

## **Keynote Address: Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala**

### **‘The Middle East and the Quest for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World’**

Good morning, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Dan, for those very warm words of welcome. As you say, we go back a long way. It is also for me a pleasant revival of memories when I come back to SOAS, where I was a part-time student in Chinese while pursuing a diplomatic career in the Sri Lanka High Commission here, and where I was again last year at a similar conference under the aegis of both the SOAS Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy and the British Pugwash Group. I am delighted that this collaboration between SOAS and the British Pugwash Group continues because as was mentioned earlier, we do need this synergy amongst all organisations working in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. It is vital at this moment in time for us to support the initiatives that are being taken on the international stage in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. This was an objective that a former prime minister of Britain described as ‘pie in the sky’ but today we know that the pie in the sky is in fact a pie in the oven, in the making, for us all to see as the reality in our lifetime and not necessarily in the lifetime of the current president of the United States.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is described as the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Middle East as a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone. I hope there will be not many more before we achieve our ambition of having that vital crucible of human civilisation, which has seen the birth of so many religions of the world and so many inventions which have enriched mankind, converted into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, so that it can serve the cause of human civilisation for many centuries to come.

I think it is important for us to remember that since we met last year at a similar conference there have been many important changes that have taken place in the international situation. We have had the election of the first African-American in the history of the United States of America. We have had a change with regard to the international financial meltdown and we have had of course progress, we hope, toward the rectification of the mistakes that led to that financial meltdown and hopefully, come December this year in Copenhagen, important steps to remedy another meltdown that is likely to besiege the whole of human civilisation – that is, the problem of climate change. We have had in recent days a number of important events leading to achieving a nuclear weapon-free world. We have had the historic speech in Prague of President Obama. More recently we have had the UN Security Council resolution on nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation – although I

would have liked the balance between nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation to be more even than it finally turned out to be. Nevertheless, it was a step forward.

But also since then we have had, in April this year, in the Hague, an important annual conference of the movement that I am privileged to lead as its eleventh president, the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Dan has made my task easier by recounting to you the proud history of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and its antecedents, going back to the 1955 manifesto put out by Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell. But I want to quote to you some sections of the conference statement of the Pugwash Council issued on 22 April. ‘The Council of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, recipient of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize, welcomes the new international climate that is being generated which makes it possible for multilateral cooperation and solutions based on it to be negotiated for the critical issues affecting the global community on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, the international economic crisis, the urgent problems of climate change, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the strengthening of the rule of law, human rights and other issues. The moment has arrived and we must seize the opportunity. As always, Pugwash stands ready to play its part. From its inception in 1957 the Pugwash Conferences have focused on the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humanity. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate indiscriminate, genocidal weapon of warfare and as such must be eliminated and declared illegal and immoral. Recent statements by many senior political leaders and others around the world calling for a nuclear weapon-free world are surely welcome and give credence to a goal that Pugwash has espoused for more than fifty years’.

Of course it is important that we combine this important quest for a nuclear weapon-free world with our quest for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This is what the Pugwash Council’s statement said specifically on this issue: ‘In parallel with regional conflict resolution efforts the Pugwash Council reiterates its support for efforts to delineate the steps needed to implement a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East’.

But we are not naïve with regard to achieving both these hugely important but difficult goals in international relations. We have an approach to conflict resolution, justice and human rights which is encapsulated in the following quotation, also from the Council’s statement: ‘In carrying out its work Pugwash recognises that conflict resolution requires a great deal of compromise in talks and negotiations between opposing parties to a conflict. This applies to conflicts between states and those between states and non-state groups. Pugwash believes firmly that dialogue and

communication and the movement of people involved in such dialogue should be allowed to the maximum extent possible. Restrictions by states on dialogue and the movement of people and the injunction of not talking with 'terrorists' ultimately are self-defeating in seeking the resolution of enduring conflicts'. But we also believe that security is a multi-faceted concept. It involves not only the achievement of political and military security. It also involves development through economic development and also the full flowering of human rights. So we go on to say: 'Genuine human security is achieved not just through the absence of conflict but through equitable access to natural resources such as food, water, health care, education and economic opportunity. For too many of the world's peoples, these basic necessities have been sorely lacking for too long. An active role for civil society and the rule of law are essential to the promotion of human dignity and the expansion of fundamental civil and human rights'.

