

## ALAN CRANSTON PEACE AWARD 2003

### Special Remarks

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The Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My warm thanks to the Global Security Institute for inviting me to join you all in felicitating Nancy Pelosi on her richly deserved Alan Cranston Peace Award this year. As the highest ranking woman in the history of the US Congress - where Alan Cranston served so long and with such distinction - Congresswoman Pelosi's principled pursuit of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and human security, both in the national and global context, is an inspiring example in these bleak times when we need to focus on winning a durable peace for the world.

I am extremely happy that I am able to include Congresswoman Pelosi among the great American leaders I have met in my lifetime, who have similarly pursued these goals. As an 18-year old schoolboy attending a World Youth Forum, I had the privilege of meeting then-Senator John F. Kennedy. In 1963 - 40 years ago - my alma mater, the American University in Washington, D.C., was the venue of President Kennedy's historic speech outlining his own vision for global peace and security. Written just a few weeks prior to the signature of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, his speech focused on what he called "the most important topic on earth: world peace."

To the questions -- "What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek?" - he replied: "Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children - not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women - not merely peace in our time but peace for all time".

The Kennedy vision of global peace and security is desperately needed today as horrifying TV images of war with its catastrophic civilian casualties transfix us and advocates of peaceful multilateral disarmament are dismissed, in a misguided mood of triumphalism, as Utopian idealists. In the far more dangerous era of the Cold War, Kennedy combined a realistic resolve to go to war as a last resort with pragmatic peace making through diplomacy in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Rejecting the defeatist concept of the inevitability of war, Kennedy stressed his faith in the capacity of humankind to evolve human institutions to create the process of peace. He also saw the arms race - as had Eisenhower in his "military industrial complex" speech two years earlier - as a colossal misallocation of resources that should have gone to combating ignorance, poverty and disease. These are all problems that remain with us today as half the world lives in the thrall of less than a dollar a day, without sufficient food, clothing, shelter, clean water, sanitation, education and the dignity of a job while global military expenditure once again soars to a trillion dollars per annum. A world "safe for diversity", which Kennedy sought in 1963, rejected the concept that different cultures, civilizations, religions and ethnic groups, must clash instead of living together in tolerance sharing the planet's resources equitably. Most importantly, Kennedy upheld the pursuit of diplomacy and the strengthening of the United Nations as "a more effective instrument for peace".

That call for strengthening the United Nations is timely today and especially in San Francisco, the birthplace of the United Nations 58 years ago. The failure of the Security Council, after its unanimous adoption of Resolution 1441, to agree on collective action with regard to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capability must be a warning to us all. Without a unified Security Council we will never achieve what Kennedy visualized as "a genuine world security system - a system capable of resolving disputes on the basis of law, of insuring the security of the large and the small, and of creating conditions under which arms can finally be abolished." Without the rule of law and disarmament -- indispensable components of international peace and security - we will never inhabit a world "where the weak are safe and the strong are just."

Without that unity, which empowers the United Nations -- still the most indispensable multilateral organization in the world - how will we ever address in real terms the larger global agenda of peace-keeping, peace-building, maintaining the norms of disarmament, protecting the environment, working for development, human rights, good governance and the other goals of the UN Charter and the Millennium Declaration?

I would argue that, fifteen years after his American University speech, the Kennedy vision of global peace was brought closer to realization in the area of multilateral disarmament when the United Nations General Assembly convened its 1978 Special Session devoted to disarmament (SSODI), the 25th anniversary of which is being celebrated this year. The grand consensus that was achieved around the memorable Final Document of that session was remarkable in its scope and durability. That we have not achieved all of the objectives of the Final Document and its Programme of Action does not invalidate its lofty goals. That the machinery for deliberation and negotiation remains deadlocked in disagreement is no reason why lubricants of political will and a more propitious international climate created by the most powerful countries cannot get their wheels moving again. Another highlight of that historic Special Session was the world community's recognition of the relationship between disarmament and development - or the indivisibility of global peace and prosperity - an important theme to recall, given recent trends involving alarming increases in military spending across the globe.

Yet, I know that while the threat of global nuclear war may have receded since 1978, we still have to contend with the continuing risks of nuclear war through accident or miscalculation and the real danger of the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and other non-state actors. Furthermore, plans by states for their new uses as pre-emptive action threaten the end of almost six decades of the non use of these horrendously destructive instruments of war. The bipolar arms race that caused unsustainably high global military expenditures in 1978 is now being replaced by supply-driven purchases of expensive and sophisticated weapons across the globe, with the industrialized nations leading arms expenditure and exports and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuelling regional and intra-national wars. Confidence in the capacity of institutions to achieve disarmament through diplomacy and the rule of law in 1978 is being eroded by the dangerous doctrine of aggressive counter-proliferation. Do we seriously believe we can ensure forever the indefinite possession of weapons of mass destruction to a chosen few while others are denied them selectively by the use of force? Calls in 1978 for the prevention of outer space being converted into another arena for war are being overtaken by concrete plans today for the weaponization of outer space and new physical principles in weapons.

Amidst all these developments it is worth restating the basic objectives of multilateral disarmament as they were formulated in the Final Document of SSOD I "The principal goals of disarmament are to ensure the survival of mankind and to eliminate the danger of war, in particular nuclear war, to ensure that war is no longer an instrument for settling international disputes and that the use and the threat of force are eliminated from international life, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations." The right to security is basic for all nations.

Disarmament is surely the most reliable and equitable form of achieving this in a universal and legally-binding process.

As the divisions caused by the war in Iraq are healed, and the community of nations returns to the United Nations as a center for harmonizing their national interests, let us also return to rule of law-based disarmament to avoid war in the future. For that a fresh compact among governments and civil society - aptly described by Secretary-General Kofi Annan as "the new superpower" - needs to be forged. That objective was close to the heart of the late Senator Alan Cranston. Nancy Pelosi and the Global Security Institute can together with the United Nations light the candle to banish today's darkness at noon.