

Minute taker: Noel Kelly  
Time: 14:30-15:30PM

## **SIPRI Armament and Disarmament Cluster Meeting**

Zoom virtual meeting, Monday 10 May 2021

### **Participants:**

Sibylle Bauer, Nivedita Raju, Lora Saalman, Ian Anthony, Andrea Varisco, Kolja Brockmann, Giovanna Maletta, Laura Robin, Keith Preble, Vitaly Fedchenko, Shannon Kile, Tytti Erästö, Petr Topychkanov, Alexandra Marksteiner, Siemon Wezeman, Pieter Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova, Jade Guiberteau, Vincent Boulanin, Laura Bruun, Luke Richards, Jade, Nikos Politis, Joey Fox, Alexandra Manolache

### **Agenda**

- Updates from Operations
- Updates from Outreach (Communications and Editorial)
- Updates from Sibylle/SMT/EUNPDC
- Reports from other Cluster colleagues
- Presentation - Nivedita Raju - A Ban On Destructive ASAT Testing: A Role for the EU?"
- AOB

## **Updates from Operations – Nikos**

- Nothing to report further and EUNPDC is referenced under. As mentioned in the SMT minutes staff are advised to submit summer vacation plans. For those who want to travel to their home countries it will be possible to spend a month either side of actual vacation to work from their home country if possible.

## **Updates from Editorial – Joey**

- On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Ian Davis circulated an e-mail with a first draft of the 2020 chronology for the SIPRI YB 2021. Staff were reminded to check entries related to their area of expertise and send feedback by todays date.

## **Updates from Outreach – Alexandra Manolache**

- Congratulations to the milex project team (Alexandra M, Diego, Nan) on a successful data launch, their great media work and excellent live interviews was appreciated.
- Congratulations to all the A&D teams who have work on updating their project webpages.

## **Clusters**

- Nothing further to report from the Conflict, Peace and Security cluster.
- From Peace & Development – the team were off following the Forum hosted during the previous week.

## **EUNPDC**

- The main update is we have signed a EUNPDC contract extension for one more year until May 2022. Later this year work will begin on planning for the next contract phase, and we will hear more on this in due course.
- A reminder that on 17 May, there will be an ad hoc on-line seminar organized by FRS (Foundation for Strategic Research) on ‘*Considering the potential lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic to strengthen the BTWC*’.
- The discussions for the dates about the annual conference were on-going at the time of this meeting and dependent on the format to be decided. Tentatively it is currently set for 6-7th December 2021.

## **SMT/Sibylle**

- Sibylle was on leave, and we will hear more on SMT at the next meeting and meanwhile recent minutes have been circulated.

## **Presentation to A&D**

- Presentation - Nivedita Raju - A Ban On Destructive ASAT Testing: A Role for the EU?

This presentation was based on a recent EUNPDC helpdesk paper giving an overview of past ASAT tests and argues that destructive ASAT testing requires urgent policy

intervention. Moreover, the paper proposed a complete ban on destructive ASAT testing, drawing inferences from the EU's draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The paper additionally proposes that the EU assumes the role of facilitator in the proposed policy measure.

<<https://www.sipri.org/publications/2021/eu-non-proliferation-and-disarmament-papers/proposal-ban-destructive-anti-satellite-testing-role-european-union>>

## Q&A

*How do you see the position of EU member states and to what extent is their consensus within the EU about the need for regulation on ASAT testing?*

When one is talking about this policy measure it interests all, as it is beneficial for all member states. If one is talking about the development or pertaining to the use of them then this is more polarizing.

Even countries outside of EU, such as Russia, have been vocal on a binding instrument to ban this kind of testing. China has indicated it may be open to a voluntary instrument on space activities.

*There was a question relating to the 'Space Liability Convention' – and how are they tracing the origin of space debris?*

There are space agencies from national government that do track debris. Of course, it depends because if these objects are smaller than 10cm and in different orbits moving at very high speeds they are difficult to track. Still there is a significant amount that we can trace and therefore attribute liability to a country.

*From an international perspective and to get countries such as the US involved how would you integrate 'Space Liability Convention' into your proposal?*

Not enough emphasis is given to this, and it could be a strong argument to entice teams to the table. To date no country has invoked a claim under it directly.

*Does the development of missile systems create a complication?*

The US will probably raise this issue and would be a concern. However, there is still potential because it is still a voluntary measure. The US have been advocating for some time and would like to see more regulation. One would have to draft the measure in a way that does not negate and recognizes self-defense as an inherent right as presented in the UN Charter. Focusing on the outcome rather than the technology may be the way forward.

*Is some of the international law outdated? What about non-state private actors?*

Private actors are the future of space activities. A launching state can be its territory or facility and if in partnership with another country. You can have more than one launching state for a space activity. Countries could be held responsible for what their

private actors do even if a license has been denied in their own jurisdiction, but the actor got a license elsewhere. There is a lot of grey area here and things do need to be clarified and updated.

*If the EU take the ban on ASAT testing forward what is a realistic timeline? What are the potential spoilers?*

It will still take a few years yet to negotiate. The spoilers are the geo-political tensions between countries that are participating. However, the EU can mediate that dialogue and ensure discussions are focused on the outcome.

On the EUNPDC side there was reference to a two-part seminar on outer space issues upcoming with one happening in July and the other in October.

Thank you Nivi for the interesting presentation!

### **Next cluster meeting**

Monday 7 June @ 2:30PM – A&D cluster meeting