



INTERACTION
COUNCIL

**Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony
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“The Present State of the World”

**By Hans Blix
Former Chairman of the UN Monitoring,
Verification and Inspection Commission**

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It is a great honour to introduce your discussion of the present state of the world. The Charter of the Interaction Council directs you to develop recommendations on and practical solutions for political, economic and social **problems** confronting humanity. I take it then that my role at this opening morning session is to **deliver problems** and the role of the Council in the afternoon session is to **deliver practical solutions**.

Let me first make some comments on how we go about **defining problems**. Then to point to some **major developments** that have taken place and that may continue to raise challenges to the world community. **Thereafter**, I propose to devote a more extensive discussion to two major issues:

- the **novel** issue of the relation between our energy use and the threat of global warming; and
- the **age-old** question how we can avoid the threat or use of force between states and achieve disarmament.

How do we define our problems?

As makers of decisions on many complex questions, you are familiar with both the need and the difficulty to have an **accurate picture of the reality** in which you are asked to intervene. You know also that it may often be necessary to take decisions and act before all the facts are known with certainty.

Before they decide on **therapy**, medical doctors must observe and analyze symptoms and set the right diagnosis. In the same way, political leaders need first to critically examine dossiers of data coming from different sources, e.g. from supposedly competent and objective civil services, NGOs, media and various interest groups. It may be natural for political leaders – and for their voters – to look to data from their own **familiar national sources**. Yet, **reports** from the **international** scientific community and from **the international** civil service often bring valuable **impartiality** and a **credibility** on which international agreement and action can be reached.

- I need hardly argue the crucial importance of the **International Panel on Climate Change**. All its conclusions over the years are not unanimously endorsed. That is as it should be in a world where critical thinking is part of progress. Yet, to the policy-maker, the views and conclusions of a panel representing a very large multinational scientific community rightly carry greater weight than views of limited groups.
- Another example – one that may be forgotten – was the advice that was given by the United Nations Scientific Committee on Atomic Radiation (**UNSCEAR**) about the dangers of the fallout from **atmospheric nuclear testing**. It was of crucial importance to persuade the world of the necessity for the Partial Test Ban Treaty that was concluded in 1963.

- It is sad that the **reports** of the international inspectors were **ignored** by the governments of the Alliance of Willing States that intervened in Iraq in March 2003. **Even today**, when the errors of national intelligence have been laid bare in key states, many in these states **still** seem to ignore that by the time of the intervention **independent international inspection** had provided no support for national intelligence claiming the existence of a continued Iraqi WMD program. Indeed, some significant parts of the national intelligence had been rebutted. Had the international inspection mandated by the Security Council been taken seriously by all and been allowed to continue for a few months more, the war might well have been precluded.

I would like to submit to you that in general - and especially on contentious international issues – **more attention should be paid** to the reports and analyses that states actually mandate from international organizations. In the future, we shall undoubtedly see a growing use of **international reports**, and of monitoring and inspection not only in the area of arms control and disarmament but also the fields of the environment, fisheries and exploitation of other natural resources, finance, health, etc. Is it not natural – and economic -- that conclusions and actions of the international community **should be based on** inquiries and analyses mandated and paid for by that community?

I shall point now to some major developments that impact on our future.

A little girl was told by her mother that the **crayfish** is moving backward and does not see where it is going. No, said the wise little girl, **but it knows where it is coming from...**

Indeed, looking backward we can see that a number of **major developments** since the Second World War raise promises and threats for the future. Let me mention some:

- The **SCIENTIFIC and TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT** will continue and further accelerate the revolutions in communication, transport, international trade, productivity and health. Some people will want the planet to stop to allow them to jump off. However, we shall **go on plucking apples** from the tree of knowledge. Many innovations will lead to further **globalization**. We have thought of this development mainly in the fields of economics, finance, science and information. However, it will bring people and states closer and the accelerating **interdependence** will have a heavy impact on state relations.
- **Life expectancy** will go further up and **child mortality** will go further down. There will be more of us and more who will need to be taken care of. Many of the problems relating to food shortages, competition about energy and environmental destruction and degradation are connected with the rapid **POPULATION INCREASE**.
- At the time of Christ there were – it has been calculated – some 350 million people on the Earth
 - by the year 1900 we had become 1.5 billion;
 - in 1990 we had attained the 5 billion level; and

-- in the year 2000 we were around 6 billion.

