

Getting a Word in Edgewise:  
Nonstate Actors' Campaigns against particular Weapons

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Prepared for delivery at the 2006 Annual Meeting  
of the American Political Science Association  
Philadelphia, PA 30 August-3 September 2006

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[Note: the subtitle is not identical to that appearing in the APSA meeting program; the change reflects the fact this paper is reporting early results of one part of a larger study investigating the influence of various types of nonstate actor in arms control efforts.]

Besides the sources cited, this research has benefited from insights in the work of Daniel Berlin, Bethany Barratt, and Audie Klotz, and comments from Peter M. Haas.

## **Non-State Actors and Weapons Acquisition**

Several types of non-state actor – profit-seeking business firms (individually or through sectoral associations), independent policy-focused research institutes (“think tanks”), professional associations, public interest groups, private relief or aid associations, and social movements – seek to influence government decisions about the acquisition and deployment of weapons. While the nonstate actors with the closest “insider” ties to governments are usually regarded as enjoying the most influence, the success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) initially lacking such ties and relying heavily on “outsider” strategies to steer governments toward a multilateral treaty prohibiting the manufacture, stockpiling, export, or use of anti-personnel landmines has inspired confidence that similar efforts can trigger breakthroughs on other weapons as well. However the ICBL operated in conditions considerably more favorable than those faced by nonstate actors campaigning to limit or abolish other weapons. A comparison of the ICBL’s experience with those of campaigns to limit the spread of “small arms” and abolish nuclear weapons reveals the unusual set of conditions that promoted its success and suggests that similar situations are far less likely to develop regarding other types of weapons.

Analysts of social movements have undertaken the most extensive efforts to understand when political efforts relying heavily on outsider strategies of mobilizing public opinion or other actors with closer ties to government are likely to be successful. They converged in the mid to late 1990s on linking social movements’ prospects of success to three sets of conditions: a) the extent of opportunity to raise issues and participate in political contentions provided by prevailing political institutions and practices (“political opportunity structure”), b) the resources and pathways available to movement leaders’ efforts to engage broad popular involvement and/or other actors with closer ties to political elites (“social mobilization structure”), and c) the ability of movement leaders to define (or re-define) the terms of debate on the issue (“issue framing”) (e.g., Tarrow 1994; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Rochon 1998). Insights drawn from this theorizing have been applied to assessing efforts by NGOs, national and transnational policy advocacy coalitions, and social movements to induce government adoption of internationally binding obligations limiting or banning possession and use of particular weapons. While revealing much about the extent and limits of nonstate actor success at influencing choices on particular categories of weapon (e.g., Price 1995; Knopf 1997; Rochon and Meyer 1997; Price 1998) or types of international regulation (e.g., Nadelman 1990), these studies do not help explain why three roughly contemporaneous efforts by NGOs, policy coalitions, and social movements using broadly similar political strategies have attained widely varying levels of success on landmines, small arms, and nuclear weapons.

Understanding this varying success requires placing the individual weapons controversies within their more encompassing issue-area rather than treating each weapons discussion as an isolated controversy. This has been acknowledged pragmatically in the existing literature, and finds broader theoretical support in the claims that the course of particular political controversies is shaped significantly by their place

within broader categories of interaction advanced in symbolic interactionist sociology (Rose, 1962; Manis and Meltzer 1967; Blumer, 1969), psychological self-categorization theory (Haslam, McGarty, and Turner, 1996), and the issue areas literatures in American politics (Dahl 1961; Lowi 1964) and international relations (Rosenau, 1971; Keohane and Nye 1977; Evangelista 1989). These different strands of inquiry all acknowledge that actors' thinking about how to gain policy influence in a particular controversy will be guided by their understanding of the broader issue area as well as of the particulars of the question or problem at hand. Thus, the success of efforts to influence government policy on weapons acquisition and use are affected by the broader "national security" or "defense" issue-area context as well as understandings about the particular weapon under debate.

The situation definitions prevailing in an issue area affect particular controversies by establishing three sets of shared understandings among the actors involved (Peterson 2004, 2005). The first indicates the type of problem at hand using broad markers like "education," "tax policy," or "national security." The second indicates the range of policy means most appropriate to addressing that type of problem; in education, for instance, currently-acceptable means include curriculum development, preschool programs, and comprehensive testing but not physical punishment of low performing students. The third identifies the actors who should be included in discussion of what to do because they possess relevant authority, resources or knowledge; in education these include the ministry of education, local school boards and administrators, teachers, and parents but generally not the persons attending school until they reach higher (tertiary) education. These understandings set bounds; particular controversies within an issue area may occur within or inspire development of more specialized problem definitions providing additional detail on the contours of that particular question, suggest ways of settling it, and indicate who among those with claims to voice in the broader issue area should be consulted in developing solutions to that problem. Both problem and situation definitions can themselves become items of controversy and explicit debate; on some occasions actors seeking influence will succeed only if they can get one or more feature of them set aside.

### **The Challenging Issue-Area of Security**

Government decisions about which weapons to acquire for themselves, which to accept as legitimately possessed by other governments, and which to accept as legitimately possessed by individuals or collective nonstate actors come within the broad issue area of "defense" or "national security." The situation definitions prevailing in this area define as "normal" (both in the sense of usual or most likely and in the sense of proper) conditions under which possession of heavy weaponry useful against external attack or serious internal rebellion is monopolized by the central government of a state, and each central government possesses a similar monopoly within the territory of the state it rules. Defense has long been understood as an executive function, even in democratic states where the legislature holds the taxing and spending powers and exercises general oversight of government activity. Thus the executive branch of the central government has the lead in making security policy, with the head of state and

head of government (where those offices are separated), the ministry of defense, and the seniormost military commanders enjoying automatic admission to the policy process while all others (including the foreign affairs ministry) must compete for entree. Until the aftermath of World War I, the legitimacy of using war (application of armed force to other states) as a means of national policy was questioned by very few (the 19<sup>th</sup> century peace movements; the more strongly internationalist wings of the socialist and workers' movements); today legitimacy attaches primarily to uses of armed force in self-defense against attack. While possession of weapons among criminals and terrorists is widely condemned, rebel movements enjoy legitimate access to weapons if others accept their claims to be seeking self-determination for a racial or ethnic group having no democratic modes of redress in the state where it lives or "national liberation" from a colonial, racist, or deeply repressive government.

All discussions of security issues occur within a mindset that accords top priority to maximizing national and state security rather than international or human security. However, even within the national/state security frame of reference government officials, military commanders, and others understand that the right of states involved in armed conflicts "to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited" (Geneva Protocol I, 1977, Article 35). Thus the imperative to maximize national security operates within some (unevenly respected, to be sure) normative restraints, most of which have been incorporated into international law since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though the particular formulations used today originated among states in Europe and the European "daughter cultures" of the Americas, they had direct analogues in or resonated well with beliefs in other cultures and have enjoyed very wide endorsement support.

