper.pdf](https://www.icm2016.org/IMG/pdf/new_tech_paper.pdf)

## **The question of implementing measures to ensure the elimination of all chemical weapons**

### **Introduction**

To start the discussion, it is important to unify the definition of what is meant by a chemical weapon. "A chemical weapon is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties. Munitions, devices and other equipment specifically designed to weaponize toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons", according to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

### **Early Chemical Weapons Usage**

Chemical weapons have been utilized throughout history and their usage has always left generations worth of destruction behind. The first agreement reached regarding the elimination of a primordial form of chemical weapons was between France and Germany that signed a deal in Strasbourg in 1675 where they agreed to not use poison bullets. This shows how the notion that the use of chemically altered weapons brings nothing but unnecessary torture is quite ancient. After this initial agreement, several others were signed such as the Hague Convention that was even altered in 1907 to include bans on poisoned weapons. However, merely 8 years later, 124 200 tonnes of chlorine, mustard and other chemical agents were released into the battlefield on Belgian land during WW1 causing the death of 90,000 soldiers and disfigurements on more than 1 million others.

### **Tackling the Problem**

The Organisation of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was therefore set up with the aim of destroying all existing chemical weapons, by implementing the measures stated in the Chemical Weapons Convention, a document to which all member states have agreed. This means that all nations have agreed to destroy their chemical weapons and to regularly carry out checks on their countries for certain toxic materials. Under this convention, states are also allowed to request surprise investigations on another state's arsenal if they suspect of illicit behaviour and that other state is obliged to accept this visit.

The OPCW has various tactics to ensure that these articles are adopted but it is the delegate's jobs to assess them and come up with alternative ways to solve a problem, which is far from being solved. The Syrian eight-year civil war that has been raging on is known to have encountered chemical warfare on several occasions. On the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2018 a chemical warfare attack on the Syrian city of Douma caused the death of over 40 people and injuries to 600 others.

Chemical attacks on individuals against the state took a new direction with the Salisbury nerve agent attack in London in 2018. Sergei Skripal, a former British spy, along with his daughter Yulia, was found in a Salisbury park with Novichok nerve agent poison. A major diplomatic row ensued between the UK and Russia. Will there be a proliferation in this type of attack?

Taking action to eliminate a country's stockpile of chemical weapons may be more difficult than ever considering the invasive action taken in the Middle East under the Bush Administration. The USA and UK used the pretext of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction to invade Iraq in 2003. They never found any. But they did overthrow a government and cause upheaval in the Middle East that does not look like ending soon. What are the measures to be put in place to ensure that these ploys are not repeated?

**Conclusion**

The delegates are therefore urged to evaluate the current ways in which this problem is addressed and to come up with innovative measures to reinforce the banning of this cruel and unjust warfare.

Websites for reference: OPCW website- <https://www.opcw.org/>

Chemical Weapons Convention- <https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention>