

**54th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs
Bridging a Divided World Through International Cooperation and
Disarmament**

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**Report of the Secretary General
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Pugwash, as we all know, has 47 years of history of promoting dialogue, cooperation and peace. In most of our history we dealt with the world divided by the iron curtain and with the nuclear confrontation between East and West. Now the world has changed in many significant ways and the Cold War is over. Still, many of our previous goals are relevant now.

We have mainly been concerned with the risks associated with the development, deployment, and overall the use, of deadly indiscriminate weapons--primarily nuclear weapons, but also chemical and biological weapons, all of these being loosely known as WMD, or Weapons of Mass Destruction. The destructive role of nuclear weapons, and the global risk of annihilation for mankind, prompted Russell and Einstein almost 50 years ago to write their famous Manifesto, which is still the basis of our work.

Dealing with the problems associated with nuclear weapons and WMDs is a complicated task, since it means first of all having a clear understanding of the consequences that can derive from the use (and the possession) of such indiscriminant weapons, and building a consensus over this understanding.

It also means appreciating and supporting the role of specific international institutions that can prevent the spread and trafficking of such weapons and the dangerous materials necessary to build them and, ultimately and most importantly, that can help direct the international community towards the total elimination of such weapons.

It means understanding the motivations that can push some specific countries to acquire or to refuse to dismantle WMDs, and dealing with the relevant specific threats and threat perceptions. Here the task is to propose security frameworks wherein the illusory safety deriving from the possession of WMDs is replaced by better and more stable security arrangements.

It means remembering that the world of WMDs, and nuclear weapons in particular, is an unequal world of haves and have-nots, and that the legitimate aspiration to equality, mutual respect and fairness should not imply that equality will be reached when all States who feel the need to do so are allowed to acquire nuclear weapons or other WMDs.

It must also be taken into account that the technology underlying most WMDs is not a particularly sophisticated one (most of it being decades-old), and that this technology is also used in many civilian applications. One of the key issues of the NPT, and also of the CWC, is that countries--by abiding to the non-proliferation regime or to the prohibitions imposed on specific WMDs—would obtain the right to receive specific technologies and materials (for civilian use), albeit under international supervision.

In more recent times, the collective role of the international community has been played down, and the idea has gained momentum that some countries should be entitled both to possess sizeable amounts of nuclear weapons indefinitely, as well as to decide which are the good countries (that can do the same) and which are the bad countries (that should be pressured, militarily and/or economically, to give up their WMD capabilities). Countries have been divided into good and evil, reliable and unreliable. The resulting Manichean approach, applied to WMD, has:

- undermined the universal and moral appeal for the elimination of WMD;
- stimulated the desire in many countries to acquire WMD (before being subjected to blackmail);
- increased the feeling of injustice and discrimination in significant parts of the world.

This has been called counter-proliferation. To make things worse, unilateral pressures to curb the spread of WMD have often been ill-directed and inconclusive.

The tragic case of the war on Iraq falls into this category. The attack on Iraq was motivated primarily by the fact that Iraq “surely” possessed WMD that were not detected or detectable by the UN inspector teams. In fact, this has been the first war in history motivated by the will to eliminate some WMD.

But we all know that no WMD have been found in one-and-a-half years of US occupation. What is absolutely remarkable is not only the fact that a big mistake was made, but that, in comparative terms, an exceedingly small political price for this mistake has been paid in the US and in the other Western countries that supported the attack.

Other motivations for the attack on Iraq involved the elimination of Saddam Hussein’s regime, and the establishment of a democratic government in Iraq that would represent a model for the entire Middle East and the fight against terrorism. While it is true that Saddam has been eliminated (and his elimination will certainly not be regretted), a democratic government in Iraq is not yet on the horizon, and terrorism has gained solid ground in Iraq after the war. In addition, the living condition of Iraqis is still critical, to say the least.

We will discuss these points in this conference. Let me mention that the war on Iraq has lowered the credibility of the goal of eliminating WMD, a goal that has been transformed, in Iraq, into nothing more than a false excuse to allow a unilateral military action conducted largely against the will of international public opinion and against the UN.

But many are the challenges to the non-proliferation regime in the near future. Let us mention them briefly:

1. First, the official nuclear powers are doing very little to proceed towards an effective nuclear disarmament, as dictated by Art.6 of the NPT. The Moscow Treaty foresees some 4000 strategic nuclear weapons by the year 2012, and it does not require the dismantlement of withdrawn nuclear weapons. Moreover, new types of nuclear weapons are possibly planned and a sizeable amount of strategic nuclear weapons are still kept in a high alert status. No effort is being made to let the CTBT enter into force, and

occasionally in fact the possibility of the resumption of tests is mentioned and discussed. Of the well-known 13 steps approved by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, very little if anything survives, and even mentioning the 13 steps can create negative reactions among the nuclear powers. The so-called war on terrorism has created a political climate (in the US and also in Russia) where it is relatively unpopular to press for any form of disarmament (nuclear, conventional, etc.), even though there is apparently no role for the possible use of nuclear weapons in any conceivable counter-terrorist action. The reluctance of the official nuclear powers to abide to the NPT obligation (Art.6) does not consider the fact that the discriminatory nature of the NPT is bound to last only for a definite amount of time.

Challenges to the non-proliferation regime arise moreover in specific regions of the world:

2. The critical situation in the Middle East could trigger (in the area) a wide-ranging renunciation of the NPT. The position of Israel, the only (unofficial) nuclear country in the area, and its refusal to discuss its arsenal and its possible elimination, could in the long range stimulate serious adverse reactions. In the Middle East we have also a significant number of countries that are not members of the CWC or the BWC. The situation would become even more complicated if some specific military actions were to be initiated against countries, such as Iran, where some controversial nuclear activity is being carried out. On the positive side, there have been long-standing proposals to establish a Nuclear- or WMD-free Zone in the Middle East. This of course should include Israel as well as all Arab and non-Arab states in the area. Building such a WMD-free zone is not an easy task, not only because of the large presence of nuclear weapons and WMD in the area, but also because of the connection between WMD issues, the staggering Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and the atmosphere of mistrust and hostility between Israel and other States.
3. The situation of North East Asia is also a source of concern. The DPRK considers itself outside the NPT. The goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula (and North East Asia) is still outstanding, and the immediate prospects are not bright. Even here there is an interplay between nuclear weapons and an atmosphere of mistrust and hostility. Progress could be made if talks were to begin in the direction of combining the creation of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, with the prospect of a peace treaty between the US and the DPRK, and the normalization of relations between the two countries and among the other countries of the region and regional powers; but, as things stand now, this normalization is not likely to materialize in the near future. Were the DPRK to become an open nuclear weapon state, it could have a significant consequence on the development of other nuclear options in the region and on the NPT as a whole.

4. What is happening in South Asia could also have a profound impact on the non-proliferation regime--neither of the regional nuclear powers (India and Pakistan) being members of the NPT. We have seen in South Asia that even non-members of the NPT have a responsibility regarding the spread of nuclear materials, technology for enrichment & reprocessing, and more generally of nuclear weapons design and technology. Serious mistakes can be and have been made. More significantly, the confrontation between India and Pakistan over longstanding issues such as Kashmir has triggered in the past a military confrontation wherein some million troops from both countries confronted each other along the recognized border and the line of control. If the confrontation between India and Pakistan had involved the use of nuclear weapons, this would have had dramatic consequences not only on the lives of many Indians and Pakistanis, but also in terms of nuclear proliferation. The controversy between India and Pakistan is the main controversy existing today between two nuclear-armed States. While the situation has significantly improved recently, the danger is still present.
5. There have been proposals to enforce non-proliferation in a more efficient and aggressive way. The Proliferation Security Initiative of the Bush administration falls into this category. So does the proposal to limit the right to produce nuclear fuel to specific countries. Such proposals and initiatives have some specific merits and advantages, but also involve the risk of being perceived as additional discriminations imposed on specific developing countries, thus enhancing the already heavily discriminatory nature of the NPT. Additional discriminations may have the effect of tightening an already very tight rope, and backfiring as far as the stability of the Non-Proliferation regime is concerned. For this reason every effort should be made by international institutions to have these provisions promoted in a careful non-discriminatory way.

