Executive Summary

While the end of the Cold War greatly reduced some global threats to security, enduring ethnic rivalries and regional tensions have created pressures on nations to continue to develop or expand their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, global political conditions are ripe for real progress in eliminating these weapons. Traditionally, the United Nations has been engaged in arms control and disarmament through developing norms, negotiating treaties, and monitoring compliance. However, in light of today’s new challenges, it is time to ask whether the international community is taking full advantage of the United Nations.

Participants reviewed the preconditions for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, evaluated the current obstacles to disarmament, discussed the elements of an effective disarmament regime, and suggested strategies and tactics to this end.
Preconditions: Security and a Global Commitment

Participants agreed that a unique window of opportunity exists springing from events occurring in the last few years: the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty and START I have entered into force, START II was ratified by the United States and is awaiting action by the Russian Duma, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was extended indefinitely, some nations have renounced altogether their nuclear weapons programs, and the Chemical Weapons Convention is on the road to ratification. The international community can build on this momentum to achieve even greater reductions in the development and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Participants agreed, however, that real progress may be achieved only after nations have reached an affirmative commitment, or “compact,” to the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. This would require nations to move beyond their sense of insecurity—a difficult task in that armament feeds insecurity and is fueled by insecurity. Ultimately, a sense of security will be dependent on trust. Reaching a global compact and carrying out nations’ commitments would be a very slow process that would involve repeated substantial security assurances and require greatly reduced levels of conventional arms.

Obstacles

Participants identified obstacles to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The import and export of dual-use materials—materials having civil and military uses—was seen as a significant impediment. Opinions differed on the solution: while some advocated more controls at the national and international levels, others argued for a more flexible system where nations examine case by case the intent of importing nations. Technological advances and the easy spread of knowledge hinder weapons control as well, particularly with respect to chemical and biological weapons. Nuclear smuggling also threatens the international community, but the first line of control would be within nations. International efforts should focus on more accurate record keeping, greater transparency in trade, and data-sharing among international organizations. The most difficult obstacles to eliminating weapons of mass destruction are the regional tensions within East
Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East and inconsistent enforcement of treaty obligations by the Security Council.

**Elements of an Effective Disarmament Regime**

An effective disarmament regime would require setting international norms, treaty negotiation, enforcement, verification and monitoring, confidence-building measures, transparency, and fostering regional steps to disarmament. The United Nations’ performance in these areas is not consistent. While the United Nations is successful in norm-building and fostering treaty negotiation, its Security Council-dominated enforcement system was characterized by most participants as unreliable and overly politicized. Some participants supported the current system, arguing that alternative enforcement arrangements are politically unrealistic. There was also disagreement on the United Nations’ record on verification, with some arguing for a stronger system and others cautioning against interference with nations’ sovereign rights. Participants generally agreed with the need to expand transparency and confidence-building measures and endorsed the growth of regional nuclear-weapons-free zones.

**Strategies and Tactics**

Most participants envisioned a greater role for the United Nations in a strengthened disarmament regime, but only after certain reforms. The Secretariat lacks a professional staff of arms control experts and the Disarmament Commission could be used to explore issues not addressed by the General Assembly or the Security Council. Most participants believed the Security Council’s veto power most weakened treaty enforcement to the extent its use has resulted in inconsistent responses to noncompliance. Participants discussed the following reforms of the Security Council:

- Prohibit the use of the veto in cases of treaty noncompliance.
- Limit application of the veto to nonmilitary enforcement decisions.
- Amend the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the chemical and biological weapons conventions to clarify the Security Council’s responsibilities.
- Remove the Security Council’s enforcement powers and vest them in the separate treaty regimes
- Assign some or all Security Council enforcement authority to
either a new or a transformed UN body.

- Expand membership to enhance regional representation.
- Create a special Security Council rapporteur for disarmament or a permanent staff of disarmament experts serving the Security Council.

Participants explored the merits of other avenues to the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Consolidating the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons treaty regimes once they are fully operational, encouraging greater involvement by nongovernmental organizations in the UN disarmament process, and increasing the number of regional nuclear-weapons-free zones were among the issues debated.
Participants

Chair
Richard H. Stanley, President, The Stanley Foundation

Rapporteurs
Bruno Pigott, Program Officer, The Stanley Foundation
Mary Theisen, Program Officer, The Stanley Foundation

Participants
Berhanykun Andemicael, Representative of the Director-General, International Atomic Energy Agency

Richard Butler, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

John Despres, US Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Enforcement

Rolf Ekéus, Executive Chairman, United Nations Special Commission on Iraq

Nabil Elaraby, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations

Ahmad Kamal, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

Sohrab Kheradi, Deputy Director, Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations

James Leonard, Acting President, United Nations Association of the United States of America

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.
Opening Remarks

by Richard H. Stanley, President, The Stanley Foundation

Welcome to the twenty-seventh United Nations Issues Conference. Our topic, “The Role of the United Nations in Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction” is both timely and challenging. Although the Cold War is over and superpower tensions have diminished greatly, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction has not disappeared. In fact, the enduring presence of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons continues to threaten global security. As long as such weapons exist, a secure peace with freedom and justice will be at risk.

