



Course 3: War, weapons and conflict strategies

Chapter 1: Weapons of Mass Destruction

Exercise 1: Information pooling

This exercise requires preparation time of several hours that can be given as homework. The pooling itself takes about 90 minutes.

Participants should be divided into four groups of no more than six people. Each group should take one of these four topics:

- 1.) Nuclear weapons
- 2.) Chemical weapons
- 3.) Biological weapons
- 4.) Radiological weapons

Preparation:

Time needed: several hours, should be given as homework.

Supplied information: relevant lessons from Course 3, Chapter 1 on Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Each group should study the relevant lesson and prepare a presentation, visualising the following information:

- A. The characteristics of the weapon type
- B. Their dangers to health and the environment
- C. What can be done to protect us?

Possible forms of visualisation are a:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Poster
- Mindmap

The presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes and the group should divide up the presentation time among several presenters.

Exercise:

Time needed: 90 minutes

Each group should give their presentation of ten minutes, followed by five minutes for questions (not discussion) – 60 minutes needed.

The participants then partake in a general discussion, moderated by the teacher, on what should be done about these weapons to prevent their use. Ideas provided can be written up on a flipchart or board.



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To what extent are the discussions of the different weapons raising similar issues, or different ones? Are there any commonalities that mean that prevention strategies towards different weapons could be combined?

Exercise 2: Calculating effects

Time needed: 50 minutes

Information supplied: Map of city, average population density per square kilometre.

Calculate the effects of a crude Hiroshima type nuclear bomb (12.5 kilotons) on your city by using this table:

Zone	Distance from Ground Zero	Area	Average population per km²	Fatality rate	Total deaths
A	0-0.5 km	0.8 sq km		98%	
B	0.5-1.0 km	2.3 sq km		90%	
C	1.0-1.5 km	4.0 sq km		46%	
D	1.5-2.0 km	5.65 sq km		23%	
E	2.0-5.0 km	65.9 sq km		2%	

Choose a target for the bomb. Using this as “Ground Zero”, draw the zones as concentric circles on the map of your city, radiating out from this point.

Discuss with the participants what would be in the zones, depending on the time of day. Are there hospitals in this area? Is it residential or are there many workplaces, shopping centres, transport nodes, where many people would be gathered?

How might the participants themselves be affected by such an attack? Where would they be themselves at that time of day, their families and friends? What would they do in such an event?

It may be that the participants find this exercise disturbing to imagine. A helpful exercise is for the group to talk about what they can do to prevent such an attack and to write these ideas down on a flipchart.

Optional extra:

If the group wants to share their calculation, they can perform a “Target X” action, by going to the “Ground Zero” they have chosen and marking the spot with a large X, made of red material and displaying your map. Then talk to passers-by about what would happen if a nuclear weapon was used on your city. For more information, see the Target X homepage:

<http://www.ipnw-students.org/Target/active.html>



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Chapter 2: Effects of certain types of weapons or conflict strategies

Exercise 3: Brainstorm on war crimes

Time needed: 45 minutes

Supply: 50 cards 10x5cm, pin-board, pins, enough markers for all participants, list of weapons/conflict strategies

Ask the participants – in groups of three people - to write down examples of what might constitute a war crime on cards (10 minutes).

Pin these cards on a board. Tell the students NOT to look at the list of war crimes on the opposite side of the page in the student handouts.

Ask the participants to take the list below of weapons or conflict strategies, the use of which might constitute a war crime, write them on cards and pin them next to their war crimes on the board. The list is a starting point, they can add other weapons or conflict strategies of their own (10 minutes).

List of weapons/conflict strategies

Landmines	Rape, sexualised violence
Cluster munitions	Slavery
Nuclear weapons	Genocide
Agent orange	Blanket bombing
Mustard gas	Massacre of civilians
Biological Weapons	Blowing up a nuclear reactor
Uranium weapons	Torture
Radiological dispersion devices	Using child soldiers
Dum-dum bullets	Pretending to be medical personnel
Blinding laser weapons	
Genetic weapons	

Ask the participants – in groups of three - to compare results with the information provided below on international humanitarian law and banned weapons/conflict strategies and add anything that is missing from their list (15 minutes).

International Humanitarian Law states:

The use of weapons is banned that:

- cause unnecessary suffering and superfluous injury (e.g. dum-dum bullets or blinding laser weapons)
- are indiscriminate in their effects, i.e. they affect combatants and non-combatants alike (e.g. landmines, cluster munitions)
- destroy things needed for the survival of civilians (e.g. poisoning water)



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- cause lasting damage to the environment (e.g. radiological dispersion devices)
- contain poison gas, chemical or biological agents (all chemical and biological weapons, e.g. agent orange or mustard gas)

Conflict strategies that are banned:

- Use of child soldiers
- Deceiving the enemy by pretending to be a protected person
- Rape, sexualised violence, sexual slavery
- Inhumane treatment of prisoners (such as slavery, torture)
- Mass murder or genocide
- Attacking dams, dykes or nuclear generating installations
- Disproportionate use of excessive damage to civilians (e.g. blanket bombing)

Nuclear weapons are not banned per se, but any use would most likely contravene international humanitarian law. Uranium weapons are also not internationally banned as yet, but some countries (Belgium, Costa Rica) have banned them.

