

Ideas from the Annual Meeting of the Geneva Academy Platform on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

13 September 2018, Geneva

PERSPECTIVES

1. Connecting Geneva to New York regarding multilateral issues; dealt by two independents from each other interstate bodies with different mandates and constituencies
2. Creating a space for informal discussion of a mixture of actors: states, international organizations, and academia.
3. Defining the scope of the 2018 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution and aiming at achieving a clearer structure of the operational part.

BACKGROUND

Mandate of the 1st Committee of the UNGA:

The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the [Charter](#) or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments. (source www.un.org)

FOCUS ON THE IEDS RESOLUTION

The forthcoming resolution could be both shortened without prejudicing its strength, and strengthened without prejudicing its wider remit. Recommendations include:

- **Introduce greater context, drawing from the 2018 Secretary-General's report:** in particular, the way in which the acquisition, construction and deployment of IEDs continues to evolve, and is specific to certain regions, states or sub-state areas. Each and every area has its own unique considerations and challenges. This requires appropriate prevention strategies.
- **Propose greater emphasis on 'prevention':** While acknowledging that preparedness, mitigation, disposal and victim assistance are all imperative areas of work, the meeting highlighted the critical role of prevention to stop the spread of IEDs. Preventive approaches apply to states, regulatory authorities and law enforcement, as well as to private sector bodies (including risk assessments, information sharing and supply chain management). In this regard, tools to support states in regulating precursor materials,

INTERPOL/WCO mechanisms to facilitate information exchange among law enforcement actors, as well as forums to enable dialogue with industry and private sector actors were seen as being of particular use. This included the suggestion that informal consultations could also help progress made in the various 'building blocks'.

- **Re-organize itself:** Discussion was held on possible re-organization of the resolution, including efforts to 'streamline' the key elements in order to make it concise and action-oriented. Approaches in this regard included organizing the operational paragraphs to reflect (i) measures to support prevention, (ii) measures to support threat mitigation and (iii) disposal and victim support.

These are some concrete proposals:

- **Preambular Part (PP)**

While being informative, it could be shorter. Speaking about some facets of IEDs – such as their use in conflict and post conflict environment and other resolutions of the UNGA and international legal instruments might be considered and/or quoted.

- **Operational Part (OP)**

The informative role could be mainly given to the PP, seeking to shorten the OP and to concentrate on aspects not covered by other UNGA resolutions.

Operational paragraphs of the IEDs resolution could be framed under three banners:

- Prevention
- Threat mitigation
- Disposal and victim support.

This section should concentrate on more concrete action. For example:

- While acknowledging that IEDs are used in conflicts and immediate post-conflict environments, and while stating that humanitarian action and victim assistance are key, the OP of the resolution should reinforce and concentrate themes on prevention, law enforcement and the uses of IEDs outside conflict and immediate post conflicts environments.
- Increased attention to State action in prevention is needed — i.e. a greater emphasis on measures to prevent the acquisition or spread of precursor IED materials.
- The need to emphasize the role of the private sector in this area; strongly encouraging the private sector to work with states to ensure precursor materials are traceable, that issues of risk (of the materials being used to make weapons) are integrated into trans-border sales and that manufactured materials come under transnational scrutiny and – if appropriate – regulation.
- To engage, where appropriate, the private sector over such preventative issues, framing it not only as a security issue, but also so as to protect international commercial and intellectual property, and to manage reputational risk.

- To promote preventative activities at a community level; this includes engaging with community leaders and relevant civil society organizations to help raise awareness of the risks associated to IEDs and to tackle the rhetoric that accompanies their use.
- To expand and embolden the role of law enforcement in global prevention and investigations, particularly tackling threats such as the 'dark net'.
- To encourage, as part of a whole-of-government approach, cooperation between militaries and law enforcements to strengthen preventive actions, in particular to facilitate and widen the exchange of information to combat the spread of IEDs and their precursors.

It has been noted that the Secretary-General report A773/156 was very inclusive; one can draw a great deal of information from it, and shape the resolution accordingly. For example, one of the countries contributing to the SG report, Afghanistan, has made a concrete proposal to help better frame the preventative aspects of the upcoming resolution (source <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/ieds/>). It says (quote):

- 'Developing monitoring mechanism over the movements of chemical precursors,
- Fertilizers, commercial explosives, and dual use components for IEDs, especially end user monitoring mechanisms'.

Such proposals are of great use and should be noted.

France, in turn, believes that working with the private sector, in particular with producers of IED precursor materials, is a crucial preventative angle that needs urgently to be developed further. Again, this proposal should be included.