

Remarks by Sergio Duarte

High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

UN Bookstore, 7 October 2008

Launch of *CREATIVE DISSENT, A Book by Douglas Roche*

Let me say at the outset that I am truly grateful to have this opportunity to say a few words in praise both of this excellent new book, *Creative Dissent*, and of its author, Douglas Roche, my friend and professional colleague of many years.

It might seem strange on such an occasion for me to begin with a quote from the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Canada's former Prime Minister, but I think he eloquently stated one of Doug's most enduring qualities. Clark wrote the following in his introduction to this book:

As a Member of Parliament and senator, his interest was not really in the 'art' of the possible, but in the boundaries of the possible, and how far they could be pushed.

If this theme sounds familiar, it appears elsewhere in this book, in the quoted words of Robert F. Kennedy, who famously said:

Some men see the world as it is and ask why; other see the world as it might be and ask why not?

This book is about many things. It is on one level a very personal story of how a family man was able to reconcile the demands of public and private life. It is a story about the continuing relevance and power of faith even in our current materialist age. It informs readers about the practice of the trade of journalism in Canada and its vital role in influencing public policy. It offers a clear explanation of the changing landscape of Canadian domestic politics and the sometimes positive, sometimes not-so positive roles played by the government bureaucracy.

It also describes quite clearly the tensions and dilemmas that a government representative faces when he or she confronts difficult choices—as for example, when a public policy conflicts with one's private conscience, or when a country champions the goal of global nuclear disarmament while also backing the enduring value of nuclear deterrence.

But above all, it is a story of a gifted public servant's determination to advance the interests and ideals of humanity. His is a vision that helps us all to understand how the progress of the human community toward a more peaceful and just world also benefits the citizens of individual countries.

Help the community, and you help yourself—this is essentially the underlying truth in this book, one that applies very much at the personal level as well as in the affairs of entire nation states.

I have known Doug Roche for over two decades and have long admired him not just because of his idealism—which is grounded both in his faith and his appreciation of the duty to serve the world community—but also because of his appreciation of the need for practical action in our all-too real and imperfect world.

He did not expect, for example, that global nuclear disarmament could ever be achieved simply by wishing for it to happen. He understood the need for positive human action to pursue this goal. The actions that he sought were not intended as ends in themselves, but as means to achieve certain explicit ends, whether they related to global nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, or the advancement of economic development around the world. He understood well the importance of leadership among the powerful countries in achieving such great results, but he also knew that such leadership did not spring from nowhere.

This led him to a brilliant innovation—the idea that so-called “middle power” states can and should use their influence to promote enlightened policies by the great powers, in particular those with the largest nuclear arsenals, the United States and the Russian Federation. He documents how he pursued and developed this idea in his discussion of the role of the Six-Nation Initiative, the work of the group called “Parliamentarians for World Order”, and the establishment of the Middle Powers Initiative, an ingenious coalition of highly respected non-governmental organizations working on behalf of progress in achieving global nuclear disarmament.

I truly believe that the longstanding efforts by Douglas Roche in the field of disarmament is one of the many important reasons why nuclear disarmament has re-captured the imagination of millions of people worldwide, as seen most clearly in public statements by current and former officials and in activities by civil society.

So I will conclude by saying that while I am here today not just to commend Doug Roche for having produced a great book, but for having led an extraordinarily good and productive

life as a public servant of his country and, indeed, of all humanity. I know that his service has not ended, as he will continue to provide advice and counsel to others as we continue our common journey to a world, at long last, without nuclear weapons or the possibility of nuclear war.

He has my deepest thanks for his contributions to a more secure, peaceful, and just world, and my very best wishes for the success of all his future efforts to pursue these noble ends.