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"NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THEIR CHALLENGE TO ASIAN SECURITY" - JAYANTHA DHANAPALA

I begin with my own modest tribute to the late Sinnathamby Rajaratnam - born in Jaffna to Sri Lankan Tamil parents but raised in Malaysia and Singapore to be, with Lee Kuan Yew and Goh Keng Swee, among the great triumvirate who built and shaped modern Singapore. Would that his vision of a multicultural nation encapsulated in the Singapore Pledge he drafted - "One united people regardless of race, language or religion" - be realized in his country of birth as it has been in Singapore! To adapt the words he chose for his epitaph, we are indeed very sorry he has left this earth; but are glad that his legacy will continue with the S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies which, hopefully, will help to produce rulers that are philosophers as envisaged over 2500 years ago in Plato's "Republic".

The case for a pan-Asian Security Architecture

The overall theme of this Roundtable is Asian Security in all its dimensions. I have chosen to focus on the real and grave threat to that security from the possession and proliferation of nuclear weapons - a subject which many, including Asians, would like to sweep under the carpet. However let me, at the outset, make three general observations.

- ◆ Firstly, the concept of collective security encompassing peace and security, sustainable development and human rights forms the bedrock of the United Nations Charter and the multilateral system. It has served the international community well for several decades despite the predominance of bipolar Cold War rivalries for most of this period and the prevailing unipolar global power structure today. At the last High level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly the Heads of State and Government endorsed this fundamental framework in their Outcome

Document. Asian security is inextricably linked with global security. We must therefore accept these postulates and build on them.

- ◆ Secondly, future projections of global economic developments point to Asia becoming an important centre of gravity especially with increasing co-operation between the two power-houses of economic development -- China and India, the recovery of the Japanese economy, the continuing prosperity of ASEAN and the Republic of Korea and the new growth potential of Central Asia with its oil and gas reserves. The distinctive features in this economic resurgence of Asia is its impact on poverty alleviation; its excellent focus on human development and its ripple effects on other regions in today's globalized world. It has transmitted impulses of economic growth by creating markets for Asian produced commodities and services and generated outflows of foreign direct investment to other regions. It has created domestic markets within Asia by increasing the purchasing power of consumers and the demand for goods, services and investment from other regions to Asia insulating those regions from domestic recession and imparting greater stability to world business cycles. In general terms, it has integrated Asia more closely with the global economy. It is a tide that is lifting all boats in the global system even as large segments of Asia's population are being lifted above the poverty line. Perhaps, before too long, Asia will be better represented among the G 8 in recognition of this continent's rising role as an important powerhouse in the global economy. The 21st century will undoubtedly see Asia's full efflorescence in economic development - provided good governance, distributive justice, education, health, the environment and infrastructure needs receive the priority they deserve. Given the growing economic content in political power and other non-military aspects of security, a shift of the centre of gravity of global power may well be possible.

- ◆ Finally, these facts cry out for a major innovation in the security architecture for Asia. We could begin with a Council of Asia just as Europe began with a Council of Europe in 1949. Perhaps Europe is overcrowded with institutions of a continental scale but the Council of Europe has survived as its oldest political organization by focussing on human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. Of Asia it can be said that we do have a genuine dearth of pan Asian organizations. This is not only a contrast to Europe but it is also very unlike Africa with its African Union and the Americas with its Organization of American

States. Regional and sub-regional institutions exist within Asia but a body which links Arab West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Central Asia and East Asia has still to be formed. Its beginnings could be a modest forum for the discussion of common issues among all Asian countries irrespective of power and size. The Joint Declaration issued at the conclusion of the recent visit of President Hu Jintao to India agreed "to explore a new architecture for closer regional co-operation in Asia." Asia's academic and research community must take up the challenge to engage in this exploration through co-operative and creative thinking as Asians as our continent assumes its new importance and new responsibilities in the vanguard of global developments.

That task can begin here. And it is entirely appropriate, for Asia is the largest continent with approximately 60% of the global population, 30% of the global land mass and 25% of the global economic output. Asia has a major stake in global security. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), with which I am proud to be associated as a member of its Governing Board, records in its 2006 Yearbook that of the 17 major armed conflicts in the world in 2005, 7 took place in Asia many of them intra-state involving governments and non-state actors. Of the estimated global military expenditure of US \$ 1001 bn (at constant 2003 prices and exchange rates) in 2005, Asia with Oceania accounts for US \$ 157 bn. Of this figure Japan spent \$ 42.1 bn, China \$ 41 bn, India \$ 20.4 bn and the Republic of Korea \$ 16.4 bn. These are relatively modest sums compared to the USA's \$ 478.2 bn and Europe's \$ 256 bn. However translated into purchasing power parity (PPP) terms the figures escalate making China the second highest military spender after the USA with \$ 188.4 bn; India the third highest with \$ 105.8 bn followed by Saudi Arabia (\$35 bn); Japan (\$ 34.9 bn); Iran (\$ 23.8 bn); the Republic of Korea (\$ 23.4 bn) and Taiwan at \$ 13.4 bn. The need to manage regional security challenges so as to contain military expenditure and focus on economic development is an obvious conclusion to draw from these figures.