The basic criteria governing choice and use of weapons are that use must be confined to military targets, that weapons chosen must be proportional to the military objectives of the mission and be reasonably necessary to its accomplishment, should not cause unnecessary suffering to those injured by them, and not harm persons or property in neutral states. The prohibition of unnecessary suffering was first articulated in 1868, and the necessity and proportionality criteria in the 1907 Hague Conventions on the Law of Warfare. The prohibitions against attacking civilians included in the 1907 Hague and 1949 Geneva Conventions crystallized into a prohibition of "indiscriminate weapons" – those that cannot be used in ways that limit civilian casualties as much as possible. The 1997 Geneva Protocol I added a prohibition on using "methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment" (Article 35, par 3). All these treaties also reaffirmed the "Martens clause" (named after its 19<sup>th</sup> century initiator) specifying that "in the study, development, acquisition, or adoption of a new weapon, means or method of warfare a [government] is under an obligation to determine whether its employment would, in some or all circumstances, be prohibited by this Protocol or any other rule of international law applicable to [that government]" (the wording in Geneva Protocol I, 1977, Article 36).

Defining weapons acquisition and use choices as part of the "national security/defense" issue area has considerable impact on the political opportunity structure facing nonstate actors at the international and national levels. Internationally, certain

forums – the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the various ad hoc and standing UN-sponsored disarmament conferences – enjoy the clearest mandate to handle weapons issues. Certain more specialized forums, notably conferences of the parties to a particular arms limitation or weapons prohibition treaty, are also available. Nationally, defense matters come within executive branch purview. Even in democratic states opportunities for use of popular mobilization may be limited by weak legislative budget control or oversight authority; opportunities in authoritarian states are more constrained. Yet in any state, differences of opinion among members of the political elite create more opportunities for popular mobilization or engagement of actors with closer ties to political leaders or senior officials than elite consensus.

The contours of the national security/defense issue area also have some effects on social mobilization structures. They probably do not affect the ability to acquire the basic resources (staff and volunteers, members or sympathizers providing relevant expertise, money) but do affect users of outsider strategies seeking arms limitations first by making them vulnerable to charges of being “soft” on defense and also by complicating efforts to mobilize by playing on fear because competing groups can also invoke fear as reason to oppose any or all arms limitations (noted in Wittner 2004, 26).

The national security/defense issue area comes with a “default” frame of maximizing national and state security. Though articulate advocates of substituting maximization of international, mutual, or human security are active, they have not yet had much impact on the security decisions of most governments. A group of self-described “middle powers,” including the governments of Canada, the Scandinavian, and some of the smaller Western European states, have begun formulating their national defense policy in those terms and advocating their use in international forums. The traditions of international humanitarian law covering treatment of civilian populations in areas where armed conflict rages create possibilities for a shift of perspective away from an exclusive focus on troops and military operations to concern for noncombatants. The law of warfare limits on choice of weapons also provides resources for issue-framing by nonstate actors employing outsider strategies.

Comparing nonstate actors’ efforts to secure greater limitation on the prevalence of three types of weapons reveals that the ICBL’s greater success rested on its facing a more favorable context. It enjoyed a more favorable political opportunity structure, faced fewer challenges in the social mobilization process, and gained greater control of issue framing:

	landmines	small arms	nuclear weapons
political opportunity structure	international – very successful forum shopping	international – limited forum shopping	international – limited forum shopping
social mobilization structure	network coordinating NGOs, etc converged on a single policy	network coordinating NGOs, etc with a range of policy proposals	ad hoc project cooperation among NGOs and activists

	proposal	active countermovement	tension between main (abolition) and related (nonprolif- eration) goals
issue-framing	strong norm pull; success reframing as humanitarian	weak norm pull	potential strong norm pull not realized
most distinct features	custom-build forum; reframing success	strategic centrality; internal division countermovement	strategic centrality; severity of verification issues

### **The Successful Campaign to Ban Antipersonnel Landmines**

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines was a network structure connecting humanitarian and human rights groups seeking to end the use of antipersonnel landmines (small mines designed to explode when exposed to an amount of downward pressure from a person, animal, or object weighing at least xx pounds or yy kilograms). Each of the component groups was structured as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the usual elements of a central office, leadership, and staff, fundraising from members and others, and formal registration as a non-profit entity in one or more countries. The network had a coordinator and lead spokesperson, Jodi Williams, and maintained strong communications flows among the member organizations, but did not try to determine the specifics of their individual campaigning on the issue. The ICBL's ability to coordinate without standardizing allowed the component groups to mesh their individual advantages (in information about conditions on the ground, in data aggregation and analysis, in attracting media or other actors' attention) into a highly effective transnational campaign.

The ICBL worked hard, and earned its success, but simply copying its organizational model will not yield equal successes. The ICBL worked in a highly favorable context (see Price 1988; Shawki 2006) where some of the constraints on nonstate actor influence on policy that flow from characteristics of the "national security" issue-area were weakened in the course of the controversy. This can be seen by comparing other nonstate actor-based weapons campaigns to the ICBL in all three aspects of gaining influence identified by the theorists of social movements: political opportunity structure, social mobilization structure, and issue-framing.

**Political Opportunity Structure.** The political opportunity structure quickly became international rather than national because of the international law of warfare and the many precedents for establishing arms limitations or prohibitions through multilateral treaties. This meant that rather than persuading each of the approximately 191 governments of the world to establish separate national legislation banning antipersonnel landmines, the ICBL could try to gain access to the institutions of international law-making and try to use them to trigger a "norm cascade" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) in which the fact a sufficiently large number of governments have accepted the need for a

ban would exert strong peer pressure on others to accept it as well. The international political opportunity structure offered four potential forums for engaging the international law-making process on weapons: the UN (either its Conference on Disarmament or a specially-convened conference), the International Committee of the Red Cross (sponsor of Geneva conferences on the law of warfare in 1949 and 1977), a review conference of the parties to a relevant multilateral treaty operating under provisions of the treaty, or a sympathetic government willing to call an intergovernmental conference on its own initiative as had been common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued even with the UN available.

