

Presidential Address – Jayantha Dhanapala
58th Pugwash Conference, The Hague, The Netherlands, 20 April 2009

It is an honour and privilege to deliver what is described as a “Presidential Address”. In fact, that is a rather pompous title and rather grandiose for an organization that is a consensual, democratic, and transparent. The distinction between the office bearers and foot soldiers is certainly not as great as elsewhere. So this is not a “State of the Union” speech, but it allows me to talk about the strong linkages between the campaign for nuclear disarmament and the Pugwash movement.

Now all of you have seen the film “*The Strangest Dream*” and know how it all began with Joseph Rotblat’s dramatic leaving of the Manhattan Project, the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, the establishment of Pugwash in 1957 with the first Pugwash conference, and the growth of Pugwash into a significant movement. I would like to quote the citation of the Nobel Committee of Norway which said that, “The Pugwash Conferences are founded in the desire to see all nuclear arms destroyed and, ultimately, in a vision of other solutions to international disputes than war. The Pugwash Conference in Hiroshima in July this year declared that we have the opportunity today of approaching those goals. It is the Committee’s hope that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1995 to Rotblat and to Pugwash will encourage world leaders to intensify their efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.” Let me repeat that last sentence: “It is the Committee’s hope that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1995 to Rotblat and to Pugwash will encourage world leaders to intensify their efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.”

So it was the aspiration of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee that our example can inspire world leaders into doing something that we have advocated throughout our history. Now they were probably thinking about the missed opportunity that had taken place approximately ten years earlier in 1986 in Reykjavik with Gorbachev and Reagan and the historic summit; when the world missed that opportunity of being nuclear weapon free by the barest minimum. But we did, as you know, come out with an historic statement, that: “a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought.” This has been a classic statement that has helped set a certain benchmark for US-Russian relations and indeed we have been fortunate not to see a nuclear war being fought, certainly by those two countries, which together own, as we have been told many times in this Conference, 95% of the 25,000 nuclear warheads around the world, 10,000 or so of them operationally deployed.

Well, despite this great compliment to us, we must be honest. The Pugwash Conferences are not the only body that has advocated nuclear disarmament and that has worked tirelessly for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We have a number of NGOs, movements, and individuals, who have also been honoured for the same reason. I go from here to Helsinki, where the IIPNW, our fellow organization, which also won a Nobel Peace Prize, will be holding a meeting. I think this is important as we are at a stage where we must have synergy amongst all our organizations, so that together we can achieve the great lofty vision of a nuclear weapon free world.

Although we have had missed opportunities in the past, we now have a unique opportunity that has arisen from the radical change in the leadership of several countries, including most significantly the USA. During the presidential campaign, then-Senator Obama had the occasion at a Washington media “roast” to deny the rumour that he was born in a manger! I can here deny that President Obama is a secret member of the Pugwash movement! But we do have a Pugwashite in the White House in our good friend John Holdren, and we know that John’s convictions throughout his whole Pugwash career, (and he made the speech in Oslo in receiving the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of Pugwash,) will, I’m sure, be with him in the advice he offers the Obama administration. I will have the pleasure of meeting John in Washington at the end of this month and I will convey to him the way in which this conference once again reinforced our own commitment to the cause of a Nuclear Weapon Free World (NFWF).

We have had, of course, over the years a number of commissions that have helped to analyse the situation, and set the agenda, including a verification agenda, for a NFWF. Early in my diplomatic career, there was the Palme commission and the Canberra Commission, on which I had the privilege of serving together with Sir Joseph Rotblat and Robert MacNamara, and more recently the WMD commission chaired by Dr. Hans Blix, which will meet again at the end of this month in Washington DC. We know that there is another Australian/Japanese commission with another group of people to come out with yet another report. And then we have heard that the Global Zero are also putting together a commission that will address the agenda of global zero.