Horizontal Proliferation and Vertical Proliferation

Let me now address my main theme. There has recently been an unbalanced focus on the threat of the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons to

other countries without any attention being paid to the vital question of nuclear disarmament - arresting and reversing vertical proliferation among those who already possess nuclear weapons. The balance must be redressed. Non-proliferation and disarmament are two faces of the same coin. We cannot have one without the other. International peace and security is not helped by having more nuclear weapon armed countries. We do need to be reassured that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran are not going on the same road taken by the USA, the Russian Federation, UK, France, China, Israel, India and Pakistan. That does not mean that the world accepts the monopoly that these eight states have over nuclear weapons. Nor do we tolerate the apartheid of some nuclear "haves" and the others as nuclear "have-nots".

We cannot also distinguish arbitrarily between 'good' proliferators and 'bad' proliferators. Regimes change and perceptions of regimes are notoriously subjective and transitory. Dr. Henry Kissinger has said in discussing the case of Iran that "...it is the fact not the provenance of further proliferation that needs to be resisted.... We should oppose nuclear proliferation even to a democratic Iran." The excellent example of South Africa which abandoned its nuclear weapons programme and joined the Treaty for the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state needs to be emulated. Somehow and somewhere we have lost sight of the fundamental danger of nuclear weapon possession by any state because of the very destructive nature of this weapon. Like Janus, the Roman god with two faces, all scientific inventions of humankind have a beneficial use and a malefic use. So is it with nuclear power. We must promote the good and agree to ban the bad. That is why the recently produced report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission - chaired by the highly-respected Dr. Hans Blix and in which I was privileged to serve - recommended the outlawing of all weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons. That path and patient diplomacy is the way forward in stopping nuclear weapons proliferation - not aggressive non-proliferation, or counter-proliferation policies, using force or sanctions against selected countries.

Let me briefly explain my theme today. I have had a life-long conviction that nuclear arms must be eliminated by a verifiable treaty. It is a conviction that I have honestly voiced again and again even at the risk of sounding like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner - and for which I have had to pay a heavy price! The world has banned biological weapons and chemical weapons, which have caused untold suffering in past conflicts. The only weapon of mass

destruction that remains unbanned is the nuclear weapon which is prominent in the arsenals of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and of three countries outside the NPT - Israel, India and Pakistan. To their credit two of the Asian nuclear weapon armed states - China and India - have adopted 'no first use' policies. The fallacious argument continues to be made that one cannot 'disinvent' nuclear weapons. Well, we did not disinvent biological weapons or chemical weapons. We simply outlawed them. And in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention we have an effective Secretariat to implement the Convention and to verify the ban.

Eisenhower - a Republican President of the United States and a distinguished military man -in his famous "Atoms for Peace" speech significantly called for the "reduction or elimination of atomic materials for military purposes" and for removing "this (nuclear) weapon out of the hands of the soldiers". It is a theme that indisputably links this speech to his equally famous 'military industrial complex' speech. He saw the folly of relying on a non-proliferation strategy alone. In this speech he also rejected the concept of deterrence which prevailed much after his time. He opposed the use of nuclear weapons in the certain knowledge that it would cause unmitigated disaster for the human race. "Surely no sane member of the human race could discover victory in such desolation," he said.

With the end of the Cold War a smug complacency has settled in regarding the threat of nuclear war. Public opinion has been anaesthetized. NGOs in the disarmament area have been starved of funds to conduct their important work to educate and mobilize the public. In Asia, as with most of the developing world, we have developed a collective amnesia over the importance of nuclear disarmament. It was civil society that demanded and achieved a ban on nuclear testing in the atmosphere and which finally capped this with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. With no transparency from any of the nuclear weapon armed countries on their weapon stocks, we have forgotten that there are still an estimated 27,000 nuclear weapons; 12,000 of them actively deployed and many of them on alert status to be launched on warning. Existing nuclear weapon arsenals are being modernized. The danger of a nuclear holocaust by accident or design remains very real.

No significant arms control measure let alone disarmament agreement has been negotiated for many years. The NPT Review Conference of 2005 failed

to agree on a Final Document although that same treaty was extended in 1995 under my Presidency with specific undertakings being accepted by the nuclear weapon states - undertakings which were reiterated and amplified at the NPT Review Conference of 2000. Not just I personally but all the non-nuclear weapon state parties to the NPT must feel a sense of betrayal of trust over the failure of the nuclear weapon states to fulfill their promises. Later last year at the 60th anniversary UN General Assembly not one line could be agreed upon in the Outcome Document on disarmament.

