

Disarmament and Security:

A New Latin American and Caribbean Agenda for the Next Millennium

The Role of the United Nations in Disarmament and the Search for Peace

by

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Excellencies

Ambassador Jorge Valdez, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru

Ambassador Enrique Roman-Morey, Secretary-General of OPANAL

Distinguished participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be present on this occasion to discuss disarmament and security issues with you. The initiative to undertake this joint event, as a co-operative effort between the Government of Peru, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) and the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs through its Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) is very opportune as the century, and indeed also the millennium, draws to a close. We are now a decade beyond the end of the cold war. It is certainly timely to reflect on the past, take stock of our achievements, and look towards the future. We must ask ourselves: "What has the international community accomplished in the last ten years, to secure peace? What more needs to be done in order to establish and maintain *sustainable peace* and *sustainable disarmament* regionally and globally?"

Treaty-building and consolidation

The international community has achieved some significant breakthroughs in the area of weapons of mass destruction and of conventional weapons – breakthroughs in which countries of this region have played a part.

- Through a series of bilateral negotiations on strategic arms reductions, resulting in the START I and START II Treaties, significant reductions have been made in the nuclear arsenals of the Russian Federation and the United States.
- The Conference on Disarmament successfully carried through to conclusion two important sets of negotiations on weapons of mass destruction:
 - The first, relating to chemical weapons, resulted in the Chemical Weapons Convention. This comprehensive ban on an entire category of weapons of mass destruction entered into force in 1997, and is now being implemented by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a body provided for in the Convention.
 - The second, relating to nuclear testing, resulted in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was opened for signature in 1996. The Treaty specifies 44 countries that must ratify it before it can enter into force. So far, only 26 of the 44, among them two of the nuclear-weapon States, France and the United Kingdom, have ratified.
- In 1995, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was extended for an indefinite period and steps were taken to strengthen its review process.

- In 1995 the parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons concluded an additional protocol, Protocol IV, on Blinding Laser Weapons, which prohibits the use and transfer of laser weapons specifically designed to cause permanent blindness. That Protocol entered into force in July 1998.
- In 1996 the parties to the same Convention concluded a partial ban on anti-personnel landmines by amending the existing Protocol II. The amended Protocol entered into force in December 1998.
- In 1997, following a remarkably short period of intense negotiations known as the "Ottawa process", the Mine-Ban Convention – a comprehensive prohibition covering use, stockpiling, production and transfer, and mandating destruction of existing mines -- was concluded. The Convention entered into force in March 1999.
- Since 1995, the parties to the Biological Weapons Convention have been carrying out negotiations in Geneva with a view to strengthening the Convention, specifically, to including a protocol containing verification measures.

Trends

The international community is becoming increasingly aware of and concerned over the tragic human toll exacted by small arms and light weapons – the principal victims being women and children -- in ongoing conflicts in which the UN is involved. At the current session of the General Assembly, two reports on these issues were submitted by the Secretary-General: one a follow-up to the 1997 report on small arms, and another studying the problem of ammunition and explosives. In response to States requesting assistance, the UN is organizing programmes for the voluntary collection and destruction of weapons, which incorporate an important development component. I myself have participated closely in the evolution of such a programme in Albania.

A UN Conference will convene in 2001 to examine specifically issues related to the *illicit* trade in small arms and light weapons.

Over the past ten years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of verification of compliance in building confidence in treaties. The two recent treaties I mentioned, the CWC and the CTBT, have incorporated rigorous verification regimes in their provisions. As I also mentioned, the parties to an older treaty, the BWC, are now negotiating a verification protocol. Civil society is also contributing in an unofficial capacity to the monitoring of agreements, especially the Mine-Ban Convention.

Where there is no legal instrument, transparency measures also serve as valuable confidence-building measures. The Department of Disarmament Affairs encourages Member States to participate in two transparency instruments: the Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures.