Ladies and gentlemen, to me this forms the prologue of what I planned to say today on the issue of the Middle East and the quest for a nuclear weapon-free world. I will do so by looking firstly at the global context and then analysing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which I regard as a vital part of the package that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT under my presidency in 1995, together with the other resolutions in the UN that have unanimously espoused this cause. Then I would like to look at some of the steps forward that have to be taken as we progress on this road towards achieving a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction but also a nuclear weapon-free world. Then I will conclude.

On the global context, I think it is always useful to remind ourselves about the world we live in and how heavily over-armed it is and how under-funded it is as far as the essential elements of peace such, as development, climate change and human rights. We know that world military expenditure for 2008 was at the staggering figure of US \$1,464 billion for the entire year. This was contributed up to 45 per cent by the United States of America, which in the eight years of President Bush achieved a higher military expenditure than was ever achieved since World War II. No doubt it was caused by two major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of them is tapering off but the other continues to rage in Afghanistan. We are therefore not likely to see a significant decrease in this huge expenditure on military hardware.

Contrast this with the fact that every night 900 million of our fellow human beings go to bed hungry. Contrast the figure of world military expenditure with the fact that 1.4 billion live on less than 1.25 dollars a day, which is the benchmark for absolute poverty in the world. One-third of humankind live on less than two dollars a day and 1 per cent on 40 per cent of world assets. We cannot, in this

globalised, interdependent world of ours, leave any human being behind in our quest for security, economic sufficiency and the full achievement of economic, social and political rights.

We must also remember that the most lethal of the arms that exist in the world, nuclear arms, still are estimated – we cannot proceed on actual figures because none of the nuclear weapon-armed states give us exactly how many weapons they have, so we have to rely on estimates by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, by the Federation of American Scientists and many other important research institutes and civil society organisations. The figure is something like 23,300 nuclear weapons among eight nuclear weapon-armed countries, five of them within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and three of them outside it – and possibly with the DPRK also having a few nuclear weapons. But what is particularly alarming is not only the figure of nuclear weapons amongst these countries but the fact that about 8,392 of them are actually deployed and are ready to be launched at a minute's notice, which makes us very much likely victims of a nuclear weapons strike by accident or by design – also more likely today with the intervention of non-state actors or terrorist groups who we know are seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. So the possibility is not just that the Cold War has ended and the likelihood of a nuclear exchange has receded into the background, but that perhaps today the dangers of nuclear weapons being used are even more complex and more immediate because we have more nuclear weapons states than were there during the Cold War and we have the frightening prospect of terrorist groups acquiring nuclear weapons and wanting to use them for nihilistic purposes.

So the dangers are much greater than they were before. These dangers are of course not going to go away, wished away by the wand of President Obama's rhetoric. They have to be achieved through solid action, through policy decisions. These policy decisions are in the pipeline, because we know that important bilateral negotiations are going on between the United States and the Russian Federation, led by two friends of mine, Rose Gottemoeller and [Anatoly] Antonov, who have got a great deal of experience in these negotiations. So we can confidently expect deep reductions in each other's nuclear arsenals by the end of this year when the SALT treaty comes to an end on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December.

We also are encouraged by the decisions that have been taken with regard to components of the ballistic missile defence system being placed in the Czech Republic and Poland, and in the beneficial effects that decision has had on bilateral US-Russian relations – paving the way, we hope, for greater understanding between these two nuclear weapons states which together own 95 per cent of all the nuclear weapons in the world. An understanding between them is crucial for us to achieve a nuclear

weapon-free world. That is why the UN Security Council resolution must also be seen in that context.