- Thus, in the last decade of the 20th century, **we increased** by roughly the same number – 1 billion – as we did during the 19 centuries from the time of Christ! Are we to continue like this until the sign ‘standing room only’ goes up in more places? If we have been urged to multiply and populate the world, could we not declare ‘mission accomplished’?
- It is true that fertility rates have gone down faster than earlier expected and that the currently drawn **curve** for global population increase has flattened somewhat. Yet, we don’t seem to worry that the change is too slow.
- In countries where **negative growth** has occurred this seems sometimes to have been lamented as national calamities. Should it not rather be **welcomed**?
- **Economists** used to tell us, to be sure, that increases in population were needed to boost economic expansion. Can’t they give us some less problematic way of achieving expansion?
- Can’t we also recognize that **greater equality for women**, including the right to education, is not only a moral imperative but is also – with better health care – the best way to smaller, healthier families.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION and DISASTERS** are not new in the history of mankind but – as it has been said – while in the past we used considerable effort and talent to destroy each other, we now seem to be joining hands to destroy our common environment. Population increase and the tools of modern technology and chemistry have expanded the environmental damages from being local, to becoming regional and now global.
- **Groucho Marx**, pondering the admonition that we should do something for future generations, said he did not understand it; “They never did anything for us...” He was joking. I am sure he would have agreed that, to feel a duty to pursue a **sustainable development**, we need do no more than recognizing our natural wish to leave a livable world to our **grand children**.

I shall turn in a moment to the specific, currently overwhelming question of the relation between **energy use and global warming and**, thereafter, to the questions of **disarmament** and the **non-use of force**. In this broad survey of developments let me also mention

- that the establishment of the **UNITED NATIONS** over 60 years ago and the creation of a host of **intergovernmental organizations** of universal membership have provided the states of the world vital fora in which they can discuss and jointly address common problems. Let us remember that this organizational evolution that we take for granted began only about a hundred years ago. The specialized agencies are for the world what **government departments** are in individual states. They provide mechanisms through

which governments can act together on issues that they cannot manage on their own;

- that the emancipation of the **COLONIAL WORLD** made the UN universal and it also revealed the enormous **challenge to bridge the gap** in standards of living between different parts of mankind. While tremendous strides have been made in many developing countries large scale extreme poverty continues to exist and calls for **attitudes of solidarity**;
- that the **universal declaration of HUMAN RIGHTS** might perhaps be seen as the **emancipation of the individual human being**, giving him or her **rights to claim** wherever he or she might be and whatever ethnic or religious group he or she might belong to. Although human rights are subject to **violations** everywhere and gross violations occur in many areas, **common global standards** now exist. They are not rooted in any particular religion, political creed or civilization but might perhaps be seen as a **globalization of ethics**. They need to be supported and fora must be maintained where complaints can be lodged and heard; and
- that although the last hundred years have seen **two world wars**, vast oppression, mega killings and genocide, the recognition of human rights reflects a **broad revulsion of brutality and cruelty**. The evolution has clearly been going and continues to go toward more humane attitudes:
 - The **death penalty** and other cruel forms of punishment have been practiced throughout history. These are abandoned in one country after another.
 - **Duelling** was once a legally accepted and honorable way of settling controversies. No longer.
 - The **spanking of children** was normal in most cultures but is increasingly rejected and even forbidden.
 - **Genital mutilation** has been and remains common in some cultures but is increasingly rejected and forbidden.
- **The wider global acceptance of democracy – and corresponding rejection of autocracy** -- may perhaps be seen as a recognition of the human right of each individual to **participate** in setting the political, economic, and social conditions and norms that he or she will have to live by.
- The implosion of the **Soviet empire**, the **END of the COLD WAR** and the acceptance of different shades of **market economy** practically everywhere, including **China**, have given new chances for the **creative initiative of individuals**. The **result** has been rapid economic rise in many countries – especially China, India and many other states in Asia. The result is also a **need for new rules of the road** in the political and economic landscape. More states are invited to join the World Trade Organization and rules in the World Bank and IMF will need to be modified.