Challenges

In spite of the undeniable advances made since the end of the cold war, there are disturbing trends. They have harmed the general climate for negotiation and are reflected in the difficulties experienced by the Conference on Disarmament in establishing a programme of work and, especially, in initiating negotiations on a fissile material treaty.

START II has not entered into force and there are no further real negotiations going on at this point. The United States plans to develop a national missile defence system have raised concerns in many quarters. The Russian Federation and China, in particular, have expressed concerns about the continuing validity of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which has served as a cornerstone of strategic stability for almost two decades. The Secretary-General has, on a number of occasions, spoken of the need for multilaterally negotiated norms against the spread of ballistic missile technology, with a view to reducing the threat posed by ballistic missiles and to improving prospects for progress in disarmament negotiations, including prevention of an arms race in outer space. Concerns regarding the ABM Treaty and missile developments figured prominently in the First Committee debate on draft resolutions, which are being voted upon today by the General Assembly.

Next April, the parties to the Nuclear-Non-Proliferation Treaty will meet. That Conference, the first since the 1995 Conference, already mentioned, will reveal how successful the parties have been in strengthening the review process that they instituted. It must be admitted that the measures identified in the decision on principles and objectives agreed to in 1995 have been only partially realized, and that there is widespread disappointment at the pace with which the nuclear-weapon States are carrying out their part of the obligations set out in article VI of the Treaty. A positive outcome of the Conference is crucial to further progress in nuclear disarmament, as nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin.

The end of all disarmament efforts is not the utopian goal of the total elimination of all weapons. However, it must mean the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. For other categories of weapons, the goal must be reduction to the lowest level of armament commensurate with legitimate self-defence. The countries of the world, working at the global and regional level, must pursue efforts in this direction with determination if they are to be free to develop the social and economic lives of their citizens and to save them from the suffering they endured in the present century.

One of the most important contributions to the enhancement of both regional and global security over the past three decades has been the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Within the last four years, two more regions – Southeast Asia and Africa – have followed the example of Latin America and the Caribbean and established nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the Central Asian States are in the process of negotiating such a zone with the active support of the United Nations. Also in the nuclear field, it is important to note that of the 44 countries worldwide whose ratifications are required before the CTBT can enter into force, six are Latin American States, and of these six, four have already ratified. A fifth State is expected to ratify later this year, sending a clear message to the world of the determination of countries in the region to do away with nuclear weapons.

It is well understood that regional and global approaches to issues of disarmament and security complement each other. One regional organization that operates close to the grass roots of daily life and has made a significant contribution to peace and security in Latin America is the Organization of American States (OAS). The wide scope of its activities shows that countries of this region recognise the need to collectively discuss, elaborate and implement security-related measures that touch the lives of their citizens every day. The *Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, and Explosives, and Other Related Materials*, negotiated by the OAS, has provided the international community with a clear example of what can be achieved when political will and practical work combine to address security problems in the region. There are discussions under way today on how to adapt the principles and provisions agreed upon in this Convention so as to create global norms on this and related issues.

At the bilateral level, the Peru-Ecuador peace process provides innovative and daring features. It does not confine peace efforts to the negotiating table nor peace dividends to governments. It extends them to the community level, incorporating in agreements a significant degree of development activity and identifying the roles that international and other organizations can play. By pursuing initiatives that involve governments, non-governmental organizations, industry and the local community, peace is given a better chance to be durable. The determination of Chile and Argentina and, more recently, of Peru and Chile to resolve differences peacefully provides further confirmation that there exists today a consciousness in Latin America and the Caribbean of the absolute need to settle inter-State problems without violence.

We all know how difficult it was to solve some of the internal problems in the heart of Central America, but a long and tedious road finally led to peace treaties – a fact that should offer some hope for the resolution of other conflict situations in the region and the world. It should be noted, however, that it is necessary to continue to monitor the peace-building process and to support the Central American States as they develop democratic societies. The number of small arms remaining after the end of conflicts in the region is one source of particular concern.

