**Forum:** Disarmament Commission

**Issue:** Developing a framework to effectively address the post-war decommissioning of weapon systems

**Student Officer:** Seokwon (Andy) Lee, Lloyd Kim

**Position:** Assistant President**,** Deputy Assistant President

Introduction

In the aftermath of conflicts, it becomes crucial to address the task of decommissioning weapon systems and munitions for the sake of international peace and security. Wars devastating impact extends beyond the battlefield, often leaving behind weapons and explosive remnants that pose significant dangers to civilians, infrastructure, and the environment. To effectively tackle war decommissioning challenges, the disarmament committee is pleased to present this Chair Report.

The main objective of this report is to provide a framework that can assist nations in managing the diverse challenges associated with weapon system decommissioning. The report emphasizes the importance of an effort involving expertise and resources to ensure the safe and efficient disposal of munitions.

As we delve into the intricacies of disarmament after the war, this report will explore factors such as environmental impact assessments, strategies for risk reduction, and incorporating technologies. The proposed framework seeks to strike a balance between addressing security concerns while fostering long-term stability and development in regions affected by conflict.

In this Chair Report, we extend an invitation all delegates to actively participate in a conversation regarding the creation of strategies for retiring weapon systems. By promoting collaboration and dedication towards this matter, we can collectively contribute to creating a safer and more secure world for future generations.

In addition to the suggested framework, it is essential for countries to address the economic consequences associated with disarmament. The focus should be on rebuilding communities and restoring normalcy in conflict situations. By taking these factors into account, we can ensure that the process of decommissioning weapons contributes to long-term development.

This report emphasizes the significance of collaboration among nations when it comes to weapon decommissioning. It is crucial for countries to work together and share knowledge in order to tackle challenges and explore solutions. By fostering an environment, we strengthen the response and create a safer environment for both current and future generations.

Definition of Key Terms

Decommissioning

The process of formally withdrawing, disarming, and rendering weapon systems and munitions inoperative, typically after the cessation of hostilities.

**Munitions**

Ammunition, explosives, and other military materials designed for use in combat, including bombs, shells, and cartridges.

**Risk Mitigation**

The identification, assessment, and implementation of measures to minimize potential hazards and dangers associated with the decommissioning process, ensuring safety and security.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

A comprehensive evaluation of the potential environmental effects and consequences of decommissioning activities, including the assessment of ecological, social, and economic impacts.

**Legacy Contamination**

The enduring presence of hazardous materials, explosive remnants, or environmental damage resulting from past military activities, requiring remediation during decommissioning efforts.

**CIED (Counter-Improvised Explosive Device) Technologies**

Advanced tools and technologies designed to detect and mitigate the impact of improvised explosive devices.

Background

The process of decommissioning weapon systems and munitions after a war has always been an intricate task, with many consequences. As conflicts come to an end and nations strive to move forward, they are faced with the challenge of disarming, dismantling, and safely disposing of the remnants that serve as reminders of the past. This endeavor goes beyond rendering instruments inactive; it requires a delicate balance between security, environmental responsibility and humanitarian concerns.

The roots of this issue can be traced back throughout history, where the aftermath of wars has consistently presented challenges that go beyond strategies. The severe impact caused by conflicts extends well beyond the battlefield leaving behind a hazardous legacy that demands meticulous attention. The history of war disarmament is filled with instances where inadequate decommissioning measures have resulted in dire consequences such as accidental detonations of unexploded ordnance environmental degradation and tragic loss of civilian lives.

In addition, to traditional weapons disarmament there are aspects to consider in the realm of post war decommissioning. In times we have witnessed the proliferation of types of munitions that range from conventional explosives to highly advanced technologies.

When countries are involved in conflicts they don't just rely on weapons. They often use improvised devices (IEDs) and advanced technology weaponry. So the approach, to decommissioning after a war needs to adapt to this ever changing range of weapons requiring an nuanced strategy.

The impact on the environment is a concern when discussing war decommissioning. Warfare itself causes damage to the land introducing materials and altering ecosystems. If decommissioning isn't done with caution it can worsen these wounds. That's why conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) has become crucial for disarmament after a war. These assessments aim to understand and minimize the consequences of disposing of weapons. Finding a balance between security needs and environmental sustainability is a challenge that requires innovative solutions.