Discuss with participants as a whole group if they feel that these rules are sufficient to diminish the lasting effect of war on health and the environment (15 minutes).

Optional extra:

Give the participants the following proposal from the International Committee of the Red Cross on how to determine which weapons should be banned from use in war and ask them to discuss it.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has proposed that the legality of a weapon can be measured by establishing whether it would cause any of the following effects:

- disease other than that resulting from physical trauma from explosions or projectiles
- abnormal physiological or psychological states (other than expected response to trauma from explosions or projectiles)
- permanent disability specific to the kind of weapon
- disfigurement specific to the kind of weapon
- inevitable or virtually inevitable death in the field or a high hospital mortality rate
- grade three wounds among those who survive to hospital
- effects for which there is no well recognized and proven medical treatment which can be applied in a well-equipped field hospital

Exercise 4: Debate on Non-Lethal Weapons (NLW)

Time needed: total 60 minutes - preparation 30 minutes, debate 30 minutes.

Supply: Basic arguments pro and contra the use of non-lethal weapons in war. Access to the internet. Optional: video camera.



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Definition of Non-Lethal-Weapons (NLW)

- NLWs are specifically designed and primarily employed to incapacitate people or disable equipment, with minimal collateral damage to property and the environment
- they should be discriminate and not cause unnecessary suffering
- their effects on people should be temporary and reversible
- they should provide alternatives to or raise the threshold for use of lethal force

Arguments for and against

Proponents of NLWs claim that the term correctly reflects the intention neither to kill nor to permanently harm. It is not meant to imply that 'non-lethal' weapons will never produce fatalities but that, compared to lethal weapons, NLWs could significantly reduce the number of deaths during violent conflict. NLWs have already been used for years, but those now being developed are far more advanced.

Opponents of NLWs fear that calling them 'non-lethal' hides the fact that they can have devastating effects on their targets and that they have great potential to injure and kill. The current trend towards NLWs that combine one or more technologies and have variable settings has led the ICRC to argue that there should be no 'non-lethal' or 'less-lethal' labels whatsoever, as all are simply weapons.

Preparation

The participants should divide into two groups, pro and contra the use of NLWs. This should not necessarily reflect their actual opinion on the matter.

Each group should take 30 minutes to prepare for the debate, electing two speakers for the group. They should prepare a 6 minute statement, laying out their arguments, based on the information supplied. Additional information can be taken from the lesson on New Types of Weapons and from the internet (e.g. consult the list of references at the bottom of the lesson).

Debate

The first speakers will give statements in favour and against using NLWs, each six minutes long. Then the groups will recess for 10 minutes and discuss their answer to the other position. Then the second speakers will answer in 4 minutes to the statement of the other side.

Optional extra:

Record the debate on video and let the participants give feedback on what they see.



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Chapter 3: Response to war

Exercise 5: Develop a public awareness action

Time needed: 75 minutes

Supply: computer, access to the internet, poster-sized paper

Split into three groups of 6-10 people.

Each group should develop an action to raise awareness on one of the following issues:

1. use of small arms and guns
2. effects of uranium weapons
3. cluster munitions

Action development (30 minutes)

The group should answer the following questions while developing their action:

- What do you know about the effects of these weapons? (Facts and figures)
- How do you feel about the use of these weapons? (use personal stories)
- Why does it affect you? (motivation to act)
- What can you do about it? (message, option to act)

The action can be a street or an online action. It should have a strong visual or dramatic element. Facts and figures or personal stories can be made up but should be kept as realistic as possible. Some facts and figures can be found in the lessons in course 3 on the effects of weapons but research should be kept to a minimum as the point of the exercise is to encourage creativity.

Some helpful information for students for their action:

Small arms and light weapons, or 'conventional weapons', are those that can be operated by one or two people. They include handguns, assault rifles, machine guns, grenades and landmines. These weapons are known to cause the majority of deaths in violent conflict globally, increase the number of deaths occurring during robbery or assault, and enhance the lethality of suicide. There are estimated 639 million small arms globally, or approximately one for every ten people on earth. More than half the world's countries are involved in producing the 7.5-8 million new weapons and 10-14 billion rounds of ammunition manufactured annually (Small Arms Survey 2003). The global trade in small arms and light weapons may be worth US \$21 billion (€15 billion) annually (Hillier and Wood 2003). Around 98 countries have the capacity to produce small arms, but the vast majority are produced in Europe (47%) and North and Central America (34%).

