

TRENCH: Curating Science, History and Military Strategy to pave a path towards disarmament

Ms. Natallia Khaniejo

The author is a research intern at IDSA. She has completed her Bachelors from Lady Shri Ram College and her Masters from Miranda house Delhi University. She is currently working on issues of Cyber Security.

Summary

This piece examines the research initiative TRENCH owned and run by Dr. Jean Pascal Zanders. Dr. Zanders specializes in Chemical and Biological Warfare and is currently investigating the possibilities and complications of negotiating Global CBW disarmament protocol.

Chemical and Biological Weapons are by no means an emergent phenomenon. While myth and history would date the usage of such weapons back to the Hellenic age, the emergence of modern chemical warfare can be traced back to the use of Toxic Gas clouds and other such Chemical weapons during the World Wars. The civilizational devastation that occurred as a result of using these weapons has unfortunately not served as enough of a deterrent to put such dangerous military aids to rest. Instead, the recent conflict in Syria and the rapid proliferation of Non State Actors has led to a drastic resurgence of such technologies. The collateral damage that occurs upon the usage of such weapons can potentially be lethal and prolonged. The lack of preparedness and preventive safeguards with respect to dealing with such technologies is a cause for concern and governments world over need to recognize this threat and come together to limit the spread of CBW material which could undermine global security architecture.

TRENCH, is a research initiative that aims to examine the issue of Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons and their impact on global stability. It engages with the need for CBRN disarmament in order to rid society of potential Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). TRENCH aims to "Recall where Science, Research and Military Art Converge"¹ in order to "Challenge Entrenched Positions"² thereby effecting change. It is owned by Dr. Jean Pascal Zanders, an expert in Armament-Disarmament policy particularly with respect to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) warfare and Space conflict. He aims

to use "Foresighting analysis" in order to examine the viability of establishing a disarmament protocol with respect to CBW/CBRN warfare, while also examining the meaning of disarmament in the global context in today's day and age. As someone who served as a Project Leader with SIPRI and the director of Geneva's Bio Weapons Prevention Project (BWPP) he poses the requisite insight to marry theory with praxis in his examination of emergent CBW trends and analysis. As on 2016, he has also been added as a member to the Organization for Prevention of Chemical Weapons' (OPCW) Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. (ABEO)

The TRENCH research initiative mirrors his vision of a need for global disarmament and raises challenging questions regarding the current global environment and its increasing inability to combat malevolent global threats. The organization specializes in Armament Dynamics, Disarmament Dynamics, Terrorism and Foresighting Analysis. They also provide Introductory as well as Advanced courses with emphasis on understanding and decoding the global security architecture. While Armament and Disarmament Dynamics remain common to most security study initiatives, Foresighting Analysis is a relatively recent concept that aims to use trend analysis to evaluate potential challenges to Disarmament discourse. The organization provides "Multisectorial trends analysis relating to International Security and Conflict."³

The initiative runs an up to date blog that examines the emergent developments in CBW news. There is also a community forum which can be used to engage in discussion regarding the current global security architecture. Furthermore in a section called "Recalling the Trench", the research initiative provides readers with historical insight into the emergence of the CBW

environment by examining the usage of Chemical weapons in World War I. An excerpt from Dr. Zanders' paper on the Destruction of Chemical Munitions in Belgium, is used to trace the historical emergence of Chemical Weapons in the Modern era through the four phases of Chemical Weapons usage in World War I primarily involving cloud gas attacks. This helps situate and contextualize the usage of Sarin and Mustard Gas by Non-State Actors today, in a historical tradition.

Currently, TRENCH is engaged in several projects and is collaborating with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BTWC), towards assisting with the "startup of projects under the Council Decision and implementation of the project elements in preparation of the 8th BTWC Review Conference (November 2016)"⁴. They are also involved in the "Educational Model on Chemical Warfare" which is an 'educational project' run by the Peace Research Institute of Frankfurt.

Their past projects involve a plethora of Monographs, Presentations and Chapters for various forums and organizations on multilingual platforms. These include edited volumes such as *Innocence Slaughtered: Gas and the transformation of Warfare and Society*⁵, as well as contributions to Journals such as *Contemporary Security Policy*⁶. The complete list of Publications can be accessed through the links provided in the endnotes.⁷

TRENCH also provides Dr. Zanders' presentations from global CBW conventions and disarmament dialogues, a key example of which would be the presentation for the OPCW ABEO, and the BWC presentation. These presentations provide key insights into the current Chemical and Biological security framework that is in place and the trends that might emerge in the near future.

TRENCH's key emphasis remains the examination of the armament - disarmament nexus and the implications current patterns might have on future Global scenarios. The usage of Chemical weapons by IS is a serious cause for concern and there is a need therefore, for systematic engagement and deconstruction of an issue that is increasingly becoming a global threat. TRENCH has held several events over the course of 2016 to deal with spreading information and awareness regarding the growing proliferation of CBW materials and the need to work towards global disarmament. Dr. Zanders has held workshops, lecture cycles and several other initiatives to increase CBW awareness. He has also reviewed the efficacy of current conventional matrices in place for the control of the CBRN, WMD threat. The events calendar provides insight into the various workshops and courses taking place across the world and the latest developments with respect to CBRN Security awareness.

TRENCH, as a research initiative, uses foresight methodology, and trend analysis to engage with a chaotic, constantly evolving global security architecture. It uses available resources to provide an objective approach to global CBW trends and emphasizes the need to evaluate history to accurately combat potential future threats.

Endnotes:

1. As depicted on <http://www.the-trench.org/> accessed on December 10, 2016
2. <http://www.the-trench.org/> Accessed on December 10, 2016
3. As stated on <http://www.the-trench.org/areas/> Accessed on December 12, 2016
4. <http://www.the-trench.org/current-projects/> Accessed on December 13, 2016
5. <http://www.the-trench.org/publications/monographs-and-edited-volumes/> Uniform Press, 2016, London. Accessed on December 13, 2016
6. <http://www.the-trench.org/publications/monographs-and-edited-volumes/> Vol. 36, No. 2 'Denying Disarmament'
7. <http://www.the-trench.org/publications/> Accessed on December 15, 2016