

**Multilateralism and the
U.S. National Interest in Disarmament**

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Introduction

Let me say at the outset how pleased I am to have the honour of visiting your beautiful state and of speaking with you tonight. I come, as you know, from an organization created through the vision of American leaders like Franklin Roosevelt -- an organization, however, that has recently been widely caricatured as a giant paper factory and a talk shop -- a huge, sprawling bureaucracy, totally out of control and, according to some extremist observers, one that is even keen on usurping the sovereignty of its member states.

So please allow me first to put some of these common misperceptions about the United Nations to rest. The various bureaucracies comprising state and local governments in Wyoming together employ over six times as many people as now work at UN headquarters -- 54,000 to

8,700, to be exact. The UN's member states have also given the organization responsibilities that reach the entire world's six billion population -- yet we are limited in performing these responsibilities by a budget of about \$1.3 billion a year, just less than the current budget of the State of Wyoming, with its population of about a half a million. As a result of a political decision in 2000, the UN General Assembly reduced the US share of the UN regular budget from 25% to 22% -- this year, the US contribution represents a contribution of 99 cents per American citizen, well less than the price of a Big Mac. By comparison, citizens of one of the world's smallest states -- Liechtenstein -- pay an equivalent of \$2.47 per person. With respect to the UN's work in the field of disarmament, there are more people in this room today than there are in my entire department at UN Headquarters, and we operate on an annual budget less than half the price of a single jet fighter. As for the paper issue, the UN reportedly uses less paper in an entire year than the *New York Times* consumes to publish one Sunday issue.

But I came here today less to defend the United Nations than to address some of the many ways that multilateral agreements directly serve and strengthen US national interests, particularly in the field of disarmament.

An Overview of US Interests in Multilateralism

When citizens from different lands travel abroad, they together benefit from standards set by international aviation and maritime agreements and maintained by multilateral organizations -- specifically, the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal and the International Maritime Organization in London. These travellers are healthier due to international agreements addressing the need to protect our common global environment and standards promoted by another multilateral organization, the UN Environment Programme in Nairobi. While travelling, they find it convenient to communicate with the help of a global telecommunication system that is regulated by multilateral agreements, through the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva. When they get into trouble and need urgent financial assistance, they can obtain funds from a local bank thanks to international banking agreements, which are supervised by the International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C. These are just some of the ways that international agreements affect each and every citizen on earth who has the privilege of travelling to foreign lands.

What is perhaps less well known, however, is the extent to which each citizen also benefits from international agreements even if they do not travel abroad. This is truly one of the most remarkable features of the world today -- we are all interconnected and interdependent in ways that most of us cannot even imagine. No country -- however powerful -- can be totally isolated from the rest of the world today.

International trade is another factor linking the peoples of the world together. Among all US states, even Wyoming -- which ranks last in merchandise exports -- still benefits enormously from foreign trade and commerce. Wyoming's exports actually increased over 60 percent from 1993 to 2000, when its enterprises exported merchandise worth over \$140 million to 80 foreign

markets. The Commerce Department notes that Wyoming also exported many non-manufactured goods -- minerals, livestock, and agricultural products worth an estimated additional \$360 million in 2000. Much of this trade involves small companies. Foreign tourists generate significant additional income. According to the US Business Coalition for US-China Trade, China's market alone represents a huge potential market for Wyoming's agricultural and manufactured goods. The Commerce Department adds, however, that while developing countries are "among the most promising markets" for Wyoming's products, the state faces many tariff and non-tariff barriers abroad. Needless to say, developing countries face their own such barriers in gaining access to the US market. How these barriers are reduced and overcome in a quest for genuine free trade brings me back to the theme of the importance of international agreements -- administered by the World Trade Organization in Geneva -- even for those who never set foot in their own neighbouring states, let alone the United Nations or some distant land.

I note that both of your current US senators surely appreciate the importance of Wyoming in its wider global environment -- one sits as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee and the other is a member of International Trade subcommittee of the Finance Committee.

International Peace and Security

So are trade, tourism, and travel the only links that bind Wyoming's citizens to conditions that exist in the rest of the world? Not by any means. While economics and politics are interwoven, consider the conditions of international peace and security -- how do they touch upon the daily lives of your citizens?

