

Opening Remarks  
By Ambassador Henrik Salander,  
Chairman of the Middle Powers Initiative

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Dear friends and participants,

On behalf of my colleagues in the Middle Powers Initiative, I want to welcome all of you and thank you for coming to this Article VI Forum, number six in the sequence of forums, called “New imperatives and openings for a nuclear weapon-free world” and hosted by the Government of Germany in this historical venue, Rathaus Schöneberg. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Government of Germany and to my former colleagues in Auswärtiges Amt for the great generosity and all of the help we have received during the preparation of this meeting of the Article VI Forum. Germany is not only a Middle Power, but also a great power and an influential force in our common ambition to take decisive steps in order to reach a world free of nuclear weapons.

To start off our two-day discussions here, I will say a few words about the present state regarding nuclear disarmament and about the efforts and ambitions of middle power countries – but before anything else, I want us to salute somebody who is our origin, the reason why we all sit here today. He has been the idea generator, the first spark setting off the fire that the Middle Powers Initiative represents today. He is the creative force behind both the MPI and the Article VI Forum – Senator Douglas Roche, our Chairman Emeritus from now on.

A little more than ten years ago Senator Roche started the Middle Powers Initiative out of nowhere. To not only dream up an ingenious political concept and strategic tool, but also make it happen quickly in real life – for that a unique combination is necessary, of knowledge,

creativity, judgement and accuracy, a combination characteristic of Senator Roche.

During the handover of the MPI chairmanship, the Senator's extraordinary generosity, wisdom and diligence has been a moving experience for me. I thank Senator Roche for the way in which he has done this, and I can only hope that I may partly live up to his expectations.

Senator Roche is not here today, but you will most certainly meet him again, because he has promised me to be available for selected tasks where his enormous experience and political judgement will be instrumental.

We turn now to a situation which is both bad and promising, exciting but also very troubled: the nuclear weapons world of today. Let's take a brief look at its features, both negative and positive ones.

The shift of power in the world's most influential nuclear weapon state gives us some reason for hope. In several other possessor states, leadership has recently been transferred or may change in the near future. Whether this is promising or problematic we don't know yet.

The general background is quite bleak, as we have described in our briefing paper for this forum. The relation between Russia and the United States/NATO has been developing negatively. New anti-missile systems, ongoing reliance on nuclear forces, the souring dialogue over Iran's nuclear program and the US' arm-twisting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, to get an exemption for India from long-standing norms, are ominous signs, and may even mean that things will get worse before they get better.

On the other hand – let's not forget what are less conspicuous facts, but equally important ones that we may take for granted: for example that *all* non-nuclear weapon states are parties to the NPT, or that North Korea and Iran, pressing enough problems in themselves, are the only real issues of breakout from the regime.

There are some encouraging things happening out there, in the media, public opinion and cyberspace. When The Economist writes seriously and honestly about getting rid of nuclear weapons, one must draw the conclusion that at least some stone has been turned. It seems as if the Wall Street Journal article two years ago by the “Gang of Four” elderly US statesmen did away with political and psychological obstacles all over the world.

Although their second “Gang of Four”-article one year later was somewhat less convincing than the first, and although critics have suspected that such articles even act as a smokescreen covering continued US nuclear weapons dominance, it is clearly remarkable that four very senior individuals with such backgrounds are able to adjust their view of the world, and also to extend some credibility to people like ourselves, who have said the same things for many years.

Just recently, another quartet, German statesmen Helmut Schmidt, Richard von Weizsäcker, Egon Bahr and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, supported the American quartet’s call for action. They also added important points about missile defence and conventional arms and proposed a restoration of an arrangement similar to the defunct ABM treaty. One point of theirs, about the relation between nuclear disarmament and conventional balances, has recently been made also by Michail Gorbachev.

An expression of the increased impatience worldwide is “Global Zero”, an ambitious project, originated in the United States but directed towards global public opinion, i.a. by working through visual media, and with a timeline for action which is supposed to be continuously made more precise. The Mayors for Peace and their “Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol” is another. Yet another is the Hoover-NTI project, supported by the Norwegian government and others, which started from the commemoration of the Reykjavik Summit and came to generate the Wall Street Journal articles.

There are also a number of opinion polls worldwide, all with strong majorities supporting abolition of nuclear weapons. Further, in just the last few weeks, and in addition to the German statesmen, prominent

politicians in several countries have come out speaking about the necessity of a nuclear weapon-free world. As just one example, US Senator Dianne Feinstein said the other day that “We must recognize nuclear weapons for what they are – not a deterrent, but a grave and gathering threat to humanity. As president, Barack Obama should dedicate himself to their world-wide elimination.”

Next Wednesday, at the IISS in London, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom will present a paper on nuclear abolition. According to a summary just released, the paper concludes that the UK is working to build a broad coalition of governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and businesses which share the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, and to forge agreement on how we will work together to make it happen. This sounds very encouraging, not least from a Government which two months ago voted in the opposite direction in several cases in the UN General Assembly. It makes sense, anyhow – I have thought for some years that the UK is closest among nuclear weapon powers to re-evaluate their weapons possession.

