

The Urgency of Disarmament

Jayantha Dhanapala

President of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

Public Lecture: Keynote Speech

Monday 16 June, 5.15pm

Good evening ladies and gentleman. Thank you, Dan, for those warm words of introduction. I begin with words of thanks also to SOAS and to British Pugwash for sponsoring this event. I have memories of SOAS that go back to 1966, when I was in London on my very first diplomatic posting, and had the fool-hardy idea that I could combine a full time job in the Sri Lanka High Commission with studying Mandarin Chinese - of all languages! And of course, as Mao Tse Tung once said, "Making revolution is not like a dinner party."

I realised very soon that learning Mandarin Chinese was not like a dinner party and I'm sure I caused a lot of frustration to my teachers. Fortunately, it all ended happily with my being posted eventually to Beijing where I made greater progress.

I must also thank British Pugwash. I speak as the eleventh President of Pugwash International and, as you all know, Pugwash has been built on the bedrock of the Einstein- Russell manifesto which enjoined us all to 'remember our humanity and forget the rest'. And British Pugwash in particular has contributed enormously to the success of the Pugwash movement internationally. It has provided us with great leaders, like Dorothy Hodgkin, like Sir Joseph Rotblat, who was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize along with Pugwash itself, as well as Sir Michael Atiyah. And I'm glad that that tradition is being maintained by British Pugwash, not only throughout the Cold war but even after the Cold War. And we have today a unique moment in international affairs where we may see a breakthrough in disarmament issues. And I'm particularly glad that

The Urgency of Disarmament

SOAS has combined its forces with British Pugwash in sponsoring workshops which have a significant role to play in the breakthrough that I expect will come.

As all of you know, we have had a very bleak period in the international disarmament and arms control in the last eight years, culminating in the fact that the 2005 NPT review conference failed to adopt a final document and that at the 60th anniversary General Assembly of the United Nations not one word on disarmament could be agreed upon because of the neo-conservative approach of some of the delegations who were present at that particular assembly. But we meet today in the afterglow of the adoption of the Cluster Munitions Treaty text in Dublin. And here I must pay a tribute particularly to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom who courageously took a decision that went against his alliance partner and decided to support the wish, not only of 110 other countries, but also of civil society in so many countries. And it is this combination of like-minded countries and civil society that can generate the momentum, and generate the political will, that we need in order to achieve practical results not just in conventional weapons but also in weapons of mass destruction. And so I believe that the Cluster Munitions Treaty adoption, which will take place finally in December of this year, will be the harbinger of a springtime in disarmament affairs. And I believe that we are therefore on a threshold of momentous events for which we have to prepare ourselves, for which we have to be convinced that the moment must be grasped now, or forever lost.

What I propose to do this evening is to describe to you some of the main features of the global situation as I see it, then to sketch out some of the available solutions that have been referred by various institutions and organisations. Finally, to talk a little bit about immediate steps that we can take in order to set the stage for the political will that I hope will be generated by the end of this year.

I have just been last week in Stockholm, as a member of the governing body of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. And, as you all know, one of the flagship publications of SIPRI is the Yearbook. We therefore, last Monday, launched the Yearbook of 2008. And one of the important statistics that that yearbook reveals is that

The Urgency of Disarmament

global military expenditure, in 2007, reached a staggering figure of 1,339 billion US dollars. This represents a 6% increase since 2006. It also translates into an expenditure of 202 US dollars for every man, woman and child on this globe which sadly contrasts with the fact that 1 billion people live on below 1 dollar a day. And it is the aim of the Millennium Development Goals to reduce that extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. This level of military expenditure hardly encourages us to believe that we will be able to achieve that objective.

Arms sales by the hundred largest arms-producing companies, many of them inclusive of companies in this country, increased by 8% over 2005. International transfers of major conventional weapons were 7% higher over the period 2003-2007, than in 2002 - 2006. And on the subject of nuclear weapons, which is the main focus of what I have to say this evening; we have eight states, five of them within the NPT and three outside, possessing something like 26,000 nuclear weapons, of which 10,200 are operational nuclear weapons deployed on launch to warning status. And, of these, 95% are owned by the US and the Russian Federation. At the same time, many arms control and non-proliferation agreements are faltering or making little progress. So it is in fact a dire situation that emerges from the SIPRI yearbook and this is what by itself urges me to talk about the urgency of disarmament.