What we cannot accept is managed nuclear proliferation. We cannot accept a distinction between good proliferators and bad proliferators. We know, for example, that the only nuclear weapon-armed state in the Middle East was assisted in its nuclear weapon programme by France and the UK. We know that India, apart from having utilised Canadian nuclear assistance (perhaps unknown to the Canadians) has also now got special concessions under the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement, encouraging India to use nuclear power for its own development but also allowing it to have its nuclear material and technology for the free development of its nuclear weapon arsenals. This kind of discriminatory treatment cannot be accepted as we all progress toward a nuclear weapon-free world because it cuts at the root of the NPT. It makes it less credible when we approach non-nuclear weapon states about their obligations under the NPT. So we must have a non-discriminatory approach to the whole question of non-proliferation.

We are approaching the review conference of the NPT in 2010. We do so in a climate that is not particularly auspicious for its success. We recall that it was in 2005 that the state parties of the NPT failed to achieve a final document at the end of that conference. But times are different. We have a new president, we have new policies and we have a rather good atmosphere that took place in the prep-com for this review conference in May of this year, where I was present in New York. But notwithstanding the improved atmosphere we still failed to achieve hard achievements. We failed to achieve the adoption of the chairman's report to be submitted to the NPT review conference because there are still a number of issues on which consensus has not been reached.

So let us not underestimate the problems that lie ahead for us in the 2010 review conference. Let us work hard to ensure that the issues that lie ahead are in fact resolved. It requires the US Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We do not know what the prospects are. We hope there will not be a Faustian bargain where the rapid replacement warhead is fed to the nuclear weapon laboratories as a morsel in order to get the CTBT ratification. We hope that the ratification can also lead to the other eight countries who have not so far either signed or ratified that important brake on nuclear weapon development to be entered into force. So we need to have that achievement.

We also need in the Conference on Disarmament, which finally after something like a decade adopted a work programme in the spring of this year but which has still not started actual

negotiations, to begin negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty. That is a very vital treaty for us to begin consultation on because we know that fissile material is the raw material that goes to form nuclear weapons and unless the nuclear weapons states of the world bind themselves to a treaty stopping this production, we will go on creating endless stocks of enriched uranium and plutonium for the manufacture of these horrible weapons.

But another issue on which we must work is the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and particularly nuclear weapons. That is where I come to the 1995 resolution. Prior to that a resolution on the Middle East as a nuclear weapon-free zone was adopted in successive years in the UN General Assembly and this has been a very important aspect of achieving a nuclear weapon-free world. Nuclear weapon-free zones, under Article VII of the NPT, are a vital element in the programme of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. What is particularly important is that it is a proactive move on the part of non-nuclear weapon states. The first nuclear weapon-free zone, the Treaty of Tlatelolco which rendered Latin America and the Caribbean as a nuclear weapon-free zone, was mooted in 1968 with giants in non-aligned disarmament diplomacy like Alfonso Garcia Robles, who deservedly won the Nobel Peace Prize for that. We have had since then nuclear weapon-free zones in the South Pacific (the Treaty of Rarotonga), in Southeast Asia (the Treaty of Bangkok), in the whole of Africa (Pelindaba) and now also in the Central Asian zone, where the five 'stans' have got together to declare themselves nuclear weapon-free.

What is important is that you have the entire global south free today of nuclear weapons. The Pelindaba Treaty recently entered into force this year as a result of the requisite number of ratifications. We have also had the Central Asian nuclear weapon-free zone enter into force with the requisite number of countries ratifying that treaty. So we have had in a sense half the globe rendered nuclear weapon-free. But an important area of the world which we all know is replete with great controversies and the potential for conflicts and a history of several wars is the Middle East. So it is important that we achieve this goal on our way to achieving a nuclear weapon-free zone.

The UN Security Council resolution that was adopted last month in New York does make a specific reference in its preamble paragraph to the importance of nuclear weapon-free zones. It talks about welcoming and supporting steps to conclude such zones and reaffirms the conviction that the establishment of internationally recognised nuclear weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned. Clearly what is disguised by that diplomatic formulation is the fact that there is one state in the region that is not ready to freely arrive at a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

But let me go back to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 as part of the package which led to the indefinite extension of the NPT. Operative paragraph 5 of that said very clearly that it 'calls upon all states in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards *inter alia* the establishment of an effective, verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological) and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective'. So the embodiment of the achievement of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East was an integral part of this resolution. I can state with all responsibility and seriousness that had there not been a resolution on the Middle East, there would not have been an indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. It was crucial to the package that the Arab countries in the NPT were able to come on board with an indefinite extension because of this resolution. It was an agreement made in the last few hours of the conference negotiations. I know the sacrifices that had to be made by the Arab group and I know the compromises that had to be made by the nuclear weapon states and by other states in order to achieve this important breakthrough.