Some recent contributions to the debate on nuclear weapons and international security have been very ambitious – more exact descriptions and thorough investigations than often is the case, of what the road to zero nuclear weapons would look like. One of these is the Foreign Affairs article “The logic of zero”, one of the authors of which is Jan Lodal, who is with us here today. This article discusses the logic behind the necessity of zero nuclear weapons, but also the logic behind each step to zero, explaining how the steps constitute a sequence and at the same time stand on their own feet, useful in themselves.

Another such valuable contribution is the IISS Adelphi Paper “Abolishing nuclear weapons” by George Perkovich and James Acton, which goes deeply into the verification needs of a world free of nuclear weapons; into ways of enforcing the compliance of states; and into how to deter violators when nations are approaching zero nuclear weapons. This study does not hide the difficulties of the way ahead.

There are of course differences of approach among all these international voices, and not least differences regarding the degree of detail and realism in which these goals, and the road to them, are described. But regardless of experts and professional doubters like ourselves, the overall picture in the public domain is clear: it is one of a genuine support among the electorates for the elimination of nuclear weapons as a threat to mankind.

Gradually, people everywhere have come to realise that if mankind is to mature, to separate itself from its animal ancestors, it has to get rid of barbaric and immoral weapons that threaten global annihilation, or at the very least requires the human mind at the release button to be closed off, in order for them to be used at all. As Douglas Roche has said, nuclear weapons and humanity cannot co-exist, just as slavery and human rights cannot co-exist. Nuclear weapons are in themselves a denial of the range of human rights opened up by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We may actually be standing in the doorway of an imaginary room, where in a not very distant future a plan for a world free of nuclear weapons will be drawn up, through cooperative efforts by knowledgeable negotiators, urged on by far-sighted politicians and NGO:s like ourselves and other forces of civil society.

But there are other forces that work in the opposite direction. Some of them are influential and very strong. Despite reductions of weapons, there are no real efforts among nuclear weapon states to significantly reduce their reliance on their weapons and undertake corresponding drastic reductions. There are rather tendencies to keep and elaborate the role of nuclear weapons as instruments of war. – It is very probable that terrorists are actively, even if so far unsuccessfully, seeking to obtain nuclear weapons. – Among states, proliferation is occurring, not a “cascade” of it, as the UN Secretary-General feared a few years ago, but clandestinely and eagerly, even if on very few hands.

The eight governments which today possess smaller or larger arsenals of nuclear weapons are spending incredible amounts of money on

keeping those weapons in shape, let alone on improving them; money that could be so incomparably much better used for other purposes. And at the same time, some very few governments, already possessing nuclear weapons, are putting up obstacles for even the *start* of FMCT and other negotiations in the only global forum for these matters, the CD in Geneva – which makes the spirit of the NPT and of its indefinite prolongation in 1995 betrayed, day after day, deliberately, by these governments.

Behind such developments, and discreetly lobbying against the hopes of public opinion worldwide, stands a machine working round the clock in several nuclear weapon-possessing countries, consisting of think-tanks, ministries, military establishments, large companies, analysts and decision-makers. These institutions and individuals never cease to come up with new rationales for keeping nuclear weapons and new reasons for upgrading, improving or replacing existing weapons, or manufacture new ones. This is sometimes done in a quite benevolent-looking symbiosis with demands for a nuclear weapons-free world, or at least with good-sounding lip service to reductions and to Article VI fulfilment.

Some of the nuclear weapon states do not rule out that they might have to use nuclear weapons in response to an attack, e.g. by chemical weapons, and possibly against a non-nuclear weapon state. It's almost hard to believe that their doctrines are so far behind current realities. Responsible politicians and military people in those countries know that nuclear weapons are in practical terms impossible to use, and only thinkable as a deterrent against other nuclear weapons. But still doctrines of some few states sound as if nuclear weapons can be used for non-strategic missions and may have battlefield utility. Doctrines remain stuck in Cold War thinking, however much some governments have been trying to formulate new necessities as cover for keeping their weapons. This is clearly a breach of NPT agreements; most definitely of those concluded in 2000.

All in all, the situation is unsustainable over the longer term. It is clear that there will be several more nuclear weapon states than today at

some point, if the trend is not reversed and nuclear weapons are brought to play a much diminished role, before being phased out.

So we have to ask ourselves, what do we, middle powers, want? We who have deliberately done away with the ambition of having nuclear weapons, what is our common wish?

The easy answer is of course that we want a world free of nuclear weapons. But that answer doesn't take us far. It does not tell us how to get there, and it does not tell us what to do today and next week.

I think a clearer answer might be that we want a *paradigm shift* – a radical change in the tone and above all in the content of the discussion between governments about nuclear weapons. If zero nuclear weapons is the top of a large mountain, then we want to see demonstrated a genuine will to, as Sam Nunn recently formulated it, start moving up the mountain together, so that even if we don't reach the top ourselves, at least our children can get out their binoculars, see the top and get there.