There is also another perspective and that is the human security perspective, and the distinction between human security and the more traditional concept of national security; while national security focuses on defence of the state from external attack, human security is about protecting individuals and communities from any form of political violence. And this political violence is again caused by weapons, so whether it is weapons of mass destruction, or whether it is conventional weapons or small arms and light weapons, we have the same impact on civilians, the same impact on human security.

We know that we have had, since 9/11, the so-called “war on terrorism”, which has been used as a justification for the increase of military expenditure. But reading the recent book by Scott McClellan, who was the spokesman of the Bush-Cheney Administration

The Urgency of Disarmament

for many years, it is clear that the world has been taken for a ride. It is clear that the invasion of Iraq took place on the false premise that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, a premise that has been over and over again exposed. And now we need to repair the damage that has been done in the last eight years and this repair will require a fundamental and radical reversion of the Nuclear Posture Review and the nuclear doctrines that emerged in the last eight years. This Nuclear Posture Review and this nuclear doctrine was postulated on the actual use of nuclear weapons when all the while, since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have had a tacit taboo on the use of nuclear weapons. But then weapons like the RNEP, or the “bunker-buster” as it’s called, and the proposed RRW (which fortunately has been stopped in its tracks by the US congress) are built in order to actually be used. And when there are doctrines about the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons in retaliation for the use of conventional weapons, or other weapons of mass destruction, it is a frightening prospect that we may actually see, in our lifetime, the actual use of nuclear weapons.

We also see the way in which realpolitik trumps the whole question of the fundamental principles of nuclear non-proliferation with the way in which the India-US nuclear co-operation deal was proposed. Internal domestic politics in India may finally bury the India-US nuclear co-operation deal but, if it did survive, it would make a distinction between ‘good’ proliferators and ‘bad’ proliferators and it would go down this slippery slope which will be, ultimately, the reason for the demise of the non-proliferation treaty, which remains today a bulwark not only against the proliferation of nuclear weapons but also the only widely subscribed to disarmament treaty which commits the nuclear weapon states to actually engage in good faith negotiations to finally bring about the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The NPT rests, as we know, on a tripod of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and of disarmament. And all the three legs of this tripod are equally important and are fundamental to the balanced implementation of this treaty. The neglect of any one of them could prove disastrous and I hope therefore, as we approach the review conference of 2010 that we will all be able to see a revived treaty as

The Urgency of Disarmament

a result of actions taken, particularly by the nuclear weapon states, with regard to Article VI.

But it is not only in the weapons of mass destruction scene that we need to be concerned about in the urgency of the situation, because in the conventional arena as well there has been, with a revolution in military affairs, a rapid growth of the sophisticated nature of technological improvements and the application of information technology to the development of sophisticated arms. So much so, that we have some countries considerably ahead of others with regard to conventional weaponry. We have also seen the unprecedented proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly in developing countries, fuelling internal conflicts, fuelling the rise of insurgencies and of terrorist groups and of paramilitaries. All this has led to an assault on human security and a large number of civilian deaths in so many countries.

Happily, we have had the UN taking the lead in trying to arrest and reverse this proliferation of small arms and light weapons and I was privileged, as Under-Secretary General, to be in the United Nations when the 2001 conference took place on the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons. And we were able to adopt a programme of action despite the negative attitude of some delegations because there was an overwhelming desire on the part of the international community to have a practical programme of action to arrest and reverse this proliferation of small arms and light weapons. A great deal more has to be done, we have to have a code of ethics, we have to have a system of controlling the brokering, and the way in which small arms can be traded and I am happy again that the United Kingdom government has taken an initiative with regard to the Arms Trade Treaty that has been today made the subject of a group of governmental experts and I hope when their report is published there will be some mobilisation of public opinion towards having an Arms Trade Treaty in order to regulate the spread of all conventional arms in a transparent manner so that we do not have the military industrial complexes of various countries fuelling the arms race and fuelling conflict as a result of their productions.