Why is now a good time to talk seriously about eliminating weapons of mass destruction? Let me suggest several reasons. First, while the end of superpower rivalry minimized some global security threats, many remain. A mushrooming of ethnic rivalries and enduring regional tensions have created pressures on nations to expand or develop these massively destructive weapons. In the Middle East, the world had a wake-up call when Iraq’s possession of chemical and biological weapons stockpiles and nascent nuclear capabilities were fully discovered. In East Asia, North Korea’s defiance of established nonproliferation norms threatened the viability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. While these crises have been averted, there is no guarantee that the international community will effectively deal with similar events in the future.

Globally, nuclear weapons problems persist. Testing continues. Smuggling of nuclear materials by terrorists presents grave security risks. And, while vertical disarmament should be promising in this post-Cold War era, the pace is disturbingly slow. We are alarmed by reports of development of chemical weapons in various countries, and of their use—even against domestic populations. Growing stockpiles of unsafe and inadequately protected
chemical weapons not only present security threats but environmental and health hazards as well. The list goes on, and I am sure it will be more than adequately discussed in the days ahead. The point is that all of these problems and developments clearly demonstrate the need to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to work seriously toward their elimination.

Second, opportunities exist to push for complete disarmament, but we will not be able to build momentum unless we take advantage of them. We have made progress. Last year the five nuclear weapons states pledged to complete negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by September 1996. START II was ratified last month by the US Senate in a near-unanimous vote. The Russian Duma may take action on the treaty this summer. Successful completion of both the test ban and START II would provide a tremendous boost to nuclear arms control and could lead the way to nuclear disarmament. The Chemical Weapons Convention, completed in 1993, continues to gain international support. Although forty-two states have ratified the convention, sixty-five are needed before it may enter into force. It is encouraging, however, that one-hundred fifty-nine countries have now signed the convention. With respect to biological weapons, negotiations are well underway to create a legally binding instrument that will provide the means of verification that was previously lacking in the biological weapons control regime. A special United Nations’ committee is working to incorporate further confidence-building and transparency measures into the biological weapons regime and is crafting a program for international cooperation in biotechnology for peaceful purposes. The next biological weapons convention review conference will be held late this year.

Finally, and perhaps most important, changes in the global political environment should permit real advances in the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Today security is no longer defined solely by military strength; rather, it includes several dimensions, including political stability, a healthy economy and environment, and respect for human rights. There is a growing realization among experts and observers that neither status in the global community nor solutions to complex problems can be found through nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. Ethnic conflicts such as the world has seen in Bosnia, devastating humanitarian disasters,
intractable civil wars, and far-reaching economic crises call for more innovative solutions. In this environment, weapons of mass destruction—indeed, even the use of force—have been rendered far less relevant. Consistent with this new outlook, various states have renounced the use and production of nuclear weapons—most notably, Ukraine, South Africa, Japan, and Germany. Their renunciation has bolstered world security. Moreover, growing economic interdependence and technological change, particularly in communications, have altered traditional notions of sovereignty and have ushered in an era where countries increasingly share common interests and objectives. As Barry Blechman and Cathleen Fisher have so aptly stated in a recent Foreign Policy article, “[t]he use of force, once accepted as an unfortunate but necessary consequence of a world in which states remain sovereign, is losing its legitimacy except as a multinational instrument to enforce common values.” Perhaps for the first time since the Second World War, a window of opportunity exists to eliminate, once and for all, weapons of mass destruction.

Why should we think about the United Nations’ role in disarmament? What should its contribution be at this critical juncture? The United Nations has served a significant role in developing the world’s weapons control regime and is in the best position to forge the remaining work that needs to be done. The Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as the chemical and biological weapons conventions were negotiated under UN auspices. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is nearing completion in the Disarmament Commission. Last June, the Non-Proliferation Treaty was indefinitely extended by the General Assembly—a political breakthrough that seemed elusive only one year before. In the wake of the gulf war, the Security Council established a special commission on Iraq to render harmless Iraq’s biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons—the first time the United Nations has involved itself in the dismantling of a nation’s entire weapons system.

The United Nations is the only institution capable of serving the needs and interests of a broad range of countries each having multifaceted disarmament goals. For nonnuclear member states, the United Nations provides an opportunity for individual and regional concerns to be brought before the world community. For nuclear states, the United Nations has provided a forum for addressing the
need to halt weapons proliferation while at the same time serving to impose on them certain international responsibilities, including progress toward disarmament. I think my own country needs to be reminded of the important role the United Nations has had in taking actions that are consistent with serving US security interests. For example, the work of various groups—such as the International Atomic Energy Agency in nuclear nonproliferation, the Special Commission in neutralizing Iraq’s weapons program, and the Disarmament Commission in negotiating the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty—has served US security goals as well as those of other nations. Clearly, for the United States and the rest of the world, the United Nations is the only place where all nations can work together on disarmament.

Like it or not, the United Nations is the only game in town. It is the only organization available to deal with these issues. For instance, in this post-Cold War era where the influence of superpowers has greatly diminished, multilateral action to prevent the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons is essential. The United Nations is the only place to deal with both vertical and horizontal proliferation. And the United Nations is the only international body that can perform the range of tasks necessary to reign in weapons proliferation, from the creation of norms and standards to the enforcement of international commitments.