With all respect to all these organizations that are planning to come out with commission reports, I think we have had a great deal of analysis and a great deal of agenda setting. What we need now, before this opportunity is lost, is action. A seizing of this opportunity before, once again, we let things off. Now Pugwash has been ahead of the curve for most of the period, but what do we do when we are behind the curve? Well, we can push the curve a little bit, to see that it moves faster, but we must also reflect, amongst ourselves, what strategies we can adopt best of all in order to revitalize the nuclear disarmament campaign, thinking outside the box, and looking for other routes, other than the conventional routes that we have pursued.

As former US Secretary of Defence Perry told us, there are forces of reaction even in the US and we cannot be sure that, for example, the CTBT will be ratified in the US Senate. Now the campaign that began in 2007 with the Wall Street Journal op-eds by the "Four Knights," repeated in 2008, and now taking organizational form with the University of Stanford and the Hoover Institute behind it, has gathered momentum. There is also the Global Zero, and we are very privileged to hear a detailed description of its activities from Dr. Jennifer Simons, who was with me at the launch held in Paris. Amongst these parallel movements that are gathering momentum, "the global public good of the highest order" that UN Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon spoke of in October last year, is in fact this NFWF. Therefore, the more who join the movement, the better it is for us.

But we must also be careful about the different directions in which we might go as we approach the goal. We have all been inspired and encouraged by the Obama statement of April 1st, and by the Prague speech a few days later. In sum, President Obama's agenda includes the ratification of the CTBT by the US hopefully during the course of this year. That really involves getting 6 to 7 senators from amongst all those 'Doubting Thomases' who were there the last time to change their positions. Vice-president Joe Biden himself, a creature of the Senate, is going to be in charge of the campaign. I think they will need a lot of help. And so it is up to us as NGOs and other groups to try to meet, and particularly those of you who are US-based, some of the senators in order to persuade them that it is important that they should support this campaign so that we can have the ratification by the US, which began the process of the CTBT, accomplished by the end of this year; or certainly by the May 2010 NPT Review Conference.

But I hear disturbing stories about the approval of the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) as a kind of barter-deal for the ratification. I heard a disturbing statement from the former Foreign Secretary of India Shyam Saran who said that it could not be assumed that India would follow the US by signing and ratifying the CTBT because they would want it linked to a nuclear disarmament programme. So we have not only got to work with the US Senate, but we have to work with the other 8 countries that have still not signed or ratified. You know who those countries are. So now let us get to the task, in our own way, try to use our time and energy to ensure that the CTBT is in fact entered into force. We are sorry not to have had Tibor Toth (Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) here to tell us the level to which he has brought his organization and his verification machinery so that the entry into force would be a very significant process.

The other issue that President Obama set out in both his statement on April 1st as well as in his speech in Prague, are US-Russian relations. And we know that these relations have been left in abeyance for far too long. There was, I think two years ago, the agonized speech of President Putin in Munich which complained about the neglect of Russia, a great power, a great nuclear weapons state, a permanent member of the UNSC, which has not been paid due respect. Instead NATO was being expanded right to its doorstep and a missile defence programme was being erected in countries very close to it, with some provocation, although various excuses were given. I'm glad now that there is a sea of change in the relationship between the US and Russia. And I hope the statement that emerged on the 1st of April is only the beginning of a process. Yet again we are happy that people whom we know – Rose Gottemoeller and others in the US administration and those in the Russian foreign ministry – are going to engage in this negotiating process as soon as possible. So we return to the old negotiating process of bilateral disarmament agreements, trying to bring down numbers. But in this bean-counting exercise, we hope we don't lose sight of the spirit of disarmament and the goal of a NWFV. Because we may go down to 1000, we may go down to 500, but what beyond that? This is not a permanent resting place. And so we must ensure that the negotiators are also aware of that.