- The **end of the Cold War** also marked the **end of a ‘bipolar world’**. I shall discuss this in a little while.

Major developments obviously include new **REGIONAL COOPERATION and organization**. While ASEAN, NAFTA, and MERCOSUR mark regional cooperation, the **EUROPEAN UNION** marks an integration and transformation of Europe.

Perhaps one can discern three phases. The **first** was driven by a wish to **preclude war** between European states through the merger of key industries. The **second** was the creation of a **vast internal market** that has called for extensive unification of law and joint institutions. The **third** – ongoing – phase is marked by a wish to reshape joint institutions and procedures to work more efficiently and to enable the participating states to **project** the considerable aggregate power of the expanding union.

The EU is an exciting project in which the original incentive to ensure peace is now a given. Having in my student days traveled with a passport stamped with an allied military permit to go through occupied Germany, I enjoy the freedom to move around much of Europe without a passport, to use the same currency, to see the merger of European corporations and ties between trade unions is gradually **creating a family** – with quarrels and all.

I turn now to the relation between energy and global warming

In the beginning of my presentation I noted that although **not everybody is convinced** about the gravity of global warming **and** although not all data are there delaying action **may be risky**. It may get too late.

A basic political and ethical dilemma is well known: during the last couple of hundred years **the industrialized states** have raised their **living standards** to unprecedented levels and an important means of doing this has been relying on energy from the **burning** of increasing volumes of **fossil fuels**. They all result in the emission of carbon-dioxide.

When **developing countries** begin to follow the **same pattern** as the industrialized countries, the rich world stands up and warns: **‘Sorry, we have already emitted** more CO₂, methane and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than is prudent. Adding any more would be reckless! **We need to reduce these emissions**. Developing countries might answer: ‘OK, but how about some **equity** – perhaps we can agree on **per capita emission** limits ensuring that the total emissions of greenhouse gases do not become imprudent?’

So, what shall we do?

Most will agree that our **global village** needs to consider **prudent aggregate limits for future emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases** and needs arrangements how such limits can be effectively implemented globally.

Let us **first** note that although **carbon-dioxide** may be the biggest single factor, we should not overlook action on **other greenhouse gases**. An agreement last year to **accelerate** the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on **phasing out CFC's** (chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons) by 10 years was very welcome not only to help rescue the ozone layer, but also because it contributed significantly to reduce the emission of a potent greenhouse gas.

Today the fossil fuels provide some 85 % of the world's energy and either ways must be found to limit their use or to limit emissions of CO₂ from them.

To limit the use of energy, some, especially in the richest countries, **urge us going back to simpler living with less use of fossil fuels**. Some gains are undoubtedly available on this account, but we should be aware that **most of humanity has no opulent life styles to shed**. Even though the price of oil now is far above 100 dollars per barrel, fast developing countries will increase their demand. As the famous Indian nuclear scientist Homi Bhaba said: '**No energy is more expensive than no energy**'.

Currently, our increasingly energy hungry world is both looking for ways of **increasing the production and use of fossil fuels** --- oil, gas and coal – and for reducing consumption and **the emissions** linked to the consumption. The pumping of more oil and gas is urged for the sake of the world economy but feared by the world ecology. For the time being the concern about the **economy seems to prevail** over that of the ecology. Let me give an example:

The **Arctic ice** is melting fast and much of it may disappear due to the climate change caused in large part by the burning of oil and gas. The first reaction is enthusiasm that with the ice gone it may be possible to drill for and exploit new oil and gas resources that used to be inaccessible... **Perhaps** governments could allow themselves to be inspired by what they did in the **Antarctic**, where an environmental protocol was reached, prohibiting the exploitation of minerals and other resources. After all, for the world it would be like keeping valuable capital in the bank for use later on.

