Barbados

Positions for the General Assembly First Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)

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I. The Weaponization of Artificial Intelligence

While technological advancements can certainly be beneficial for militaries, they also pose a serious threat to world peace. The use of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) and allowing artificial intelligence (AI) to make military decisions pose important questions regarding reliability and ethics, such as how to hold an autonomous system accountable for mistakes, how to train these systems, how these machines could create longer wars, and whether they can be trusted to make the right decision. These questions are especially pertinent since there are no agreed upon definitions for either artificial intelligence or LAWS. While many countries and non-governmental organizations have raised concerns about the use of LAWS in war, there are not currently any formal treaties or agreements to outlaw their use. The People’s Republic of China, State of Israel, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, The United States of America, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are currently researching and incorporating AI into their military. Due to these countries’ large political influence and tensions between each other, Barbados is concerned about the potential for an arms-race developing and threatening world peace. An Arms-race would have negative impacts on Barbados’ trade agreements with our allies, especially the United States of America as they represent 40% of imports in the Barbadian economy. Another cause of concern is the potential for an increase of citizen casualties due to LAWS. As of right now, it is not possible for artificial intelligence to distinguish between soldiers and citizens. Should citizens be near a warzone, the risk of them being injured would increase. The only way to prevent these deaths is to require humans to remain in control of military weapons. Mistakes like these could also inspire nations to purposely go after citizens under the guise of the weapon malfunctioning. LAWS could potentially make it easier for countries to carry out assassinations and ignite the flames of war. Finally Barbados is also concerned about the United Nations’ silence on this matter and supports the creation of a universal definition for artificial intelligence and LAWS and the declaring the use of LAWS to be a war crime.

Due to the lack of clarity regarding what qualifies as artificial intelligence and LAWS, creating sound policy regarding this matter is difficult. Barbados encourages member states to agree on definitions for these terms to aid the policy-making process. The Barbados Defense Force is not currently looking into incorporating artificial intelligence or LAWS into our defense force based on the size of our military and lack of major conflicts. Barbados recognizes that other countries may feel the need to invest in these technologies to aid their national security, however. To overcome this, Barbados suggests creating a formal resolution to outlaw the use of LAWS, similar to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. While the presence of LAWS on the battlefield has not yet been fully established, Barbados believes that by acting early the UN can prevent an arms-race between major militaries and maintain world peace.

II. Combating the Global Illicit Arms Trade

The state of Barbados has outlawed the use, manufacturing, and sale of firearms by non-military and police forces within its borders since the passage of the Firearms Act of 1998. This legislation has contributed to the process of bringing Barbados into agreement with the terms of the UN Arms Trade Treaty of 2013. Barbados has also taken steps to destroy surplus and obsolete weapons with the assistance of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in 2013. Despite these actions, illegal firearms are continuously being trafficked into Barbados by foreigners looking to make easy money at the expense of their own morality. This must not be allowed to continue, and Barbados implores its fellow Member States to join it in further implementing resolutions to prevent the illegal trafficking of firearms worldwide.

Barbados has also collaborated with fellow members of the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CCIACS) as well as The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to train security officials in the usage of the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System (iARMS) security database for the recognition and tracking of illicit arms. This data has proved invaluable in preventing arms from entering the country, as well as fellow nations in the Caribbean. Barbados has also used the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network (IBIN) and the INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table (IFRT) to better track illegal weapons and ensure their seizure. This collaboration between fellow Caribbean states, as well as more powerful states such as the United States of America, is essential in combating this global issue. Particularly in regions with high levels of cross-border trafficking, such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, collaboration between Member States is essential. Barbados looks favorably on a resolution that establishes and encourages further collaborations between Member States in specific regions in order to more effectively monitor the trafficking of illegal weapons. A conference such as the one held between CCIACS and INTERPOl, held every two years that involves experts in the most common weapons trafficked in the specific region of the conference, will ensure that the security forces of the region are well informed of the tactics and tools used by firearms traffickers in the region and will be better able to respond as information is uncovered. In addition, Barbados wishes for the United Nations General Assembly to provide encouragement and incentive for Member States to update their laws concerning firearms to bring these states more in line with the terms outlined by the Arms Trade Treaty. Regulations on the capabilities of firearms made available to the public will decrease the danger posed by firearms that have been illegally acquired. In addition, increased scrutiny on the manufacturing and sale of firearms in the world will lead to overall fewer trafficked arms and fewer lives lost as a result. If the committee follows these initial steps, then the world will see a large reduction in the number of arms trafficked world-wide. The global trafficking of weapons must be mitigated as much as possible if not outright eliminated, and Barbados believes that if these steps are followed, the damage done by firearms trafficking will be properly addressed.