In answering this question, let me first clarify what I mean by the term, "disarmament." Some people seem to think that the UN is a bunch of utopian idealists seeking to usher in a totally weapon-free world -- yet this is just not the case. Article 51 of the UN Charter recognizes the "inherent right" of self-defence -- which clearly implies the authority to have and to use weapons in the exercise of that right. Under Chapter 7, the Charter also empowers the Security Council to use force in maintaining international peace and security. The real meaning of this term has evolved as a result of international conventions and political declarations endorsed by the US and other countries. Together, these commitments show a strong multilateral consensus on the goal of *eliminating* all weapons of mass destruction. They also show that the world is also committed to *regulating* conventional weapons so that one nation's security is not achieved at the expense of another -- in other words, the nations of the world are seeking a common and co-operative security arrangement. Your state motto is "Equal Rights" -- so you will understand the right to equal security. This is achieved through a web of treaties and conventions -- the observance of this rule of international law is what makes civilized societies different from terrorists.

Without doubt the gravest danger arises from the continued existence and global spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons -- which together are aptly called "weapons of mass destruction." The tragic events of September 11th last year have reverberated throughout this

country, as indeed the world, and one can only imagine the nightmare that awaits us all should terrorists acquire and use such weapons. As for 9/11, decisions that originated in Afghanistan -- an impoverished country on the other side of the planet -- set in motion a chain of events that unleashed a human catastrophe for the world's only Superpower. Last year, upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Secretary-General Kofi Annan referred to something called the "Butterfly effect." Scientists say that the world of nature is so tightly connected that a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon rainforest can generate a violent storm on the other side of the earth. The experience of 9/11 surely offers sobering evidence of this effect in the realm of human security, and further reaffirms the vital need for all countries to work together to solve their common problems. The rationale for multilateralism in forming a coalition in the war on terrorism has become evident today even to the most ideological unilateralist.

In such a light, which country is truly irrelevant to international peace and security? Which country can the world comfortably allow to decline and collapse into a "failed state," without having a profound effect upon the security of its neighbours or even the wider global environment? We must care about what is going on in other countries not only for altruistic reasons but also because they can directly affect our livelihoods, the security of our daily lives, and the kind of world we will pass on to future generations. In the words of the old Arapaho proverb, "When we show our respect for other living things, they respond with respect for us."

Is Wyoming really so far from the events in New York, Washington, D.C., or in other countries? Last January, Governor Geringer issued a press release announcing that Wyoming had received a \$6.5 million grant for bio-terrorism preparedness. Police, medical, and emergency responders in Wyoming are already at work to address this threat, which could of course arise from activities of either domestic or international terrorists. The Wyoming Department of Health now has on its web site advice for where citizens can get information on anthrax, botulism, pneumonic plague and small pox. In his State-of-the-State address on 11 February, your Governor could hardly have stated the situation more clearly when he remarked, "Five months ago today, our world changed."

Clearly, terrorism -- whether national or international -- is now a very real concern to the citizens of Wyoming. What many may not realize, however, is the extent to which existing international agreements are working to reduce some of the *worst-imaginable* threats, which arise from the possible use of weapons of mass destruction. The 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or NPT, has forged a common bond among 187 countries against the global spread and for the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons. Under this treaty, each state that does not possess nuclear weapons must agree to intrusive international safeguards -- implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency -- over all of its nuclear materials, while those states that do have such weapons pledge to get rid of them. The world would be a far more dangerous place if this treaty ceased to exist -- and there were no commitments not to help countries to acquire such weapons, no obligations not to manufacture such weapons, no undertakings to eliminate all such weapons, and no nuclear safeguards to protect against illicit uses of nuclear materials.

The same is true with the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). These treaties directly benefit the citizens of the entire world and they deserve everybody's support. Unlike the CWC, however, which has a dedicated organization to conduct inspections and monitor compliance, the BWC lacks such a verification system. The parties to that treaty have been trying for many years to conclude a Protocol that would create such a multilateral system, but -- amid concerns voiced by the United States even after the anthrax mailings here -- the necessary consensus to create such a system has not yet materialized and controls are still enforced only on a national basis.