But if everything were perfect, we would not be here. While the challenges before the United Nations are many, the organization’s capacity to deal with them is very limited. Currently, the United Nations and national governments move from crisis to crisis, developing ad hoc measures along the way. Member states’ financial support of the United Nations is unpredictable. The United Nations and its related organizations have weak enforcement mechanisms, and their intelligence and monitoring activities rely on member states’ good will. Solutions to these and other problems must necessarily accompany any revitalized role of the United Nations in eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

Now is the time for member states to strengthen their resolve and create the political will to disarm. Nations need to assess both the adequacy of today’s global arms control regime and the United Nations’ institutional capabilities. The United Nations has much to
offer. It is time the international community took full advantage of it. What is more, by methodically assessing and strengthening its role in eliminating weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations will not only make this a safer world, but would, in the process, enhance its own viability as an international organization that makes a difference.

I want to stress to all of you the urgency in our task. At this moment the political environment is conducive to progress toward the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. If that is truly our goal, then we must act now before this window of opportunity closes. For who knows how long this moment will last? In these turbulent times, who knows what political changes will take place over the next twelve months? Who knows what technological advance may be the next weapon of mass destruction, triggering another arms buildup? Who knows what spark will cause a political flash point to ignite, resulting in the use of some weapon of mass destruction? After crossing such a threshold in the use of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, do we want to look back on this time and regret our inaction?

Unless we work now, we will continue to find ourselves running dangerously and haphazardly from crisis to crisis. We cannot allow the opportunity to eliminate these weapons pass. Working together today could result in real progress. Improving the United Nations’ capability will both strengthen the United Nations just when it is under fire and help achieve our common goal. Tackling these issues will not be simple. It will mean that institutions and nations will have to shed outdated ideas. Your presence here indicates your willingness to take on the challenge. I look forward to our discussions.
Conference Report

The Role of the United Nations in Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction

For more than forty years, the United Nations has been working quietly, effectively, and almost without notice on an issue that has hung heavily over the world: curbing the horizontal and vertical proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Yet, only now may the United Nations be uniquely positioned to facilitate their elimination. While the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) received most of the attention last year, there have been other less prominent but equally important developments. The UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) has identified, monitored, and verified the destruction of Iraq’s nuclear weapons capacity. The United Nations is working to strengthen compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Conference on Disarmament successfully completed negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and is now negotiating a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The United Nations has the potential to play a central role in ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction, but is the world community ready to embrace the goal by taking advantage of the United Nations’ strengths and improving its capabilities?

The Stanley Foundation convened its twenty-seventh United Nations Issues Conference with three broad aims. The first was to explore whether the goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction is indeed feasible. The second was to examine the United Nations’ past record and current role in dealing with proliferation. The third objective was to identify concrete, short- and long-term strategies for improving the United Nations’ performance in this area.

Issues Relating to Elimination: Feasibility and Preconditions

Although participants agreed that the total elimination of the weapons of mass destruction was desirable, some doubted its feasibility. The post-Cold War world is an uncertain, unstable place.
Although old ideological enmities have faded, old alliances have become strained, internal conflicts have escalated, and countries’ reactions to international crises are less predictable. As a result, some argued the climate for eliminating weapons of mass destruction is not good. They cited several examples. The prohibition on the use of chemical and biological weapons is still not a universally accepted norm; only forty-two nations have ratified the CWC, still short of the sixty-five needed for the convention to enter into force. More states have crossed the nuclear threshold and others seem to be on the verge. Many states already possess the capability to produce biological and chemical weapons and delivery systems. Although the United States has talked about eliminating weapons of mass destruction, it has not committed to any timetable. Some questioned whether international institutions are, in fact, capable of addressing these issues.

However, most participants saw in today’s global environment a unique window of opportunity. They cited the end of the Cold War, which has brought unprecedented progress in bilateral agreements such as the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, START I, and START II. The NPT was indefinitely extended in 1995. Nations

The rapporteurs prepared this report following the conference. It contains their interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.
such as South Africa and Brazil have renounced their nuclear weapons programs. And nuclear powers have pledged, as part of the extension of the NPT, to complete a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996 and to make systematic efforts to reduce nuclear stockpiles with the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Moreover, the signing of the CWC brings the total elimination of these weapons within reach, and negotiations continue to put teeth into the BWC.

Both the hopeful and the doubtful acknowledged that progress toward complete disarmament would need to be undertaken step by step and accompanied by new security assurances and a greatly reduced level of conventional armaments. Given political unpredictability, the opportunity to agree upon and implement the elimination of weapons of mass destruction may be short-lived. Unless new steps are taken, the present situation could deteriorate and new weapons technology, smuggling, and proliferation among non-state actors could lead to a new arms race. Acting now is important. Participants discussed what should be done to move toward the goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction. They agreed that a new global security compact or commitment was a precondition for the total elimination of these weapons.

Security
Elimination of weapons of mass destruction cannot be divorced from the issue of security. The two are intertwined in a Gordian knot. Acquisition of weapons is spurred by a sense of insecurity. Yet, the weapons themselves breed insecurity that inevitably leads to further proliferation. The key to halting the spiraling proliferation of these weapons is to build a sense of global security.

But how can security be created when both the elimination and proliferation of these weapons can create imbalances which give rise to a sense of insecurity? Two rationales exist. One begins with the perception that insecurity is the cause of armament. Nations arm when they perceive security threats. Absent regional or strategic alliances assuring security, nations will arm themselves. The first step, according to this approach, is to
bolster the current collective security mechanism—the United Nations—or develop a new one.

