

Hans Blix, *Why Nuclear Disarmament Matters*

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The end of the World War II brought new hopes of creating a better and more peaceful world. However, the beginning of the Cold War and the fierce arms race among the superpowers and allies dashed such optimism. Despite promises by the superpowers to disarm, even by the end of the Cold War, more than 50,000 nuclear weapons still posed security threat to the international community. In recent years, instead of improving, the climate for arms control and disarmament has deteriorated further.

At present, the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is under strain as non-nuclear states have become increasingly dissatisfied at the failure of the weapon states in moving seriously toward disarmament. Although reductions are taking place in overstocked nuclear arsenals, with around 27,000 weapons still existing, such reductions seem to be only in redundancy. What is even worse, the commitments of the nuclear states for further disarmament in 1995 during the indefinite extension of the NPT, have been ignored completely. Several nuclear states no longer pledge 'no first use' of nuclear weapons.

Even then, states have been giving less attention to nuclear arms control and disarmament. Factors like intense focus on counterterrorism measures; failure of the global treaties in preventing the 9/11 attacks; insufficient barriers in those treaties in preventing Iraq, North Korea and Libya from going nuclear; may be responsible for it. Besides, the paralyzing requirement of consensus combined with an outdated system of bloc politics has weakened the current global arms control and disarmament forums. It has increased states' lack of faith in disarmament measures.

Despite their failures in bringing about a world without nuclear arms, in today's integrating world community, global treaties and institutions like the UN, IAEA still remain indispensable in enhancing international security. To

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make the UN more effective, a strong Security Council is necessary. Today, the international community is in need of a Security Council, consisting of more representatives of the world, acting in tune with it, and taking concrete actions in reducing potential future international threats.

The WMD Commission has put forward certain recommendations for making global disarmament efforts more effective. Significant among them are: a) The UN should bring about a credible multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process by convening a new World Summit on those issues; b) The CTBT should be signed as early as possible; c) Negotiations on an effective treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons should begin; d) As a part of confidence building measure, the nuclear weapon states, especially the US and Russia, should take lead in reducing their strategic nuclear arsenals; e) All nuclear weapon states should commit themselves to a no first use policy; and f) controls on radioactive and fissionable material should be strengthened to impede trafficking and to make it harder for terrorists to acquire them.

With the help of such measures, the international community will definitely be able to revive disarmament measures. It is high time that the five nuclear states take their commitment to negotiate toward nuclear disarmament seriously. It would have dramatic impact on the world political climate and reduce incentives to nuclear proliferation.

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