

The International Context, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Role of Parliamentarians

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I'd like to open by paying tribute to two wonderful people who were dedicated advocates for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons and who passed away recently. I'd like to honour Icoho Ito, Mayor of Nagasaki, President of the Japan Association of Nuclear Free Local Authorities and the Vice-President of Mayors for Peace, who was shot and killed earlier this week as he was campaigning for re-election. Mayor Ito worked closely with the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament building collaborative efforts of mayors and parliamentarians in the quest for a nuclear weapons free world.

I would also like to honour Janet Bloomfield, Co-Director of Atomic Mirror, former Chair of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the United Kingdom and one of the founders of Abolition 2000, the international network of over 2000 organisations calling for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons through a global nuclear weapons convention – or treaty. Janet passed away suddenly last week. A number of people who might otherwise have been here are attending her funeral today.

I apologise if this is a rather somber note on which to start my presentation. Both Mayor Ito and Janet were seriously dedicated to nuclear abolition, but also they both had a great sense of humour, hope and humanity in their work. In our considerations today may we also mix a seriousness about the importance of our task – to rid the world of the threat of nuclear weapons – with a sense of optimism and some good fun.

The 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco (the Latin American NWFZ Treaty) was held in Mexico on February 14th. In the US this is also Valentines Day – a day to celebrate romance. So Janet's organization Atomic Mirror 'romanced' the delegates with chocolates and Valentines Day cards, and invited the rest of the

world to send NWFZ Valentines cards over the year 2007 – 2008 as a stepping stone towards a nuclear weapons free world. In a time when it is hard to get media and public attention on the vital issue of nuclear threats, such fun and innovative activities are welcome.



But to return to the serious nature of the topic for this session – the international context, the current state of play of the NPT and the role of parliamentarians – let me start with a couple of recent developments.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in one of his final major speeches before retiring from office, said the greatest danger requiring action is that of nuclear weapons. *“Even a single bomb can destroy an entire city, as we know from the terrible example of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and today, there are bombs many times as powerful as those. These weapons pose a unique threat to humanity as a whole.”*

Annan criticized countries for talking this issue selectively and from two polarized paths. One of these is promoted by the ‘non-proliferation first’ advocates (including the Nuclear Weapon

possessing States) who take no action on their own stockpiles but attempt to prevent anyone else from acquiring nuclear weapons. The other path pursued by the 'disarmament first' advocates who are hesitant to support stronger non-proliferation measures while the NWS make no progress on disarmament.

Annan expressed concern that because of inaction, the world is not only "sleepwalking towards disaster. In truth, it is worse than that – we are asleep at the controls of a fast-moving aircraft. Unless we wake up and take control, the outcome is all too predictable."

On January 17 the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved the hands of their Doomsday Clock closer to midnight. The Clock indicates, in the view of eminent scientists, how close we are to a catastrophe that could destroy civilization. It now stands at 5 minutes to midnight.



The move was made because of the growing risks from climate change and a growing threat from nuclear weapons including North Korea joining the nuclear club, Iran possibly on its way to doing so, an increased readiness by existing nuclear weapon powers to use nuclear weapons, and an increased propensity to use military force to deal with nuclear proliferation issues.

Mathematician Stephen Hawking, at the press conference announcing the Doomsday Clock change, noted; "As scientists, we understand the dangers of nuclear weapons and their devastating effect, and we are learning how human

activities and technologies are affecting climate systems in ways that may forever change life on Earth. As citizens of the world, we have a duty to alert the public to the unnecessary risks that we live with every day, and to the perils we foresee if governments and societies do not take action now to render nuclear weapons obsolete and to prevent further climate change."

This move provides an opportunity for parliamentarians to act on the more general aspect of nuclear dangers and the need for action towards a nuclear weapons free world. UK MP Dai Davies and 27 other MPs, for example, followed-up the Bulletin announcement with an Early Day Motion highlighting the Doomsday Clock and concluding that "the retention of British nuclear weapons of mass destruction further exacerbates the global security problem."

On January 4 this year US conservative leaders George Schultz (Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan) and Henry Kissinger (Secretary of State under Richard Nixon) joined moderates William Perry (Secretary of Defense under Bill Clinton) and Sam Nunn (Former Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee) in a call to end nuclear deterrence and pave the way for a nuclear weapons free world.

In an editorial entitled [A World Free of Nuclear Weapons](#), published by the Wall Street Journal, the men asserted that "Nuclear weapons **were** essential to maintaining international security during the Cold War because they were a means of deterrence," but that "reliance on nuclear weapons for this purpose is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective."



COMMENTARY

A World Free of Nuclear Weapons

By GEORGE P. SHULTZ, WILLIAM J. PERRY, HENRY A. KISSINGER and SAM NUNN

January 4, 2007; Page A15

The called on US leaders to envision how to achieve a nuclear weapons free world and that “Reassertion of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons would be a bold initiative consistent with America's moral heritage.”