A second rationale is based on the premise that arms create insecurity. Weapons of mass destruction, by their nature, create an insecure environment and promote proliferation. It is important, therefore, to first gain general acceptance of the idea that security is enhanced by disarmament, then take steps to disarm.

Most participants agreed that these rationales are not mutually exclusive. Both should be addressed simultaneously. Additionally, different regions will require different kinds of security assurances which range from nuanced promises to formal alliances. Perhaps most important to proceed, trust must be developed between nations.

**A Global Compact**

Some called for a “global compact” by which countries would establish a fundamental political agreement, a common understanding that weapons of mass destruction are wrong and that the world is committed to their elimination. Only through a global compact will serious disarmament begin. Many participants noted that trust is often lacking, especially between nuclear weapon states (NWSs) and nonnuclear weapon states (NNWSs). The NNWSs believe that while they have complied with the NPT, the NWSs have generally ignored their Article 6 obligation to negotiate in good faith a complete disarmament treaty. The NWSs, on the other hand, are concerned that certain NNWSs may attempt to obtain nuclear weapons production capability. They view the refusal of some nations to sign the NPT as a proliferation danger. This atmosphere builds distrust.

What options are available to break through the feelings of distrust? Participants pointed to several possibilities, including eliminating large weapons stockpiles, putting conventions into force, renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons, disarming small and large NWSs simultaneously, and establishing confidence-building measures.
Obstacles to the Elimination of Weapons

In a broad sense, increasing security and creating a global understanding are preconditions to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Participants also examined more specific, concrete hurdles to making progress. Those hurdles include import/export issues, technology transfers, smuggling, regional flash points, and an ineffective approach to enforcement issues.

Import/Export Issues
Participants agreed that dual-use materials—materials that are used for economic development and could either directly or indirectly be used to produce weapons of mass destruction—are significant impediments to eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Some participants advocated developing controls at national and international levels. Other participants argued that placing strict controls on exports would damage some countries’ economic growth and would not stop the transfer of sensitive technologies. They argued that nations should examine the intent of each importing nation on a case-by-case basis. Many other participants sought a middle ground advocating a “grand bargain” in which exporting nations would agree to trade and importing countries would agree to establish transparency procedures which would assure that sensitive materials were used for peaceful purposes.

Technological Issues
The advance of technology and the spread of knowledge are significant obstacles to controlling weapons of mass destruction. This is particularly true in the chemical and biological arms fields, where knowledge needed to produce these weapons is widespread, as demonstrated by the use of sarin nerve agent in a Tokyo commuter train by the Aum cult in 1995. Participants noted that methods of preventing the spread of this knowledge—prohibiting high-technology companies from hiring foreign nationals or preventing foreign nationals from attending Western universities—would be undesirable and ineffective.

Smuggling
The demise of the Soviet Union, increasing intrastate conflicts, and the large number of nonstate actors have increased fears about the security of nuclear stockpiles. In fact, smuggling incidents doubled
from around sixty in 1993 to one-hundred twenty-four in 1994. Participants argued that the first line of control is within nations. Each must maintain more accurate recordkeeping of nuclear materials and permit greater transparency in trade. International organizations must develop greater data sharing.

Regional Flash Points
Regional tensions and instances of noncompliance with treaty obligations present serious challenges to the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. For example, tensions are particularly high between India and Pakistan, two presumptive nuclear powers who have gone to war three times. Israel, generally recognized as having nuclear weapons in its arsenal, has not signed the NPT. Iran, a signatory of the NPT, is widely suspected of having embarked on a nuclear weapons program and may have received smuggled nuclear technology from several sources. North Korea, also a member of the NPT, was actively developing a nuclear weapons program and had threatened to withdraw from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime until agreement was reached in late 1994 diverting the crisis. While progress has been made by the creation of nuclear-weapons-free zones, the growth of post-Cold War regional tensions coupled with the increasing availability of nuclear and nonnuclear weapons materials and technologies may further exacerbate regional tensions for the foreseeable future.

Inadequate Enforcement Mechanism
Many participants observed that reliance on the UN Security Council for enforcement of arms control regimes is problematic. They worried that the veto—particularly when five nuclear powers are permanent members of the council—could result in selective enforcement of treaty violations. For example, when North Korea did not allow certain inspections, the threat of a Chinese veto prevented the Security Council from placing sanctions.
Participants meeting at Arden House discuss, in formal and informal settings, the effort to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.
Necessary Functions in an Effective Disarmament Regime

If the elimination of weapons of mass destruction is, as many participants argued, feasible, despite significant hurdles, it is important to identify the necessary components of an effective disarmament regime. Participants identified several components.

Norm-Setting and Treaty Negotiation
The UN system has been particularly effective in developing norms and facilitating the negotiation of treaties. More must be done to bolster enforcement provisions in the BWC, to reach a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and to seek the commencement and conclusion of a convention banning the production of fissile materials for weapons production.