The Urgency of Disarmament

I think some of the good things that have happened have included the anti-personnel landmines Convention, again a product of the synergy between which civil society organisations, like Jody Williams' International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), as well as the governments of Norway and Canada, who took leadership in this particular issue. Likewise, we have seen a similar groundswell of public opinion to ban another category of weapons which had enormous humanitarian consequences, and it was Cluster Munitions. I believe we have to continue with this kind of initiative.

Space is another area that demands urgent attention, because we are at a stage when space is obviously militarised but not yet weaponized and I think this is a fundamental importance for us to ensure that that last frontier is kept free of weapons. And if the ballistic missile defence programme is permitted to continue we are likely to see space weaponized very soon. And therefore the urgency of action in space is another matter that demands our attention as civil society organisations and NGO's working in the field of peace and disarmament.

Looking at the global situation broadly, it has struck me that although the Cold War resulted in the demise of international communism, we still have perhaps three '-isms' that dominate global politics. The first of those '-isms' is terrorism. And terrorism, as we all know, predated 9/11. It hit the United States in 9/11 and it of course resulted in the so-called war against terrorism, which did not always observe the human rights instruments that have prevailed internationally. But terrorism has affected many countries and I come from a country that has suffered from terrorism for over twenty years. And terrorism is fundamentally an assault on the rule of law, and we must therefore have international co-operation against terrorism, because this can have enormous consequences.

Secondly, although with the rise of multinational economic entities like the European Union and ASEAN, national sovereignty was regarded as being an historical legacy of the Treaty of Westphalia. Today after the Cold War has ended and we see in the post-Cold War situation once again the importance of nationalism and the concept of state sovereignty. This cannot be underestimated as we look at the world today.

The Urgency of Disarmament

And finally, with globalisation and the world shrinking in time and space, we have consumerism as a very important driver of the international community. Now consumerism by itself is not a bad thing, but the empowerment of a number of economies, particularly in China and in India, has led to a demand for energy and a demand for other commodities that has entailed a rise in prices. But it is not a black and white picture, because we still have the problem of agricultural subsidies in the European Union and in other developed countries that have to be looked at because we are far from having a level playing field in global trade. We must not only have free trade, but we must have fair trade. And with the Doha Round of the World Trade Organisation still incomplete, we need to move rapidly for equality in the terms of trade so that developing countries can have access to markets and access to commodities that their people rightly deserve in an increasingly inter-dependent world.

And if you look through the prism of these three ‘-isms’, at the crises that dominate the world today, you will see some inter-connectedness between the ‘-isms’ and the crises. And the first crisis is, of course, weapon proliferation which arises largely from the strength of nationalism in so many countries and the fact that this nationalism is fuelled by the unbridled supply of arms. A supply of arms that has to be regulated in terms of the UN Charter by an Arms Trade Treaty and by a sense of responsibility by the suppliers so that we do not have global military expenditure at the current height of 1,339 billion dollars.

We also have a huge fuel crisis. We know that today oil reached almost \$140 per barrel - and that despite Saudi Arabia’s decision to increase their production. Clearly, there is a need for alternate sources of energy other than the fossil fuels which have caused so many carbon emissions that they imperil the world and have caused what has been proved, through the Stern report here in Britain, and through the IPCC report globally, the climate change that we see coming in the next decade. And so, the fuel crisis has led to a fresh demand for the peaceful uses for nuclear energy, which under (NPT) Article IV is an inalienable right particularly for the non-nuclear weapon states, who have legally

The Urgency of Disarmament

renounced their option to acquire nuclear weapons, in order to remain non-nuclear weapon states and to be able to have the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Now, absent a firewall between the peaceful uses of energy and the non-peaceful uses of nuclear energy, there have been warnings raised, subjectively, with regard to certain countries acquiring peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We have to be cautious in approaching this. A number of proposals have been made internationally with regard to how the peaceful uses of nuclear energy could be regulated. We have within the NPT, we have Article III, which requires the non-nuclear weapons states to sign the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and that in the past has provided the confidence that countries are going to be strictly adhering to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