Public opinion in the United States, other nuclear weapons States, and indeed all over the world, has favoured nuclear abolition for some time now. Opinion polls in the US, UK, France, Japan, India, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Russia and more have indicated public support for nuclear abolition and a nuclear weapons convention at 75% or above. But the political leadership in NWS and their allies has dragged behind this sentiment, erring towards the so-called realist perspective (which could be more accurately described as a defeatist perspective) that nuclear disarmament is desirable but not possible in the current political context.

The Doomsday Clock move indicates the danger in this approach. The Wall Street Journal article calls for a visionary problem solving approach to achieve a nuclear weapons free world, rather than a defeatist approach accepting the status quo.

Some other recent initiatives give substance to this problem solving approach. The Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, chaired by Hans Blix, studied the issue of nuclear weapons along with biological and chemical weapons, and came up with a number of practical measures that could be taken now to move the world towards nuclear abolition.

A consortium of lawyers, scientists and disarmament experts went further and drafted a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention in 1997 outlining the legal, technical and political elements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear weapons free world. This Model NWC has recently been updated and will be re-released on April 30 at the NPT Prep Com, along with the book *Securing our Survival: The Case for a Nuclear Weapons Convention*.



So where does the NPT fit in these developments? Is it a useful forum for ensuring a balanced and effective approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament or is it seriously flawed? I would say a bit of both.

The NPT contains a core bargain on nonproliferation and disarmament that reflects a basic reality, i.e. that you cannot expect States to indefinitely restrain themselves from acquiring nuclear weapons if other States retain the right to possess them indefinitely. Thus, the NPT requires both non-proliferation and disarmament. The bargain is a good one. The problem is in selective implementation and the lack of teeth in the NPT to enforce implementation of the disarmament obligation.

Thus, we should continue to highlight the NPT and its joint obligations of nonproliferation and disarmament. We should be there at the meetings to challenge States to implement both sides of the bargain. But we cannot rely solely on the NPT to deliver the goods. We must also take other actions.

At the 2000 NPT Review Conference the political climate plus good advocacy and diplomacy, produced a very good final document with 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. In 2005 it was obvious to many of us that agreement would not be reached due to a widening split between some of the NWS who were retracting from 2000 agreements and extending their nuclear doctrine, and some non-NWS that were keen on developing proliferation sensitive nuclear technology. Thus, in 2005 many of us looked at what could be done outside the NPT that would not require agreement by all States Parties. This included:

- Cross-party resolutions in the US Congress on non-proliferation and disarmament and in other parliaments like Belgium on such issues as removal of tactical nuclear weapons,
- strengthening the existing NWFZs through the first ever conference of States Parties to NWFZs which was held in Mexico,
- establishment of new nuclear weapons free zones in particular one in Central Asia,
- building the public vision of a nuclear weapons free world through engagement of over 1000 mayors in the nuclear abolition campaign,
- injecting the nuclear weapons issue back into the media through op ed pieces and presentations in the United Nations, US Congress and other parliaments by high level people including Jimmy Carter, Ted Turner, Robert MacNamara, Ted Sorenson, Mikhael Gorbachev and Jane Goodall and by the largest public anti-nuclear demonstration in New York since 1982, and
- encouraging diplomats to explore the requirements for a nuclear-weapons free world through an open-ended NPT working paper – later to be followed up by the establishment of the Article VI Forum – an ongoing diplomatic forum for exploring these ideas.

For the forthcoming NPT prep com and leading up to the NPT Review in 2010, I believe that parliamentarians need to continue this two-track approach – on the one hand getting involved in the NPT process, but also taking initiatives at national, regional and international levels to advance nuclear disarmament.

This could include parliamentary resolutions, like the one introduced into the US Congress by Democratic Presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich calling for the US to take a leadership in negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention.

It could include further parliamentary actions calling for the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe and the establishment of a European NWFZ.

It could include endorsing the mayors and parliamentarians joint statement encouraging the United Nations General Assembly or the UN Conference on Disarmament to commence nuclear disarmament negotiations.

It could include the promotion of a NWFZ in the Middle East that would restrict proliferation sensitive technology such as uranium enrichment as well as provide a process for Israel to abandon the nuclear option with security guarantees.

The Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament, a non-partisan network of nearly 500 members in 68 countries, can help parliamentarians learn about issues and developments, share ideas and initiatives, become engaged in international disarmament forums, and develop collaborative actions.

We are there to serve you – the legislators of the world, and we invite you to make use of what we offer in order to ensure that our visions of a safe nuclear weapons free world do not remain just dreams but become the reality for our children.