The 3rd item on the Obama agenda is the FMCT. And he talked about the importance of moving matters in the Conference on Disarmament - and God knows matters need to be moved in the Conference on Disarmament. But it is not enough to talk about fissile material cut-offs because there are also existing stocks, which concerns some people, and which concern us. There will also be the Nuclear Posture Review that will set out the doctrine. All this will have to be achieved before the NPT Review Conference next year if that conference is to succeed. I had the privilege of presiding over the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and then from the UN I was happy to see the 2000 Review Conference succeed with the adoption of the "13 Steps". Fortunately I was gone when the tragedy of 2005 took place. But now in 2010 I will be there, I hope, in my capacity as President of Pugwash to see the treaty safeguarded, strengthened, and carried forward. Yet I think it was Rebecca Johnson who told us here that perhaps this is now an outdated game. Because we hear a myriad of promises before a Review Conference, if the Conference succeeds in papering over the cracks and coming out with a final document, everybody feels very pleased with themselves, and go back to their country saying they have had a successful conference. And of course if it fails, once again, they go back but nothing changes, it will be business as usual. And this is why I say that we need to have something very much more than the ritualistic exercises that we have seen. We have to see whether there can be a change in the game. And for that we need out-of-the-box thinking.

We need to attack the role of security doctrines and what place nuclear weapons occupy there. It was a fundamental shift during the Bush-Cheney administration that caused alarm among all of us, for the use of nuclear weapons that was predicated. Likewise, in NATO, and there are many countries in NATO today, more and more whose citizens are members who are represented in Pugwash. We need to ensure that there is a revision of these doctrines so that the salience of nuclear weapons in security is reduced considerably. Because it is only after that it will be possible for these weapons to be eliminated. We must also support those countries within NATO who want to get rid of nuclear weapons on their side. Now we have heard very important statements from countries like Germany recently, which need to be supported by us because it's extremely important.

Some years ago there was a book that estimated a cost of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, "Atomic Audit" it was called, and I forget the figures, but phenomenal figures were quoted for the actual cost of nuclear weapons. Today the nuclear weapons budget is estimated at US\$52 billion. That is a significant chunk of the US budget at a time of the international financial meltdown. So nuclear disarmament makes eminent financial sense as well as making eminent security sense. And this is something that we must continue to urge with both the US as well as with other nuclear weapon states.

Let me go on to the NPT of 2010, which we must all prepare for. And I propose being present at the PrepCom at the first week of May with Paolo (Secretary-General Cotta Ramusino) and Jeffrey (Executive Director Boutwell) in order to see what we ourselves can offer as Pugwash to assist the process. There will, of course, be a number of issues that will agitate the minds of the NNWS as well as NWS. The previous PrepComs have largely been devoted to procedural issues and there is no one more competent to talk about it than Rebecca Johnson.

But I think that there are a number of issues that we have to think about which concern the work that Pugwash has been doing already, and which you heard Paolo talk about when he presented his report. I refer to Articles I and II, and particularly to Article III, but also the fundamental question of Article IV on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which from its inception has been assured as an inalienable right. And now, efforts are being made to circumscribe the exercise of that right for reasons of realpolitik. For a number of countries that legally renounced nuclear weapons possession, one of the attractions was the opportunity of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, not only for power, but also for agriculture and medicine. All of them are connected to the agenda for a developing country, so that the 'bottom billion' in the world were looking forward to the use of nuclear energy and to assistance under projects from the IAEA. And now they are being told, "Hold on chums, there are some problems, we need to be sure that somewhere in the hidden recesses of your mind, you are not going to go for nuclear weapons and we need to be assured of that." And so countries even in good standing in the NPT, like South Africa and Brazil, are being told to join a multilateral fuel cycle arrangement where you can have nuclear fuel whenever you want to, and reactors whenever you want to. The governments of these countries ask 'Well, what criteria do we need to satisfy, apart from financial payment to get this?' And then you begin to see the subtext, and the fine print of the arrangements, which make it very clear once again that you will have certain countries dominating the decision-making, and making it extremely difficult for the countries of the South to have access to nuclear energy.

