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Arms Control and Disarmament Policies: Political Debates in Switzerland

Dr. Dr. h. c. Barbara Haering
President of the GICHD Council of Foundation

Switzerland's objectives and commitments

- Switzerland is a small country with a long history of neutrality. Therefore, our security policies focus on:
 - pursuing national and human security
 - maintaining our political capacity
 - securing our critical infrastructures
 - contributing to global security – focusing on human security and on peace keeping under the lead of the UN (no peace enforcement).
- Switzerland's arms control and disarmament strategies follow the objectives of our security policies in general.

Shifting paradigms

- Border defense has become irrelevant in Europe.
- However, new security threats have emerged with following characteristics:
 - Defense and homeland security increasingly deal with overlapping issues.
 - They involve non-state actors and are confronted with new means and methods of warfare.
 - Thereby, civilians and critical (civil) infrastructures are crucial focal points.
- Moreover, security policies are cross cutting traditional policy themes.

New threats – some key words

- Fragile states and revolutions...
- Non state actors and arms proliferation...
- Terrorism...
- Organized crime: The total income of illicit trade, cyber-crime and money laundering could be well over 2 trillion \$ per annum - about twice the military budgets worldwide...
- Energy and environment security...
- Militarization of space; run for resources in the outer space...

New challenges also for arms control

- During the area of Cold War, we knew what kind of weapons we were facing and where they were. Today, we are uncertain of potential weapons and where they could or will be.
- New challenges especially in regards to arms control and disarmament policies and negotiations:
 - increasing complexity of threats
 - the involvement of states as well as non-state actors
 - new alliances of “the willing”
 - increasing difficulties for international negotiations

Changing paradigms also for Switzerland

- Switzerland's national security as well as our homeland security depend on global security.
- Abstaining from international security politics will not strengthen Switzerland's security any longer.
- In the new international arena the states obligation to international law becomes fundamental, resulting in the fact, that neutrality lost its importance from a legal point of view.
- However, being impartial and refraining from particular national interests remains important for Switzerland's foreign politics.

CH: Arms control and disarmament policies (1)

- Switzerland's international arms control and disarmament policies are led by the Federal Government. Parliament does not have a significant role.
- Switzerland's arms control and disarmament politics are pursuing the following three objectives:
 - assuring national and international security by minimising the level of existing arms to the lowest degree possible (addressing “haves” as well as “not haves”)
 - fostering disarmament and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction
 - promoting human security

Swiss ammunition exports: Legal framework

- Weapons and ammunition may be exported. However, export is illegal in the following cases:
 - International or an internal conflict in the country of destination
 - Systematic and massive violation of human rights in the country of destination
 - High risk of use of these arms against civilians in the country of destination
 - High risk of proliferation to a country in conflict
- All export decisions of the federal administration and the Federal Council are bound by these criteria.

Swiss munitions exports in 2011 (1)

- Since 2005 Switzerland's munitions exports increased by about 340%. In 2011, exports increased by 36% compared to 2010.
- Switzerland is the 13th largest arms exporter and is responsible for 1% of the arms exports worldwide.
- Switzerland supplies 68 countries with munitions.
- Saudi Arabia is the main end user of Swiss munitions exports, followed by Germany.

(Numbers according to SIPRI 2012)

Swiss munitions exports in 2011 (2)

- Exported munitions are mainly:
 - Ammunition (32%)
 - Tanks (25%)
 - Weapons of diverse caliber (18%)
- In 2011 Switzerland's munitions exports reached 872 Mio. Fr. – summing up to 0.42 % of the total export volume of Switzerland.
- 60% of the net value added of these exports remain in Switzerland and the income of approx. 5'000 people depends on these exports.
(BAKBASEL economics 2008)

In spite of end user certificates....

- **2005:** Armored howitzers sold to the UAE -> Morocco
- **2011:** Ammunition sold to Katar -> Libya
- **2012:** Hand grenades sold to the UAE -> Syria



→
2005

→
2011

→
2012

Need for coherence

- In order to balance conflicting interests and to achieve coherent policies all three ministries of foreign, defense and economic affairs need to work closely together.
- Arms exports policies need to be transparent and predictable for all parties involved – also for industry.
- Sanctions must be relevant and coherent.
- A close cooperation between the federal administration taking and preparing decisions of the Federal Council, the industry and civil society is important.

