

Multilateral Approaches to WMD Threats After September 11

by
Jayantha Dhanapala
Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs
United Nations



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Introduction

I would like to begin by thanking the Arms Control Association for honouring me as the speaker at your annual luncheon -- my first chance to address the association since my remarks at your annual dinner in 1996. I predicted then that the prospects for nuclear disarmament -- despite the success of the NPT Review and Extension Conference and the imminent conclusion of the CTBT -- were "not good." Looking around at the debris of multilateral disarmament endeavours, I am surprised to be invited again! But I must congratulate Daryl Kimball upon his assumption of the position of Executive Director of this highly-respected institution, and do predict confidently that the prospects today for the Association are good. I also pay tribute to the many years of service rendered by Spurgeon Keeny, who helped lay a solid foundation.

Daryl noted in his introduction that the world will soon mark the 56th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of its very first resolution, which aimed at the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Yet two other anniversaries also deserve some note on this occasion. Today, 63 years ago, a cyclotron at Columbia University split a uranium atom, heralding the world's first fission experiment. And a week from tDDay will mark the 38th

anniversary of the world premier of the classic film, *Dr. Strangelove*, a film some of you here today might recognize more by its subtitle -- "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb." All these events illustrate the issues on which ACA and its supporters have worked over the years -- issues that remain with us and have acquired even greater urgency after 11 September 2001.

The Historical Significance of the 11 September Events

The historical significance of 11 September, like the fall of the Berlin Wall, will be debated for years to come. Was it the end of history? Was it our entry into the 21st century through a "gate of fire" as my Secretary-General has put it? That it brought the issue of terrorism into the forefront of the global agenda -- far from being a purely national or regional concern -- is indisputable.

And yet the rest of the global agenda before 11 September remains with us. That includes the problems posed by weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security. The United Nations Millennium Declaration pledged to eliminate the dangers posed by such weapons. These dangers are accentuated by the efforts reportedly made by Al Qaeda to acquire WMD. Yet there are also other extremist groups in all regions who, in their blinkered vision, can only see civilizations clashing -- not co-existing -- and who are prepared to use unthinkable methods to bring about the crash of civilization in its entirety.

In the backlash to the events of 11 September, my distinguished colleague, Mary Robinson, the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights -- along with other human rights bodies -- has warned that human rights should not be sacrificed as we deal with terrorists. Secretary-General Kofi Annan put it unambiguously when he said -- "there is no trade-off between effective action against terrorism and the protection of human rights."

Seeing the escalation of global military expenditure, I must myself warn against the sacrifice of disarmament and arms control norms in the battle against terrorism. While some prefer paperless disarmament, that is surely no reason to jettison the treaties and conventions that do act as a legal barrier to the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the proliferation of their delivery systems. Our need to prevent terrorist groups from obtaining WMD material and technology demands the strengthening of existing norms and greater efforts to implement them.

Multilateral Efforts Against WMD

Prior to 11 September, it was already evident that global military expenditure -- after its decade-long decline following the end of the Cold War -- had begun to rise ominously. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has recently reported that world military expenditure in 2000 was about \$798 billion in current dollars and that the largest volume increases were in Russia and the USA. The regions showing the steepest increases in military spending were Africa with 37% -- and South Asia was not far behind with a 23% increase.

After 11 September we have seen that both the United States and Russia have announced increases in their military budgets. Many other countries have cited terrorism as a reason to increase military budgets, although there is no correlation between such investments and counter-terrorism. One US commentator pointed out that the US spends \$20 billion annually on preparing to fight a large-scale nuclear war with Russia, while spending less than \$2 billion annually on homeland defence. News reports also show that the bombing in Afghanistan cost \$1 billion per day. Yesterday, participants at an international meeting in Tokyo identified \$15 billion in immediate needs for the rebuilding of Afghanistan over the next five years. That is equivalent to 15 days of bombing -- surely an insurance premium for never having to bomb that country again, and surely a better investment in preventing Afghanistan from becoming an incubator of deadly terrorism ever again.

The events of 11 September should be moving the international community towards a culture of prevention, instead of culture of reaction. The Secretary-General's report on the prevention of conflict -- issued three months before that tragic date -- identified disarmament as one of the key tools in achieving this new culture of prevention.