The issue goes beyond removing munitions it also involves considering the intricate socio economic and political implications that affect regions after conflict. The presence of ordnance makes it unsafe, for displaced populations to return home hinders reconstruction efforts and perpetuates insecurity in a cycle.

As a result it is important to consider the decommissioning process, in relation to objectives such as security sector reform, justice and development initiatives that promote long term stability.

In the realm of progress the landscape of decommissioning after wars has undergone changes. The use of technologies like robotics, sophisticated sensors and data analysis has improved the accuracy and efficiency of munitions response efforts. However incorporating these innovations presents challenges related to accessibility, affordability and the need for personnel. To ensure an successful approach to war decommissioning it becomes crucial to strike a balance between traditional methods and modern technological solutions.

The international dimension brings complexities to this issue. Cross border armed conflicts often involve neighboring countries in war decommissioning consequences. Collaborative approaches that rely on cooperation and diplomatic efforts become essential. International. Agreements addressing arms control and non proliferation play a role in defining responsible post war disarmament measures. Nevertheless finding the right balance between disarmament imperatives and a nations sovereign rights in managing affairs remains a challenge, for the global community.

In summary the process of decommissioning weapon systems and munitions after a war is complex. Requires an understanding. History has shown us the consequences of disarmament efforts highlighting the need, for a framework. As we navigate this landscape we must consider the impact, socio economic implications, technological integration and international cooperation to ensure responsible disarmament in the post war period. The following sections of this report will explore each of these aspects in detail providing insights and recommendations to guide stakeholders towards a sustainable and peaceful world, after conflict.

Major Parties Involved

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

NATO, as a military alliance, is intricately linked to issues of disarmament. Member nations contribute to collective security, and NATO plays a role in shaping the security landscape of regions affected by armed conflict. The decommissioning of weapon systems is of strategic importance to NATO, influencing its stance on arms control and non-proliferation.**.**

European Union (EU)

The European Union, through its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), engages in post-war disarmament efforts to promote stability in conflict-affected regions. Its involvement is often aligned with broader diplomatic and development objectives, recognizing the interconnectedness of security and sustainable development.

United States (US)

As a major global actor, the United States wields influence in shaping the trajectory of post-war decommissioning. Its stance on disarmament reflects national security considerations and a commitment to international peace. U.S. involvement often manifests through financial support, technological contributions, and diplomatic initiatives.

Russian Federation

Russia, being a prominent force plays a crucial role in the efforts to increase disarmament after wars. Its participation is influenced by concerns about security, historical experiences of confrontations and geopolitical factors. Russia’s position on disarmament often aligns with its strategic objectives.

Timeline of Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Description of event |
| July 16, 1945 | The United States conducts the world’s first nuclear weapon test, code named *Trinity.* This brought a new phase in modern warfare and made post-war weapon decommission. |
| December 26, 1975 | United States completes the destruction of all its biological weapons. |
| September 1991 | The Soviet Union dissolves into 15 different states, varying in economic and military capabilities. The vast number of weapons left over from Soviet period brought great difficulty in the decommission process. |
| September 15, 1992 | The United States, United Kingdom and Russia sign a treaty for transparency in biological weapon production aimed to prevent the any illegal activities. |
| February 2, 1993 | The former Soviet Union nuclear testing site located in Kazakhstan officially closed. |
| December 3, 1997 | Launch of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,  Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction treaty. The participating countries are given a 10-year period to decommission all mines in the designated areas. United States did not participate in this treaty. |

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Since the conclusion of the cold war, various countries have been attempting to discover the most effective way in decommissioning weapon systems. When the USSR disintegrated in 1991, many central Asian including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were left with vast quantities of military equipment as the Soviets dumped these artilleries in various sites to avoid restrictions placed by the arms control agreements. However, these countries didn’t have the financial and technological capabilities to dismantle these weapons. Therefore, an effective framework had to be developed to efficiently achieve this goal.

One previous solution proposed and executed by several nations were to outsource the decommissioning of weapon systems. Nations such as the Czech Republic and Hungary would outsource the task to outside military companies that bear the technological and financial capacities to execute such tasks. These companies would dismantle the weapons on officially registered destruction sites and follow the terms of the CFE Treaty. The locations where the weapons were originally stored would have been registered as an official destruction site to minimize and reduce the transportation costs during the process. Since 1992, a total of 2,358 heavy weapon systems have been dismantled in Hungary with each weapon destruction costs ranging from €2,000~4000.

