

**REVIVE DISARMAMENT by Dr. Hans Blix,  
Chairman of the independent Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission.  
Ottawa 27 September 2006**

**I appreciate the opportunity to speak the day before the opening of the Article VI Forum and I want to express my thanks for the attention which has been devoted to the Report of the WMD Commission, which I had the honour to chair: “Weapons of Terror. Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms” (www.wmdcommission.org)**

**All good forces – and the Middle Powers Initiative is one of the best forces around – need to be active to revive disarmament.**

As a young lawyer, I assisted Mrs. Alva Myrdal at the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Conference in Geneva. She was a **minister** in the Swedish government and **her portfolio was disarmament. Today**, a resident Swedish ambassador in Geneva handles disarmament as one among other issues that arise in the many international organizations located in that city.

I recall that the US Government once had a very capable Agency for Arms Control and Disarmament. As far as I know, there is nowadays not even a division for arms control in the State Department.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which is the world’s central forum for negotiations on arms control and disarmament, has not been able to agree on a work program since the middle of 90s.

The NPT review conference in 2005 ended without any agreement and declaration and the UN summit the same year could not agree on a single line regarding arms control and disarmament.

***Could it be that after the Cold War there is no more need for arms control and disarmament? I certainly do not think so but let me list what a sceptic about disarmament might say.***

There is no fear of **MAD -- a nuclear duel** between great powers causing mutually assured destruction.

There is **less armed violence** than there used to be. Last year the **UN Undersecretary for Peacekeeping noted**

- that there are less wars than there used to be;
- that there are today about 25 armed conflicts in the world, down from more than 50 in the early 1990s;
- that most armed conflicts in the world today are *civil wars*;

- that the number of people killed in battle in the world is at present at a hundred year low. (Jean-Marie Guehenno in *The International Herald Tribune*, 12 September 2005).

There has been a reduction of nuclear arsenals from an estimated 50 000 to 27 000, including a dramatic reduction or withdrawal under the 1991 Bush-Gorbachev Presidential Nuclear Initiative of what is called “**tactical nuclear weapons**”...

There will be a further drastic but unverified reduction by 2012 under the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty.

A **moratorium on nuclear testing** has been observed by all states for a number of years. Why bother with a CTBT?

There is hardly any production of enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons in the great powers. Why worry about prohibiting it in a verified **Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty**?

There are ample **verification capabilities** maintained and paid by national governments. Why argue for more international “cumbersome treaty based bureaucracies” – to use US Ambassador Bolton’s words, when he underlined that the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) comprises “activities” – not organizations. (Fi.T. 7 Aug.2004)

There is and will be no shooting **war of civilizations**. The US military supremacy will deter any attempt of this kind.

World public opinion no longer clamours for arms control and disarmament. It sees a need to fight terrorism and global warming.

**I am afraid this is the sunny side up and that the reality, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, is that we are at a crossroad and may be sleep-walking into new arms races.**

The US National Security Strategy of 2006 begins with the words “*America is at war*” and during the past year President Bush has said that 9/11 was the Pearl Harbour of the Third World War.

**World military expenditures** are not going down. In 2005 they amounted to about one trillion dollars, a little less than half of it being US expenditures.

In 2005, the US spent 3.7 % of its GDP on defence while Europe’s NATO members were spending about 1.9 %. (FiT 3 March 2005);

**In 2003, the US and some allied states actually went to war against Iraq to eliminate weapons of mass destruction** – that turned out not to exist;

Rather than restricting the use of nuclear weapons, the nuclear doctrines in several states have come to permit a **first strike**. This includes voices in Washington repeatedly saying that “**all options are on the table**” in the case of **Iran**;

There is a concern that **North Korea** could **test** a nuclear weapon;

There is concern about the risk of **proliferation** of nuclear weapons to further states unless the NPT is strengthened;

There is concern that the **US – India** nuclear cooperation agreement could lead to a race to stockpile more weapons or weapon material in Asia;

**New nuclear weapons**, possibly with new or additional missions, may be designed and produced in some states, including the US and the UK; and that US nuclear test ranges are kept ready for tests;

**China and Russia** are preparing countermeasures against the threat which they perceive from the US missile shield;

There is a risk that **space may be weaponized**.

