

**Address by Ambassador Richard Butler,
Chairperson, Middle Powers Initiative to
Expert Seminar on
“ Toward a Nuclear Weapons Convention: A Role for Canada”
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In the small number of human beings in the room is a remarkable group of people. I salute all of you for your extraordinary work.

I gave Bev some speech notes for my remarks I'm going to change them. I'm going to depart from what I wanted to say, in order to respond particularly to some comments being made today. [Amb. Butler honours Dr. Trevor Findlay for his work on verification at Canadian Centre for Treaty Compliance.]

Trevor, I want to share a verification story. You may be able to draw a principle from it. If you've got a problem, find a rat! We were inspecting a lab in Iraq, when I was in charge of UNSCOM. We'd given Iraq notice as required. When we arrived at the lab, it was filled with beautifully clean desks and tables with writing pads and pencils. We could have formed the impression it was a school or place where people learned to write. In a desk drawer we found the rat, a lab rat used in their work and they'd forgotten to dispose of it. We tested that rat and proved they'd been fooling with illicit chemical materials. So, find the rat!

With respect to the hijack from the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The CD works by consensus and, after a highly effective process, all agreed with the substance of the text of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. But at the last moment, the delegation of India used a procedural means to block movement of the text to the UN General Assembly. They blocked its transmission, not its substance. People approached me in New York and, it fell to me to take an action. I wrote a letter to the President of the General Assembly. I asked him to put an item on the UN General Agenda and said: "By the way, here is the text of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty identical to one considered in another place. Would you now please open this in the Assembly?" It was adopted. It was about ten years before I could safely visit India again. On the day of signing the Treaty, I was thanked by President Clinton for my work.

This conference comes at the right time on the right subject.

The passage of time is now too long. I have recently talked to ambassadors in New York, on a draft text for a UN General Assembly resolution. When I had to explain why I was doing this, I said "it is time". We must stop accepting assurances of action, knowing that action was unlikely to take place. It is time because of the continuing danger posed by nuclear weapons. Let them talk about their safe systems. We need to talk dangers. We need to do it because of the stasis in the CD. Once hijacked, twice shy. If they won't do it, it has to be done somewhere else.

There are new pressures upon the non-proliferation regime, there is political instability, but there is also a political opportunity. I didn't think I'd ever hear an American President say what President Obama said in Prague and later, he also issued

a virtual negative security assurance. If we act appropriately, we might be able to seize the time and make progress.

These are the basic actions needed:

a) assert with greater determination, clarity, insistence, that it nuclear disarmament is a matter of universal concern. We have tended to accept that there are those who have the weapons and those who don't, and the issue of their existence and the threat they pose is the weapon states alone to determine. It isn't. It is ours too, all of us. This is what we were hearing on international law with respect to the use and threat of nuclear weapons. It is of universal concern to all of us. We need to make that more clear and widely understood than ever before.

b) We need a new mechanism for nuclear disarmament wrapped up in a convention that makes them illegal. I believe in the truth, that if you've a really special job to be done, you make a purpose-built mechanism for that job. You don't put new wine into old casks. This I learned from a newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia, in 1983 - when the U.S. and Russians were making one nuclear weapon per week. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, went to the Cabinet (at a time when he had been the Minister for only 6 weeks), and said we need to do something about the shocking growth of nuclear weapons. They created a job called the "Ambassador for Disarmament" and I was appointed. Most self-respecting countries now have an Ambassador for Disarmament. You need to create a special mechanism for it. I was the first Ambassador for Disarmament accredited to the U.N. and we were subsequently followed by many others.

Partly because of this principle, the Middle Powers Initiative recently drew up a resolution for the UN General Assembly. I did a round of consultations in New York on that draft. It calls for implementation of the Secretary General's five point proposal. That proposal has been supported by 130 states and was "noted" with unanimity in the NPT Review Conference Final Report.

The Middle Powers Initiative's resolution is open to the public. I'd be happy take the resolutions in a pickup truck and drop them on the road in front of the U.N. It is time for action. This is demonstrated by the fact that the first resolution of the UN, in 1947, called for nuclear disarmament, and ends with the UN Secretary General's Five Point Proposal, now current.