Enforcement
One participant noted that “without enforcement provisions, conventions are nothing more than paper regimes.” Currently, the response to noncompliance is to turn the issue into one that must be dealt with at a political level. Some participants were satisfied with the current system, arguing that other enforcement provisions are politically unrealistic, would lack teeth if implemented, and would only harden the stance of treaty violators if they had teeth. These participants argued that the world already deals effectively with potential violations of regimes such as the NPT and cited North Korea as an example. Most participants disagreed. They contend that the political sensitivity of enforcement mechanisms argued against the current ad hoc approach to enforcement and in favor of devising an effective collective security mechanism to deal with enforcement in an evenhanded manner.

Verification
Verification provisions, according to one participant, are essential to political acceptance and an effective regime. They should be designed to collect data or provide firsthand access to confirm or verify a state’s compliance with a treaty or agreement. The BWC third review conference, for instance, established a group of experts to...
examine possible verification measures. Critics of the CWC in the US Congress argue that its verification procedures do not provide, among other things, methods of detecting clandestine production facilities, diversion of precursors, and the transfer of weapons technology. Many participants agreed that some verification procedures need strengthening. Others believed that current verification procedures are appropriate and should not interfere with the sovereign rights of nations.

Confidence-Building Measures and Transparency
Confidence-building measures and transparency work to eliminate the elements of secrecy in military activity. They help states distinguish between real and unfounded fears about threats from potential adversaries. They include increased communication, distribution and collection of technical data, scientific and technical exchanges in the chemical and biological weapons fields, security assurances, prenotification of weapons testing, as well as financial assistance.

Creation of Regional Links
Participants endorsed regional disarmament approaches that supplement global efforts. Currently, there are four treaties establishing regional nuclear-weapons-free zones, all in the Southern Hemisphere: the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, the 1967 Tlatelolco Treaty (for Latin America and Caribbean states), the 1986 Rarotonga Treaty (covering the South Pacific), and the 1996 Pelindaba Treaty (for all African states). In addition, in December 1995 the Association of Southeast Asian Nations formally endorsed a new nuclear-weapons-free zone that would abut the South Pacific zone. These regional agreements reflect the unique characteristics of different regions and build transparency, confidence, and security.

The United Nations’ Advantages and Weaknesses
Most participants agreed that the United Nations has had a distinct comparative advantage in establishing international norms of behavior and in negotiating international agreements to control the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The complex techno-
logical and political challenges of eliminating the threat of weapons of mass destruction will not be met by any single state or set of states. Instead, weapons proliferation is inherently a global political problem which needs a global solution. The United Nations is the only international body to which nations have given the explicit authority for collective security and is the best—perhaps only—forum to negotiate multilateral commitments to non-proliferation and disarmament.

Helpful as norm-building and treaty making are, they are only two aspects of disarmament. The United Nations and its subsidiary organs have not had similar success in confidence-building measures, verification, monitoring of compliance, or enforcement. While participants considered such functions essential to an effective arms control regime, the extent to which the United Nations can or should enhance its activities and programs in these areas was a matter of extended debate.

The primary issue was whether the United Nations should in fact be more involved in these other aspects of arms control. One minority view held that the United Nations was created primarily to provide a forum to address global issues on a multilateral basis and, as such, cannot be expected to perform functions beyond building international norms and negotiating treaties. The United Nations is not a treaty implementation organization per se or a formal institution which could be assigned the task of directly controlling weapons of mass destruction. Given these limitations, the functional aspects of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons control, including enforcement, should be handled within the institutions created to regulate them. The IAEA, it was noted, already has a functioning comprehensive safeguard system and the CWC will have one once the convention enters into force.

Other participants envisioned a more involved role for the United Nations in eliminating weapons of mass destruction. However, they recognized problems rooted in both the structure and operation of the United Nations that would need to be solved before it could take the lead. Since the UN Charter was “preatomic,” it was
neither created nor equipped to deal with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Security Council was also seen as anachronistic—“a 1945 tool dealing with century problems.” In its present configuration, the United Nations is not an ideal foundation upon which to craft a system of international collective security. Nevertheless, most participants agreed that it is the best vehicle available to the international community.

**Improving the United Nations’ Effectiveness**

Participants assessed the United Nations’ present ability to facilitate eliminating weapons of mass destruction and proposed various reforms both to its structure and operation. Any enhanced UN role in controlling weapons proliferation must also be accompanied by reform of those UN bodies responsible for nonproliferation and disarmament. How to improve the disarmament structure and whether such restructuring should involve revising the UN Charter were issues that generated substantial debate. Discussion centered on reforming the Security Council, the Secretariat, and the Disarmament Commission. Participants also assessed the role of regional nuclear-weapons-free zones and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in disarmament.

**Security Council**

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council holds “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” and has the authority to “decide what measures shall be taken...to maintain or restore international peace and security.” Consistent with this mandate, the disarmament regimes negotiated under UN auspices give a special enforcement role to the Security Council in implementation. For example, the IAEA statute requires violations of its safeguards system, which the agency implements under the NPT, to be referred to the Security Council. In 1993 the IAEA referred a case—concerning North Korean compliance—for the first time. The CWC calls on the Security Council to consider questions of enforcement and withdrawal, as does the BWC. Most participants questioned the reliability of the Security Council in fulfilling these institutional duties, especially with respect to enforcement. They explored whether and to what extent the Security Council’s veto power should be revised; whether the Security
Council’s powers to determine the existence of violations and undertake enforcement measures should be removed and vested instead in the respective nuclear, chemical, and biological treaty organizations; whether the composition of the Security Council adequately reflects today’s global power structure; and whether additional resources should be provided to the Security Council to expand its expertise in arms control issues.