But after the clandestine weapons programme of Iraq was discovered by UNSCOM and the IAEA after the first Gulf War, we have had to be extremely circumspect. And an additional protocol was negotiated by the IAEA member states and is today available for countries to sign and ratify as strengthening the comprehensive safeguards and providing additional confidence to the international community that countries in receipt of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are in fact proceeding entirely to use that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes exclusively. Other proposals have been made, notably by Dr Mohammed El Baradei, with regard to a multilateral fuel cycle. This has got to be negotiated and accepted internationally. We are still at a preliminary stage. But there cannot be, I believe, any interference in the right of countries to have access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy in order to develop their own economies.

Not so long ago the International Atomic Energy Agency published a report, which took a look at how the IAEA could function in the decades ahead. And if I may quote from that report they said that full, strong partnerships are needed to forge a reinvigorated nuclear order: first, between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states; second, among nuclear technology and fuel cycle suppliers, states that want nuclear energy and the IAEA; third, among the states, the private sector and international agencies; and fourth, among developed countries, developing countries, international and

The Urgency of Disarmament

development institutes and the IAEA. What we really need to have, therefore, is a stronger global nuclear order, which again the same report identifies as featuring greatly expanded international co-operation and transparency, with new partnerships for nuclear energy, development, disarmament, non-proliferation, safety and security. This will help enable a safe and secure expansion of nuclear energy in those countries that seek it, helping to power a growing global economy while mitigating the threat of climate change. Secondly, making it possible for nuclear technologies to expand their role in saving lives, growing crops and providing jobs in the developing world. For indeed, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is not just in the provision of nuclear power, but in helping to make agriculture more productive, helping in the cause of saving lives in medicine and in numerous other ways. Thirdly, to reduce the dangers of nuclear accidents and nuclear terrorism and finally to provide a path towards dramatically reduced dangers to humanity from nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation.

And indeed that is one of the fundamental tasks before us. And I believe that the response to the three '-isms' that we have noted as being features of the current global situation, should in fact be multilateralism - effective multilateralism, co-operative multilateralism, and that is the only way to move forward. And the hallmark of a multilateral world order is the rule of law, and is the fact that there has to be equality and non-discrimination.

So we move on to some of the solutions to the problems before us. And as I said I see - using the term that Barrack Obama has used for his second book - an 'audacity of hope' that we can command, as we look at the future. New leaders have emerged in Europe in the last year. In this country you had a change of leadership at the Prime Minister level, in France we have a new President, in Germany there has already been a Chancellor for some time, and in Russia recently we have had a change of President. We have seen in Latin America a number of changes taking place. In Asia, the Chinese Communist Party had an important Congress last year and we can expect to have a general election in India next year. But perhaps most important of all, is the fact that in the only surviving superpower, we are going to have a crucial election on the 4th November this year. And whether it is Senator McCain who emerges as the President of the United States, or

The Urgency of Disarmament

whether it is Senator Barack Obama, the statements of both candidates indicate the fact that there is going to be change with regard to nuclear disarmament. And therefore we have every reason to prepare ourselves for that change that is going to take place. For the generation of political will does not take place within a vacuum. It takes place within a robust civil society, a strongly articulated public opinion, and that public opinion must be a global public opinion, and the United States will respond to that global public opinion.

We are seeing, as Dan Plesch said, a renaissance, a reawakening of disarmament. We need to have the agreements, the bi-lateral agreements between the Russian Federation and the United States, that expire - one of them on the 5th December 2009 and the other in 2012 - extended or replaced with new agreements that ensure deep, verifiable, and irreversible cuts in the nuclear arsenals of these two countries, who as I said before have 95% of the nuclear weapons of the world. We need to have the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty ratified by the nine outstanding countries who have either not signed or not ratified that important treaty which is emblematic of nuclear disarmament and which has always been regarded as the litmus test of nuclear disarmament. We have that treaty, requiring 44 basic signatures and ratifications before it can enter in to force. The verification system embedded in that treaty is ready and set to go. It has already proven its effectiveness in detecting the test by the DPRK not long ago. It is waiting for the ratification of these remaining nine countries before it can enter in to force. And I believe if the US Senate ratifies this CTBT next year, we will have a cascade of ratifications, which will enable us to see that treaty enter in to force.