The United Nations and other multilateral organizations working on disarmament and non-proliferation goals are doing all they can to contribute to this goal and they are doing so through concrete deeds -- not just words. All of the UN's efforts in this field should be considered within the context of the dozen international conventions that have been negotiated over the years to strengthen international cooperation against the scourge of terrorism. These treaties, combined with the treaty regimes for the elimination and non-proliferation of all WMD, offer the basic architecture for the world's coordinated, global response to the gravest threats to international peace and security in the new century ahead.

The United Nations is no stranger to the issue of terrorism. Its various resolutions and declarations extend back several decades -- the key to the fate of these efforts remains, as it always has, with the resources and the political will of its Member States. The UN response to the attacks of 11 September was swift and is continuing to unfold in several important ways. Consider for a moment the following recent activities.

The UN General Assembly and the Security Council adopted resolutions denouncing the attacks the day after they took place. On 28 September, the Security Council then adopted resolution 1373, aimed at targeting terrorists and those who harbor, aid, or support them. Through this resolution, the Security Council also established a new subsidiary organ called the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which is working with international, regional and sub-regional organizations to find ways of expanding assistance to states on a host of financial, regulatory, and legislative issues. The resolution calls upon all UN Member States to report to the CTC on the specific steps they are taking to implement Resolution 1373.

From 1 to 5 October, the General Assembly held a special debate on measures to eliminate

international terrorism. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, when addressing the General Assembly on 1 October, called for developing a broad, comprehensive and sustained strategy to combat terrorism. He specifically stressed the need to strengthen the global norm against the use or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He emphasized, for example, the need to redouble efforts to ensure universality, verification and full implementation of key treaties; to promote cooperation among international organizations dealing with these weapons; and to tighten national legislation over exports of technologies needed to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

From 15 to 26 October, a United Nations Working Group on measures to eliminate international terrorism met to continue the elaboration of an overarching draft convention on international terrorism. Efforts are continuing to reach a consensus on such a convention as well as on a separate convention on nuclear terrorism.

Also in October, the Secretary-General established a Policy Working Group on the UN and Terrorism to identify longer-term implications and broad policy steps the UN system might make in the collective international effort against terrorism. This group, composed of many offices and departments inside the UN system, will produce a report by next June containing its recommendations on specific contributions the United Nations can make in addressing this global threat.

On 29 November, the General Assembly re-emphasized the importance of multilateral responses to terrorism, disarmament, and proliferation challenges, by adopting without a vote resolution 56/54 T, which reaffirmed multilateralism as a "core principle" in disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. The resolution emphasized that "progress is urgently needed" in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism, and called upon all Member States "to renew and fulfil" their commitments to multilateral cooperation in these areas.

On 18 January 2002, the Security Council had an open meeting on terrorism. The Secretary-General called on the CTC to develop a long-term strategy that would enable all States to undertake the steps needed to defeat terrorism. The Chairman of the Committee -- Britain's Ambassador to the UN, Sir Jeremy Greenstock -- stated that the Council's aim was to improve the average performance level of governments against terrorism across the globe by upgrading the capacity of each nation's legislation and executive machinery to fight terrorism. Speakers also called for more attention to be given to issues that fuelled terrorism, including: poverty, intolerance, regional conflicts, denial of human rights, environmental degradation, lack of access to justice and equal protection under the law, as well the lack of sustainable development.

This collective effort treats terrorism as a multidimensional subject, requiring diverse, synergistic contributions throughout the UN system. There are very strong reasons indeed for one to believe that the events of 11 September -- while not directly involving what are classically termed "weapons of mass destruction" -- will lead to the strengthening of global disarmament norms.

Multilateral efforts are already underway to create, maintain, implement, and extend such norms in a variety of global arenas.

With respect to nuclear weapons, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) called the 11 September events a "wake up call" for new efforts to enhance controls over security of nuclear materials. After having been handicapped by a zero-growth budget for many years, the IAEA is finally starting to get some of the additional funds it needs to confront new safeguards and physical security threats seriously.

In an effort to rekindle international efforts to enhance the physical security of fissile nuclear materials and other radioactive substances, the General Conference of the IAEA adopted a resolution on 21 September requesting the Director General to review the Agency's activities to strengthen its work relevant to acts of terrorism that involve such materials.