Uranium weapons contain radioactive depleted uranium (U-238). Uranium weapons are specifically designed to penetrate armoured vehicles such as tanks. On impact,



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the uranium penetrator tip melts and partially vaporizes. The generated metal particles start burning spontaneously to form particles of uranium oxide. When the round has entered its target, fuel tanks are often set on fire and ammunition stored in vehicles detonates, usually leading to large explosions. As a result the remains of the penetrator may also partly burn into dust (uranium oxide particles). The resulting very fine, radioactive, toxic dust can cause harm when inhaled or ingested. Apart from on testing ranges, uranium weapons are known to have been used in the 1991 Gulf War, Bosnia in 1994-5, Kosovo in 1999, Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan. DU is an alpha emitter, which has led to claims that it is more or less harmless because the radioactivity it emits cannot travel through the skin. It is, however, harmful when particles are inhaled, ingested or enter the body through a wound. Moreover, as a heavy metal DU is highly toxic. Although slightly less radioactive than natural uranium, it behaves identically in terms of its chemistry. It is widely accepted that uranium, inhaled as insoluble particles, is carcinogenic to the lung through its radioactive emissions; and that if soluble it will cross the blood-air barrier of the lung to become systemic and be physiologically toxic to the kidney. Uranium may also be genotoxic, meaning that it is capable of damaging the genetic material of humans and thus potentially lead to cancer. Uranium weapons are not specifically banned, but are considered by many to be illegal under present international law.

Cluster munitions are intended for attacking large-scale enemy troop formations. They come apart in the air before making contact, dispersing 200-400 bomblets that can saturate a radius of 250 m. The changing nature of warfare, though, means they are used against enemies in or near highly populated areas, so all too often they critically injure or kill civilians instead of their intended military targets. There is a further danger: up to 40% of the bomblets fail to detonate immediately, and leave a trail of unexploded munitions in war-torn areas. Cluster bombs fall under the general rules of international humanitarian law, but were not specifically covered by any currently binding international legal instrument until the signature of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008. This international treaty stemmed from an initiative by the Government of Norway known as the Oslo Process which was launched in February 2007 to prohibit cluster munitions. This treaty was signed by 94 states in Oslo on 3–4 December 2008.

Presentation of action to whole group (45 minutes)

Each group presents its action to the whole group, taking 10 minutes each. Allow 15 minutes for a short discussion of the results.

Optional extra:

If the participants are motivated, then they can carry out their action and see what the response is. In such a case, the research needs to be more thorough and the facts and figures correct. After conducting the action, they should evaluate what worked and what didn't.

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Exercise 6: Exchanging viewpoints

Time needed: 30 – 45 minutes

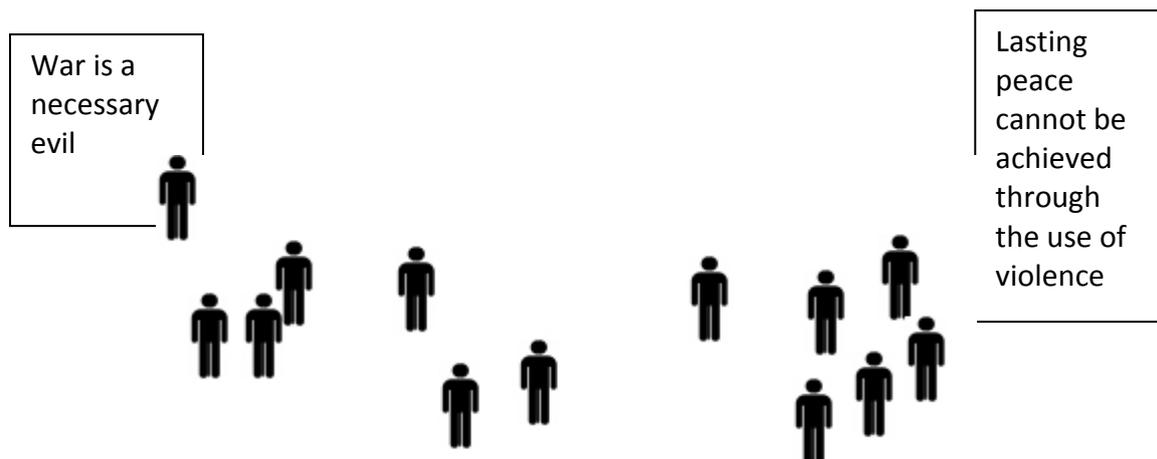
Supply: two flipcharts, cards 10x5cm

This exercise is designed to allow participants to understand the viewpoints of others. This is necessary if you are undertaking advocacy work. It also helps to understand that there is not always a simple “pro or contra” opinion, but variations between these extremes and these may not be fixed.

Here are two statements of opinion:

- War is a necessary evil.
- Lasting peace cannot be achieved through the use of violence.

Write these two opinions on a flipchart and place them on opposite sides of the room. Ask all the participants to place themselves between these two viewpoints, when one is on the extreme right and the other on the extreme left, like this:



Ask some of the participants (randomly chosen) to say why they chose where they are standing. Try to get a mixture of viewpoints.

Then ask the participants to each take a card and write on it a possible reason for having a viewpoint which is not their own. When they are finished, they should read it out and stick it to the flipchart with the viewpoint the argument supports. If, during this process, new arguments emerge, participants should be allowed to write more than one card.

Ask the group to place themselves again between the viewpoints and look at whether there are any changes in positions.

Options:

Other viewpoints can be used instead of the ones suggested here. This exercise is also very good for resolving conflicts, in which case a third position (known as “transcending position”) can be developed that all parties can agree to.