We should note that apart from environmental consequences increased global use of oil and gas resources may have **negative security implications**. As someone said, if Iraq's main export had been **kumquats**, there would have been no wars in the Gulf. Today, we can see that **Central Asia**, rich in oil and gas, is becoming another area of great power tensions. Thus, both international security and environmental security would benefit from **restraint in the demand** for oil and gas.

When it comes to ways of **reducing the amounts of carbon dioxide**, many measures are discussed. **It is uncontroversial to say that we should** look for **all possible ways – technologies and economic measures** – that result in reduced emissions of **greenhouse gases**. A major approach is to seek to expand the use of energy sources that generate little or no greenhouse gases, like **nuclear power**, hydropower, solar power and other renewables. Regrettably, some of these sources and methods may raise only faint or distant hopes and others are controversial.

Research and development of energy from **fusion** is desirable but practical results can hardly come in the foreseeable future. High hopes are currently pinned at the testing of techniques of **catching** (sequestering) CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels and injecting it into cavities in the earth. However, it is too early to know whether the methods are practicable and affordable.

One practical, significant and uncontroversial approach is **to increase efficiency** so that more energy is obtained from any given amount of fuel. When the number of cars increases it is obviously desirable that their engines use less gas per mile. However, the introduction of energy saving techniques in many cases **requires time** and is most practical when investments are made in new machinery and methods.

Stopping **deforestation**, especially of tropical rain forests, **would preserve vast lungs that soak up carbon dioxide**. Perhaps states that undertake to set such lungs aside as ‘**global parks**’ could be compensated by the international community– just as private owners are compensated by states for land set aside as national parks?

Switching from coal to oil and from oil to gas is helpful to reduce CO₂ emissions, as the burning of gas results in half as much CO₂ as does coal per energy unit generated.

While not much hydropower remains to exploit, other ‘renewables’ – i.e. solar and wind energy, biomass and ethanol, wave and tidal power – **remain the** chief option to some. Many of these sources may become more economic than they are now but few believe they can become of more than marginal importance.

Let me give some figures comparing the energy content of different fuels:

1kg of wood has an energy content corresponding to 1 kWh
1 kg of coal -----to 3 kWh
1 kg of oil ----- to 4 kWh

while

1 kg of uranium -----to 50.000 kWh,
If it is reprocessed after use, the U and Pu will have
an energy content corresponding -----to 3.500.000 kWh

If there were some break-throughs in our ability to **store electric energy** – better batteries – some of the intermittent energies, like wind and solar would become more useful.

Let me turn, lastly, to nuclear power

Nuclear power currently provides the world about 4 percent of its energy and about 16 percent of its electric energy. There is little doubt that after a long period of stagnation nuclear power is now **experiencing spring** and could in time give the world vast amounts of energy.

Construction is going on in Asia and Russia, Eastern Europe, Finland and France. In the **UK**, the government is determined to replace its aging park of nuclear plants with a new generation. In the **US** new nuclear power reactors have been ordered in Georgia and many more are expected. In the **Persian Gulf** a number of reactors may be ordered to meet rapidly increasing electricity demand and to desalinate water.

While it is generally accepted that nuclear power can give the world significant amounts of carbon- dioxide free energy, objections are raised on **other grounds. Let me deal with the principal objections.**

It is objected that uranium is a **'finite' resource**. However, a future use of **breeder reactors** will make these resources ample even for many centuries of increased reliance on nuclear power. Utilizing the **thorium resources** of the world is another avenue that remains open and may offer several advantages.

It is objected that the **Chernobyl accident** showed that nuclear power is not safe and that accidents can have long lasting unacceptable consequences. However, in some forty years of nuclear power reactor operations, the unusual Chernobyl reactor is the only one that suffered an accident causing significant radioactive releases into the environment. Since Chernobyl there has been much development in nuclear safety. The risks of accidents cannot go to zero, but the **availability** of nuclear power plants has gone up from a global figure of some 70 % in the 1970s to well over 90 % in the 1990s. This points to a much greater reliability and, at the same time, better economy. Care is now also taken that even in the worst kind of accident, releases of radioactivity into the environment should not occur.