**Enforcement and the Veto Power.** Participants had varying opinions regarding reform of the veto power of the permanent five members of the Security Council. For some, the veto power was the most significant obstacle to more effective treaty enforcement. The council’s inability to act because of a lack of consensus has led to inconsistent and unpredictable responses to noncompliance. The unpredictability, in turn, has undermined deterrence and has effectively ceded to one or two countries the task of upholding international proliferation norms. A few participants suggested prohibiting the use of the veto when the council makes decisions related to noncompliance and enforcement. This would require either revising the Security Council’s rules of procedure (which are still provisional due to this issue) or amending the Charter. The latter, of course, would present more formidable political obstacles. One participant cautioned that, given the decidedly anti-UN mood of the US Congress, tampering with the Security Council’s veto power could be explosive. Also, pressure on the Security Council to alter its rules of procedures would require strong Security Council support, not just “grudging consent.” One participant suggested limiting the scope of the veto with respect to nonmilitary measures, such as economic sanctions authorized in Article 41, as a first step to gauge the viability of the proposal.

As an alternative to amending the Charter or the Security Council’s rules of procedure, some participants proposed that member states ensure greater uniformity in the council’s enforcement decisions by clarifying the council’s responsibilities. There is a “gray area” between the enforcement role the treaty regimes assign to the Security Council and the fundamental mandate of the Security Council. These participants suggested amending the NPT, CWC, and BWC to establish a definitive set of responses available to the council. More explicit instructions written into the treaties might inject more predictability into Security Council responses.
Remove Noncompliance and Enforcement Decisions From the Security Council. A few participants suggested reassigning the present role of the Security Council in identifying noncompliance and carrying out enforcement. They argued that the inconsistency of the Security Council’s decisions regarding enforcement of the NPT has produced resentment and accusations of double standards. This has worked to undermine the regime’s legitimacy. To ameliorate this, one participant proposed removing the Security Council’s enforcement powers and vesting those powers in the separate institutions created by the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons treaty regimes, such as the IAEA or the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Another proposal was to assign some or all Security Council enforcement authority to a new UN body or to a transformed UN Trusteeship Council. The administrative cost of converting the Trusteeship Council into a disarmament enforcement authority would be minimized since the body already exists, but member states would need to define the new Trusteeship Council’s relationship with the Security Council.

Participants also discussed who should determine the existence of treaty violations—an issue fraught with political tensions on all sides. The CWC, for example, was originally intended to place every member state in an equal position with respect to identifying instances of noncompliance. This would have been accomplished by granting the executive council of the CWC, not the Security Council, authority to identify chemical weapons violations. During negotiations, the prerogative of identifying violations was granted to the Security Council. One participant criticized this as an unnecessary enhancement of Security Council powers at the expense of a fully capable executive council. Those who supported the current CWC structure responded that the objective of preserving Security Council control was not to deprive the executive council of the power for the sake of protecting the Security Council’s domain. Instead, one participant asserted, if the executive council had authority to identify violations of the CWC, it might not recognize obvious violations for political reasons. Additionally, an executive
council pronouncement that a violation had occurred would force the Security Council to take punitive enforcement actions, depriving it of alternative ways to ensure compliance. It is not clear, however, how the Security Council would be less political in identifying CWC violations.

**Change the Security Council Composition.** Some participants claimed the Security Council’s composition must be changed if it is to become more effective in disarmament. The current membership is small; it does not include several states which have recently crossed the nuclear threshold, nor does it include important economic and regional powers. Participants acknowledged the variety of proposals to expand the council: adding permanent members; creating a “tenured” membership category where members would sit for longer than the current two years; adding regional representation; or simply expanding the current size of the council through the addition of more rotating members. Others were skeptical and cautioned against building security structures within the United Nations that do not reflect the power balances of the international system. In the long run, they argued, imposing a structure that ignores global realities will hinder the United Nations’ ability to respond to future security threats and would harm considerably the organization’s credibility.

**Increase Security Council Expertise on Disarmament Issues.** The Security Council lacks the institutional expertise to monitor and analyze proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Although the permanent five do have adequate sources of information, the temporary members do not; instead, they must rely on the permanent members. This deficiency has contributed to the council’s ad hoc approach to confronting proliferation threats. It has also denied the council the opportunity to develop early warning mechanisms, to engage in preventive diplomacy, or to make well-informed decisions on proliferation issues.

Some participants supported the creation, under the authority of Article 29, of either a special Security Council rapporteur for disarmament or a permanent professional staff of experts serving the
Security Council exclusively. The staff would provide information, analysis, and advice and would assist the council in examining and responding to the secretary-general’s reports on disarmament. Reliance on one resource would foster consensus among the permanent five, allow the Security Council to be more active in disarmament issues, and encourage the sharing of information between institutions and governments. Most important, the Security Council’s discussion and decisions on proliferation threats would be based on a deeper awareness of the political and technical issues involved. On the other hand, some participants expressed reservations about the wisdom of expanding the resources of a Security Council that is unrepresentative, operates in a shroud of secrecy, and has of late been too active in passing relatively unimportant resolutions.