In 2003/2004, Pugwash tried to tackle some of these issues by promoting dialogue, track II meetings, and analyses on some of the above-mentioned issues. We had a very active year, with about 15 meetings conducted on the subjects and themes mentioned above, as well as others.

We dealt with some specific realities (the Middle East, South Asia, North East Asia) by devoting much attention to the specific problems of nuclear weapons and WMD, while at the same time trying to understand the complexities of the contentious issues in those areas and the interesting and innovative relevant peace proposals.

1. In dealing with Middle East issues, we obviously acknowledged the importance of a Middle Eastern WMD-free zone, but also saw that this zone could be more feasible in a framework such as the one considered by the Arab plan, where normalization of relations between Israel and other States has been linked to the creation of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders or within borders adjusted in some mutually acceptable way, such as the one defined by the Geneva Peace Accord model. The combination of the Arab plan and the Geneva Peace Accord represent up to now the best scheme for a decisive progress for peace in the Middle East. One outstanding issue for some time has been whether talking of a WMD-free zone can be meaningful only after a comprehensive peace has been achieved (as Israel claims to be the case), or whether the development of even partial initiatives towards a WMD-free zone could be integrated into the peace process to the benefit of the peace process itself. Here there is the need of exploring several options and possibly finding new proposals.
2. The Iranian nuclear question can more easily be addressed if both a non-discriminatory policy towards fuel acquisition is achieved, and the IAEA safeguards, including the additional protocol, are fully implemented. This is not an impossible task, especially if an effort is made towards normalizing/improving the relations between Iran and other Western countries, including the US. While it is possible to acknowledge possible past technical violations of the NPT, cornering, if not criminalizing, Iran will not make things easier for the NPT itself in the Middle East as a whole.
3. We have seen the recent positive changes in Indo-Pakistani relations. Here we can detect a paradigm change in the reciprocal approach of the nuclear states. Confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the nuclear field will likely be discussed more and more (an approach Pugwash has advocated since our first South Asian security meeting in Geneva). Other economic CBMs and cooperation agreements, as well as the easing of communications between the two states, are also presently being discussed and, to some extent, implemented. The key issue of Kashmir is now undoubtedly being dealt with in different tones and with much less constraints than in the past. Even though the Kashmir issue may not stay permanently at the absolute center of the Indo-Pakistani relations, it will always have a political relevance and a powerful impact on the heart and minds of the people in the subcontinent. Helping to promote dialogue on the Kashmir issue is also something with which Pugwash is very much involved.
4. We are now here in North East Asia, and we believe that there is a widespread desire to have a nuclear-weapon-free zone here—a desire which hopefully spans the two Koreas. The possibility of a stable nuclear-free Korean peninsula is certainly linked to the establishment of a better, much less adversarial relation between the powers present in the area, including of

course the US and DPRK. There is a wide-spread consensus that the alternative to a local détente is a freezing of the present situation, possibly with more economic restrictions and hardship. Military action of any type is generally not considered a feasible option. Nevertheless, if the DPRK were to openly become a nuclear state, the shock waves would be felt in the entire region, with other States (such as Japan) possibly considering an alternative nuclear option. Again, this would have an effect that would go well beyond this area and would be a significant blow to the NPT.

5. Finally, promoting and strengthening the role of truly international organizations in preventing nuclear proliferation--with clear non-discriminatory policies as opposed to either unilateral decisions or decisions taken by some ad hoc “coalition of the willing” or “coalition of the strong”-- is very important to making the non-proliferation regime stable and increasingly stronger. International organizations such as the IAEA or the OPCW have performed remarkably well, and are still our best hope for building an international legal framework that would hopefully soon outlaw all WMD. This of course does not deny the need for an evolution and an adjustment of international regulations in the area of controlling the spread of critical material and technologies and the relevant role of international institutions.