Yet biological weapons are not the only weapons of mass destruction that have affected the security of everyday lives in Wyoming. Your neighbouring state, Utah, has in the past had accidental releases of chemical agents from the remnants of the old US chemical weapons programme.

You have also certainly been affected by the global nuclear arms race. Just two months ago, newspapers across the country reported the results of a recent study performed by the National Cancer Institute and the Centers of Disease Control, which found that Cold War-era nuclear tests both within and outside the United States had spread radioactive fallout literally across this country. Certain counties in Wyoming reportedly had some of the highest concentrations of cesium-137 deposits as a result of this fallout. In 1998, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that high in Wyoming's Wind River Range, scientists were investigating fallout deposits found in various annual layers of a glacier -- it seems that the glacier had formed a kind of natural history book of nuclear fallout from past nuclear tests and perhaps other radioactive materials from nuclear facilities in neighbouring states. All across the country, as many as 15,000 cancer deaths may have been caused as a result of these nuclear tests, along with tens of thousands of additional non-fatal cancers tied to atmospheric nuclear tests. The study -- which included brightly-coloured maps showing where the fallout had landed -- found that literally no US resident born after 1951 escaped some exposure to this fallout. The same tragic fact is true of other countries where nuclear tests were conducted.

Fallout from atmospheric tests was not the only legacy for the citizens of Wyoming from the Cold War and the nuclear arms race. According to the US Department of Justice's special web site for its "Radiation Exposure Compensation Program," uranium miners, uranium millers, and ore transporters from Wyoming are eligible for payments of \$100,000 for health effects caused by those activities that were undertaken from 1942 to 1971. In a telling comment concerning the environmental problems associated with the US nuclear weapons complex, Senator John Glenn remarked in 1987, "It will do us precious little good to protect ourselves from the Soviets or any other potential aggressor if in the process we poison or substantially irradiate our own people."

The citizens of Wyoming, given such risks, clearly had a enormous interest in the globally-negotiated Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, which outlawed atmospheric nuclear tests around the world -- and today, they have an important stake also in the total elimination of all such tests, which would be accomplished by the final entry into force of the 1996

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which still awaits ratifications by the US, China, and a few other countries. The ending of all nuclear tests, by all states, and for all time, would mark a giant step forward toward global nuclear disarmament.

The benefits for all countries from the achievement of global nuclear disarmament would just be overwhelming. While there would still be health, safety, and environmental problems to address from the final warhead destruction efforts, and from the dismantling of the special facilities that produced nuclear weapons materials, these would pale in comparison to the hazards of a nuclear war or even the continued production of such weapons. There is also a budgetary impact. In 1998, the Brookings Institution estimated that US taxpayers alone had spent well in excess of \$5 trillion on nuclear weapons since 1940 -- if stacked as one dollar bills, that amount would reach all the way to the moon and over half-way back.

The recent agreement between the US and the Russian Federation is clearly a step in the right direction, insofar as both countries are finally back to the business of concluding legally-binding agreements to reduce their deployed strategic nuclear forces -- a responsibility they share with China, Britain, and France under the terms of Article VI of the NPT.

We are still, however, far from realizing our common vision of a world without nuclear weapons. The next vital step in this process is to ensure that the reductions in these operationally-deployed strategic nuclear weapons will be irreversible and that each side -- indeed all the world -- will know that the warheads are actually being destroyed, rather than just stored for possible future use. The world community must be assured that disarmament words are being matched by disarmament *deeds*, and this requires the public release of far greater details about the size and composition of the world's nuclear arsenals, which are estimated to total over 30,000 nuclear warheads, many of them on launch-on-warning status.

It is truly remarkable that now, at the start of a new millennium -- a full decade since the end of the Cold War -- we are not only still facing most of the same old dangers from nuclear weapons, but now we are even encountering some new nuclear dangers. Recent daily headlines are warning that a nuclear war might occur in South Asia, which only underscores further the point that the longer these weapons persist in the world, the more likely it will be that they will be used -- and not only by India and Pakistan.

These and other nuclear dangers are of growing concern to people across the globe. Two weeks ago, the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues -- located at the University of British Columbia -- released a study of international public opinion, which found that the majority of citizens in nuclear-armed countries supported the negotiation of a treaty to ban all nuclear weapons. The study also found widespread support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a "no first use" policy and a pledge by nuclear powers not to use their weapons against non-nuclear adversaries.

