

Evaluating the Role of the United Nations in Terms of Disarmament Affairs

Forum: Disarmament Council

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Introduction

The world has witnessed on numerous occasions the detrimental effects of the usage of biological weapons. As a result, this has spurred great dialogue between member states about the proposal of disarmament. However, the idea of disarmament has elicited strong feelings and its progress has been met with obstacles. Nevertheless, the role of the United Nations to preserve international peace and security remains the same. The United Nations takes a firm stance that disarmament is a crucial measure to take in order to ensure peace; however, it does recognize that disarmament alone will not be enough. The United Nations has been proactive to ensure member states maintain peaceful dialogue amongst its counterparts and to ensure progress towards peace and disarmament is being made. Hence it became the role of The United Nations Disarmament Commission to instigate further progress between the member states to ensure disarmament is further in reach. Since the establishment of the United Nations, tensions between certain member states have only become weaker creating great uncertainty in the midst of this pandemic. Consequently, The United Nations must evaluate its role in terms of disarmament affairs and make changes whatever it sees necessary.



UN General Assembly

Background

It is with great certainty that the United Nations has and will continue to be an instrumental institution that prompts international peace and protects the differences that makes each member state unique. However, since the establishment of the UNODA the world has witnessed the growing tensions between member states. This raised growing concerns about the use of nuclear weapons and the effectiveness of the countless treaties and discussion. Specifically, with the unstable relationship between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the outside world, the collapse into another war has always been the concern of the UNODA and the UN. With the never-ending ICBM tests and provocations towards its counterparts it has always remained an active instigator.

Measures have been taken like the creation of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on April 29, 1997 with the purpose of eliminating any weapons that fell under the umbrella of mass destruction, in which 165 countries signed. Measures such as the Chemical Weapons Convention

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are a matter of great importance, they reaffirm the objectives of the United Nations of maintaining international peace. Another measure taken was the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 adopted unanimously in 2004, this resolution reaffirms the global communities' decision to refrain any member states "from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes." In addition, Resolution 1540 argues member states to adopt legislation to restrain any efforts to proliferate nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

The United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services was established in 1994 with the objective of assisting and reporting towards the Secretary-General "in fulfilling his internal oversight responsibilities in respect of the resources and staff of the Organization." Since then, the OIOS has made investigations and created annual reports, which includes evaluations and recommendations for certain committees to rethink certain aspects.

On April 6, 2018 the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) made an inspection and evaluation on the United Nations Office for Disarmament affairs (UNODA) and concluded that though there was progress the OIOS quoted that the UNODA "lacked a deliberate, systematic and holistic approach to strategic planning." UNODA was evaluated by looking at its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and cross-cutting issues. Relevance in the sense the "extent to which UNODA identified and responded to stakeholder needs and priorities, and extent of its value-added in the broader landscape of disarmament actors." Effectiveness which looked at the goals in which the UNODA laid out, but also looked at whether the UNODA was able to meet their goals. Efficiency which looked at how the UNODA utilized their resources to reach their objective. Lastly, cross-cutting issues which focus on whether the UNODA took into consideration the various gender issues and cultural issues when making interventions behalf of the UNODA's objective of achieving disarmament. In the annual report the OIOS commended the UNODA in terms of their ability to be "consistent with its mandate and largely responsive to stakeholder needs and was considered a key impartial broker and technical partner on disarmament issues." However, OIOS accented that the UNODA lacked planning and a systemic approach with failure to self-evaluate. Furthermore, the annual report added recommendations to which the UNODA was recommended to take. The recommendations included bolstering "its strategic planning process" and "strengthening the monitoring and self-evaluation."

Problems Raised

The fifty-eighth General Assembly expressed concerns regarding the growing instability within various regions causing disputes among states' which may result in an arms race further hindering the ability of the United Nation to achieve their objective of maintaining international peace. Large majority of the members universally agree that weapons that fall under the category of mass destruction impose a grave threat to the very existence of humanity and hinder the progress of reconciliation. It can be argued that progress for disarmament has been met with great obstacles and challenges. For example, nationalist tactics and vetoes have hindered attempts to bolster existing treaties such as NPT, BTWC and CCW.

Problems may be raised when delegates hold the interest of their nation above the

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interest of the United Nations. In previous years, First Committee member states were unable to reach consensus on a legal approach to further limiting arms and reaching disarmament. Even when five resolutions were introduced, member states including The United States, Russia, and China accused each other. Furthermore, problems and disputes occur when states use chemical weapons upon their own people to eliminate or achieve their goals. For example, the 7th session of the UN General Assembly First Committee on disarmament and international security expressed concerns regarding North Korea's nuclear program and already existing treaties in place. During the debate, The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) received a significant attention during general debate in the wake of the August 2020 position of Lexi Navalny, a Russian opposition leader. Russia became a member of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 1992; however, it has not demonstrated its commitment on numerous occasions. On November 1, 2006, Alexander Litvenioneok who was a British-naturalized Russian defector and former officer of the Russian FSB was poisoned by radioactive polonium-210. Experts concluded that Litvienok betrayed the FSB and was working for the British intelligence and was a prominent opposition associate of Mr. Putin and his regime. Unfortunately, Alexei Navalny, a Russian opposition leader and a loud critic of Mr. Putin was poisoned but made a recovery. Russia has denied responsibility and allegations that have been made. This has raised serious concerns about the level of legitimacy and commitment Russia has shown and will continue to show in the future.

Definition of Key Terms

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs was established on January 1, 1998 with the goal of achieving complete disarmament. The UNODA hopes to achieve their objective by taking disarmament measures, such as dialogue, transparency and confidence-building on military matters.

Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

Office of Internal Oversight Services is to “assist the Secretary-General in fulfilling his internal oversight responsibilities in respect of the resources and staff of the Organization.” Furthermore, it creates annual reports through which evaluations are conducted and concerns are addressed.

Possible Solutions

As the UNODA carries the responsibility of achieving disarmament, it is crucial to evaluate the role of the United Nations in the progress made so far. Some of the proposals may be include but are not limited to:

1. Working alongside the OIOS to track areas of the UNODA that are successful and not. In addition, the UNODA and other organs of the UN should adjust it sees apt depending on the annual report published by the OIOS.
2. Reaffirming the values of this establishment through the meetings it hopes to have with member states. In addition, meetings should revolve around the topic of evaluating the

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role of the United Nations in Terms of Disarmament Affairs.

3. Urging member states to host and attend more summits annually amongst member states with the hopes of reconciliation.
4. Recommends the United Nation General Assembly to ask individual member states' heads of state to focus on the topic of evaluating the role of the United Nations in terms of Disarmament Affairs when making their speech during the opening session of the General Assembly.
5. Recommends member states to submit annual reports on the United Nations and its works evolving Disarmament Affairs.



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