Nuclear weapons are in a special category. Not only will their scale of destruction be infinitely greater than conventional weapons but also their impact on the ecology, which supports human existence, and their genetic effects on the survival of the human race could be catastrophic. The Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July, 1996 ruled unanimously that there is no authorization in international law for the threat or use of nuclear weapons and that, "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith, and bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." In the Cold War the so-called Mutual Assured Destruction doctrine (MAD), paradoxically, gave us some hope that these awful weapons would not be used. Today the actual use of nuclear weapons is seriously planned and new types of weapons, such as bunker-busters, are being designed lowering the threshold of use alarmingly. That is why Asia must call for a revival of nuclear disarmament. We cannot with any credibility or logical consistency condemn the nuclear test of the DPRK on October 9 this year or the failure of Iran to comply with the IAEA's Safeguards Agreement unless we also make progress in reducing and eliminating the nuclear weapons already in the possession of the eight states who have them. We cannot accept the argument that nuclear deterrence is good for some and unacceptable for others. There are no safe hands for weapons as destructive as nuclear weapons.

Besides with today's problems of global terrorism we cannot take the risk of nuclear technology and materials leaking to terrorist groups. This is recognized both in the adoption and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and by the latest US Presidential directive instructing the nuclear weapons laboratories to work on improving safeguards in the event that these weapons fell into "wrong hands". There are already too many documented instances of thefts and illegal trafficking in nuclear material and nuclear technology. Even here an inconsistent policy is pursued when, as the

latest issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists reveals, a trafficker in nuclear technology gets less jail time than a corrupt businessman or a prolific spammer. And of the notorious A.Q.Khan nuclear smuggling network only three have been convicted and sent to prison so far.

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission

It is for these reasons that in my final year as UN Under-Secretary-General I proposed that there should be an International Commission on WMD. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was not ready to have such a Commission function under the aegis of the UN. Sweden through its courageous Foreign Minister at the time, the late Anna Lindh, accepted the challenge and set up the Commission with Dr.Hans Blix as Chairman. Fourteen of us drawn from different countries - including six from Asia - began our work early in 2004 meeting in different capitals and exchanging ideas with scholars, researchers and diplomats from a wide range of countries over a period of more than two years. Finally in June of this year we presented the final report to the Secretary-General of the UN and it has been tabled as a document of the UN. Dr.Blix has also spoken to the First Committee of the UN in October 2006 apart from addressing numerous audiences and media conferences in different parts of the world.

Our Commission felt that the time for action on weapons of mass destruction has come especially with regard to nuclear weapons. We see them as inhumane weapons of terror because they are in fact intended to intimidate those who do not possess these weapons. As the Canberra Commission, in which I also served, said in 1996 " Nuclear weapons are held by a handful of states which insist that these weapons provide unique security benefits and yet reserve uniquely to themselves the right to own them. This situation is highly discriminatory and thus unstable; it cannot be sustained. The possession of nuclear weapons by any state is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them". The WMD Commission reiterates this adding that "So long as any such weapons remain in any state's arsenal, there is a high risk that they will one day be used, by design or accident. Any such use would be catastrophic." Nuclear weapons must be devalued as the ultimate currency of power. That can only be achieved by their elimination.

A co-operative rule based world order requires us to have a nuclear ban negotiated and administered through a multilateral institution. For this purpose we need to convene a World Summit which will discuss WMD and agree on a programme of action. The momentum for that must begin here in Asia.

A total of 60 recommendations have been made in the WMD Commission Report. They include -

- ◆ The need to agree on general principles of action with disarmament and non-proliferation being pursued through multilateral institutions in a rule-based international order where the UN Security Council is the ultimate authority; the revival of disarmament negotiations; the pursuit of policies that do not make states feel the need to acquire WMD
- ◆ The need to reduce the danger of existing arsenals by making deep reductions; securing them from theft especially by terrorist groups; the need to take weapons off their alert status; prohibit the production of fissionable material and having no-first-use pledges by those who have nuclear weapons
- ◆ The prevention of proliferation through the entry into force of the CTBT; implementing the commitments of the nuclear-weapon states under the NPT; continuing negotiations with DPRK and Iran to ensure their non-nuclear weapon status while assuring them of their security and their right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and international arrangements for the supply of enriched uranium fuel and disposal of spent fuel
- ◆ Working purposefully for a ban on nuclear weapons within a reasonable time frame; encouraging nuclear weapon-free zones especially in the Middle East; achieving the universalization of the CWC and BWC and preventing an arms race in outer space.

The Director-General of the IAEA speaking at the UN General Assembly on 31 October this year wisely focussed on the twin issues of 'atoms for peace' and 'atoms for war' when he said, " Fifty years after the Atoms for Peace initiative, the time has come to think of a new framework for the use of

nuclear energy - a framework that accounts for both the lessons we have learned and the current reality. This new framework should in my view include:

- 1.innovative nuclear technology that is inherently safe, proliferation resistant and more economical;
- 2.universal application of comprehensive safeguards and the additional protocol;
- 3.concrete and rapid progress towards nuclear disarmament;
- 4.a robust international security regime; and
- 5.an effective and universal nuclear safety regime. "

This framework will serve global security and Asian security well providing guarantees for those who seek nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and security assurances for non-nuclear weapon countries balancing the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation concerns of the international community. Let Asia take the initiative in calling for the Global Summit recommended by the WMD Commission to initiate action for a safer world.

(Jayantha Dhanapala was the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs from 1998 to 2003 and is a former Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the USA. The views expressed here are personal to him)