We also need to have the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. This was a negotiation programme that was promised in 1995 when I presided over the NPT Review and Extension Conference, and is there in one of the decisions that formed the interlocking decisions together with the resolution of the Middle East that was adopted, as a total package. But it has been, unfortunately, ignored and we are still to achieve action. I think while we have something like 1370 tonnes of highly enriched uranium and over 200 tonnes of separated plutonium in the world, we

The Urgency of Disarmament

live in a very, very dangerous situation particularly since there are terrorist groups who are known to want to acquire this fissile material for their own nefarious purposes.

And so we need to not only eliminate highly enriched uranium, we also need to have this Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiated urgently. But we also need action urgently on the Arms Trade Treaty, which is at the moment undergoing study. We need action urgently on nuclear weapon free zones. And I am glad that the conference that is to take place tomorrow will look at the important area of the Middle East, as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction - the proposal made many years ago, by President Mubarak of Egypt, which still has to be achieved. And I would propose that the nuclear weapon states sign the protocols, have already concluded nuclear weapon free zones. There are a number of nuclear weapon free zones whose protocols await signature, notably the most recent Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ), which I worked hard to achieve whilst I was in the United Nations.

There is also the possibility that in the Arctic, with the melting of the summer ice in that part of the globe as a result of climate change, there will be increased competition for the resources in the Arctic seabed - oil, gas, diamonds and other minerals. There will be heightened maritime commercial activity, with countries in East Asia like China and Japan, choosing to adopt the Arctic route rather than go round the Cape of Good Hope or come through the Suez Canal. All this will cause increasing hazardous competition and not only will there be competing claims for areas that overlap -and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea may not be able to settle - but there could be a nuclear dimension to this rivalry. And therefore it is important that the two major nuclear weapon states, the US and Russia, reach some kind of constraint and as they did with regard to the Antarctic Treaty in 1959 -the first treaty which declared any geographical area to be nuclear weapon free- they should do the same with regard to the Arctic, because the repercussions of increased competition in the Arctic will be felt by the rest of the world.

We are also seeing changing power realities, and while I don't entirely agree with my friend Kishore Mabubhani in exaggerating the importance of Asia, there is clearly a shift

The Urgency of Disarmament

in the centre of gravity in global power. And we should be big enough to accept that, to accommodate that changing power shift, to accommodate a growing China and a growing India, so that they can take their rightful stage in the global situation. We also need I think to energize civil society, to take a more active interest. There was a time during the Cold War when the danger of nuclear weapons was felt intensely, when we had rehearsals for nuclear raids, and when we had the whole world demonstrating against nuclear weapons. Indeed it was civil society that helped to have the first move towards banning nuclear weapon tests and this led, in 1963, to the Partial Test-Ban Treaty. But we need now to once again re-awaken the sensibility of civil society to the dangers that exist because we have had more nuclear weapon states than before and we have the new prospect of terrorist groups acquiring nuclear weapons.

But what are the immediate steps that we can take? I was privileged to be associated with some of my colleagues under the leadership of Dr. Hans Blix, to come out with the Weapons of Mass Destruction Report. This report contains a number of eminently practical proposals for achieving the outlawing of nuclear weapons. I know Margaret Thatcher once told us that nuclear weapons could not be 'dis-invented' and the nuclear weapon free world was a pie in the sky. But in fact we are not asking for weapons to be 'dis-invented', but we are calling for the de-legitimation of certain categories of weapons. Because nuclear, biological and chemical weapons are all weapons of mass destruction, whose unrivalled lethality is such that they can cause the extermination of the human species, they can cause irreversible damage to the ecology that sustains human life and they could cause genetic effects that could be again of permanent damage to the survival of the human race. And so these weapons are in a very special category, they are weapons of terror. And we have been able to outlaw biological weapons, through the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972. We have been able to outlaw chemical weapons, through the Chemical Weapons Convention. And what remains is for us now is to outlaw nuclear weapons. Because it is only through the total elimination of this category of weapons that you will ensure proliferation will not take place. Because if there are no nuclear weapons, they cannot proliferate, it is as simple as that.