As an alternative to creating a subsidiary staff or rapporteur, the Security Council might consider reviving the historically neglected Military Staff Committee to provide it with disarmament expertise. This committee was originally intended, as stated in Article 47 of the UN Charter, to “advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council’s military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, the employment and command of forces placed at its disposal, the regulation of armaments, and possible disarmament.” Since the committee already exists to serve the Security Council, the administrative and political problems associated with breathing life into the Military Staff Committee would be limited. Participants stressed that member states would need to define the relationship of the Military Staff Committee to the Security Council.

Secretariat
The resources the Secretariat commits to disarmament were seen as inadequate. To help the Security Council have an informed understanding of complexities involved in any disarmament issue, the Secretariat would need personnel that could give substantive input. A small office within the Secretariat staffed by arms...
control experts could be appointed to provide substantive support for the periodic weapons review conferences and to assist the secretary-general in drafting his Article 99 reports on disarmament to the Security Council.

Disarmament Commission
Participants differed on their assessment of the Disarmament Commission’s contribution to the United Nations’ arms control efforts. Some maintained the commission makes valuable contributions to the policy process. For example, the commission provides a forum where diplomats identify areas for norm-setting and discuss the feasibility of academic ideas and NGO recommendations on arms control—where the “world of politics and diplomacy visits theory.” Nevertheless, supporters contend that the Disarmament Commission is underutilized. It could be more effective if it were required to explore disarmament issues that do not lend themselves to General Assembly or Security Council consideration, such as whether, or how, to close the gaps in the UN disarmament regime; the desirability of strengthening the relationship between or outright consolidation of the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons control regimes; whether NGOs should be granted greater access to UN processes, including formal access to the commission itself; and the sensitive issue of timing of a fourth General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament.

Other participants viewed the Disarmament Commission less favorably and suggested that UN funds could be better spent. When assessing the United Nations’ effectiveness in global disarmament, one participant suggested that the Disarmament Commission was “as useless as the Indian Ocean Committee” and urged the United Nations to be “ruthless” in its analysis of which institutions work and which do not.

Strengthening the Role of Treaty Regimes, Regional Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones, and NGOs
Although reforming the structure and operation of UN entities directly responsible for disarmament is crucial for the greater control and eventual elimination of weapons of mass destruction, par-
Participants explored other avenues as well. Participants concentrated their analysis on consolidating the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons treaty regimes (once all become operational) into one weapons control agency; expanding the number and interconnectedness of regional nuclear-weapons-free zones; and assessing the most effective role for NGOs in the disarmament process.

Treaty Regimes
There was a sharp division among participants regarding the merits of consolidating the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons control regimes into one weapons control agency. Most participants were generally supportive of the proposal. The IAEA, clearly the most developed weapons control regime, has institution-building and technical expertise which could be readily shared with a revitalized biological weapons regime and with a future chemical weapons regime. At a minimum, ideas for implementing the CWC and BWC could be gleaned from the IAEA’s experience. Proponents of some form of consolidation maintain that the successful UNSCOM is a potential model for regime consolidation given its structure of mutually complimentary activities. UNSCOM’s nuclear disarmament
responsibilities are performed with the close cooperation of the IAEA, but it has sole discretion over chemical and biological weapons aspects of the operation. UNSCOM represents a unique approach to linking chemical and biological weapons controls.

Others viewed any integration of the treaty regimes as misguided. There is no overarching principle within the three regimes that suggests they operate in tandem. The problems associated with monitoring and verifying compliance with chemical and biological weapons controls differ from nuclear weapons controls. Various scientific and technological distinctions make the wholesale lifting of one compliance regime onto another unworkable. Furthermore, opponents noted, the international community should be cautious about the suitability of UNSCOM as an integrative model. UNSCOM’s strength is based on a binding Security Council resolution and, more important, the unwavering commitment of the council’s five permanent members to the elimination of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. UNSCOM was created under special circumstances and, as such, is not readily adaptable to other situations.

**Regional Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones**

Increasing the number of regional nuclear-weapons-free zones was seen as a complementary path toward building a world free of weapons of mass destruction. More than one hundred countries across Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia currently adhere to regional nuclear-weapons-free zones, and certain Central Asian countries within the former Soviet Union are moving in that direction. Since most conflicts involving weapons of mass destruction emerge at the regional level, this approach to disarmament and nonproliferation is promising. To aid these regional efforts, participant suggested that the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons control regimes expand their connections to the regional zones and encourage their momentum. At a minimum, they have symbolic value and may help nations visualize a world without such weapons.

**Should the United Nations encourage more extensive involvement by NGOs in the disarmament process...?**
Nongovernmental Organizations
Should the United Nations encourage more extensive involvement by NGOs in the disarmament process or is their present level of access sufficient? Opinions varied. Some argued that NGOs are not truly “representative” organizations (many in fact do not run their own organizations democratically) and cannot realistically claim to reflect the views of their respective countries’ citizenry. Moreover, NGOs do not necessarily have influence with their own national governments. Each has its own agenda, complicating the United Nations’ task of choosing which NGOs would be allowed greater access should the United Nations decide to expand the NGO presence. It would be rare for any NGO to be accepted by all member states. In light of these enduring problems, some participants believed NGOs should not be given greater access to the UN disarmament process.