The draft calls on the Secretary General to convene a Conference of all states beginning in 2014 on a framework of mutually reinforcing agreements or convention. The resolution is very simple. It reflects the notion that less is more. It gets quickly to the point and says this is what we should do.

Interestingly, no one has said no, but one has said yet said yes. It was agreed, however, in informal consultations, that we would continue with meetings every six weeks or so. A version of the resolution will succeed, if not this one. If it lights a fire under the Conference on Disarmament, it will have done its job. If it creates another special purpose mechanism, it will get its job done. But we have to ask how to seize the

momentum to implement the Secretary General's proposal and the NPT review outcomes.

Now there are very specific actions needed. And I'll say what they are quickly. We need: negative security assurances; an agreement by Nuclear Weapons States pledging no first use; a fissile materials cut-off treaty; agreements on de-alerting and no new production.

We need to remind the Nuclear Weapons States of their obligations not just under Article VI but also under Article 1 of NPT. The Article I obligation requires states never to assist anyone else in their acquisition of nuclear weapons. China has assisted Pakistan. The U.S. is assisting India, if indirectly. France assisted Israel in the past. This issue of non-proliferation by Nuclear Weapons States, those who lambast Iran, must be said made clear.

For a secure world without nuclear weapons, weapon states need to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in their nuclear weapons strategies. We need to deconstruct deterrence and extended deterrence. We need to assert the applicability of international law. The Vancouver Declaration says there is no doubt about it.

We need a new structure of global governance. And, new mechanisms for verification and enforcement.

We need to revisit the role of the UN General Assembly on this.

The UN Security Council is unreliable. The veto is abused and has been abused since the beginning.

The nexus of being a Nuclear Weapons State and one of the permanent five members of the Security Council needs to be undone. It is a negative nexus.

One of the funniest remarks I've heard about the British: I noted the UK representative last night made remarks, basically, without substance.

When Mahatma Gandhi was summoned to London to discuss the future of India, on his arrival there, he was surrounded by media. He was asked: "what do you think about western civilization?" He responded: "I think it would be an awfully good idea!" Nuclearism is connected to colonialism. It is now recorded in public writings that when Gordon Brown approached Tony Blair saying the public and the party don't want nuclear weapons, that Tony Blair said the UK must hold onto its nuclear weapons because we don't have our colonies any more but we have our nuclear weapons, and that is what gives us prestige!

What this points to is the need for a complete revision of the discourse. We have strong competition from Lady Gaga other so called celebrities. The public discourse is awash with triviality and falsehood. The public understanding is pitiful and poor.

In his book *Dark Sun*, Richard Rhodes quotes the report drawn up by Enrico Fermi and Il Rabi in 1949 on the proposed Hydrogen Bomb :

“ By its very nature it cannot be confined to a military objective but becomes a weapon which in practical effect is almost one of genocide...It is clear that the use of such a weapon cannot be justified on any ethical ground... The fact that no limits exist to the destructiveness of this weapon makes its very existence and the knowledge of its construction a danger to humanity as a whole.”

What to do?

1) The Middle Powers Initiative will continue with a rolling series of consultations on the draft resolution. I recommend you ask the Canadian government to convene or provide facilities for Middle Powers Initiation to call an informal consultation.

My wife works with HIV/Aids work and she has noted the need in her work for a “safe space for discussion”. We need the same.

We need to think of how to seize this moment, to implement the provisions of NPT 2010, the UN Secretary General’s Five Point Proposal, to design the way in which we will design the purpose-built mechanism we need to render nuclear weapons illegal. Canada’s record is second to none among relevant countries. Let us start the process here.

2) Let us also consider how to change the public discourse on nuclear weapons. In particular, responsible governments need to stop the deceptions about deterrence, the usefulness of deterrence and extended deterrence based on the threat of nuclear weapons.

The Canberra Commission’s third axiom is that as long as nuclear weapons exist, they will be used, by accident or by decision, and that any use will be a catastrophe. This is not hard for people to understand. We need much more truth to be told.