It is objected that there is no solution to the **question of nuclear waste**. However, the concepts and technical solutions do exist for secure and very long term disposal of high level nuclear. New technology may bring even better solutions. A wise woman chairing a Swedish commission on the question of nuclear waste said that 'Waste is what you have when imagination has run out.'

Finland is the first country building a repository for high level waste and I am sure that Sweden will not be very far behind. **Further**, however you assess the small risk of **leakage** of radioactive waste, perhaps thousands of years from now, you must **compare** that risk with the certainty of the negative impact even in the next 50 years of the wastes from the main alternative – fossil fuels.

It is claimed, lastly, that an expansion of nuclear power would increase the risk of further spread of **nuclear weapons**. However, while clearly more nuclear fuel would have to be produced for more nuclear reactors, the **risk of misuse or diversion of enriched uranium or plutonium** can be minimized. The major part of any expansion of nuclear power would **occur in countries that already have nuclear power** – the US, UK, China, Russia, Japan, India etc. Whether the US would have 200 nuclear power plants rather than 100, or Sweden would have 20 instead of 10, would hardly risk increasing the number of nuclear weapons in the world.

The construction of installations for the **enrichment of uranium and production of plutonium** where it would not be economically justified would, however, be a cause of concern. It would have to be addressed on a case by case basis – as is now done with North Korea and Iran. One should remember, nevertheless, that even if there were no expansion of nuclear power in the world, the construction of such installations could occur and would have to be addressed. To remove or reduce incentives for the construction of indigenous fuel cycle installations international arrangements are now discussed about assurances of supply of nuclear fuel for power reactors in bona fide non-nuclear weapon states.

A last comment: in their stands on nuclear power, political parties and leaders seem often to have been led by tactical considerations whether on balance votes would be gained or lost by support or opposition to nuclear power. In my view they should rather weigh arguments of substance and seek to inform and lead public opinion. It is true that many people have felt anguish about nuclear power just as many people feel anguish about flying. If political leaders conclude that using more nuclear power has increasing advantages, inter alia, as one of several means of generating energy without CO2 and if they are of the view that these advantages outweigh the decreasing risks, they should say so.

I turn now from the energy-environment issue to the issue of non-use of armed force between states and disarmament.

Visions of a worldwide **outlawing of nuclear weapons** have often been ignored as well meaning **fantasies**. The situation has changed in the past year by a shift of opinion in a large part of the US security oriented elite, led by the so-called **Gang of 4**, comprised of former US Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn. They – and their many supporters – have argued that while during the Cold War **nuclear deterrence** was rational and necessary, “*such reliance is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective.*” They urge that we should accept the vision of a nuclear weapon free world and they **propose a large number of steps** in the fields of arms control and disarmament.

The views advanced have received **significant support**. Senator **Obama** has cited the stand of the 4 with approval and **Senator McCain** has advanced several proposals that are in line with steps suggested by the 4 regarding nuclear weapons. It must be assumed that both candidates believe that US **voters** are with them. Perhaps the time is turning against nuclear weapons.

Before the nuclear weapons existed another – even grander – vision used to draw ridicule: the **vision of a world free of the use of armed force** between states.

We should recognize that **to rise above dreams** both visions and even the steps toward them require not only a genuine revulsion against the use of armed force but also a **positive wish** for cooperation instead of confrontation. A **climate of confrontation** – like that of the Cold War – may yield important arms control restraint when this is deemed mutually advantageous. Yet, it is also likely to **yield crises** – as in the case of

Cuba in 1962– and arms races. A climate of **détente** and cooperation is likely to yield greater **mutual confidence** and resulting from that, **disarmament** and an absence of the threat or use of force. There is not only a vicious circle of arms races but also a virtuous circle of détente and disarmament.

Thus, we **cannot** today or ever **ignore the global political context** when we assess the outlook for disarmament and non-use of force. In this regard let me **first note** some **hopeful long-term trends**.

Looking back in **history** we cannot fail to see how over the centuries larger and larger **areas have become pacified**. For the last 200 years any armed conflict between Nordic states has been highly improbable and today such a conflict is **unthinkable** between members of the EU. On the North American continent war could no longer take place between the **US and Mexico** and in South America interstate wars are also a thing of the past.

