

Abstract

3rd European Symposium on NLWs

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Abstract: NLW Overview With Particular Reference To Areas of Concern

It has been reported that non-lethal weapons are having an increasing impact on war fighting, peace support operations, civil policing and prison control. This presentation will briefly review the non-lethal field, highlighting the key characteristics and concerns associated with non-lethal technologies. We will focus on two weapons systems in particular to illustrate key issues, concerns and debates (1) the introduction of electro-shock weapons into civil policing; and, (2) the development of biochemical incapacitating agents.

The aim of the presentation will be to encourage further discussion about the moral and ethical implications of non-lethal weapons, such as their potential role as 'technologies of political control'; the social impact and implications of NLWs; the controversy which surrounds claimed harmful medical effects; their use as instruments of punishment and torture; implications for international law, and; problems of regulatory control mechanisms for NLW marketing and distribution. Whilst these are not new issues it is important that such concerns are kept to the forefront of the non-lethal research and development field.