The ICBL quickly gained access to the international law-making process through sympathetic governments willing to sponsor its initiatives. In 1993 an ICBL member organization, Handicap International, persuaded French President Francois Mitterand to propose to the others convening of a review conference of the 57 states parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (the CCW) and including landmines on its agenda (others proposed addressing low-caliber rifles, laser weapons, and naval mines). The French proposal was accepted by most of the other parties. In his role as depositary of the CCW, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali formally called the conference for September-October 1995 and established a Group of Government Experts to prepare drafts and background paper for its consideration. Meanwhile the International Committee of the Red Cross, consistent with its traditional role as promoter of elaborating the law of warfare, held a symposium on antipersonnel landmines in April 1993 attended by military strategists, mine specialists, representatives of companies producing mines, international lawyers expert in the law of warfare, surgeons, orthopedists, representatives of human rights and humanitarian NGOs, and representatives from organizations engaged in de-mining. It then convened a Symposium of Military Experts examining alternatives to antipersonnel landmine use in January 1994.

The ICBL and its member organizations came to the CCW Review Conference with a problem definition identifying antipersonnel landmines as both a military and a humanitarian problem, and several notions of how militaries could carry out their missions without using antipersonnel landmines. However, they – like other interested nonstate actors – had to watch the conference from outside. Following normal UN practice, perhaps intensified because the conference was addressing “security” issues, negotiating sessions were closed to all but government delegates. While the Australian and Canadian governments did include representatives of ICBL-member NGOs on their national delegations, other governments did not. Most ICBL activity was thus confined to presentations at the parallel “NGO forum” and efforts to lobby delegates whenever they were available for contact. After considerable discussion of antipersonnel landmines, the Conference came to a stalemate. Though approving some limits on export and use of antipersonnel landmines, it adopted neither the ban advocated by ICBL nor the requirement that mines be made to be self-deactivating and detectable advocated by governments desiring to use mines in defensive emplacements along borders.

Though the immediate result was disappointing, the CCW review gave the landmine issue higher on national political agendas and revealed that several governments, including the Belgian, Canadian, and German, strongly supported a ban. The UN Conference on Disarmament was then tied up in highly contentious debates about nuclear weapons, and ban advocates also knew that its consensus procedures would require a lengthy negotiating process. The government of Canada, under impetus provided by foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy, agreed to join ICBL in co-sponsoring a “strategy meeting” of governments and nonstate actors supporting a ban in October 1996. They determined to develop a ban agreement but were also aware that low participation would weaken the impact of any agreement they wrote. This inspired additional campaigning, which was helped by the fact the UN Conference on Disarmament failed to make much progress after including antipersonnel mines on its 1997 agenda.

The number committed to using the Ottawa Process rather than UN forums increased from 50 in October 1996 to 115 in June 1997 (SIPRI 1998, 552); the additional joiners included the Japanese, British, French, and Italian governments (the German had already joined). While the Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Pakistani, and Russian governments declined, the US government decided in late summer to participate. While the US government came to the process with strong internal divisions on the issue, the French and Italian had become more committed after elections and indications of strongly favorable public opinion in their countries (SIPRI 1998, 552). The strength of the momentum thus created was both acknowledged and reinforced in October 1997 when the Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced its decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the ICBL and Williams.

**Social Mobilization Structure.** Availability of the international level political process meant that the ICBL could advance its efforts by focusing first on the most favorable state-level political opportunity structures, and then work to leverage support from some governments into support from others. While extending its campaign to all parts of the world, the ICBL focused particularly on using the opportunities for mass mobilization through organization and media campaigns in democratic states. It was also a pioneer in using the newly-emerged global Internet to keep in touch with its many affiliated NGOs. While the central staff of the ICBL remained small (Jodi Williams and xx others) the member NGOs had hundreds of people available. The ICBL and its member groups also highlighted the consequences of antipersonnel landmines by recruiting victims of landmines to talk or write about the harm they and neighbors have suffered.

ICBL affiliates pursued publicity campaigns and legislative lobbying in democratic states. In the USA they acquired enough congressional support to push the Clinton administration towards the Ottawa Process, though not enough to overcome all military objections. After elections, the French and Italian governments came around even more strongly to supporting a ban. The Japanese government also increased its support. In Africa, where public opinion had less impact on most governments, ICBL affiliates lobbied their governments, picking up strong support from the South African and Kenyan governments. ICBL members then used regional seminars and conferences

for government officials and other experts to reach other governments. It picked up the pace as the Ottawa Process unfolded, and more international organizations and governments became involved in promoting a ban (SIPRI 1998, 552-53).

The ICBL also sought to pressure arms makers into supporting (or at least not opposing) a ban by stigmatizing mine producers. At least in the USA this worked; by April 1997, 17 of the 47 US firms manufacturing mines had announced support for the ban (SIPRI 1998, 552, note 27). This may have been assisted by the nature of the firms. For firms producing a wider array of products, dropping landmine production to avoid the sort of public tarring experienced by US chemical firms producing chemical defoliants in the 1970s (noted in Winzowski 2006, 30-32) was not a costly decision, particularly as the US Congress began mandating restrictions on mine production and export in 1997 (SIPRI 1998, 552).

**Issue Framing.** The ICBL's success also rested on its ability to steer the global debate about antipersonnel landmines. It acquired mastery of the issue-framing process by providing the information revealing the extent of the landmine problem, latching on to established norms that weapons should be discriminate, and, in particular, re-defining landmine use as a "humanitarian" problem because most of the minefields' effects were felt long after the end of the war in which they were laid. This shifting of the issue category was particularly potent because it took the issue outside the realm of "national security" where arguments about the need to maintain defenses give military commanders and strategic experts considerable weight in policy debates.

When most of the largest minefields were laid in the 1980s, antipersonnel landmines were viewed as an "ordinary weapon" no more problematic than any other. The widespread laying of antipersonnel landmines began to be perceived as a "problem" requiring a policy response in the early 1990s as humanitarian organizations working on post-conflict reconstruction in several countries began assembling and communicating the data they possessed about the situation in particular countries. While observers of particular conflicts had been aware of antipersonnel of landmine use and its consequences in individual countries, notably Afghanistan and Cambodia, collating data revealed enough instances creating enough casualties to establish widespread casting of antipersonnel landmines as a "global problem". By 1994, anyone paying attention to the issue had seen the NGOs' largely uncontested estimates that as many as 110 million antipersonnel landmines had been laid in 64 countries, were killing or maiming some 26,000 people a year, and would not be completely removed for centuries at then-current rates of de-mining (noted in, for example, ICRC 1994). Only after the Ottawa process was underway, were the estimates of numbers of mines laid challenged and revised downward (SIPRI 1998, 545). Estimates of casualties actually sustained were more reliable and high enough to keep concern alive even as the mine numbers were reduced.