The concern for nuclear proliferation is ultimately motivated by the dire consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, which can be used by adversarial nuclear powers or by terrorist groups. As advocated many times by (and not only by) Pugwash, in order to prevent nuclear terrorism, the international community should seriously take steps for:

- Controlling all dangerous nuclear materials (highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium)
- Speeding up the dilution of highly enriched uranium and the disposal of plutonium, keeping in mind that the risks associated with highly enriched uranium (HEU) are higher since there are less technical obstacles for the construction of a rudimentary bomb with HEU.

Pugwash continues to address these issues, especially in connection with the situation in Russia where the problem is more severe.

The risk of nuclear terrorism is naturally influenced by the global spread of the terrorism phenomena, and a legitimate question to ask is, what are the real effects of the so-called war on terror? How has the spread of terrorism been affected? One of our working groups here is devoted to this issue, and over the last few years Pugwash has held a periodic workshop on this. In one of these workshops which took place before the war on Iraq, while we acknowledged that terrorism of the Al Qaeda-type was hardly present or related to Iraq, we raised the issue that following a US military intervention, terrorism would likely be much more present and active there. I very much wish we had been wrong.

Many issues need to be discussed concerning the war on terror, and I have just pointed out a few of them. The concerns I am expressing here are not, needless to say, aimed at promoting tolerance towards terrorism. The point is that, in order to contain terrorism, it is not useful to proclaim a “war on it”; taking concrete and effective steps is what really matters.

First of all, as a consequence of the war on terror, two countries (Afghanistan and Iraq) have been invaded. While it is true that two dictatorial regimes have been eliminated, allowing new options for the future, it is also true that the suppression of the old regimes did not allow per se the consolidation of new stable governments. In both countries, progress towards democracy is uncertain to say the least. Most importantly, many lives have been destroyed, and many are still being lost in those same countries, as a consequence of terrorist and criminal activities (that are apparently not declining) and of some very dubious counter-terrorist military actions. In particular, when counter-terrorist actions involve retaliations against civilians, including children, the resulting public anger increases the support for terrorism.

In the West, terrorism is de facto identified with Islamic terrorism, and Islam is often seen as one of the main sources of terrorism, despite occasional formal reassurances to the contrary. The clash of civilizations became too much of a self-fulfilling prophecy, and the gap between Islamic and Western countries grew larger. In this climate, it has become much more difficult to promote communication and scientific-cultural exchanges--even organizing visits of scholars and political experts from some areas of the world to the US (or EU) has become a nightmare. This is an environment where anti-Western terrorism can grow and find increased support.

The war on terrorism has resulted in a long list of restrictive measures that have strongly limited individual liberties. This is especially true for the US, where the detention of individuals can be indefinitely prolonged without a trial (e.g., Guantanamo) and where people are carefully followed and scrutinized. Also of concern are reports of US occupying forces using torture and of terror suspects being deported to countries where torture is practiced.

We in Pugwash started as a small community made up almost exclusively of scientists who wanted to promote dialogue and mutual understanding and point out the risks associated with the presence of nuclear weapons and other WMD. As you can see from our activities and participation, many of us are still scientists concerned with our responsibility and with the possible consequences of developments in Science and Technology. It is not only weapons which matter when we are talking about human security. Other non-military aspects (unequal economic development, the spread of specific diseases, the environment) can have a dramatic impact on our security and ultimately provide sources of conflict. There is certainly space now and in the future in Pugwash for these problems.

Let me conclude by remembering the title of our conference “Bridging a Divided World through International Cooperation and Disarmament”. This is more than the title of a conference, it should be considered as the goal of our work. Our “special interest” for nuclear weapons and WMD fits perfectly well, since nothing contributes more than nuclear weapons and WMD to division and mistrust, and is detrimental to peace. In difficult times, talking about disarmament may seem unpopular, since fear, animosity, a sense of national frustration, and anger may result in suggesting weapons as the solution. Well, they are a big part of the problem, not of the solution, and if disarmament is unpopular, then we are quite happy to be unpopular for quite some time.