But that breakthrough was in 1995. Today in 2009, we are still far away from achieving the important first steps that are necessary to implement Paragraph 5 of that resolution. We know that this issue will once again, as it did in 2000 and 2005, be a major issue at the 2010 review conference. So we must have a plan of action, some progress that is being made. We know that since 1995 we have had a number of developments take place in the Middle East. If you look at the Middle East as the Greater Middle East, as some have put it, which includes Iran, we had the invasion of Iraq on the pretext that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, only to discover that there were no weapons of mass destruction. We have had the controversy regarding the nuclear programme of Iran. We have had Libya agree to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programmes through diplomacy. Of course outside the region we have had the problem that continues with regard to the DPRK, its withdrawal from the NPT and its two nuclear weapon tests.

In the background of all that we also had the ACRS process that continued briefly and which has now sputtered out. We have had the Quartet with its ambitious roadmap, which appears to have led us nowhere. But we have an incipient peace process initiated by the new president of the United States with his very able Middle East peace negotiator, Senator Mitchell, at the forefront. We hope that there will be some progress in which this issue of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction will take a very important place.

President Obama made a very important speech in Cairo on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June. Two sentences in that entire speech, which was an important cross-cultural, bridge-building speech, leapt out at me. The first is: 'Given our interdependence, any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail'. To my mind, any group which elevates itself over another group by virtue of its possession of nuclear weapons is bound to be involved in a world order that is not sustainable. So this is another reason why we must ensure that we have a nuclear weapon-free world. The second sentence: 'No single nation should pick and choose which nation should have nuclear weapons'. Again, it is a reaffirmation of every nation choosing its own path for national security but at the same time we must have global norms, and one of the global norms that are so vital to us today – because we are poised on the brink of nuclear conflagration – is having a nuclear weapon-free world.

Very quickly, what are the steps forward that we must take? Clearly, the entry into force of the CTBT is priority number one. We had recently in New York the periodic Article XIV Conference of the CTBT, where for the first time the United States was represented. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton was there as a symbolic affirmation by the United States, which was the first country to sign the CTBT, that it intends to ratify it. We hope that intention will be realised soon and the other countries that are not yet either signatories or ratifiers of this important treaty will follow suit.

Second, we must have the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiated at the CD. Third, we must have a number of confidence-building measures in the Middle East, and I do not need to spell those out to you. Those of you in this area are only too familiar with it. Right now the rejection of the Goldstone report by Israel and by the United States is not a confidence-building measure. Such reports in other global situations would have been promptly accepted by both those countries but given the fact that it is in their security backyard they have chosen to reject a report by the very eminent jurist from South Africa.

Iran of course is too big an issue for me to deal with in the confines of this particular presentation. But Iran has on 1 October agreed through the diplomatic efforts of the entire globe, including the UN Secretary General, to have the IAEA director general visit Iran. As a sequel to that we have also an IAEA inspection to take place on the second facility that has been revealed. We also know that Iran has agreed to send out some of its low-enriched uranium abroad for further enrichment and processing. These two first steps are a sign that diplomacy can succeed with Iran, as it did with Libya. I would hope that the world will persist in this diplomatic route.

As I said before, Article VII is a very useful guide to us. The fact that we have already so many nuclear weapon-free zones is an encouragement to the Middle East that what was regarded as unattainable in some areas is in fact attainable. There was a time in my memory as a diplomat when Argentina and Brazil were regarded as being on the brink of becoming nuclear weapon states but today they have signed up not only to the Treaty of Tlatelolco but also to the NPT and are regarded as countries in good standing in both those treaties. So our expectation of having a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is not a naïve one.

