

**REMARKS UPON ACCEPTING
THE ALAN CRANSTON PEACE AWARD**

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Excellencies, friends and comrades -- not in arms of course -- but in the cause of disarmament,

I am truly overwhelmed and humbled by the honour you are bestowing on me today. But, more importantly and before you honour me, we are -- all of us -- honouring the memory of Senator Alan Cranston who worked so tirelessly and tenaciously for nuclear disarmament. I recall my many meetings with him -- in Washington while I was Ambassador for my country and later here in New York in my present capacity. Unbowed by age and undaunted by setbacks, Alan Cranston fought courageously for his conviction that the nuclear weapon was, simply, evil and had to be eliminated from our world. Gathering the signatures of former military and political leaders worldwide, lobbying governments and addressing focus groups, he campaigned vigorously till his death. The establishment of an award in his memory by the Global Security Institute he founded and led, keeps alive the idealism and vision, which sparkled in him. It is a huge privilege to be its first recipient.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have long believed that the most durable achievements in public policy are best realized through institutions rather than individuals. It was Jean Monnet -- the architect of today's European Union -- who once said that while nothing is *possible* without people, nothing is *lasting* without institutions. Twice in my professional career it has been my privilege to work for this unique institution -- the United Nations -- first as Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and now as the head of the Department of Disarmament Affairs re-established in 1998 by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose encouragement and guidance have been invaluable.

Let us recall that the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in January 1946 was on disarmament, and since then the United Nations has been at the forefront of the global campaign for nuclear disarmament. Most recently, the aspirations of Governments and civil society were articulated in the historic Millennium Declaration, in a solemn pledge "To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers."

Immediately preceding the Millennium Summit, the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference adopted a far-reaching Declaration setting out thirteen steps to achieve nuclear disarmament leading to the elimination of this omnicidal weapon which alone has the unique and grotesque capability of rendering all humankind and its environment extinct.

Today, however, we meet in cheerless times. The fact is that the gulf between declarations and deeds especially in the field of disarmament is alarming. In the 57 years since the nuclear weapon was first used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki the danger of such terrible weapons being used again has at times seemed unimaginable and yet also so fearfully close. On 27 February this year the Doomsday Clock maintained by the Chicago-based Bulletin of The Atomic Scientists was moved forward to just 7 minutes to midnight symbolizing that we are again moving closer to nuclear conflict.

We had hoped that with the end of the Cold War, the role of nuclear weapons would also end. More than a decade since the fall of the Berlin Wall we are estimated to have over 30,000 nuclear warheads many of them on alert launch-on-warning status. We have had two more countries defiantly announcing that they have crossed the nuclear threshold. The world protested then and appears now to have acquiesced. Based on a well-founded fear of the impact of the development and testing of nuclear weapons on human health and our common natural environment, civil society helped to bring the issue to the negotiating table. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was finally concluded in 1996. The confident assurance of that achievement contributed to a large extent to my ability to craft the decision on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and its adoption without a vote. We were also told in 1995 that unless we had the certainty of a permanent NPT we could have no probability of nuclear disarmament.

Yet seven years later --

- we have not had the entry into force of the CTBT and
- we have not seen any fresh nuclear disarmament treaties.

Instead we have --

- the prospect of the demise of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM);
- the fear that nuclear tests may be conducted in the future;
- plans for the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear weapon states; and
- the development of improved nuclear weapons.

The nuclear disarmament issue remains for the most part buried under the welter of countless global problems -- the most recent being terrorism. But the very prospect of the terrorist use of nuclear weapons must be a wake up call to us all to return to the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons. The alternative to the international rule of law can only be anarchy. We have seen, especially in Afghanistan, what that can do in a failed state and its impact on global order. A failed global order would be too horrible to imagine.

In a Charter-based world where the resort to force is renounced in favour of the pacific settlement of disputes, weapons derive their legitimacy only because of their possible use for individual or collective self-defence - a right guaranteed by Article 51 of the UN Charter. By that token the nuclear weapon by virtue of its massive lethality, like other weapons of mass destruction, is, in my personal view, totally illegitimate and immoral. The 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) recognized this. There is the all too trite argument that nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented and therefore we must acquiesce in their existence -- confined of course to the existing nuclear weapon states -- in a situation of nuclear apartheid. Let us debunk that once and for all. We have also not disinvented biological weapons or chemical weapons. But we have delegitimized them by international conventions. We can and must do the same with nuclear weapons. Failure to do so saps our moral right to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I was a member of the 1996 Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and I recall one of its most cogent passages, which said "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 history of the nuclear weapon is a record of the steady proliferation of its possession held in check only by the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. But NPT treaty parties may be like the legendary Dutch boy with his finger in the hole of the dyke. We will be overtaken by disaster unless a concerted and coordinated effort is made to take the first credible steps in nuclear

disarmament since START II. Pursued without progress on disarmament, non-proliferation will inevitably become an exercise in futility.

An opportunity presents itself when the two mightiest nuclear weapon states have their Presidents meet in Moscow in May. The agreement that comes out of that meeting must include concrete cuts in nuclear weapons arsenals in a legally binding, irreversible and verifiable pact. The world needs to see nuclear weapons being destroyed, not relocated. We can only hope that that agreement places nuclear disarmament back on the rails. It is appropriate that those who announced the death of arms control should contribute to its resurrection. If this fails the NPT may go down in history as a broken contract.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I have spent the greater part of my professional career in disarmament. Coming from a region and a culture deeply imbued with the non-violent ideals of the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi, I have watched with anguish increasing levels of violence in my own country and the advent of the nuclear weapon in my own region. I was once described, by a well-intentioned colleague, as a maximalist. I make no apologies for being that. I cannot be otherwise when it comes to nuclear weapons. Yet no one seriously expects total disarmament or unilateral disarmament overnight. Incremental progress in nuclear disarmament with verification is a pragmatic necessity so that nations can be assured of their security. But there has been no serious implementation of the nuclear disarmament commitments made in the NPT, the Preamble of the CTBT, the Final Declaration of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the Millennium Declaration. The disarmament community must therefore rekindle the public campaign for nuclear disarmament.

May I conclude by paying a sincere tribute to NGOs like the Global Security Institute, which have steadfastly maintained their campaign for a nuclear-free, disarmed and secure world amidst increasingly difficult times. A fortnight ago, I invited Nobel laureate Jody Williams to speak at a disarmament conference in Beijing. She concluded her inspiring address by saying --

"Too often we 'idealists' are told that the real world is a cold, hard, and unforgiving place and that to ensure peace we must prepare for war. That is not a view that this idealist will accept. My view of realism is that you get what you prepare for. If we want to build a peaceful world, we must prepare for peace. If we want to live in a world with a meaningful agenda for disarmament in this century, civil society, like-minded governments, international agencies and the United Nations must forge a partnership to ensure that our 'idealistic' vision becomes the new reality."

That coalition building has begun. The presence here of Jane GoDDAll -- the Secretary-General's latest Messenger of Peace -- and others is testimony of this. Disarmament is pre-eminently a humanitarian endeavour for the protection of the human rights of people and their survival. We have to see the campaign for nuclear disarmament as analogous to the campaigns

such as those against slavery, for gender equality and for the abolition of child labour. It will be a hard, uphill struggle but, eventually, we shall overcome!