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International Seminar on Autonomous Weapons Systems
Rio de Janeiro, Naval War College
February 20, 2020

Objectives of the event:

Contributing to the debate on the governance of the emerging technologies in the field of LAWS (Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems) in the scope of International Law, including Humanitarian International Law, particularly in the framework of the GGE/LAWS of the CCW (Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons), considering its diplomatic, legal, technological, business, strategic, and military dimensions.

The Seminar aims to promote discussions in an informal environment, with the purpose of enabling an improved exchange of information, which can assist governments and non-governmental delegations in preparing for the GGE/LAWS in 2020 and in drafting their recommendations for the next CCW Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, in 2020, and for the 6th CCW Review Conference, in 2021.

Participants:

Representatives of governments, international organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, NGOs, private enterprises, and academia.

Background:

The High Contracting Parties to the CCW endorsed the recommendations of the GGE/LAWS, particularly a set of guiding principles, in their meeting in November 2019, in Geneva.

Among other aspects, the recommendations confirmed that the work of the GGE must be guided by International Law, in particular Humanitarian International Law, and by ethical aspects.

The GGE will submit two reports: one for the meeting of the Parties in 2020 and another for the 6th CCW Review Conference in 2021.

In its discussions, the GGE will consider the legal, technological, and military aspects in an integrated manner, taking into account ethical considerations.

According to the recommendations, the GGE will utilize the aforementioned aspects “as a basis for the enlightenment, consideration, and development of aspects of the normative and operational structure on emerging technologies in the field of lethal autonomous weapons systems.”

It is in this context that the Seminar is inserted.

The event will allow for informal and high-level interaction between governmental and non-governmental participants, with the objective of sharing knowledge and improving situational awareness on LAWS. The discussion can aid in the drafting of national and institutional contributions for the GGE/LAWS and in building a spirit of consensus in the preparation of recommendations.



Program

Thursday, February 20

09:00 – Opening session

Roberto Goidanich, Minister, President of FUNAG

Alvaro Monteiro, Squadron Admiral, President of the Political-Strategic Studies Center of the Brazilian Navy

Merel Ekelhof, UNIDIR

Janis Karklins, Ambassador, Latvian Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Chairman of the 2020 GGE/LAWS

Alessandro Candeas, Ambassador, Director of the Department of Defense of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

09:40 – Coffee break

10:00 – Panel 1: Human-machine interaction and human control: from engineering to IHL.

Amanda Wall, Office of the Legal Adviser – Department of State (United States)

Elizabeth Minor, Article 36 / Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Yokoyama Daiki, Conventional Weapons Division – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)

Anja Dahlmann, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Germany)

Geber Ramalho, Cesar Institute (Brazil)

Edson Prestes, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) - MODERATOR

12:30 – Lunch break

14:00 – Panel 2: International Law, including IHL, on LAWS: is there a need for a new Protocol?

Konstantin Vorontsov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Russia)

Kathleen Lawand, Legal Division – Arms Unit (Red Cross – ICRC)

Michael Biontino, Ambassador, Special Adviser – Foreign Office (Germany)

Bonnie Docherty, Harvard Law School

Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador, Director of the Department of Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation – Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (Austria)

Pamela Moranga Quezada, Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva (Chile) - MODERATOR

16:30 – Coffee break

16:45 – Panel 3: Strategic and military dimensions of autonomous weapons – disruptive technology as a game changer.

Karl Chang, Associate General Counsel, Department of Defense (United States)

Roberto Gallo, ABIMDE (Brazilian Association of Security and Defense Industries)

Chen Yongcan, Deputy Consul General (China)

Moa Peldán Carlsson, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Alfredo Muradas, Vice-Admiral, Director of Weapons Systems, Brazilian Navy (Brazil)

Antonio Jorge Ramalho, University of Brasília (Brazil) - MODERATOR

18:45 – Closing session