What are we to make of such contrasting visions? The end of the Cold War took the world away from the brink of disasters – but good use was made only for a short time of the windows of opportunity that were opened for global cooperation in two interrelated vital fields:

- collective security; and
- arms control and disarmament.

**In the area of arms control and disarmament** the CWC was concluded after decades of negotiations and it entered into force in 1997. The CTBT was adopted in 1996 but did not enter into force. Thereafter nothing of similar magnitude was attained and what there was, largely geared to the risk of proliferation and not to arms control and disarmament.

Security Council Res.1540 is an important tool to strengthen implementation of existing weapons bans. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) – an alliance of willing states under US leadership – might offer some deterrence against illicit trade and transport of WMD related equipment and material.

There are several welcome threat reduction initiatives.

On the other hand, as problems of great magnitude have been piling up **unresolved** in the area of arms control and disarmament (the fissile material cut off going nowhere, the risk of space weaponization, the missile shield and responses to it, the new generations of nuclear weapons).

**In the area of collective security** we see not only a stagnation but important steps back from the order designed at San Francisco:

The end of the Cold War allowed the **collective security** formula of the UN to function in the case of the Gulf War, when in **1990 and 1991** the Security Council authorized common action – including armed action. President Bush talked about a “new international order”. However, in **2002 and 2003** the Charter precepts for collective security were **abandoned** and action was taken in conspicuous absence of Security Council authorization. Then and thereafter, the US has declared its readiness to take armed preventive action – perhaps even nuclear – **regardless of the UN security order in a non-defined category of “growing threats”**.

**Is there a non-declared aim to create a global security system based on US military power and a readiness to use it?**

On 17 September **2002** the new *US National Security Strategy* was published, giving support to and arguments for possible pre-emptive actions against terrorist organizations and ‘rogue states’. In an overview it declared that

*“The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to **help make the world not just safer but better...**”*  
(Sec. I)

This hopeful note was echoed in US National Defense Strategy of 2005 states. I quote:

*“The end of the Cold War and our capacity to influence global events open the prospects for a new and peaceful system in the world”*.

Judging by another passage on the same page in the Strategy of 2005, the visions not only ignore but also seem to see the order and procedures of international organizations as obstacles. I quote again:

*“Our strength as a nation state will continue to be challenged by those who employ a strategy of the weak using international fora, judicial processes, and terrorism.”*

An article by an academic in the Canberra Times (28 April 2005), vividly articulated the wish for reliance on US military supremacy instead of arms control diplomacy. I quote:

*“We need a fundamental re-think about the role and value of arms control in international relations. Despite all the naysayers, the world is enjoying its unipolar moment. American military supremacy is assured for decades to come.... And the Bush Administration has done a good job of shifting the focus on international efforts away from moribund arms control diplomacy to real counter-proliferation activities such as the Proliferation Security Initiative... we should encourage America to go further. Wipe the slate clean of all the old arms control structures and instruments. Disband the*

*Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and replace it with a standing military force to prosecute acts of proliferation.” (Ungerer, lecturer at the University of Queensland).*

Reverting to the Strategy of 2002, we find that the freedom to take pre-emptive action regardless of UN Charter restrictions is claimed against the background of possible threats of **weapons of mass destruction**. I quote:

*“We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They rely on ... the use of **weapons of mass destruction** – weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning.” (US National Security Strategy 2002.*

The central message was that

*“The United States has long maintained the option of **pre-emptive actions** to counter a **sufficient threat** to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking **anticipatory action**”*

**Thus**, no criterion was offered of the situation in which a pre-emptive action would be regarded as permissible, except that a threat did not have to be “imminent”.