I could not understand the statement by the prime minister of Britain in the Security Council, where he said – while announcing a reduction of the Trident system by one – that Britain will insist that the onus on non-nuclear strategy is that in future it is for non-nuclear weapon states to prove they are not developing nuclear weapons. This proving of the negative is the kind of fruitless route we pursued in the Security Council with regard to Iraq. It is a dangerous statement to make because if that is the only way in which you can prove that the 182 non-nuclear weapon states in the NPT are genuinely pursuing nuclear non-proliferation, then we are going to be in a very difficult situation. We are asking for this proof without achieving the full implementation of Article VI, which has been bolstered by the International Court of Justice ruling in 1996 which clearly interpreted Article VI as being mandatory on the part of nuclear weapon states.

So we have this situation which is by no means an easy situation. But I conclude by saying that huge mountains in international relations are scalable and can be conquered. We have had in the past the institution of slavery being abolished. We have had the impossibility of achieving voting rights for women achieved. More than that, in my own lifetime, I have seen the dismantling and elimination of colonialism, which enabled my country among others to be independent in 1948. We have seen the dismantling and eradication of the odious system of apartheid in South Africa and the emergence of Nelson Mandela as the leader of his country as a non-racial democracy. We have seen the end of the Cold War. We have seen terrorism end in Northern Ireland and we have seen terrorism being defeated in my own country.

So with all these achievements of ideals for a peaceful and prosperous world, I am confident that we can see the achievement in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction as an important element in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. It is part of the effective and equitable multilateralism that we must all see. A nuclear weapon-free world, to quote Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, is a global public good of the highest order. Thank you.

**Question:** [indiscernible] the only country in the Middle East which is nuclear, why don't you name that state by name? Why are you trying to avoid the country which is nuclear, which is well known? Why don't you name it by name? You said Iran, you said India, you said Libya, why don't you say the country?

**Ambassador Dhanapala:** First and foremost, because Israel has neither acknowledged its possession of nuclear weapons but of course it is common knowledge that it is Israel and I have no hesitation in using the name of Israel if that will help to satisfy you.

**Question:** Another point. You praised the statement of Mr Obama in the Cairo speech. Actually what he said is what the United States is doing, which is the United States is picking countries – for example, it picked Iran – and ignoring other countries which are nuclear. It is the United States that is doing that practically.

**Ambassador Dhanapala:** That is precisely why I identified two sentences which I felt illustrated my thesis and contradicted what Mr Obama is doing. That is why I think there is in fact a big gap between the rhetoric of President Obama and his actual actions, because he is going to be facing a very strong opposition from the Republican right. It is up to us as international civil society and other countries in the global system to support what we know is President Obama's intentions. That is why I think just as much as his rhetoric did not win Chicago the Olympic Games of 2016, we may not have his rhetoric alone achieve a nuclear weapon-free world, but his actions will. It is up to us to cooperate in ensuring that in fact those actions take place.

**Question:** Is there a mechanism by which sanctions can be imposed on countries that are not part of the NPT in the same way as on countries that are a member of the NPT? This kind of logic applies to other [indiscernible] international organisations, for example the International Court of Justice and so on. Since we don't belong, nothing applies to us – can the United Nations Security Council change this structure in a way where we can impose sanctions on everybody and even more on the ones who don't belong to the NPT and other organisations?

**Ambassador Dhanapala:** First and foremost, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty does not have an organisation which imposes sanctions on anyone who is derelict in fulfilling its obligations. It has been my consistent plea in the NPT that we should have a secretariat, we should have some kind of a council of peers so that we can hold inquiries into allegations of non-compliance, whether it is by nuclear weapon states or non-nuclear weapon states. But let me remind you that under the UN

Charter it is the Security Council that has primary responsibility for peace and security in the world. The 1992 Security Council summit, which was chaired by Britain's John Major, decided that proliferation of nuclear weapons is in fact a breach of international peace and security. It was in terms of that that action was taken under Security Council Resolution 687 to impose sanctions on Iraq. Subsequently we have had sanctions being imposed on Iran.