It was easy to show that the non-self deactivating ("dumb") landmines used in the 1980s were indiscriminate. This rested partly on an appreciation that they were spread and left on the ground rather than aimed and fired at a particular target by a soldier or aviator and on a realization that they remained in the field even after battle shifted to a

different locale. Perceived indiscriminateness was reinforced as civilian casualties continued to climb even years after the armed conflicts inspiring their use had ended. The case for a ban rather than limitations on use was reinforced by the ICBL's showcasing of statements by current and retired military commanders that there are few or no military missions critically dependent on anti-personnel landmines for success. Sometimes lost in the shuffle was the fact that several important militaries, including the Chinese, Russian, and US, continued to believe that landmines had significant uses, including laying smaller charges comparable to antipersonnel landmines near anti-vehicle mines as "anti-handling devices" to deter hostile efforts at minefield clearance. At the same time, even these governments acknowledged the problem with mass dispersal of antipersonnel landmines by adopting unilateral prohibition of exports.

The continuing high incidence of civilian casualties facilitated re-defining use of antipersonnel landmines as a humanitarian problem larger than the traditional concern with protecting civilians during wartime. Most of those killed or maimed (loss of one or both legs is the most common result of survivable injury) by landmines were rural dwellers with little access to medical care and no money for prosthetics. The huge number of mines laid in some countries also closed off large areas to civilian activity after the war, inhibiting efforts to boost post-conflict reconciliation through economic reconstruction and development. The notion that antipersonnel landmines posed a humanitarian as well as a wartime problem was reinforced by the fact that they are easy to spread but hard to locate and deactivate.

The political strength of the ICBL's issue-framing efforts are most obvious in two areas. The first is the fate of an alternative that was not taken up – proposals to permit self-deactivating ("smart") landmines while banning "dumb" ones. "Smart" landmines would not pose an ongoing humanitarian problem because they would not explode after a few months, though while active are as indiscriminate as "dumb" landmines since there is no soldier or aviator aiming and firing them at a particular target. However, there was little support for a ban confined to "dumb" landmines. Besides concerns about verifiability, perceptions that banning only "dumb" mines would allow rich states to use mines while denying them to poor ones tarred the proposal with the label "unfair" (Price 1998, 630). The second area of effect was treatment of verification. As late as April 1997 participants in the Ottawa Process were split between those, led by the German government, desiring an elaborate verification regime and those preferring reliance on confidence-building and transparency measures. The debate was partly about worldview, with those looking at the agreement as an arms control measure desiring formal verification rules and those regarding it as a humanitarian measure preferring voluntary cooperative activity. Beside concerns about the costs of implementing some of the formal verification measures, a general consensus among experts that local production of antipersonnel landmines in countries experiencing internal conflict would not reach a scale sufficient for laying vast minefields (Williamson 2003, n. 32) supported the case for relying on confidence-building and transparency.

**Result.** The ICBL was able to re-define the problem of landmines in a way that removed them from the category of "ordinary weapon" that the defense ministry and

military commanders are left to acquire or not as they determine, to acquire sufficient public attention to put significant pressures on many governments, and to secure through the international law-making process adoption of a multilateral treaty institutionalizing its preferred policy of prohibiting manufacture, export, or use of antipersonnel landmines. Its success is less than complete – though the governments of 150 states have ratified or acceded, they do not include governments of China, India, Russia, or the USA (ICRC 2006). However even the nonparties have stopped exporting antipersonnel landmines. While still manufactured in several countries, the NGOs monitoring landmine use agree that usage has declined significantly (SIPRI 2005, 669). The US government is replacing the “dumb” antipersonnel and anti-vehicle mines in its arsenals with “smart” mines that will self-deactivate after 30 days and be detectable with commonly-available mine detectors (SIPRI 2005, 673).

### **Comparison: Small Arms and Light Weapons**

The early 1990s were a period of change in security agendas as the danger of nuclear war between the superpowers waned, and internal conflicts replaced international wars as the main source of battle-related casualties. The portable conventional arms that could be set up and fired by one or two persons rose higher on the list of weapons concerns as the weapons surrender programs forming part of post-conflict reconciliation efforts in various parts of the world revealed the extent of weapons possession among rebel groups. Perceptions of widespread weapons possession as a humanitarian concern was strengthened by growing awareness of the large number of civilians displaced, injured, or killed in many of the intra-state conflicts fought primarily or exclusively with rifles, submachine guns, and grenade launchers. While British-based and Norwegian coalitions existed earlier, concerned NGOs and individuals established a wider issue network, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) in October 1998. It emulated the ICBL by acting as a network coordinator allowing its member NGOs, research institutes, and individuals broad latitude to campaign against the spread of small arms as they chose. Like ICBL it also secured assistance from governments desiring to reduce the flows of weapons around the world. However, it has not enjoyed comparable level of success.

**Political opportunity structure.** Initially the international policy process looked quite open to IANSA. The challenges faced by UN peacekeeping and other post-conflict reconciliation had raised concern about widespread possession of arms in the UN Secretariat and among several governments. In 1995 the UN General Assembly took up a Japanese proposal to consider the problem, and created Panel of Government Experts that reported back on the issue in 1997. The Panel made 22 recommendations about limiting the spread of weapons, which the Assembly praised but adopted only to the extent of convening a UN Conference on “Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects” for mid-2001. In the meantime, the UN Secretariat created a unit for Coordinating Action on Small Arms within the Department of Disarmament Affairs in 1998 and several regional initiatives developed. An Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking In Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other related Material was adopted in 1997. In 1998 the European

Union adopted a Code of Conduct for Arms Exports covering all categories of conventional arms, and the EU Commission adopted a mandatory program for Joint Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. In West Africa, ECOWAS member governments adopted a regional Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in 1998, and extended it for additional three year terms in 2001 and 2004. Cooperation in suppressing illicit arms trade was also discussed by ASEAN member governments (SIPRI 1998, 503-505; Vines 2005, 342-343).

Several governments, including the Belgian, British, Canadian Japanese, and Norwegian, supported initiatives on the issue by sponsoring expert conferences or funding NGO research and publicity efforts while the UNDP provided most of the financial resources for implementing the ECOWAS Moratorium (SPIRI 1998, 508-509). Yet at no point did any of these sympathetic governments create an intergovernmental negotiating forum outside the UN. Like the 1995 CCW Review, the scheduled UN Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons provided an initial focus for activity. NGO leaders and other campaigners participated fully in the brainstorming conferences and symposia held in 1998-2000, the 100 NGO representatives who attended the 2001 UN Conference and its follow-ups had their activity limited by the standard UN rules confining nonstate actors to observer status that did not include access to the informal negotiating sessions. When it adopted a recommended Programme of Action Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition rather than the binding agreement small arms campaigners hoped to achieve, participating governments desiring to maintain better control of the process avoided the then-stalemated UN Conference on Disarmament by winning agreement to convene follow-up sessions for 2003 and 2005.