Debates in the election campaign in the fall of 2004 suggest that the administration looked with disdain on the relevant UN Charter rules. In the debate about pre-emptive military actions – which both candidates thought could be necessary – Senator Kerry said that such action would have to stand up to what he called a ‘**global test**’. The responses left no doubt that the administration felt assessing pre-emptive armed actions contemplated by the US against any **outside yardstick, was ridiculous**. This view would no doubt have been endorsed by the present US Permanent Representative to the UN. Mr. Bolton, who on 13 November 2003, said the following before the Federalist Society in Washington DC:

*“Our actions, taken consistently with Constitutional principles, **require no separate, external validation to make them legitimate**. Whether it is removing a rogue Iraqi regime and replacing it, preventing WMD proliferation, or protecting Americans against an unaccountable Court...”*

Nevertheless, the pursuit of **counter-proliferation by military action in Iraq without ‘external validation’** must have been a disappointing and discouraging experience. It proved tragically expensive in lives, suffering and resources, while no stated objectives were attained – except the toppling of a brutal dictator. It is also evident that ignoring the Security Council contributed to the failure of the enterprise.

Although I am not aware of anything that has been said or done suggesting that a retreat should be under way from the strategies I have cited, it would be natural if some re-

evaluation were taking place of the relative value of military force, diplomacy and UN involvement to counter terrorism, proliferation and other threats in the future.

In the cases of **North Korea and Iran**, military actions would not under present circumstances receive authorizations by the Security Council and renewed non-authorized military counter-proliferation actions appear improbable. The path of negotiations and broad multilateralism seems to be preferred in both cases.

Although various economic pressures are being applied against **North Korea**, **no UN sanctions have been contemplated** other than the rather special ones adopted that relate to the North Korean missile program. One is tempted to believe that even moving the nuclear proliferation issue to the Security Council with the sanctions option hanging in the air, is at least currently deemed counterproductive. For a considerable time, efforts have been focused instead on convincing the North Korean government that it would stand much to gain in terms of security, status and economy by renouncing all weapons of mass destruction, abandoning its indigenous nuclear program and accepting verification. The North Korean government is told that it could obtain assurances against armed attacks from the outside and against subversive activities inside. Diplomatic relations with Japan and the US would also become possible, signalling an end to pariah status and isolation.

Although it can be argued – and is argued by some – that North Korea breached commitments that it undertook, and should receive nothing for reverting to them, it is a **policy of negotiations and quid pro quo** that is found the most hopeful – not one of threats and punishment.

**The case of Iran** has been handled rather differently from that of North Korea by the great powers, which are concerned by Iran's program to enrich uranium. The European powers have accepted that the enrichment of uranium for peaceful aims, such as nuclear fuel production, is open to parties to the NPT but they show a lack of confidence that the Iranian program has only peaceful aims. Asking Iran to suspend the enrichment programme they offer in return various forms of quid pro quo in the economic sphere and an assurance of supply of enriched uranium for nuclear fuel.

Differently from the case of North Korea, **no assurances against outside attacks and subversion** have been held out to Iran as a part of an agreement involving the suspension of the enrichment program. Such assurances – as well as promises of diplomatic relations, which were given to North Korea – would probably be of great interest and value to Iran, but only if the US were a party to a settlement.

Again differently from North Korea, Iran has been sent a good deal of not so veiled **military threats** from spokesmen for the US and Israel, and a main purpose of the successful US drive to **refer the case of Iran to the Security Council** appears to have been to seek an authorization for **sanctions**. While there is hardly any reason to question the legitimacy of that move, especially given Iran's violation of its safeguards agreement,

the threat implicit in the action may turn out to be counter-productive and there are clearly divided views as to the wisdom of going down this path.

As with North Korea rewards may provide a positive inducement, while threats of punishment **may** be perceived as humiliating and provoke intransigence or even countermeasures. In saying this I am not contending that diplomatic, economic or some military pressure, especially if authorized by the Security Council, would always be unwise. I don't think Iraq under Saddam would have accepted inspection, had it not been for an increasing US military presence in the Gulf in the summer of 2002.

A puzzling peculiarity in the case of Iran has the demand that Iran should suspend its enrichment program **before** any in depth talks could be held about the various items that would be offered as a quid pro quo. Which player in a game is willing to give the other side its trump card before the play begins? Perhaps a time limited suspension of the enrichment programme, starting at the same time as the talks, would offer a way out of this self-inflicted dilemma?