Another method mainly used by the United States, is to store the weapons in a secure location guarded by the military with restricted access. The United States retired the “Nation’s most powerful weapon” back in 2022. The weapon was said to be roughly 80 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. Instead of destroying the bomb, the United States decided of destroying the powerful weapon, decided to dismantle it and store it in various bunkers. This would allow the United States to bring back the weapon in the future or use the parts to develop new and more powerful weapons. If an ex-Soviet nation took this path, they would have faced severe economic and political sanctions from the western nations.

There are other previous solutions such as, dismantling the weapon and selling its parts to military enthusiasts, using it for training/ dummy purposes and displaying it in a museum. However, these methods can only be conducted in a smaller scale as the number of weapons exceed the storage capacity of museums or training dummies.

Possible Solutions

For this topic, there isn’t a right or wrong answer to a solution proposed a country, unless it is highly unrealistic and goes against the agreements and treaties that are agreed upon. Depending on the technological, economic, and political state of the nation, a country may decide to settle on different solutions. It is important to consider the current position and stance of your nation before suggesting a solution. To create a most effective resolution, create a combination of the previous solutions stated above and your own solutions. Remember the solutions below are only suggestions, adjust the solutions below so that it suits your country.

* Creating a channel to provide funding to the countries that are unable to afford the dismantling costs of weapons. This resolution is necessary as it will encourage post-war nations to forfeit their weapons after the war, reducing the risk of future attacks and the formation of terrorist groups that will use the weapons on their advantage. However, it is important that the funding is provided transparently to prevent potential corruption or misusage of funding.
* Donation of materials to manufacturers. The tools that are used to build weapons can be used in other industries. After dismantling the weapons and removing any potential elements that may cause harm to civilians, the remaining parts can be donated or auctioned off for a cheap price. This not only helps government and military dispose the excess waste, but it also allows the manufactures to purchase materials for a cheaper price, boosting the production and the industry. If done correctly, this solution can bring great economic growth to the respectful country.
* Education & technology. One reason why many countries are unable to decommission weapons is due to the lack of knowledge and technology available within the country. Therefore, a potential solution can be to create a branch within the Disarmament committee that provides the necessary education and technology in decommissioning a weapon to the nations that do not have access to such information.
* Civilian Purchase. There are many military enthusiasts that are eager to purchase weapons or parts that were once used in war but are unable to due to the high prices. After ensuring that the weapon is non-lethal and cannot cause harm to a human (for example, removing the tank’s ability to fire) the weapons and parts should be available for purchase at a cheaper price.
* There are other solutions such as destroying the weapon or deep-sea dumping. However, these solutions should be the last resort due to the environmental concerns. Additionally, there are various legal issues attached to these solutions and may be more complicated to execute.

Bibliography

Broad, William J. “The Surprising Afterlife of Unwanted Atom Bombs.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 17 Nov. 2022, www.nytimes.com/2022/11/17/science/retired-nuclear-bombs-b83.html#:~:text=Typically%2C%20nuclear%20arms%20retired%20from,warehouses%20across%20the%20United%20States.

*The Role of DDR in Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*, www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/pb\_review\_thematic\_paper\_orolsi\_ddrs\_-\_role\_of\_ddr\_in\_pb\_and\_sp-final.pdf. Accessed 3 Jan. 2024.

Shaw, Andrew. “Conflict Studies Research Centre - ETH Z.” *The Disposal of Redundant Heavy Weapons*, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, www.files.ethz.ch/isn/92528/05\_Jul.pdf. Accessed 3 Jan. 2024.

Wilkinson, Adrian. “Disposal and Demilitarization of Heavy Weapons in Montenegro - Seesac.Org.” *Defence Conversion - The Disposal and Demilitarization of Heavy Weapon Systems*, South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, www.seesac.org/f/docs/SALW-Destruction-2/Disposal-and-Demilitarization-of-Heavy-Weapons-in-Montenegro-EN.pdf. Accessed 3 Jan. 2024.