In late October, the IAEA organized an international symposium on nuclear verification and security of material involving the participation of more than 500 national and international experts in fields of nuclear safeguards, non-proliferation, security, and safety. The Agency is looking closely at the adequacy of controls under the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material to see what more can be done to enhance these controls. Specifically, the Director General has decided to convene a group of legal and technical experts to draft an amendment aimed at strengthening the Convention. The IAEA is also working hard to strengthen nuclear safeguards through its efforts to promote international acceptance of the Additional Protocol. The success of the IAEA's multilateral efforts in all these fields will not only be laudable, but absolutely essential if there is any hope whatsoever for progress in eliminating the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Multilateral efforts against the possession or proliferation of chemical weapons are another intense focus of ongoing multilateral efforts. In response to two UN Security Council anti-terrorism resolutions last September, the Executive Council the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has specifically addressed the issue of chemical terrorism in its autumn session. The Council has stressed the need to focus on achieving universal adherence to the Convention, enacting national implementing legislation and ensuring the OPCW's ability to respond to a request for assistance and protection in the event of the use or the threat of use of chemical weapons. The Council also established a working group to develop recommendations for OPCW's contribution to the global anti-terrorism effort. The working group will propose specific measures to the next session of the Council, to be held from 19 to 22 March this year.

Worldwide, 70,000 tonnes of chemical agents has been declared to the OPCW. These stockpiles have been completely inventoried, inspected and re-inspected. Furthermore, all the declared chemical weapons production facilities have been de-activated. The global chemical industry is subject to inspection by the OPCW. Dual-use chemicals, which could be misused as precursors of chemical weapons, are carefully monitored and the trade in the most dangerous chemicals is limited to Member States.

With respect to biological weapons, despite the inability of the states parties to the BWC to reach a consensus -- after many years of effort -- on a verification protocol, efforts will continue at the treaty's resumed Review Conference later this year to reach agreement on a common multilateral approach to reinforce the global ban on biological weapons. I hope that the growing public awareness of the threats associated with such weapons will inspire greater progress in this area, notwithstanding the absence of an organization to implement this norm.

For its part, the World Health Organization (WHO) has compiled a final draft of international guidelines on responding to terrorist attacks using biological and chemical weapons. The draft emphasizes international cooperation, including through the OPCW, to prepare for possible terrorist attacks.

Historically speaking, the United States has played key roles in fostering multilateral approaches to alleviate these threats, particularly those arising from the global spread of weapons of mass destruction. With respect to nuclear threats, the United States recognized even before the end of the Second World War that efforts to address such threats would require extensive international cooperation. This led to the Baruch Plan, the Atoms for Peace programme, the creation of the IAEA and its system of nuclear safeguards, and numerous other initiatives and agreements. Together, these led to the accretion of a body of international law founded both on numerous multilateral treaties and the customary practices of states. In many cases, these multilateral control efforts originated in unilateral proposals by leaders of countries and it is surely fair to say that the leadership of the United States has often been crucial in the success of these efforts. This leadership will continue to be vitally important in contributing to the success of multilateral organizations like the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the IAEA, whose efforts will also substantially reduce the risks of possible use of chemical or nuclear weapons not just by states, but also by terrorists.

Similarly, the successful conclusion of an international convention against nuclear terrorism -- a goal that has eluded an international consensus for too long -- would help significantly in confronting this enormous challenge. There is also a compelling need to upgrade physical security at facilities that produce, store, or use a wide variety of controlled radioactive substances -- especially those of the fissile variety -- and to reexamine internationally the adequacy of controls currently prescribed by the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Strong US leadership on behalf of these two important conventions would be undoubtedly serve the interests of international peace and security.

The problem of nuclear terrorism was anticipated long ago. On 25 April 1945 -- a mere fortnight after the death of President Franklin Roosevelt -- his Secretary of War Henry Stimson wrote a memorandum to the new president warning that, and I quote: "the future may see a time when such a weapon may be constructed in secret and used suddenly and effectively with devastating power by a willful nation or group [my emphasis] against an unsuspecting nation or group of much greater size and material power." Yet most of the early postwar efforts to address the global nuclear threat focused exclusively on nation states as their primary subjects. Nuclear

terrorism became a popular topic in the professional arms control literature in the mid- to late-1970's, though the urgency and global scope of this threat has only recently started to receive the attention it so richly deserves.

