

Voices and responsibilities of Nuclear Weapon States.

Panel at the IPPNW World Congress, Basel, Switzerland, Aug. 27 2010.

Presentation by Gunnar Westberg.

Reconstruction of the speech which was delivered

Your Excellency Ambassador Laura Kennedy, General Saighal. I regret that Ambassador Loschinsky has had to leave.

But first of all: Dear Academician Jevgenij Chazov! I wish to congratulate you to your eighty years. I understand that you have been celebrated this last year as one of the foremost cardiologists in the world. You were the first to use streptokinase intracoronary in acute myocardial infarction. Your Cardiology Research Institute in Moscow is world famous. But you should be equally celebrated as one of the founders of IPPNW. Given the time and the circumstances, that was a very brave action. Your organization has survived for almost thirty years, and is very active and growing in importance in many countries. I would, however, be more happy if we could have celebrated the end of IPPNW with a tremendous party, after the abolition of all nuclear weapons. That day is still not here, but it will come. I hope we will both see that day.

We have survived 65 years with nuclear weapons.

That was not a given. During the 65 years when we have lived with the threat of nuclear annihilation there have been many instances when we came close to The End. Only afterwards have been told about some of the critical situations.

There was the Cuba crisis. The book and the movie *Thirteen days* tell the story. Both Kennedy and Chrustjov had to deal with politicians and generals around them who wanted to go to war. Wanted war, because that was what they were trained for. Wanted war, as not to lose credibility. With a less restrained US president, and had not Anastas Mikoyan been at the side of Chrustjov, what would have happened?

We survived the Cuba crisis.

In the early eighties the fear within the Soviet leadership of a nuclear attack from NATO, and from President Reagan's USA, was at times acute. During the NATO exercise Able Archer in November 1983 the KGB warned the Soviet Leaders that this was another Operation Barbarossa, the maneuver which Nazi Germany used as a cover for the attack against the Soviet Union. NATO will attack "The Evil Empire"! The NATO leaders had no idea of how the exercise was perceived in Moscow. A mistake at that time could have spelled the end of human civilization. Two well placed Soviet spies, one at the NATO headquarter and one in London, repeatedly assured the Soviet military leaders that no attack was coming. The Soviet leaders waited in fear and anxiety, and the exercise ended.

And there were other critical moments. Two months before the Able Archer crisis, on September 26 1983, two or three objects, soon maybe five, identified as US missiles on their way to Soviet territory appeared on the radar screens in Moscow. Colonel Stanislav Petrov, the officer on duty, was under strict orders to report any such observation immediately to the national high command. But Petrov waited. Several minutes, against instructions. Would USA really attack with only a few missiles? And the ghosts on the screens disappeared.

We survived.

John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State for six years during the nineteen fifties, afterwards often bragged of the Brinkmanship he had displayed when confronting the “Godless communism”. How can anyone even talk about Brinkmanship in the nuclear age?

We survived. We survived even John Foster Dulles.

Dear Ambassadors, you have at great length told us of the steps of disarmament your countries Russia and USA have taken. But we are not satisfied. It is of little importance of there are 60 000 nuclear warheads in the world, or just 10 000. You can still destroy the human civilization. You must go for Zero. If you do not clearly aim for zero nuclear weapons in a foreseeable future, be it 10 or 15 years, your reductions will not discourage nuclear proliferation. This is also emphasized by the four harbingers of nuclear abolition, the elders Shultz, Perry, Nunn and Kissinger.

Nuclear weapons cause war. If nuclear proliferation is to be stopped while you keep your own nuclear arsenal, you may have to resort to war. If the threat of a nuclear mushroom cloud had not appeared behind Condoleezza Rice in her “no smoking gun” speech, the US public would probably not have accepted an attack on Iraq. And now the specter of an Iranian nuclear bomb may “force” the USA closer to the brink of “preventive” war again. It will not be the last time:

Nuclear weapons cause war.

You did not speak of Zero.

Neither did you speak of No High Alert. Your governments do not want you to speak of this, of mankind under the sword of Damocles. The latest Nuclear Posture Review, presented by President Obama, tells us that steps will be taken to decrease the risk of nuclear war by mistake. Decrease, not remove.

The risk of global nuclear war today is much lower than during the Cold War. But it is not zero. And if the relationship between USA and Russia deteriorates the risk will increase. Better act now, agree on a road to nuclear weapons abolition when the feeling is good. Read and negotiate the Nuclear Weapons Convention and bring these negotiations to conclusion as demanded by the International Court!

A regional nuclear war spells global famine.

Remember, that even a limited nuclear war, when less than one percent of the nuclear arsenal of the world is used, will cause a change in the global climate for many years. A global famine of unprecedented proportions, with many hundreds of million people starving to death, will be the consequence. You do not believe this? If so, read the scientific reports and disprove them if you can.

If nuclear weapons are allowed to persist, they will be used.

If nuclear weapons are allowed to persist, they will proliferate.

Nuclear weapons cause war.

But your countries do not want to go for Zero.

We say: Zero in our lifetime!