So no wonder that there is a great deal of suspicion, animosity, and concern relating to this new arrangement regarding Article IV. And on Article VI, of course, I don't think we can expect to have nuclear disarmament within the context of the NPT as Rebecca said. I will talk about this later on when I discuss other routes that we may pursue. There is of course a new issue being brought up in regard to Article X, and that is as a consequence of a decision by the DPRK to withdraw from the NPT and the fact that some countries would like to maintain the fiction that the DPRK is still a member of the NPT that occasionally goes off on a weekend and tests a weapon. We have to be very realistic about it. Article X cannot be converted into a jail to keep NNWS unwillingly within the NPT permanently. It is true that we have to find ways and means diplomatically, as the UK very successfully did in the case of Libya, to contain a potential break out.

It is true that this takes time, takes effort, but that is precisely what all of us are trying to do here in Pugwash – the efforts that Pugwash are making in the DPRK, the diplomacy that we are engaged in with regard to Iran, which the US National Intelligence Estimate has told us is very far away from developing a nuclear weapon. And so there is a lot that needs to be done through diplomacy, not by using a sledgehammer. We saw where a sledgehammer got Mr. Bush. Therefore, we should look into what we can do and here the scientific expertise of Pugwash must be utilized. What should we do with the existing stock, running into 1370 tonnes of HEU if you do not count what is being set aside for downblending? What do you do about the separated Pu of 244.9? You have to find solutions. Whether it is by encouraging countries not to enrich to the high levels that are being contemplated or whether it is to encourage manufacture of nuclear proliferation resistant technology, new kinds of reactors for example – it is an area in which the scientists in Pugwash can perform a huge service. I suggest that we try to harness the energies of all these countries together. We can have a task-force to propose this. We can produce scientific papers that will help to change the thinking of a number of developing countries which will find our proposals more acceptable, more credible, and more trustworthy. So let us move in that direction.

This current conference is another step in a longstanding connection between Pugwash and the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons. But the question we must honestly ask ourselves is how much closer are we to the goal? Is it a mirage? There have been in the past so many broken promises, so many unfulfilled bargains, so many false dawns. Alva Myrdal wrote many decades ago about "*The Game of Disarmament*". So are we going back to the old order, the pre Bush-Cheney order, with the bean-counting in US-Russian negotiations with regard to nuclear disarmament? All this might sound cynical, but I think our predecessors in Pugwash were always cautiously optimistic. They always advised other options than the conventional one, there were always other plans that they proposed.

We have heard warnings, as I said, about the forces of reaction within the US and other NWS. They are not going to fold their tents and go away. The laboratories of Los Alamos, Sandia, and Livermore are not going to give up. They were once fed the bait of the stockpiles stewardship programme. What will they demand now? So we have to be alert to all aspects of nuclear weapons programme. Some of you may have read an article that I wrote in some concern about what might come out of the Medvedev-Obama meeting of 1st of April. And there I quoted two young writers in the US – Darwin Bond-Graham and Will Parish – who published an op-ed piece in *Foreign Policy In Focus* at the beginning of this year. And they talked about the concept of anti-nuclear nuclearism. Let me quote just the first paragraph: "Anti-nuclear nuclearism is a foreign and military policy that relies upon overwhelming US power, including the nuclear arsenal, but makes rhetorical and even more substantive commitments to disarmament, however vaguely defined. Anti-nuclear nuclearism thrives as a school of thought in several think tanks that have long influenced foreign policy choices related to global nuclear forces. Even the national nuclear development labs in New Mexico and California have been avid supporters and crafters of it." So beware of this anti-nuclear nuclearism and the nice phrases about a NFWF that are in fact not mirrored by the actions that are taken. Watch closely for budget allocations. There had been an attempt, at the end of last year and subsequently after the Obama administration came in, to have the fiscal impetus package include some money for the nuclear weapons programme. Fortunately that was discovered by some alert people and it was removed. I think all of us have a duty to ensure that anti-nuclear nuclearism does not win the day.

And so we must therefore look for other routes. One route that has been proposed is an NPT amendment conference even though we know that that route is unlikely to succeed. Those who advocate it point to the fact that the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty amendment conference, which was well in motion and led by the great Alfonso Garcia Robles of Mexico, was one of the elements that provoked the NWS in to rethinking their opposition to the CTBT.