Although armed conflicts – mostly civil wars – arise in Africa, in the Mid-East and although **Taiwan and Kashmir** remain flashpoints, **overall** the risks of armed conflicts have gone down in ever larger areas. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's **Yearbook** reports that although the world's military expenditures for 2007 attained 1339 billion dollars, the number of interstate wars has been declining. There was none in 2007.

It is easy to see that important **factors that often triggered** war in the past have **disappeared**

- **Borders** have become settled in ever larger parts of the world
- **Conquest** of territory was often an aim of kings and other leaders. Perhaps Saddam Hussein was the last ruler bent on conquest? However, while colonialism is over, seeking regime change may not be over and may still cause military action.
- **Seeking independence** is no longer a cause of war as practically all colonial areas have become states
- **Religion and ideology** are no longer the cause of war. Crusades and jihads are things of the past.

With the **end of the Cold War**, the contest between the Marxist-influenced ideology and the market-influenced ideology disappeared. Practically all states now practice some kind of market economy and most – at least – profess aiming at participatory democracy. To warn against a coming **war of civilizations** is to attribute much too great importance to small groups of militants within a vast Muslim world of moderates. Saying this is **not ignoring** the risk that such groups could use **terrorist methods**, but we lose our sense of proportion, **if we arm against them as with war** between states. Terrorism does not justify maintaining nuclear arsenals or blue sea navies.

It is possible – even **probable** – that globally and regionally, accelerating **interdependence and economic integration** are key factors reducing the temptation to

rely on the threat and use of armed force. Japan and China, Europe and Russia have good reasons to tread cautiously. Sky-rocketing trade and communications – globalization – while having some negative consequences, have yielded tremendous benefits that would be lost in military confrontations. Fortunately, the evolution of **interdependence will continue** as it is driven by relentless scientific and technical developments that are largely outside the control of governments.

Yet, I must note that there **remains thinking** that is based upon a **less optimistic** outlook. **Ministries of defense** are often less inclined to think that growing interdependence may be changing the world. Rather, they may stress that the **future is uncertain** and that their governments should not lower the guard but maintain a readiness to meet all eventualities and **show this readiness**, for instance, by sending warships and air planes on patrol here and there. The **United States' security doctrine** retains the option of armed intervention against 'growing threats' at all times – even as a preventive measure.

Others will disagree with me, but I see the efforts to continue **expanding NATO** and perhaps also the idea of a **League of Democracies** – that would exclude Russia and China – as a **revival** of the policy of **containment** that was once both necessary and successful during the period of Russian Communist expansionism. I fear born again **policies of exclusion** – whether the object is Russia or China – will be seen as threats by the excluded and could have the very result they seek to avoid, namely stronger nationalism, stronger military, and hurt pride leading to increased tensions and possible arms races.

In my view, **policies of active cooperation** are needed to strengthen peace. There is no lack of problems that **require** global cooperation for their solution. It is time we begin to confront **threats that are common to all**, like climate change, energy and other resource constraints, and time to jointly **promote** global development and human rights and HIV, economic instability and the gap between the rich and the poor countries.

The **end of the Cold War** opened a **window of opportunity** for the expansion of such cooperation but it was only used partially and for a limited time. Disarmament made strides in the first half of the 1990s but stopped and regressed thereafter. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was rejected by the US Senate in 1998 and with the Bush administration taking over in 2001 and with 9/11 occurring the same year the window was closing. The **unilateral moment** that arose for the United States through the collapse of the Soviet empire developed into a decade. The **Iraq war** was initiated in a conviction that cooperation in the UN would have inaction and paralysis as the result, while **instant disarmament and democracy** could be achieved by the use of US superior military power.

This atmosphere prevailed even in the spring of 2006 when the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission that I headed published its report **“Weapons of Terror. Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms”** with 60 concrete proposals. However, since then the atmosphere has changed considerably. The **faith in superior military power** as a fixer has been undermined in Iraq and also in the Lebanon. By contrast, the value of **UN legitimacy** has been rediscovered and even in

the diplomatically exasperating case of DPRK and – so far – in the case of Iran, negotiations have been preferred to the use of force.