As with landmines, the political opportunity structures of different states permitted varying degrees of activity. In some – Britain, Norway, and Switzerland most prominently – government officials encouraged collaboration among and provided funding to small arms campaigners (Krause 2002, 258). NGOs in Europe also found sympathetic audiences among national and EU officials. NGOs in South Africa and Kenya used their contacts with government officials to win support for greater efforts to limit possession of small arms. In the USA, political opportunities were open to both IANSA affiliates and the National Rifle Association, a strong opponent of any proposal to ban private ownership of pistols, rifles, and sporting firearms enjoying greater entrée to elites than IANSA members as well as significant support among the public.

What small arms campaigners could accomplish in particular states was also shaped by levels of corruption and efficiency among state officials. In both Africa and Southeast Asia most illicit weapons reach their ultimate recipients through corrupt officials, military personnel, or police willing to sell or give weapons to rebels and others (Vines 2005, 359-360; Carpie 2005). Officials providing arms smugglers with fraudulent import certificates have also hobbled the African efforts (Vines 2005, 345). Thus success in lobbying top leaders to limit trade in small arms and light weapons was often undermined by lower-level officials in some parts of the world.

**Social mobilization structure.** Small arms campaigners clearly drew on the ICBL's experience in their lobbying and public mobilization. IANSA adopted a similar network form and used the Internet and other forms of telecommunication to hold the network together. Like ICBL members, IANSA members depended on a mix of government and private foundation funding. However it did not have quite as extensive a set of active unaffiliated nonstate supporters as ICBL. The ICRC has not been as active on the small arms issue as it was on landmines, nor have as many celebrities lent their renown to the cause.

Though the resources have been present, IANSA has not been able to mobilize as coherently as ICBL. ICBL could let member NGOs, institutes, and individuals campaign in their own way because they were all seeking the same easily understood and presented policy solution – a ban. IANSA affiliates concede that seeking a ban is unrealistic but, for reasons noted below, have not converged on a common policy position. Allowing NGOs and others to affiliate as long as they share at least one IANSA goal and leaving them to campaign in their own way preserves the network but reduces the coherence of the message. This has created two disadvantages for IANSA as compared to ICBL. First, it has prevented any particular person or persons from emerging as “the” spokesperson the way Jodi Williams spoke for the ICBL (Shawki 2006, 29). This was obvious in 2001 when two different NGO-prepared draft treaties were circulated at the UN Conference on Small Arms (Bondi 2002, 232). Second, it has contributed to tensions between IANSA's developing country-based (“southern”) and industrial country-based (“northern”) members, with the southern members chafing at what they regard as excessive northern control of the campaign (Shawki 2006, 29).

IANSA and its members have also faced what social movement analysts call “countermovements” – NGOs and other nonstate actors that publicly oppose its positions and compete with it for policy influence (Mayer and Staggenborg 1996; Bob 2004). The US-based National Rifle Association has been the most prominent and active opponent, but other groups have also challenged IANSA's problem definition and policy recommendations (Krause 2002, 258; Shawki 2006, 27).

**Issue-framing.** IANSA never developed the same dominance of issue-framing attained by ICBL. Even at the start, small arms campaigners were not the main source of data, and they have not converged on a common data presentation. Use of small arms and light weapons could not be portrayed as contrary to the law of warfare since they are not inherently indiscriminate or cause unnecessary suffering. Nor was IANSA able to persuade other actors to regard possession of small arms and light weapons as a humanitarian rather than a security concern.

Issue framing could have been complicated by the existence of two competing definitions of “small arms” but the 1997 UN Panel of Experts report acknowledged the problem in defining revolvers, self-loading pistols, rifles, carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns (all used by a single person) as “small arms” and portable rocket launchers, grenade launchers, and other weapons of less than 100 mm

calibre (movable and operable by one or two persons) as “light weapons” (UN Panel 1997, 11-12). Though generally discussed together, the two types pose distinct problems. Light weapons include more technologically sophisticated systems and focusing on them also permits distinguishing between weapons for internal or international war and weapons for policing or recreation. Focusing on small arms has the advantage of focusing on the weapons most likely to be used by rebels and others in the poorest parts of the world, but the disadvantages of including weapons in the policing and sporting categories having to address ordinary policing and arousing countermovement concern about possible efforts to abolish all private ownership of weapons.

IANSAs were not the main source of data about the prevalence of small arms, and its affiliates did not converge on using a single set of data. Some IANSAs members continued to support high estimates, such as the UNDP claims that there were 8 million illicit small arms in West Africa (see UNDP 2004, 3), even though a member research institute, the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey (2003, 80-81), estimated from its sources that the total was most likely less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of that (Vines 2005, 341).

Opportunities to re-define the problem created by possession and use of small arms and light weapons were limited by the fact they continued to be regarded as “ordinary weapons” rather than abhorrent devices. Though usable in indiscriminate ways by particular fighters, small arms and light weapons are not inherently indiscriminate because they must be aimed and fired by a human user to cause destruction. Their importance to attaining legitimate military objectives was also very different than that of landmines. While most militaries could be persuaded that antipersonnel landmines served few useful battle purposes, small arms and light weapons are important for maintaining national security against internal as well as external enemies. For most governments and security experts, the problem posed by small arms is that of how to keep them out of the hands of certain groups: criminals, terrorists, rebels, and (for some) highly repressive governments, not eliminating them altogether. Yet rebels and repressive governments can claim a right to possess weapons; rebels because weapons are necessary to exercising their right to rebel and repressive governments because weapons remain necessary to exercising sovereignty over and maintaining order within state territory.

IANSAs and other campaigners have tried to present widespread possession of small arms by rebels, criminal groups, and private individuals as a humanitarian problem. They have argued that widespread possession of small arms is linked to higher incidence of internal armed conflict, violent crime, and sexual violence as well as to weakening of the social trust that holds communities together. While resonating strongly in some regions, particularly Europe, and among governments of some developing countries, these arguments have not won wide enough acceptance to permit redefining small arms as a “humanitarian” rather than an “arms control” or a “law enforcement” issue.