Other participants argued that NGOs have contributed to disarmament and should continue to do so. That NGOs may not be representative organizations does not detract from their ability to make special contributions to disarmament issues. For example, NGOs provide a convenient channel through which academia and arms control experts can interact with the United Nations to define the intellectual terrain and help create and shape policy options. They are constructively involved in confidence-building measures and in transparency programs enabling states to better ascertain the intent of parties acquiring certain products and materials. They are adept at identifying issues before they escalate into crises. Ultimately, NGOs “keep diplomats honest” by striving to hold the United Nations and its member states to their commitments. Even those who criticized NGOs conceded that they have a role to play.

One participant maintained that NGOs are most effective when they are “working the corridors.” Any other arrangements, such as allowing certain NGOs to address member states on the floor of the General Assembly during official meetings, were less meaningful since the delegations pay little, if any, attention to them. Most participants agreed, however, that NGOs could contribute more to the disarmament process by expanding their activities to other aspects of
arms control, such as developing practical approaches to rationalize conventional weapons control regimes with regulation of weapons of mass destruction. Eventually, NGOs could be involved in providing transparency to ensure that no nation rebuilds weapons of mass destruction once they have been truly eliminated.

**Short- and Long-Term Strategies for Improving the UN Role**

Throughout the conference participants identified concrete steps and strategies which, if embraced and implemented, could pave the way toward global elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Although there clearly are no quick fixes, participants agreed that some progress is better than none. The following is a list of specific recommendations. Not all participants agreed with the feasibility or desirability of any one recommendation. Each proposal, however, elicited substantial discussion and support.

**Short-Term Strategies:**

- Convene a special Security Council meeting to discuss the broad issue of the role of nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War era.
- Complete the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Stopping the qualitative development of nuclear weapons would pave the way for quantitative ceilings and transparency in fissile material sales.
- Commit to a no-first-use policy for nuclear weapons.
- Convene a fourth Special Session on Disarmament to discuss the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.
- Create a UN register for weapons of mass destruction to increase transparency.
- Create a staff of arms control experts and/or a rapporteur on proliferation as an Article 29 “subsidiary organ” of the Security Council.
- Enhance conventional weapons control by adding more types of conventional weapons to the UN Register of Conventional Arms.
- Hold discussion within the General Assembly regarding the role of NGOs in the UN disarmament structure and processes.
Long-Term Strategies:
• Strengthen regional approaches to disarmament.
• Pursue both disarmament and nonproliferation and establish a timetable for total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.
• Explore the use of the Security Council veto as it relates to disarmament issues and the composition of the council.
• Define clearly the role of the Disarmament Commission.
• Form an interparliamentary union to encourage consensus on disarmament among the national governments.
• Explore the feasibility of unifying the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons control regimes.
• Expand the Security Council’s access to arms control expertise through the creation of Security Council subsidiary bodies or by enhancing Secretariat support.

Conclusion
A universal commitment to eliminate weapons of mass destruction is a necessary first step before any international organization can successfully work toward that goal. When the political will is found, the United Nations, more than any other international organization, is well-positioned to orchestrate disarmament. However, the United Nations’ abilities to foster such a global commitment and to conduct the actual disarmament once the commitment is made are hampered by enduring structural and operational problems. The international community must work to address these problems. It must build consensus on how to compel compliance with the treaty regimes and on the proper role of the United Nations and the Security Council.

Today’s window of opportunity must be used to maximum advantage. For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age more than fifty years ago, the political environment is favorable to forge a global commitment to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Unless nations act now, the world may find itself confronting future dangers far worse than present ones.
Chairman’s Observations

Arden House discussions confirmed that, for the first time since the Second World War, there is a credible opportunity to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. However, desirable as this objective is, progress will be neither easy nor immediate. It will be achieved step by step.

Delegitimizing the use of weapons of mass destruction is the first step toward elimination. Nations need to reach a fundamental agreement that the development, deployment, and use of weapons of mass destruction is wrong and must commit to their elimination. This “global compact” should be coupled with a continuing series of confidence-building measures such as commitments to a no-first-use policy, completion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention verification regime, creation of a register of weapons of mass destruction, and other similar actions.

A second essential element is greater transparency in all matters relating to weapons of mass destruction including transfers of sensitive technologies. In the past certain nations denied technology transfers to others as a means of preventing the spread of such weapons. Strategies of denial are less and less effective. In the interconnected, knowledge-based societies of today and the future, it is increasingly difficult to control information and technology. Strategies of transparency are needed. We need open mechanisms to monitor the extent and intended use of technology transfers. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—whether representing industry, technical, or other interest groups—should continue to bring questionable uses to the attention of appropriate institutions and enforcement authorities.

Third, we need effective institutions to enforce treaty obligations and encourage adherence to international norms. The United Nations is the best starting place for this. As we consider how best to use the United Nations, we should look to successes, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the UN Special Commission on Iraq, as models. Regional organizations and nuclear-
weapons-free zones are also important to the elimination process and should be encouraged. Similarly, NGOs and civil society have much to contribute through information gathering, lobbying, conceptualization, and advocacy.

Ultimately, we will need to link elimination of weapons of mass destruction with reductions in conventional weapons and to breath new life into the old concept of general and complete disarmament.

We must rise to the challenge of this unprecedented opportunity to move toward total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The prospective benefits call for political will and commitment from all concerned. Let us not miss this opportunity.