Is the world ready more generally to step on the path to disarmament and peace?

When we look for ways of leading the world to disarmament and non-use of military force, it may be of interest to consider **what brought this desirable result within modern states**. There were no doubt many elements but let me single out three:

- The emergence of a **monopoly on the possession and use of arms**,
- The emergence of institutions – **legislatures** – authorized to adopt laws by majority vote and valid within the whole society,
- The emergence of **institutions**, including courts to decide in differences and authorities **for governance**.

Where on the road to this desirable organization is the world community?

In the world community we have evidently **no legislature**, nor are we likely to get one in the foreseeable future. The General Assembly is a valuable council in the **global village**, a forum in which all states can participate in the discussion of common world problems and action can be stimulated. However, the result is **recommendations** – not law.

It is perhaps **amazing** that it has been possible to create a vast amount of international rules through the adoption of treaties, which become binding as law only through the individual consent given to them by states. **Yet**, as was well described by the Commission on Global Governance, the shortcomings are glaring. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol and the EU Lisbon treaty are cases in point.

In spite of the difficulties some fundamental rules governing state conduct have emerged. The UN Charter contains rules that oblige members – not to disarm but – to **refrain from using armed force** against each other except in self defense against an armed attack. **In national laws** we have rules that prohibit people from assaulting, killing and injuring each other, unless it is done in self defense that is proportionate to an attack or attempted attack. The UN rule is similar – for states.

The Charter also **allows the Security Council** to mandate or authorize the use of force in the wider sphere of situations where it decides that there is a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression.

We must note, however, that the UN Charter **restriction on the threat or use of force has been violated many times**. The political cost of violations has varied depending upon the circumstances. In the **case of Iraq in 2003**, where there was neither a prior attack nor an authorization by the Security Council the incompatibility with the UN Charter was **glaring** in the eyes of most states, **especially** when the case was compared with the collective intervention that occurred in Iraq in 1991, when Iraq had launched an armed attack on Kuwait.

As to international **courts and institutions of governance**, more and more are established by treaty. Some courts judge in differences between states. Many have been set up to try **war crimes** cases.

While the citizens of states are disarmed, the member states of the international community have evidently **not disarmed**. By treaties they have, however, **renounced or restricted** the possession or use of certain arms and methods of warfare. **Biological weapons** were banned in 1972 and a similar complete outlawing, supplemented by an elaborate system of verification, was adopted in 1993 **for chemical weapons**.

During the Cold War the US and the Soviet Union agreed on many **bilateral restraints** deemed mutually advantageous. Yet, at the peak of the Cold War there were some 55,000 nuclear warheads in the world, the vast majority in the Soviet Union and the United States. Multilateral treaties introduced a **partial ban on nuclear testing in 1963** and later prohibited the placing of nuclear weapons in the **Antarctic**, on the **seabed** and in **space**.

Under the **Non-Proliferation Treaty** signed in 1968 the then **non-nuclear** weapon states were invited to renounce nuclear weapons and all parties, including the then nuclear weapon states **committed themselves** to negotiate toward **nuclear and general disarmament**.

The end of the Cold War drastically lowered tension in **Europe** and allowed the states belonging to NATO and those belonging to the Warsaw Pact to agree on **important reductions** in the levels of conventional weaponry in Europe (CFE) and to a large measure of transparency, including mutual inspections. **In the nuclear sphere**, the US and the Soviet Union undertook drastic **parallel reductions** in the deployment and stocks of tactical nuclear weapons.

Could the **window of opportunity for disarmament** that opened in the early part of the 1990s and closed toward the end of the decade **again open**? That is the hope that the new thinking in the US raises. It suggests that the **US should take the lead** with Russia and the other nuclear weapon states to move to nuclear disarmament. They argue that the principal dangers facing the world are coming from a possible **spread** of nuclear weapons to **further states** and to **non-state actors**. In their view, the nuclear weapon states **themselves** need to move away from nuclear weapons in order to mobilize the world community against the risk of proliferation. All would agree that the **Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968** must be the starting point for constructive discussions. Under the treaty

- The then non-nuclear weapon states parties committed themselves **not to acquire nuclear weapons**, and
- The then five nuclear-weapon states committed themselves to **negotiate toward nuclear disarmament**.