Thus small arms campaigners have had to work from areas of existing consensus, particularly the widespread agreement that illicit trade in both small arms and light weapons needs to be suppressed. As one prominent campaigner put it in 2002, “virtually

every weapon in illicit trade started as legally produced and traded” (Krause 2002, 249). While true for the more sophisticated types of light weapons like portable anti-aircraft rocket launchers, many less sophisticated light weapons and small arms can be produced in small workshops and smuggled across national borders without entering legal trade (Vines 2005, 360 discussing West Africa). Thus the campaigner’s assertion that controlling illegal trade requires limiting legal trade is open to challenge on empirical grounds. It is also challengeable on political grounds. Proposals for stringent general limits on trade have been challenged with counterarguments that they are unfair (by giving industrial states more advantage in weapons than they already possess) or violate governments’ sovereignty. Proposals to limit or ban transfers to particular governments with bad human rights records have been advocated by some governments, such as members of the EU, but vehemently resisted by others, most notably the Chinese. Even at the regional level there is a diversity of approaches, ranging from limiting illicit trade only (OAS, ASEAN), through reducing legal sales as well (EU), to discouraging local manufacture as well as all forms of trade (ECOWAS). The basis of issue-framing was revealed particularly clearly by the fact that one proposed binding UN agreement on small arms is presented as a Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime rather than as an arms control agreement (UN 2006).

**Result.** IANSA, its members, and other nonstate entities campaigning for limits on trade in small arms have been able to keep the issue on the international agenda, but have not been able to control the international law-making process. Governments have kept the issue in arms control or transnational crime forums operating under rules restricting negotiating sessions to government delegates. Governments have also maintained more control over issue-framing and results, successfully confining most global-level activity to suppression of illicit small arms trade. Though more ambitious proposals to limit legal trade enjoy some governments’ support, IANSA and its members have not been able to build momentum behind any alternative beyond controlling illicit trade sufficient to create and sustain a “norm cascade” that would carry initially unsupportive governments along. The frustrations with securing agreement on further supply limitations have led some small arms campaigners to advocate greater reliance on “demand-side measures” like poverty alleviation, peace building, and police reform that would reduce nonstate actors’ desire for weapons (Atwood, Glatz, and Muggah 2006).

### **Comparison: Nuclear Weapons**

Mass protests and petition campaigns influenced government policy on nuclear weapons at two points during the Cold War. Popular agitation emphasizing the serious health consequences of atmospheric testing, contributed to acceptance of limiting nuclear tests to underground sites in Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963. General popular support for reducing nuclear dangers certainly assisted conclusion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968, but public mobilization had less obvious effects than in the early 1980s when the nuclear disarmament (Western Europe) and nuclear freeze (USA) movements pressed for greater limitations on the size of nuclear arsenals than had already

been in the 1972 SALT-I and 1979 SALT-II agreements and succeeded in persuading both the Reagan Administration and the US Congress to drop the former's initial plans for significant expansion of nuclear arsenals (see Knopf 1997; Rochon 1998). Mass protest has been muted since the end of the Cold War, but a variety of NGOs, independent research institutes, and individuals have continued the campaign for abolition (elimination) of nuclear weapons.

**Political opportunity structure.** The international political opportunity structure has not been wide open to nuclear abolition campaigners. Governments have kept the international negotiating process standing multilateral arms control forums -- the UN General Assembly's First (Disarmament) Committee, the UN Commission on Disarmament, the now-quinquennial NPT Review Conferences, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. All four limit direct participation by representatives of nonstate actors. Individual governments have sponsored public symposia and conferences on abolition with government officials and NGO representatives or individuals participating, but even the governments comprising the New Agenda Coalition advocating rapid progress toward abolition have not attempted to establish an alternative intergovernmental negotiating forum. In 1993-94 activists and NGOs taking up Richard A. Falk's suggestion to use an international litigation strategy for prodding governments into greater action garnered sufficient support among governments not possessing nuclear weapons for majorities in the World Health Assembly (plenary body of the World Health Organization) and the UN General Assembly request advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice on the legality of possession and use of nuclear weapons. While an Advisory Opinion would not directly change any government's policy, campaigners hoped that a clear enough condemnation would alter the balance of public and elite opinion by de-legitimizing nuclear weapons, and sought to maximize the likelihood by encouraging participation in the legal arguments and providing interested governments with draft briefs. The ICJ concluded that the World Health Assembly lacked authority to ask for an advisory opinion on the subject, but did respond to the UN General Assembly's request (ICJ 1996a, 1996b).

National political processes are more or less open to abolitionist campaigners depending partly on the nature of the state-level political regime (degree of democracy and centralization of decision-making authority in the executive branch) and partly on where individual governments stand in the categories articulated in the NPT. The first basic distinction is between parties and non-parties, with the latter having no obligations under the NPT and thus full freedom to acquire or renounce nuclear weapons as they choose. A number of governments have stayed out of the NPT to preserve this freedom of choice. The second basic distinction is between "nuclear-weapon State Parties" (NWS) and "non-nuclear-weapon State Parties" (NNWS) to the NPT. The NPT is a bargain: NNWS forego acquisition of nuclear weapons in return for rights to acquire and use civilian nuclear technologies under safeguards, Both NNWS and NWS pledge not to encourage or assist acquisition of nuclear weapons by a NNWS, and the NWS agree to join the NNWS in "undertak[ing] to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear

disarmament, and on a treaty of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control” (NPT, Article VI).

The end of the Cold War seemed to open up possibilities of greater reduction in and even abolition of nuclear arsenals. Hopes were heightened as the USSR (from 1990), the UK (from 1991) and the USA (from 1992) stopped testing and the USA and Russia (successor to the USSR) agreed to further cuts in their strategic nuclear arsenals. However two nuclear weapons possessors then outside the NPT, China (1992-96) and France (1995-96) engaged in additional testing. The French tests, carried out on French possessions in the South Pacific, inspired public protests in various parts of the world and drew strong reactions from the Australian and New Zealand governments. The Australian responded in 1996 by establishing the Canberra Commission of former national leaders and military commanders from around the world to report on means of accomplishing abolition.

The May 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan highlighted the already-familiar weaknesses of the nonproliferation regime, and inspired abolition campaigners and some sympathetic governments to new activity. The Japanese government – always sensitive to nuclear issues because of the August 1945 bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – briefly stepped into the limelight by sponsoring the Tokyo Forum on nuclear weapons in July 1998 while the Coalition for a New Agenda was formed by the governments of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, and Sweden to press for greater attention to abolition in the UN forums.

The first indication of government positions after the South Asian tests occurred in the UN General Assembly that fall. The Coalition for a New Agenda was able to win majority support for GA Resolution 53/77Y calling on the NWS to “immediately” begin fulfilling their obligations under the NPT by starting negotiations leading to “early adoption” of a ban on possession, threat, or use of nuclear weapons. The 114 to 18 with 38 abstentions vote revealed the continuing pattern of government positions: the American, British, French, Indian, Israeli, Pakistani, and Russian voted no while the Argentine, Australian, Canadian, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, and South Korean abstained (UN Yearbook 1998, 513-514). The Coalition also pressed its case in the annual sessions of the UN Conference on Disarmament.