There is no shortage of prescriptions for our governments what to demand from the nuclear weapon states, both in the shorter and the longer run. Many of us here have personally taken part in formulating such ideas and recommendations, and some of them have been agreed by governments, but not realized. Among these are the thirteen steps from the NPT 2000 review; the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention; the 30 nuclear weapons-related recommendations from the WMDC, the Blix Commission; and similar demands which will most probably be formulated by the recently started Japanese/Australian commission, by the Global Zero project, and, in a best-case scenario, also by the NPT Review Conference starting 15 months from now.

The most authoritative voice so far has been the UN Secretary-General's, when in October he called for the urgent pursuit of what is a "global public good of the highest order". To get there, to a nuclear weapon-free world, he proposed that states should either negotiate a framework of interlocking treaties and instruments, or consider negotiating a strongly verified nuclear weapons convention.

The Middle Powers Initiative has also contributed to this growing number of roadmaps and proposals. The first four Article VI Forums generated a condensed set of measures that were deemed to be especially urgent, and which do not diminish the security of any state. They have been described and analysed in several MPI Briefing Papers by now, and they are, as you know, verified force reductions; de-alerting of nuclear forces; start of FMCT negotiation; entry-into-force of the CTBT; improved security assurances; fuel cycle control, and improved handling of NPT treaty matters.

These proposals are of course partly the same as have been around for years and even decades now; four of them, for example, are the same as in the thirteen steps. All seven are nevertheless completely valid, in fact more valid than ever, but they are also rather general in character, and of course they do not in themselves create the political circumstances that are required for them to be turned into reality.

We *have* done something. The Article VI Forums have been useful. But what we do is insufficient.

Countries like ours, with governments like ours, ought to be able to orchestrate our demands in a better way. We wring our hands over failed NPT conferences. We call it unacceptable to be facing the risk of accidental nuclear war. We complain about deceptive and foot-dragging strategies on the part of the nuclear weapon states. But the truth is that our own strategies have been inefficient. We have been badly coordinated. We haven't spoken up clearly enough and haven't formulated ourselves precisely enough. This has to change.

We must refine our argument against those nuclear weapon states which constantly claim that they are fulfilling their Article VI obligations. The nuclear weapon states have a history, from 1970 up to now, and more recently and conspicuously from the indefinite NPT extension to now, of cashing in agreements from non-nuclear states like us, while at the same time carrying forward the monopoly on large-scale violence which they presently have and show no sign of letting go.

But we shall also extend our hand to the nuclear weapon states and deepen the dialogue with them. The MPI has never been about confrontation. Rather, the MPI should encourage the nuclear weapon states and assist them in improving their own security by abandoning nuclear weapons.

We must also explain and advocate our belief that what is needed is to get rid of nuclear weapons themselves, not only of the regimes that may in future possess them or do possess them now.

I could enumerate other examples of advances that are needed. This is only to remind ourselves that middle power countries have homework to do. But we also need to take our analysis and our work to the next level. This level is symbolized by a Nuclear Weapons Convention, as an expression of, and a short-hand symbol for, a nuclear weapons-free world. The groundwork is already done; now the analysis must be deepened.

Douglas Roche has called the phase which the Middle Powers Initiative is now entering “the second phase of the MPI”. What we have to do is to connect the priority steps with the concrete vision of a nuclear weapon-free world. When we started the Article VI Forums in 2005, it was a result of the crash of the NPT Review Conference that year, after which the need was clear for a forum where substance could be discussed among like-minded states in a cooperative setting. Therefore the first four Forums were quite NPT-oriented, and rightly so, in order to reevaluate priorities after 2005. But now we need to look also further ahead; to think seriously on how to start international practical processes leading to a ban of nuclear weapons. What we must try to do is to break down the lofty goals into specific, manageable and practical processes that can gain political momentum globally.

This said, I certainly believe that the Middle Powers Initiative must work both with a long-term strategic horizon and with an operative eye on the tactical need of the next few months and the next NPT meeting and other pivotal events coming up. For the time being, the

NPT is the main structure to which we must connect our efforts. The Review Conference next year will decide a lot for the future. The MPI will arrange an informal pre-conference with The Carter Center in Atlanta in October, because we believe that such gatherings may potentially be very helpful for the review result.

Let's ask ourselves: in two or three decades, will we then look upon the NPT as we look upon the ABM treaty today? As a few scrap pages in a dustbin?

It's a possibility. One thing is certain: the direction in which the NPT is headed must be changed *now*. After May 2010 it may be too late. A good deal of the responsibility for this change of direction now rests with the new American administration. Interview responses from the president-elect last year sounded promising. But we also know that the countering forces are strong.

Let me conclude by saying that I am looking forward to our discussions, which promise to be highly interesting. I wish everybody a fruitful Article VI Forum here in Berlin!

Once again I thank Douglas Roche for everything he has done for us and for humankind. In all modesty, I will try to continue the build-up of the MPI into a creative, credible and forward-looking contributor to our quest for a world free of nuclear weapons.

I thank you for your attention.