The **2005 conference** for the review of the treaty ended in recrimination. **Non-nuclear weapon states** accused the nuclear weapon states of not taking seriously their duty to negotiate toward disarmament, inter alia, not fulfilling promises made at the review

conferences in 1995 and 2000. **The nuclear-weapon states** rejected these arguments, pointed to reductions they had made in their nuclear arsenals and voiced concern about the violations of the treaty by Iraq, Libya and North Korea, about suspicions raised against Iran and about the lack of provisions covering non-state actors.

The next review of the NPT will take place in 2010 and while some have warned against the possible collapse of the treaty, the **preparatory meetings** held so far suggest that efforts will be made to **strengthen the treaty** and compliance with it. The reality is that in important ways the treaty has been a **great success**. Although it failed to get India, Israel and Pakistan as parties and North Korea has given notice of withdrawal, it has the widest adherence of any arms control treaty. **South Africa** dismantled its nuclear weapons and joined the treaty. When they seceded from the Soviet Union, **Byelorussia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine** transferred the nuclear weapons on their territories to Russia.

Non-nuclear weapon states parties are **not averse to strengthening** the barriers against proliferation. They see no advantage in a world in which there are more fingers on nuclear triggers. And they are fully aware that the **technical difficulties** of making weapons are **shrinking** and that the main obstacles remain producing or otherwise acquiring enough highly enriched uranium or plutonium. They support control measures to prevent that sensitive nuclear material, know how and equipment are acquired by non-state actors and may well agree to make withdrawal from the treaty more difficult and many may accept more far-reaching inspection. Without positive action by the nuclear weapon states' parties to **significant measures in the sphere of nuclear disarmament**, however, progress is unlikely.

While the Bush administration has not so far signaled agreement to any such measures its tone has become more conciliatory. The next preparatory meeting will take place in 2009. There will be **new policy-makers in Washington** and rather new leadership also in other nuclear weapon states. If the views of the large non-partisan group of the US security elite that favours nuclear disarmament were to have significant impact in the new US administration, which seems plausible, there would be good chances for an active international disarmament agenda and a constructive NPT review conference. Such an agenda would require steps of conciliation in the presently rather poisoned US-Russia relations and probably also that the ongoing negotiations with DPRK and Iran do not end in failure.

The order of items **on a new agenda for disarmament agenda** is less important **than the** early establishment of such an agenda. **However, there is wide recognition about the high priority of some items:**

- Bringing **into force the** Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) **would send a** stronger signal **than any other measure could do** that disarmament are seriously back. If the US Senate **reconsidered its rejection of the treaty and** ratified it, **the prospects are good that other states would follow suit.**

- The US and Russia, **who have the largest stocks of nuclear weapons**, should take the initiative to a reduction - and **not just redeployment - of nuclear weapons**.
- **Talks should be started to ensure that** no weapons be placed in space.
- **Nuclear weapons should be taken off hair trigger alert to avoid war by accidents or misunderstandings.**
- **Nuclear weapons should be removed from Western Europe and Western Russia. Their presence is a relic of the Cold War and their removal would help reduce tensions that have been building up.**
- **The long proposed treaty providing a verified ban on the production of fissile material for weapons should now be negotiated to prevent that more enriched uranium and plutonium be produced for weapons.**

Let me conclude. The WMD Commission **that I headed stressed that when we want to convince states to stay away from, or do away with, nuclear weapons, the best approach is that which makes the states feel they do not need nuclear weapons for their security.**

Cooperative foreign, security and economic policies **may be the most important means to reach that result** and to promote peace. **In this process the United Nations is fundamental to provide norms and mechanisms for practical cooperation.**

The window for cooperation that opened at the end of the Cold War has been allowed to hang flapping in the wind. It is high time that it be fully opened and lead to peace based on a multilateral cooperative security order.

Mr. Hammarskjöld said: the UN will not take us to heaven but it might help us to avoid hell.