Political opportunity structures even in the democratic nuclear weapons-possessing states are not promising because choices about nuclear weapons are held firmly within the executive branch. On the whole, the “nuclear weapons establishments” have been able to prevail in policy discussions, though there have been moments when political elites appeared divided and some segments willing to consider abolition (McGwire 2005, 117, n. 6 attributes lack of action by the Clinton Administration to the illness-forced retirement of Defense Secretary Les Aspen). However, securing abolition continues to founder on the problem of getting all of the nuclear weapons possessing states sufficiently interested at the same time; governments possessing nuclear weapons do see the situation in n-person prisoners’ dilemma terms.

**Social mobilization structure.** While NGOs, independent think tanks, and individuals advocating abolition of nuclear weapons exist in many countries, they have not formed a global coordinating network. The greatest visible coordination occurred among the NGOs and others involved in the World Court Project. It promoted the idea of seeking an ICJ advisory opinion and provided interested governments with draft briefs and other legal advice in preparation for its hearings on the matter. However it was a single-task network and disbanded once the Advisory Opinion was issued

Social mobilization on nuclear weapons issues has been fairly sporadic since the end of the Cold War. The anniversaries of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings do provide an annual occasion for vigils and other forms of public protest, but this seldom leads to lengthier efforts. There was a flurry of mobilization just after the French nuclear tests, but little after the Indian and Pakistani ones. One possible explanation is that other issues have been more prominent in the public mind. Another is that the variety of nuclear weapons issues on the table – abolition, prevention of further proliferation, and (particularly since 2003) worry that the G.W. Bush administration will use force against either or both Iran and North Korea to prevent their acquisition of nuclear weapons – inhibits focusing continuously on abolition.

**Issue-framing.** It is easy to argue that actual use of nuclear weapons would fail to satisfy the traditional law of warfare criteria guiding choice of means and methods of warfare. The UN General Assembly even adopted resolutions saying use of nuclear weapons would be a crime against humanity in 1961 and 1978-81 (General Assembly). Using large nuclear weapons against cities would produce large numbers of civilian casualties and massive damage to civilian facilities, qualifying them as indiscriminate. Even smaller “battlefield” or “tactical” nuclear weapons can be viewed as causing unnecessary suffering to anyone killed or injured by exposure to the radiation rather than by the initial blast. Abolition campaigners have also sought to portray nuclear weapons as posing wider humanitarian problems, drawing partly on the disruption of normal life that would follow their use against cities and partly on the arguments that a war involving launch of large numbers of nuclear weapons would irrevocably change the Earth’s climate and end all life on it.

However, these arguments have not carried the day in arms control negotiation forums, where the consensus rules give the least receptive control over adoption of new frames. Some abolition campaigners sought to get around that problem by taking the question to the ICJ, a forum composed of individuals chosen for their general expertise in international law and therefore likely to be less committed than NWS policy-makers to emphasizing national security or maintaining a particular arsenal of weapons. The briefs prepared for, and used by several, NNWS urged the ICJ to look beyond the law of warfare to more general international human rights and environmental law. While the ICJ did agree that nuclear weapons are unique because of their destructiveness and radiation effects, it rejected the more ambitious abolitionist arguments that threat or use of nuclear weapons is directly prohibited by international environmental law, the right to life provisions of multilateral human rights treaties, or the prohibition of genocide. It also rejected arguments that nuclear weapons should be treated as a form of poison

weapon or that bans on some Weapons of Mass Destruction (biological and chemical) can be extended automatically to others (nuclear bombs). Yet a majority of the judges did advise, based on the law of warfare, that except in circumstances of self-defense in extremity, using nuclear weapons would “generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable to armed conflict and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.” All the judges agreed that the NWS parties to the NPT have a clear legal obligation to work for nuclear disarmament (ICJ 1996a). Though the ICJ opinion did support the abolitionist cause (DiFilippo 2004, 20 called it an “unambiguous victory”), it did not endorse any of the alternate humanitarian or environmental issue-framings that the abolitionists hoped to use for displacing the nonproliferation and arms control frames.

The ICJ thus left in place the impressions of nuclear weapons as a deterrent derived from the combination of non-use since 1945 and stability of superpower relations through mutual assured destruction between roughly 1965 and 1991. Though some commentators (e.g., Tannenwald 1999) have claimed that non-use has become a strongly established norm, many private citizens as well as military and civilian strategists believe that lack of use does not inhibit use of nuclear weapons as credible deterrents. French nuclear doctrine is particularly clear on the point; the French definition of “non-use” (“*non-emploi*”) does not exclude retaliatory missions (Yost 2005, 121).

Abolition campaigners have sought to dislodge acceptance of nuclear weapons as deterrents by arguing that the “low salience nuclear world” (McCgwire 2005, 127) of the Cold War in which the weapons exist but were not used was a temporary exception to the normal pattern of international rivalries leading to arms races leading to use of the weapons acquired during the arms race. However their efforts to present the alternatives as a binary choice between arms races leading to nuclear war and elimination of nuclear weapons have not won majority support in any country possessing or seriously considering acquisition of nuclear weapons. While the Cold War justification of mutual assured destruction is no longer relevant, nuclear weapons are still widely regarded as important for deterrence of threats, including threats to develop and use chemical and biological weapons. Though some policy-makers are interested in developing conventional responses, French (Yost 2005, 117-19, US (Yost 2004, 705-8), and Russian (SIPRI 1998, ) nuclear weapons doctrines do include use of nuclear weapons in response to attacks employing chemical or biological as well as nuclear weapons. For their part, the governments of India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran all justify their decisions to develop or seek nuclear weapons on grounds of needing deterrents against larger external enemies.

Public opinion in nuclear weapons-possessing states remains ambivalent. A 2004 survey of French public opinion is fairly typical. 58% of respondents agreed that France cannot defend itself without the *force de frappe*, even though 49% also agreed that actually using nuclear weapons was dangerous because it would invite retaliation against French cities (Yost 2005, 137). Many abolitionists are confident that receding of the Cold War will permit aid their efforts to shift attention towards the consequences of their use, and that considering those consequences will persuade publics and decision-makers

to regard nuclear weapons as decreasing rather than increasing security (e.g., Rochon 1998, 55).