These two countries were NPT countries but they were being sanctioned not only because they had violated the NPT and were reported to the Council by the IAEA but because the proliferation of nuclear weapons – or the allegation that they had nuclear weapons – was regarded as a breach of international peace and security. So you do not have to belong to the NPT in order to have the Security Council impose sanctions on you. We had Resolution 1172, a very harsh resolution, that was passed – of course it did not involve sanctions – when India and Pakistan both detonated nuclear devices in 1998. But then in marked contrast, one of the most fervent supporters of that resolution goes and signs a nuclear cooperation agreement with the Indians and subsequently everybody joins the chorus of support in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, including Britain. So some of these actions are not always consistent and that is a well-known fact in international relations.

**Question:** Thank you for a very interesting speech. The question I would like to ask is: in the 2010 NPT conference, there seems to be a focus on the CTBT treaty and the Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty rather than the main focus being on a nuclear weapons convention. Is there not a chance that this will play into the hands of the nuclear states, who don't want to give up their nuclear weapons, by allowing them to make these secondary concessions instead of the big one?

**Ambassador Dhanapala:** I think the choice we are confronting is on whether to have a full loaf or half a loaf. With all those in the nuclear disarmament movement, I support the idea of having a nuclear weapon convention because that will outlaw nuclear weapons. But we know that at this moment in time that is a bridge too far. So we start with steps, incrementalist steps, such as having the entry into force of the CTBT, such as having a treaty banning the production of fissile material. But of course this does not mean that we have forgotten what a nuclear weapons convention is or that we should continue to fight for it. As you know there are some very important groups working for 'global zero'. I was present in December in Paris when the global zero movement got off to a flying start with a hundred very eminent people supporting its launch. Next year they are supposed to enlarge that group to one thousand. This is a momentum created by the op-eds that were published by the 'four wise men' in the United States – George Shultz, former secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, Bill Perry and Senator Nunn – who published op-eds in important US journals in 2007

and 2008, and who have behind them the Hoover Institute at Stanford University preparing all the necessary papers so that what we are achieving is going to be in fact a verifiable nuclear weapon-free world. It is their work that has undoubtedly influenced President Obama and indeed candidate McCain during the time of the campaign, and which we are now seeing in the policies that are being enunciated by President Obama. In fact Secretary Kissinger was present at the UN Security Council meeting that was held recently on the issue of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

So the objective of having a nuclear weapons convention in the same way as we had a Biological Weapons Convention which outlawed and delegitimised biological weapons in 1972, and in the same way as we outlawed and delegitimised chemical weapons in 1996 with the Chemical Weapons Convention, we are also moving towards a nuclear weapons convention. But everybody agrees that this is not going to be achieved overnight because you need the cooperation of those countries who have nuclear weapons, and you are not going to achieve that in the immediate future. It is going to take incrementalist steps.

**Question:** I have two questions for you. Your testimony that [indiscernible] resolution, without it there would have been no indefinite extension of the treaty, is very important due to your position at that conference in particular. The Arab group claims the same thing, they insist on it. They say that the implementation of that resolution after fifteen years now would pull the legitimacy of the indefinite extension of it. What would be your advice for the Arab states in the coming 2010 conference? How should they pursue the implementation of that resolution without being portrayed as saboteurs of the conference?

My second question is: we always perceived 1995 and 2000 as successful conferences. But nothing has been implemented out of these conferences. So what is your definition of a successful conference, coming out of the document that nobody intends to implement? What is the recipe for that? Thank you.

**Ambassador Dhanapala:** First of all, I think a lot depends on conference strategy. I believe that before 2010 it is important, now that we have a better atmosphere in which to conduct multilateral cooperative arrangements, for the key states involved in the Middle East resolution to enter into a dialogue with the key states who are important within the NPT context in order to have some agreements. I think this kind of pre-conference consultation is vital. It helps to prepare the ground for a successful conference. It is not something that will emerge at the last minute when the clock is stopped at some ungodly hour in the morning that you are going to achieve that agreement. It has to

be prepared and well researched, and I am sure this can be done. We have some very able diplomats amongst the Arab countries and I am sure all of them will get together and prepare the ground for a successful conference.