This important leadership role for the United States is not limited to initiatives of its government. Since its founding in 1971, the Arms Control Association has pursued the fundamental goal of "promoting public understanding of effective policies and programs in arms control and disarmament," a role it has fulfilled well over the years. The United Nations also appreciates the importance of such activities by numerous other academic and other non-governmental groups in civil society around the world. In response to a General Assembly resolution, the United Nations itself has underway an experts study on disarmament and non-proliferation education. The group has already met twice and plans to submit its report later this year to the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly. With public understanding and support as a foundation, and strong multilateral norms and institutions to advance such norms, the world will have every reason to expect a significant reduction in both the threats posed by all weapons of mass destruction, including terrorist threats.

The terrorist acts of 11 September have shaken a world out of a dangerous complacency. The public, concerned groups, and legislators are now starting to take much more seriously not only the threat of terrorism but also the danger that WMD may actually be used against military or civilian targets. In this sense, the sarin nerve gas attack in Japan in 1995 and the anthrax incidents in the United States and elsewhere in recent months have encouraged leaders everywhere to reconsider old assumptions, reassess old policies, and explore new collaborative international ways and means of alleviating genuine common threats.

Longer-Term Implications of 9/11 for Disarmament

It is of course premature to predict the specific, long-term impacts of the events of 11 September upon the prospects for nuclear arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament -- and their common denominator, international peace and security. One can safely say, however, that the tragedy is already leading to calls for a profound re-assessment of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and for an entirely new approach to the whole notion of weapons-based approaches to defence.

It is regrettable -- but surely indisputable -- that the states that possess nuclear weapons remain quite unprepared to give them up anytime soon, despite repeated formal and informal commitments, most recently their unequivocal undertaking at the May 2000 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. There has certainly has been some progress to note in recent years, including efforts by some nuclear-weapon states to declare publicly their holdings of fissile nuclear materials, to declare limitations or reductions in the size of their arsenals, to halt the production of new fissile materials, and in some cases to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We hear of a reduced dependency on nuclear weapons, but a continuing need for a strategic "triad" that includes non-nuclear means of deterrence -- recognizing that a country's vast superiority in highly-capable conventional weapons can conceivably inspire other states to seek WMD as an asymmetrical response. We hear re-affirmations of the doctrine of the first-use of nuclear weapons and, from some nuclear-weapon states, words on behalf of the continuing value of tactical nuclear weapons. We hear of reductions in deployed, operational weapons, but also of transfers of operational weapons to various reserve categories, rather than to facilities for their verified physical destruction. We also hear that these reductions will occur unilaterally, outside of any binding treaty framework, and hence will be reversible, and free from any bilateral or international verification. One senior US official recently stated that "we are currently projecting to keep the nuclear forces that we have to 2020 and beyond -- and longer, and beyond."

The NPT's strengthened review process, however, will play an important role here in holding all the treaty's nuclear-weapon states accountable for their past commitments to eliminate their nuclear stockpiles. The first of Preparatory Committee meeting of the states parties to the treaty will get underway in April and there will be two additional sessions before the 2005 NPT Review Conference. The fate of this ongoing process will provide some solid indicators of the future of both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Another area for potential progress in the years ahead lies in the field of controlling the dangers inherent in long-range ballistic missiles, though global multilateral disarmament efforts in this field are unfortunately still non-existent. In April 1999, the Secretary-General issued a statement noting with concern the lack of multilateral norms with respect to both missiles and missile defences. A year later, the General Assembly asked the Secretary-General to establish an experts group to examine the question of missiles in all its aspects, the current subject of a United Nations experts group. I hope that the events of 11 September will lend some new urgency to efforts to establish such norms, though I do not underestimate the difficulties ahead in achieving such a goal.