Abolitionist efforts to secure elimination of nuclear weapons are also hindered by the serious and impossible to ignore verification concerns. The destructiveness of nuclear weapons makes cheating on agreements to abandon them highly attractive, creating a situation in which verification is essential to maintaining cooperation. Verifying destruction and non-replacement faces two problems, the relative ease of hiding assembled nuclear weapons even from on-site inspections and the close connection between military and civilian nuclear technologies. The explosive cores of nuclear weapons contain “weapons grade” radioactive material consisting of either 80% plutonium-239 or 90% uranium-235. 10 kilograms (about 22 pounds) of weapons grade plutonium-239 is enough to make a 15 kiloton bomb. Natural uranium contains very little U-235; it needs to be run through a specialized gas centrifuge to reach the approximately 5% concentration needed to run a civilian power reactor. One pass through the centrifuge accomplishes this; a second pass increases the concentration to about 25%, and a third to about 93%. Weapons-grade plutonium also does not occur naturally, but can be acquired from used reactor fuel rods by chemical separation. Thus any government possessing the right gas centrifuges and enough uranium, or uranium-fuelled reactors plus the right chemical separators can make its own weapons-grade material unless the acquisition and post-use reprocessing/disposal of nuclear reactor fuel is carefully supervised. The NPT addressed this problem through linking transfer of civilian nuclear technology to acceptance of IAEA safeguards including on-site inspection, but governments with sufficient local talent or outside helpers willing to operate outside the safeguards system have been able to build reactors on their own.

At present nuclear weapons assembly technologies remain beyond the capabilities of nonstate actors, but theft or diversion of weapons grade material or assembled nuclear bombs from government stocks is possible. Nonstate actors can more easily assemble “dirty bombs” – devices that pack some radioactive material with conventional explosives to spread radiation in small areas –because these can be made from radioactive materials like cesium-137, iridium-192, and radium-226 that are less well-guarded and inventoried than uranium or plutonium stocks.

Through all discussions of nuclear weapons, the need to avoid further proliferation while moving towards elimination means that the “abolition” issue-frame urged by the NNWS and nonstate campaigners necessarily coexists with a “nonproliferation” frame. Abolition advocates urge moving “beyond” the nonproliferation frame with arguments about equity and the practical difficulty of preventing proliferation if the NWS continue to act in ways that suggest nuclear weapons provide significant leverage in international affairs. At the same time campaigners agree that nonproliferation is a reasonable first step, and this concession allows the nuclear weapons-possessing states (in or outside NPT) to combine an immediate focus on nonproliferation with inaction on the eventual goal of elimination.

**Result.** Advocates of abolishing nuclear weapons have worked together transnationally without forming a large umbrella network, except during the World Court

Project in 1993-96. Yet lack of a network is not the reason for their modest success. Other than their resort to the ICJ, governments have limited their access to the international negotiating process by keeping the abolition issue within the UN General Assembly, the UN Conference on Disarmament, and the NPT Review Conferences. While national political opportunity structures in democratic states not interested in possessing nuclear weapons allow entrée, those of nondemocratic states and of democratic states possessing nuclear weapons have been less open. Though all of the elements for redefining nuclear weapons as abhorrent are present, a combination of lingering impressions of nuclear weapons as deterrents and current impressions of nuclear weapons as providing protection against coercion by stronger states have prevented sufficient consensus on abhorrence to trigger serious discussion of how to move to abolition. Even efforts to develop “ancillary agreements” serving simultaneously as barriers to proliferation and as steps towards abolition have had mixed success. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiated in 1996 is unlikely to enter into force any time soon. The US Senate rejected ratification in 1999, and others of the 44 states whose ratification is required to bring it into force are also holding back (UN 2006). Reactions to the revelations about A.Q. Khan’s activities in 2004 did move discussions of limiting production of weapons-usable fissile materials out of stalemate.

## **Conclusion**

Though three cases are a small set, these suffice for understanding why the ICBL’s success in steering a majority of the world’s governments toward accepting a ban on possession, manufacture, export, and use of antipersonnel landmines is exceptional. Its success rested on unusually favorable conjunctures in two of the three sets of conditions that promote acquisition of policy influence by nonstate actors relying heavily on mobilizing mass opinion and outsider lobbying in national capitals and international meetings. It was able not only to gain access to the international law-making process; but to find sympathetic governments willing help it beyond normal “forum shopping” among existing international bodies to creating an additional forum for its use. By this point, early 1996, the agendas of ICBL and a group of governments The ICBL also benefited from strong support by governments seeking to alter the traditional “security” agenda by shifting from “state security” to “human security” had converged. Abolishing antipersonnel landmines was attractive to these governments not only for itself, but as a way of exercising leadership at the international level. By presenting not only the indiscriminateness of the weapons but also re-defining large fields of antipersonnel landmines as a “humanitarian” rather than a “defense” issue, it was able to open up national decision-making processes to supporters who normally would not included in discussions of weapons acquisition.

The small arms and anti-nuclear weapons campaigners have faced less favorable situations. While they also have good resources for social mobilization, neither the international political opportunity structure not the issue framing process has been as favorable for them. The international political opportunity structure remained reasonably open because UN conferences or bodies were addressing small arms and nuclear weapons

issues. However the governments most actively supporting stronger controls on small arms possession and abolition of nuclear weapons did not create any new international forums. This may rest on pragmatic anticipations of stronger negative reaction from others; it also reflects the fact that less success in issue-framing means the likelihood of bringing the reluctant along through creating a norm cascade is much lower. Both the small arms and nuclear weapons are more central to governments' security concerns than anti-personnel landmines because of their perceived military usefulness. Nuclear weapons abolition also involves much thornier questions of verification meaning that the Landmines Convention solution of leaving the issue largely aside will not work.

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### **Getting a Word in Edgewise: Nonstate Actors' Campaigns against particular Weapons**

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The issue-area of national security/national defense is generally inhospitable ground for efforts by groups relying primarily on "outsider" political strategies and public mobilization for acquisition of influence over policy-making.

In some areas, including decisions about weapons acquisition, retention, and use, the international law of warfare, including the "international humanitarian law" on protecting civilian populations in wartime, provides entrée for those actors who can base their policy arguments on its stipulations.

Social movement theory provides the most-tested set of propositions about the conditions under which nonstate actors using “outsider” strategies and public mobilization can influence governments. The likelihood of success increases with favorable political opportunity structures, effective social mobilization, and control over issue-framing.

The table summarizes the situations facing the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, activists and groups concerned with small arms and light weapons, and activists and groups seeking abolition of nuclear weapons:

	landmines	small arms	nuclear weapons
political opportunity structure	international – very successful forum shopping	international – limited forum shopping	international – limited forum shopping
social mobilization structure	network coordinating NGOs, etc united behind a common proposal	network coordinating NGOs, etc with diverse policy proposals  active countermovement	ad hoc project cooperation among NGOs and activists  tension between main (abolition) and related (nonproliferation) goals
issue-framing	strong norm pull; success reframing as “humanitarian”	weak norm pull	potential strong norm pull not realized
distinct features	custom-built forum; reframing success	strategic centrality; internal division; countermovement	strategic centrality; severity of verification issues