I agree with you that a successful conference sometimes is a misnomer. We regard the adoption of a conference document by consensus as a success. Sometimes you can have a very watered-down final document where you are trying to achieve a consensus at the lowest common denominator. That is not serving global interests, let alone serving the national interests of all the countries involved. So what we need is a highest common factor amongst all these countries, synthesising the national interests of all those attending the NPT review conference so that we have the conference itself being strengthened, the treaty being strengthened, and forward movement.

In 1995 we were all assured that the indefinite extension was vital in order to provide some predictability for the nuclear weapon states to get rid of their nuclear weapons. But we know that even with the indefinite extension there was very little perceptible movement towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Of course the question of nuclear disarmament goes hand-in-hand with the question of nuclear proliferation. We must stop nuclear proliferation both vertically and horizontally and we need to see Article VI implemented at the same time as Articles I and II and IV. So we have this problem of not looking at the treaty holistically but only looking at it in certain sections. Here I think even the non-nuclear weapons states must acknowledge that there have been inadequacies in the implementation of Articles I and II. We have to be therefore equitable in our approach to all these problems. While we seek the implementation of Article VI we must also be absolutely sure that Article I and II are also being achieved.

I think this is one way of approaching the 2010 conference but we need to have the building blocks done. I mentioned some of them – the CTBT entry into force, the beginning of FMCT negotiations – but also we need to have in the individual areas, and particularly in the Middle East, some progress that has to take place. I am confident that President Obama's new initiatives in the Middle East will bear fruit and that this will be the right climate several months ahead when we meet in May 2010 for the NPT review conference.

**Question:** My question was largely taken forward by [indiscernible] but I want to perhaps press you on a specific detail arising. The difficult balance to be had on the 1995 resolution on the Middle East is between what can be taken forward for implementation of that resolution within the context of the NPT and not over-burdening the NPT with issues that can actually only be resolved outside the

purview of the NPT in direct dealings with Israel, which is not a member of the treaty. Among the chair's recommendations from the last prep-com dealing with this issue were several that had quite practical mechanisms, including things like a subsidiary body, but one in particular I want to ask for your view on because it's interesting – one of the proposals was to have a special coordinator appointed from the NPT in 2010 but with a clear implication of taking the issue forward and facilitating implementation on behalf of NPT states but between 2010 and the following review conference. First I'd like your view on whether you think that this is a good and useful idea, and second, if you do, should we seek to have a coordinator appointed from among states in the region or would it be better to have a coordinator from outside the region to act as a kind of facilitator or honest broker to take the issue forward? I'd be interested in your view on that initiative and how best to take it forward.

**Ambassador Dhanapala:** Thank you for that question, Rebecca. I should have mentioned that there has been this proposal to have a special coordinator on achieving the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East of 1995. Certainly in the absence of ACRS or any other kind of negotiation on this specific issue, I do think it is a proposal that should be supported and implemented. It would be better if the United Nations has a special coordinator but we already have a surfeit of special coordinators and special representatives on the Middle East. I think Terje Larsen is still acting in one capacity. We have former Prime Minister Blair also acting on behalf of the Quartet and we have Senator George Mitchell. So perhaps it would be best if the NPT has its own special coordinator.

In the choice of a coordinator, I do think it is vital to be able to engage Israel in this task. Sri Lanka has for a long time been president of a group that goes into the Israeli practices in occupied territories and it has never succeeded in getting permission to go into Israel or into the occupied territories. It has to hold its inquiries in other parts and this has largely led to the ineffective nature of this committee on Israeli practices in occupied territories, although the report is submitted ritualistically to the United Nations. So to prevent that kind of situation, because it is important to be able to engage the Israelis, I think it is best if we select somebody from outside the region to ensure the objectivity of the special coordinator and his or her acceptability to all the countries concerned. I am sure that the Arab countries will agree to finding a suitable negotiator. I can think of lots of countries in the non-aligned movement who will be acceptable to both Israel and the Arab countries. I hope therefore that a special coordinator will be seriously considered at the 2010 conference.

**Dan Plesch:** Thank you very much, Ambassador, not only for a great speech but for engaging in discussion.