I have suggested that offering North Korea and Iran **assurances in the security field** could be one important element to induce them to accept deals in the nuclear field. General measures of arms control and disarmament in the nuclear field are not part of the talks with North Korea and Iran. However, it is tempting to think that **the talks would be somewhat less difficult**, if these countries were to face not only an expectation that **they** should help to **solidify** the global proliferation regime but also to see a readiness among **nuclear weapon states** to do the same by moving to concrete measures of arms control and disarmament in the nuclear field, as promised in Art. VI of the NPT and when the treaty was extended without time limit. If they do not undertake such action they should also not be surprised if there is erosion in the support and respect for the treaty.

This brings me to my main message, which is that fulfilment by all parties of the bargain underlying the Non-Proliferation Treaty is required if the treaty is to remain viable. **It is not a treaty that appoints the nuclear weapon states parties individually or jointly to police non-nuclear weapon state parties and to threaten them with punishment.** It is a contract in which all parties commit themselves to the **goal of a nuclear weapon free world.** If police action is to take place, it must be authorized by the Security Council in conformity with the UN Charter. The nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT have a strong voice in the Council, but they are not alone.

Practically all the non nuclear weapon states parties have fulfilled and are fulfilling their part of the NPT contract with great positive effects on security and stability in the world. It is high time that the nuclear weapon states parties move on with their commitments.

The end of the Cold War should allow the world to move not only into a further globalization of economy and development, but also of security – as, indeed, happened in the UN authorized Gulf War – and as should happen in arms control and disarmament.

The independent **Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission**, which I had the honour to chair, has presented a unanimous report in which a large number of measures are proposed in the sphere of arms control and disarmament. In its view, nuclear weapons should be comprehensively prohibited in the same manner as Biological and Chemical Weapons. Such a nuclear convention is not in sight today but there is a vast number of measures which could be taken without much delay and the Commission's report ***Weapons of Terror. Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms*** lists and describes and offers the rationales for many of them.

The year 2006 will not go down in history as the year of disarmament, but perhaps the year when it was realized that achieving disarmament by war and democracy by occupation is difficult and that we must resume our efforts to bring about global disarmament – **revive disarmament** – through cooperative actions and negotiations.

Let me only end by mentioning two items on which positive action now could change the world climate and achieve a global warming that all would welcome.

**First**, we need the entry into force of the **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty**. It was adopted exactly ten years ago – in 1996 – and remains ready on our desk. Although 135 states have ratified the treaty the ratifications by ten more states, including the US, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel and Iran. A large number of “friends” of the treaty spoke up last week at the UN in favour of prompt action. Ten years have been lost. No time to continue taking the risk of keeping the treaty in limbo.

It is gratifying that the **moratorium** on testing has not been broken, but the treaty would provide stronger assurance. There have been some fears that **North Korea** might test a nuclear weapon to demonstrate their status. The multilateral talks with North Korea – as those with Iran – must ensure that both countries ratify the treaty. This will undoubtedly be much easier if the great powers involved all have ratified and it may prove very difficult if they have not done so. No arms control treaty has a more convincing and reliable international verification system.

**Second**, the convention prohibiting the production of enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons should be negotiated without further delay. While the draft circulated by the US is welcome it needs to be complemented by a system of verification if the treaty is to be viable and credible. Such verification is nothing new. Enrichment plants in some nuclear weapon states (in the EU and in China) as well as in some non nuclear weapon states (Japan and Brazil) already have extensive verification.

While a Cut Off treaty should cause no security problems for any of the nuclear weapon states, the absence of such a treaty might cause serious problems in Asia if the draft agreement on nuclear cooperation between India and the US were to enter into force. If India were to be able to import uranium fuel it could – I do not say would – make more fissionable material for weapons. Unless it adhered to a Cut Off treaty providing for international verification, Pakistan and China might fear an increase in Indian stocks of weapons or weapons material. However, none of the nuclear weapon states in Asia would

bind itself under a verified Cut Off treaty unless the other nuclear weapon states in the world did the same. It must have high priority.