Intervention by the United States

Karl Chang

- Thank you, Chair.
- In the spirit of interactive dialogue, I wanted to respond to a few of the comments made by other states this morning.
- We do not agree with the suggestion by some delegations that "human control" is agreed as a shared frame for understanding human-machine interaction, and have previously indicated - and reiterate again today - that we do not believe that such a principle helps improve our collective understanding of risks and benefits related to LAWS and how technology can be used to reduce suffering during war. As we have explained before, we think the notion of autonomous weapons being under human control to be an overly simplistic construct that fails to capture the various human touchpoints throughout the life-cycle of the weapon that can be used to ensure compliance with IHL
- For example, an operator might be able to exercise technical control over every aspect of a weapon system, but if the operator is only reflexively pressing a button to approve strikes recommended by the weapon system, the operator would be exercising little, if any, judgment over the use of force.
- I would also highlight the use scenario that we have put forward in our working paper last year, in which the machines are being relied upon by human beings to inform decision-making in armed conflict. When human beings are relying on machine assessments to make decisions, in human-machine teaming concepts, like those described the UK, it's a much more complex issue than simply an issue of the human controlling the machine and pressing the stop button if they see something inappropriate.
- We also appreciate the point made by our colleague from Japan that we should be learning and studying first, in particular in developing areas like machine self-learning, and looking to the good practices already developed by industry and in other contexts.
- I also wanted to highlight and appreciate a comment by our colleague from Switzerland, who noted that consensus seems to be emerging around the idea that "human control" or "human-machine interaction" is not an end in and of itself, but rather, one means to help ensure that emerging technologies in the area of LAWS are used in compliance with IHL.
- The type and extent of human machine interaction that is appropriate for a particular weapon in a particular context will necessarily vary based on the specifics of the situation. This is a point that was well-made by our Swedish colleague, our Israeli colleague, and our Japanese colleague as well. Because what is required by IHL can be so contextual, developing strict new requirements like requirements for "stop" buttons may be difficult to do across all contexts.
- However, we find the suggestion of our colleague from Switzerland that the chair consider offering good practices for human-machine interaction under Guiding Principle (c) to be a helpful one. We have ourselves been thinking along these same lines, and have offered some suggestion of our own for good practices in human-machine interaction for the GGE to consider.
- Yesterday, we proposed specific conclusions on human-machine interaction, which are highlighted in our national commentary on guiding principle (c). I think there are common elements in our proposals that are reflected in the statements of other delegations, including elements relating to testing and evaluation of weapon systems, training of personnel, establishment of doctrine and procedures for the use of weapon systems, and user interfaces for weapon systems.
- Lastly, we appreciate the Chair's suggestion of the establishment of Friends of the Chair in the area of legal, technical, and military expertise to further explore some of these ideas, and hope to be able to contribute our experience. Thank you.