There are solid technical and economic grounds for doubting that terrorist groups will themselves acquire ICBM's anytime soon. In terms of non-state actors, the missile "genie" is still inside its bottle. With sufficient political will -- strengthened by the heightened public sensitivity to international threats -- it is possible that the states which possess such weapons may in the years ahead be willing to conclude some new multilateral agreements to reduce substantially the dangers of such missiles. The MTCR's draft "code of conduct" and the Russian Federation's Global Control System are examples of such proposals that are now under consideration. Multilateral progress in this area can build upon unilateral actions or agreements among specific countries.

The global missile and WMD threats can also be reduced via greater multilateral cooperation in export controls, to ensure that the most sensitive components and technologies as well as related dual-use goods do not end up creating new risks to international peace and security.

Such an effort, however, must be global and non-discriminatory or it will have little chance of long-term success. The global goal -- however distant it may now appear -- of eliminating long-range missile delivery systems has some profound advantages over half-way measures that focus exclusively on non-proliferation, missile defences, deterrence, or simply enhancing confidence in existing missile stockpiles. These advantages relate specifically to the basic fairness and equity of a non-discriminatory disarmament goal, and the practical advantages in verifying compliance with a global ICBM ban -- rather than arrangements that simply aim at regulating the development, stockpiling, and use of missiles.

It is vital, therefore, that these incremental steps in the field of missiles occur not just to stabilize the global missile status quo, but to serve a longer-term purpose -- namely, the ultimate elimination of such missiles. The preamble of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty envisages the goal of the elimination from national stockpiles of all delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction and I believe that incremental steps in this direction would undoubtedly serve the interests of international peace and security.

Toward a New Multilateral Approach to Security

What is perhaps most striking about many responses to the threats posed by both terrorism and weapons of mass destruction is the extent to which these responses rely upon weapons. What is missing from this weapons-based approach to security is an emphasis on the need for deeper multilateral cooperation rooted in binding legal norms and implemented with the assistance of global international organizations.

The late Paul Warnke once referred to the nuclear arms race as a process much akin to "apes on a treadmill." It is perhaps more apparent today than ever that real change, when it comes to thinking about nuclear weapons, is slow in coming and slower yet in implementation. Extensive international cooperation -- and public participation from civil society -- is needed to ensure that counter-terrorism efforts will escape this familiar syndrome.

Effective measures against WMD terrorism and on behalf of WMD disarmament simply cannot be accomplished by any single country acting alone. No one country controls all global exports, monitors all transfers of technology, and enforces all legal obligations. Certain dangerous weapons materials -- like plutonium, highly-enriched uranium, and many strains of deadly bacteria and toxins -- are hazardous whoever possesses them, given at the very least the risks of accidents, thefts, and sabotage. These materials are born dangerous. They are dangerous to produce, store, transport, or use even for ostensibly peaceful purposes. They are not dangerous simply when located inside so-called "rogue states." They are dangerous everywhere and always.

For this reason, multilateral treaty regimes like the BWC, CWC, and NPT serve a triple security purpose -- they serve to prevent the proliferation of such weapons to states; they make it much more difficult for terrorists to acquire significant WMD capabilities; and they promote an

equitable, fair, and global public good called disarmament. While subject to improvement, they also serve these ends better than any single state, acting alone, can hope to achieve, and they surely serve these ends better than competitive arms races undertaken in the name of achieving or preserving of military supremacy.

The United States -- with all its material and intellectual resources -- is destined to play a leadership role in world affairs. Of this there can be no doubt. Whether this leadership will inspire the global elimination of WMD returns us to the issue of political will, the same issue that inspired the creation of this Association over three decades ago. As the arms control association in the most powerful country on earth, you have a heavy burden to ensure that this leadership moves the world in the right direction.

In his Nobel Lecture of 10 December last year, Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke of three priorities of the United Nations in the century ahead -- eradicating poverty, preventing conflict, and promoting democracy. This is the "triad" that will genuinely serve the interests of international peace and security. And in the realm of preventing conflict, the goals of disarmament, arms control, and the peaceful settlement of disputes must remain the triad within the triad. Let us put an end to the debate whether arms cause conflicts or vice versa and recognize that each continues to affect the other, as they have from time immemorial. Let us dedicate our triads to productive, not destructive uses.

You have my very best wishes and my full support in all your efforts to bring us closer to a world free of all weapons of mass destruction -- a world able to grow and prosper in peace, with security for all.