

## On Graham Pearson's retirement

Speaking notes at Civil Society Briefing, on margins of BWC Review Conference  
Filippa Lentzos | 7 November 2016

As many of you will be aware, Graham Pearson will be retiring from his NGO coordinator role at the end of this Review Conference.

This, however, is not the first time that Graham retires. Graham was Director General and Chief Executive of the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment at Porton Down. On reaching the mandatory retirement age of the British civil service, he retired from the British Ministry of Defence in 1995.

Graham's particular interest in, and personal support, to arms control was apparent already during his ten-year+ directorship at Porton.

Some notable events during the time of his directorship include

- The decontamination of Gruinard Island
- Operation Granby – the name given to the British military operations during the 1991 Gulf War

Graham's most conspicuous contribution to the BWC, in public at least, was as the UK Expert on VEREX in 1992 and 1993, and at the Special Conference in 1994 to which it reported.

Graham's major conceptual contribution – the 'web of deterrence' – dates from this VEREX period. It was developed in many presentations and notably in his *Washington Quarterly* article: 'Prospects for chemical and biological arms control: the web of deterrence' where he wrote: "VEREX must aim at the development of a cost-effective verification regime that will deter States Parties from acquisition of BW capabilities" as one component of the 'web of deterrence' he envisaged.

Graham's directorship also encompassed some of the UNSCOM years. Whilst CBDE Porton Down had provided experts and equipment to support UNSCOM, Graham was not himself a direct participant in any UNSCOM activity. He was therefore well placed to write an independent account of what UNSCOM has achieved and its significance for the non-proliferation of WMD. Which he did. The book was called *The UNSCOM saga: Chemical and Biological Weapons Non-Proliferation*, and I, for one, found it an incredibly useful resource, and it has formed a key part of my BW library since my student days.

As I said, Graham retired from the MOD in late 1995, but he has continued making significant contributions to the BWC from 1996 onwards as a Visiting Professor in International Security at the University of Bradford. There are five things I'd like to mention as highlights of particular interest to NGOs in his work since 1996:

1. Upgrading the role of NGOs. Graham gained permission from the President of the

Fourth Review Conference (UK Ambassador Sir Michael Weston) to deliver NGO Statements at that Review Conference, and he has coordinated them at Review Conferences and other BWC meetings for the subsequent 20 years.

2. Key Points publication. In 1996, Graham (along with Malcolm Dando) edited the Key Points for the Fourth Review Conference with Article by Article chapters. He continued this series of Key Points multi-author briefing books for the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Review Conferences. And I am glad to have been able to contribute chapters towards the Key Points both to this Review Conference and to the last one, in 2011.
3. Graham supplemented the Key Points briefing books, by writing, co-authoring and editing more than 80 Bradford Briefing Papers and Review Conference Papers. All of this was within the University of Bradford Division of Peace Studies project on Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention.
4. Graham has chronicled and analysed the BWC Review Conferences and other BWC meetings in 45 Reviews (so far!), in the series called 'Reports from Geneva,' published for many years in the CBW Conventions Bulletin from the University of Sussex and since then on the website of the Harvard Sussex Program.
5. And finally, Graham played a critical role in enabling NGOs to engage with government and international officials, scientists and diplomats, through BW workshops in Geneva of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Graham served on the Steering Committee of the Pugwash Study Group on Implementation of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. While he retired from this role a few years back, his contributions to Pugwash and the NGO community are historically important and deserve mention.

Dear Graham, let me close by warmly thanking you for both your professional and personal contributions to NGOs and the friends of the Convention community.