Yet despite this support, many individual citizens who truly care about international peace

and security feel powerless to change the perilous state of affairs we are now facing. Perhaps they are just vexed by the sheer number or complexity of common security challenges that we all encounter, one way or another, in our daily lives. In the years immediately after the Cold War -- a time of remarkable growth in the world economy -- military expenditures were consistently falling, a reflection perhaps of society's determination to use such resources for more productive social and economic purposes. Yet in the last three years or so, such expenditures have been rising again, and have totalled over \$800 billion a year -- that is approximately \$130 per person on Earth. The current proposed defence budget for the US alone is now rising to almost half of that *global* figure. These days, it is not at all uncommon to read of new multi-billion-dollar deals involving the export of all kinds of major conventional weapons, including jet fighters, tanks, submarines, and other such arms suitable for offensive military operations. To help keep the public informed of the scale of such transfers, my Department maintains the UN's Register of Conventional Arms, an invaluable research tool available to all who are interested in learning more about the global arms market.

The illicit international sale of another type of conventional weapon -- small arms and light weapons -- poses additional global security challenges. There are reportedly over a half billion of these weapons now in circulation around the world -- and these are the weapons used in civil wars and by terrorists because they are relatively cheap, easy to smuggle, and readily available in large quantity. Last year, the UN hosted a major international conference on this illicit trade, which resulted in an agreed Programme of Action to enhance cooperation among all countries to curtail this trade. As one of its own contributions, the UN is now studying the options for marking and tracing such weapons to reduce the likelihood of their illicit use. None of these efforts interferes in any way with the right of individual, law-abiding citizens to possess or to sell small arms for legitimate uses.

Another difficult challenge facing the world community concerns anti-personnel landmines and the explosive remnants left over from armed conflicts. The UN is working on these problems, through its Mine Action Service and through my Department, in clearing mines, educating citizens, assisting victims, advocating a global ban on antipersonnel landmines, and destroying stockpiles. Current efforts to eliminate landmines are guided by two multilateral agreements -- the 1997 Mine-Ban Convention and Amended Protocol II of the 1981 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

People Count

Yet whether the subject is bilateral or multilateral agreements, national laws and regulations, or policy statements issued by individual governments, the average citizen remains the ultimate sovereign, so to speak, in the whole political process, both domestic and international. The UN Charter, for example, and the United States Constitution both begin with virtually the same words, "we the peoples." The future of disarmament, as indeed the future of multilateral cooperation in all areas of international peace and security, rests on support from an enlightened citizenry, one that is capable of appreciating both the bountiful benefits of nuclear

disarmament and the unbelievable risks and costs that attend the further postponement of this particular appointment with destiny. It is precisely at this point, when the popular imagination is so inspired, that political leaders worldwide will discover the political will to give disarmament the full support it so richly deserves.

While the citizens of Wyoming are unique in many respects, they are no different from citizens everywhere in seeking a better life, a cleaner environment, a brighter future for their children, a smaller tax bill, and what Franklin Roosevelt once called the "freedom from fear." The freedom from the fear of nuclear attacks will not be achieved merely by trying to keep other countries from getting such weapons -- after all, if we consider that eight states now possess these weapon capabilities, this strategy has already failed seven times. The freedom from fear will also not be achieved by threats of overwhelming military retaliation, whether directed to states or to terrorist groups. Nor will it be achieved by even a reliable missile defence system. There is only one way this will be achieved, a path clearly described in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the states parties to the NPT. These countries reaffirmed that "the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." All participating countries agreed with that statement, which could not possibly be a better way to conclude a speech on multilateralism and the US national interest in disarmament.

I would like to thank the Casper Committee on Foreign Relations for inviting me to speak, but also commend you for showing an interest in the topic of disarmament -- by no means an esoteric subject confined to a charmed circle, but a visceral issue linking all citizens of this world. I encourage you to keep up this interest and to join the billions of other human beings on this planet who are seeking a better world, a world free of weapons of mass destruction and the regulation of conventional arms -- a common interest that can only be achieved by multilateral action and un-tiring national efforts to fulfill this solemn goal, for the good of all.