Parliamentarians have a different approach

- Only few parliamentarians are particularly committed to arms control and disarmament policies. Their approach is different compared to governmental and diplomatic initiatives:
 - Parliamentarians depend on public elections and therefore, will go for the short term visibility!
 - They will commit themselves to issues that are high on the public and media agenda, such as landmines, cluster munitions or nuclear disarmament.
- However, finally they are the ones that are responsible for legally binding decision supporting governmental and diplomatic initiatives.

Three topical issues

- Direct democracy and disarmament
- Personal army rifles
- Ratification of CCM

Direct democracy and disarmament

- Direct democracy allows the people of Switzerland to exert political power directly.
- Proposing constitutional changes (100'000 signatures) or thwarting legislation approved by parliament (50'000 signatures) is common.

Direct democracy and concordance go hand in hand:

- In order to limit the risk of a referendum, our governmental system is based on concordance. By mutual agreement the four largest parties are represented in the Federal Council; thus, building a sort of coalition amongst the most powerful parties.

People's initiatives against arms exports

- During the last decades broad public debates were launched by people's initiatives urging a general abandonment of arms exports:
 - Initiative 1969; failed in the referendum in 1972
 - Initiative 1997; failed in the referendum in 2000
 - Initiative 2005; failed in the referendum in 2010
- These initiatives were launched by pacifist groups, left wing and green parties on the background of critical exports of arms or dual use goods.
- Although these initiatives failed in the referendum, they still had an impact on Switzerland's arms exports legislation – and practice.

Where to store Swiss army rifles?

- Following an old tradition, Switzerland's militia soldiers store their personal army rifles at home.
- However, the number of suicides and homicides committed with army guns has been increasing over the years.
- As a result, women's organizations, pacifist groups as well as left wing and green parties are urging the government and the parliament to stop this tradition.
- In response to this request, the Swiss army now offers to store personal weapons in arsenals.

Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)

- 2008: Switzerland signed the CCM in Oslo.
- 2011: The Federal Council agreed to ratify the Convention and to submit the message to parliament. However, the Defense Committee of the House of Representatives is against ratification:
 - The destruction of our own cluster munitions will cost Switzerland about 20 Million CH FR.
 - Right wing parties as well as groups of Swiss officers were claiming the ratification would weaken Switzerland's defense capacity.
- 2012: The parliament finally supported the ratification – which took place on July 17, 2012.

The GICHD at a glimpse

- The Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining GICHD was launched by Switzerland more than ten years ago:
 - Switzerland still is the main donor
 - Council of Foundation with 23 members – including donor states, mine affected states, the UE, UN
 - expert organization with 42 co-workers
- The GICHD hosts the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) supporting the states parties in the implementation of the APMB...
-and stands ready to do so also for the CCM.

GICHD is working in all five pillars of mine action



Demining



Stockpile destruction



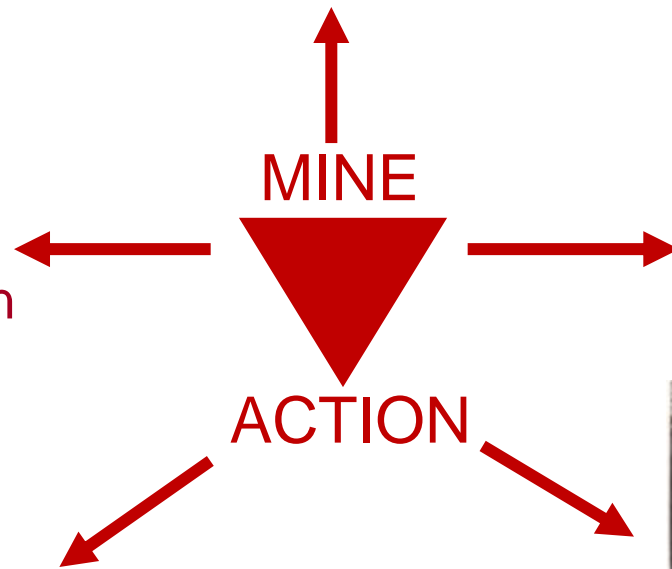
Mine risk education



Advocacy



Victim assistance



In summary

- We are the first generation that has the resources to substantially contribute to peace and stability worldwide. We therefore have the responsibility to do so.
- The complexity of security threats is increasing. Thus, we need comprehensive human security approaches.
- Due to our long lasting experience Switzerland has the capability to become a security and peace “exporter”.
- In order to secure our success the commitment to international co-operation is imperative.