Disarmament and security are dynamic phenomena that evolve continuously. We must, therefore, stop and reflect on how to improve the way we deal with these issues today and how we, collectively or individually, should address them tomorrow. The reassessment of the past and the realignment of our efforts for the future entail taking a fresh look at the rationale driving disarmament and security measures. This process of reflection will enable us to renew our efforts and redouble our determination to deal with *old* and *new* challenges in the coming era with courage and creativity.

We are living in a changing world, so I am happy to see interest in the region in refining collective and individual thinking on what could constitute a regional disarmament and security agenda for the future. A variety of issues related to both regional and global perspectives will be addressed during this Seminar, and it appears appropriate that, in the course of the next two days, we will:

- Analyse what was the focus of Latin American and Caribbean disarmament and security

concerns at the latest sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, and how the region will prepare itself for the upcoming Millennium Assembly;

- Assess current and prospective multilateral agreements and the role that countries in the region could play to strengthen security concepts and initiatives. The rich agenda of this Seminar clearly shows that enhancing security is not simply a matter of analysing one or two issues, but rather requires a multifaceted approach encompassing not only weapons systems, but also political, financial and social dimensions;
- Deepen understanding of the relationship between peace, disarmament and development and of its utmost importance in the debate on bilateral and subregional security issues.

If we reflect over the past ten years, it is clear that a constructive new feature in the security debate has been the inclusion of more actors. The active participation of non-governmental organizations, research institutes, the media and other entities of civil society is growing, and it appears essential to assert the legitimate role they can play in strengthening national and regional security.

It also appears essential to spend some time in devising new co-operative ventures between various regional and subregional organizations. It was with this in view that countries of the region went to the General Assembly in 1997 and requested the Secretary-General to revitalize the three United Nations Regional Centres, among them the Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The unstinted co-operation of the Government of Peru has been invaluable in reviving the Centre. The Lima Regional Centre now provides an additional platform for co-operation in the region and between regions. I would like to stress that the name of the Centre reflects concern not only for peace and disarmament, but also for development. One of the goals of our activity is to explore how disarmament can, in very practical ways, contribute to social and economic development. The Centre undertakes a very rich programme, including outreach to the general public.

- In June of this year, the Centre organized a regional seminar on trafficking in small arms, which helped to convey national and regional perspectives on the matter to the General Assembly and other forums where issues of small arms are being debated. Activity in this subject area will certainly increase in the months ahead, as the international community prepares for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for 2001.
- Last week, the Centre started a series of workshops in co-operation with the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Both the Centre and the Commission invited police and customs officials from South American countries and Mexico to build awareness and to promote the adoption of the provisions of CICAD's 1997 Model Regulations, which will govern the import, export and in-transit of firearms, their acquisition and ammunition in the region. A follow-up event is expected to take place in Martinique, bringing together Central American and Caribbean officials early next year;
- Today, as you can see, the Lima Centre is co-operating with both the Government of Peru and OPANAL to provide a new forum for debate on conceptualizing and implementing disarmament and security initiatives;

- I was pleased to learn that the Centre has been invited to co-operate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the convening of the *First Meeting of Latin America and Caribbean National Authorities for the Chemical Weapons Convention*, to take place in Lima during the first quarter of 2000; and
- In the last quarter of next year, the Centre, responding to another invitation, will co-sponsor, with the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a seminar on *International Cooperation and National Implementation/Ratification Procedures* related to the CTBT.

As you can see, the horizon of activities for the Lima Regional Centre is very promising, and it is already clear that the request made by countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to revitalize the Centre was truly justified. The Centre stands a real chance of mobilizing human, material and financial resources and of being a catalyst and an instrument for facilitating the implementation of innovative ideas in the region. However, none of these goals can be reached if there is no real commitment of political will and financial means to work with the United Nations. The tools to address regional and global security available in the region today are more comprehensive than ever; the opportunity to use these tools fully to accomplish these goals is before us: let us start the practical work that all of you have long envisaged and fought so hard to support.

I wish you a constructive and fruitful Seminar appraising the opportunities and challenges for disarmament and security in the next millennium. Thank you.