The Urgency of Disarmament

We need of course to have verification of a weapon free world. We need to have civil society mobilized for this purpose and we have to have the scientific community organised. And this is where Pugwash, with its vast pool of expertise among the scientific community, has been able to make a contribution. I think we need to seize this moment. We have in the United States already the four retired statesmen - George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, from the Republican Party, and William Perry and Sam Nunn from the Democratic Party - writing two persuasive editorials in the Wall Street Journal (not the most liberal of journals). And none of these four were associated with the call for nuclear disarmament, but in the autumn of their lives they have realised the urgency of trying to achieve a nuclear weapon free world. And while of course there have been others in the past who have recanted their pro-nuclear weapon views, like Robert McNamara and General Lee Butler, these four gentlemen have got a solid team of experts working behind them in the Hoover Institute in Stanford University. And they have been able to convince a number of other outstanding leaders in the United States of both parties that the US must lead the world in nuclear disarmament. And these views have percolated in to the US Presidential campaign and, as I have said before, they are views that are shared by both Senator McCain and Senator Obama. And so we will be in a situation where, as the great bard of this country, Shakespeare said, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune" - and we must grasp that moment.

Let me conclude by saying that John F Kennedy, as President, envisaged in the early 1960's a scenario where there would be 20- 25 nuclear weapon states. Happily, that scenario has not been fulfilled. But we still have eight, perhaps nine, nuclear weapon states and a number of other states who want to be nuclear weapon states, apart from the terrorist groups who want to acquire nuclear weapons. So 45 years later, we still have an opportunity for preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons and preventing the cascading proliferation that threatens us. And so, let me conclude again with the words of Albert Einstein/Bertrand Russell manifesto: "Remember your humanity - eliminate nuclear weapons."

Thank you.

The Urgency of Disarmament

Dan Plesch:

‘Jayantha has kindly agreed to take a few questions, and then I hope you will join us for a reception afterwards. John Finney from Pugwash also has a presentation to make which you might like to come and do now before we take the questions John’

John Finney:

John Finney mentions 2008 is the centenary year of Joseph Rotblat's birth, and that Joseph Rotblat was particularly concerned to motivate young people. To celebrate this, the British Pugwash Group launched an annual national essay competition. A first year physics student at UCL, Emmet Farragher, won the 2008 competition, which carries the first place prize of £500. “And so it is my pleasure to present a prize now to Emmet Farragher.” [applause]

“Congratulations.”

Dan Plesch:

‘Well the floor is now open and I’m sure Jayantha will invite questions...’

QUESTIONS INAUDIBLE.

Responses from Jayantha Dhanapala:

Response to Question 1:

Having served in the first committee of the UN General Assembly I am aware that there has been for many years a resolution adopted in the General Assembly overwhelmingly, about having a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East. With regard to Israel, as you know they have had a policy of neither confirming nor denying their nuclear weapon capability. There have recently statements by members of the government, whether it is an official statement of the Israeli government or not, remains unclear, and perhaps there

The Urgency of Disarmament

are more experts on the Middle East situation here in the audience who can add to this discussion. There have not been official Israeli government declarations but perhaps leaks, whether inspired or not, again one is not clear about. And so, this is part of the war of nerves, the psychological war you may call it, but whatever it is, most experts in the world regard Israel as a de facto state armed with nuclear weapons. It is not called a nuclear weapon state because that is an appellation that is confined to the five countries within the NPT Treaty. Whether this will trigger an arms race, I hope not. What we must try to aspire to is to first of all bring down the level of nuclear weapons that is held in the world and eliminate them totally so that there will not be this desire on the part of other countries to acquire nuclear weapons, because as both the Canberra Commission and the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission said incontrovertibly, the very fact that you have some countries with nuclear weapons and who arrogate to themselves the right to have these weapons exclusively, you will always have other states who also want to acquire these weapons in order to equalise their advantages in international peace and security and to ensure that there is a level field as far as peace and security is concerned. So a short answer to your question again, I hope that it will not be a provocation that we can all work towards eliminating nuclear weapons rather than creating a dangerous situation of having more and more nuclear weapon states.