There are many other routes. There is the possibility of reconvening the nuclear weapons issue and its legality with the ICC here in The Hague. We know that the decision that came out in 1996 was not as clear-cut and unambiguous as we would have liked, or as some of the judges would have liked. But we have to approach this carefully. I know that some countries have been thinking about it. It all depends on the composition of the Court and on the framing of the question. But this is another route we can adopt.

Then there is the UN's Secretary-General's route. I had the privilege of being present in New York on the 24th of October last year, when Ban ki-Moon, who many people accused of not being very sympathetic to us, made the most extraordinary speech of any UN Secretary-General that I have known. He began of course by talking about a world free of nuclear weapons, which would be a global public good of the highest order, and then went on to talk about a 5-point proposal. Firstly, he urged all NPT parties to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty and to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament. It is in that context that he asked them to consider negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention, referring to a draft that was on the table of the UNGA, co-sponsored by Costa Rica and Malaysia. He went on, of course, to make several other points in his 5-point proposal, which I am sure

that many of you are familiar with. But one that is relevant to our Conference here in The Hague is his initiative relating to the rule of law. He talked about the need to bring so many of the disarmament treaties into force, including the CTBT, but also mentioning the many nuclear weapon free zones, treaties that have not entered into force because some of those have not been signed by the NWS. I am happy in this context to note that the treaty with which I was personally associated, the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, did come into effect because of the various countries signing and ratifying the treaty not so long ago. He also talked about accountability and transparency and complementary measures that are needed. Now this is the furthest that any UN Secretary-General has gone in calling for a NFWF. I hope he survives.

There is also the proposed Arms Trade Treaty even though it is not directly linked to the agenda of nuclear weapons. We have to encourage treaties like this, or movements towards signing a treaty like this, because according to the SIPRI Yearbook 2007, global military expenditure was US\$1,339 billion, which works out roughly as \$202 per person. At a time of the international financial crisis, we would do well to look at how much of this expenditure is really necessary to maintain security, and how much of it is profits made. Just as Wall Street made a profit from Main Street, so are the arms manufacturers making profits at the expense of those people in developing countries who fight their wars and have no other means than to buy these arms.

So we have to not only engage in our task of nuclear disarmament and disarmament in general by rebooting the system, but also by looking at how we reconcile unequal power and asymmetrical arms control. Because the framework in which we have to work in the world today is not just a framework of nation-states, 192 of them in the UN. It is also a framework in which the nation-states have to work with non-state actors. There was a proposal, during this conference by a Pakistani professor, who suggested that we should look into how we can have a dialogue with non-state actors, the dialogue that Paolo has successfully conducted in many regions of the world where there are conflicts. Obviously we cannot have a dialogue with every one of them and not all of them will be interested, but with those who are, is there some way in which Pugwash can engage in a dialogue?

There is also the North-South problem, which is going to be aggravated. The Doha Round was one of its battlefields. There are new emerging economies in the South – China, India, South Africa, and Brazil – the G20 is one arena in which they can work together with the North. But are we going to lose this opportunity once again? And finally, of course, there is always the divide between the NWS and the NNWS. That divide will always be an impetus for countries that want to be NWS, as long as nuclear weapons are invested with the political power and significance.

And so we must – all of us – reflect once more on the statement in the WMD Commission Report that said, “So long as any state has such weapons, especially nuclear arms, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain in any state's arsenal, there is a high risk they will one day be used, by design or accident. Any such use would be catastrophic.” This echoes words that have been in other statements of Pugwash. It repeats, in different language, what the Pugwash movement has said from its inception. But it is not only by words that we can counter the machinations of the nuclear lobbies of the world, it is by actions. And I conclude by appealing to all of you to do what you can, to exert your influence, to use your scientific expertise in order to build a bulwark against nuclear weapons. So that in our lifetime, if not in our lifetime then in President Obama's lifetime, we can achieve our vision of a NFWF.

Thank you.