Response to Question 2:

It can be made an excuse to nuclear disarmament in order to justify the continued retention, by some sense, of nuclear weapons but it is in fact not a valid {excuse} in fact it should be a spur to nuclear disarmament and that is what I was trying to say throughout my lecture. Let me add something that I omitted to do and that is, the project that SOAS has on disarmament and globalisation in which I have myself been personally involved. And the short term for that project is SCRRAP. It's a very evocative word; it stands for the Strategic Concept for Reduction and Removal of Arms Proliferation. But what is important about it is it adopts this synoptic view, the holistic view of international affairs by combining international security, development and international law, in order to achieve the disarmament renaissance that we have been talking about. And it is in fact a

The Urgency of Disarmament

broad, full spectrum approach. It is an agenda that derives from many of the programmes already in existence, the Thirteen Steps of the 2000 NPT review conference, the New Agenda Coalition, the Blix Commission report in which I participated, the Seven Nation Initiative and of course the recent Hoover Plan of the four gentlemen I mentioned to you. We have of course the importance of sustainable development for the developing world and for the growth of the global economy and this assumes that there is a common security, and it can only be achieved by systematically addressing questions from the productions of nuclear weapons in the context of sustainable development and seeing the fundamental interconnection between disarmament and development. So I would commend this programme to you beyond this lecture and beyond the workshop that we have, as being an all embracing programme of action that can encompass the important issues that confront the world, such as proliferation of weaponry whether nuclear or conventional, the development problems as well as climate change.

Response to Question 3:

First of all – will Obama or McCain ensure that there will be disarmament, apart from nuclear disarmament? Clearly, the military industrial complex, which was identified by President Eisenhower, is still alive and kicking in United States and many other countries and they will have their lobbies working overtime to ensure that there is a heightened demand for their products. But I do believe that there is today such a strong and overwhelming public opinion against these arms that nuclear weapons certainly will have every prospect of being reduced under these two gentlemen whoever becomes the President.

As far as conventional weapons are concerned I think there will be a strong move certainly to reduce the current levels of expenditure. And if, as Obama has promised under his Presidency, there will be a withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, certainly in one arena they are going to have a substantial reduction in the demand for weaponry and therefore a substantial reduction in the military expenditure of the United States. I think it will require, of course, sustained campaigning on the part of civil society groups for us to achieve the progress to persuade the United States to sign the Mine Ban Convention, to

The Urgency of Disarmament

sign the Cluster Munitions Treaty and to make other agreements. There is the CFE, which awaits full implementation. There is the outer space area in which a great deal of work needs to be done. And there has to be a substantial curtailing of the ballistic missile defence programme, particularly the components of it in Czech Republic and Poland, which are a provocation to the Russian Federation and which needs to be addressed by whoever succeeds Mr Bush.

Response to Question 4:

Article 4, certainly the whole point about Article 4 is that the nuclear weapon states were expected, together with those who have the capability in developed countries, to assist non nuclear weapon states in the transfer of technology and materials so that they could exercise their inalienable right to have the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. And there have been a number of developing countries who have obtained these peaceful uses of nuclear energy, through the NPT and the IAEA has been able to supervise their exercise of that inalienable right. What we are talking about now is the fact that there is growing concern about one or two countries and as a consequence there is an attempt to erect some kind of additional controls that were not envisaged in the NPT with regard to the transfer of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Response to Question 5:

On the question that you raised, Madam, well I think the whole point is that when you have a situation of a total elimination of a weapon which is effectively verified, then the prospect of even a rogue nation defying that international law becomes extremely difficult, particularly since you cannot hide permanently the development of the elaborate infrastructure you need for developing a nuclear weapon. And so the Security Council or the international community will very soon find ways and means, if they are unable to persuade that country to abandon its plans, to ensure that that country observes this international law.

The Urgency of Disarmament

Dan Plesch:

‘Well I think we can continue the discussion informally at the reception, so I would like you to join with me in thanking His Excellency, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, so much for such an incredibly useful and erudite presentation. Thank you.’