

The Globalization of Peace, by Dr Hans Blix

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It is a great honour to be awarded the Sydney Peace Prize and to be invited to lecture.



The subject of this lecture is globalization of peace. I shall tell you from the outset what my main messages are.

First, I believe that long term the interdependence of nations that has already led to peace in a growing number of areas in the world, will lead to a globalization of peace, to a continued growth of international law and of common global institutions.

Second, we must wake up to the troublesome current reality of new great power tensions, and incipient arms races. We must revive disarmament and further develop the multilateral system of co-operation, including the United Nations. Third, there are short, medium and long term threats both to life and peace if we do not husband the use of the earth's resources, restrain our use of fossil fuels and restrain the growth of the human population.

I shall now develop these messages.

Globalization

Whether we like it or not the accelerating interdependence of nations forces us to cooperate. Viruses like avian flu travel anywhere without visa and must be stopped by common efforts. We have a common atmosphere - and we must jointly tackle the threat of global warming. We use the space above us for global communications and we must cooperate to ensure that no one places weapons in it and transforms it to a junkyard of fragmented satellites - by design or mistake. We all need food, fresh water and fuels. For this we must cooperate to husband the resources of the world.

We also need to slow the increase in the world's population. To anyone who still says we have a duty to populate the world I think we should say "the mission is accomplished".

If we accept the necessity to cooperate in all these matters, must we not also accept the necessity of cooperating to eliminate war, violence and weapons of mass destruction?

I shall begin by pointing to some hopeful and some dismaying signs on the path to peace. Thereafter, I shall zero in on two vital elements:
First, the globalization of law, particularly the international rules on the use of armed force.

Second, the globalization of disarmament, particularly the need to move to a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons.

Hopeful signs on the path to peace

There are today fewer wars between states than there used to be. The first world organization, the League of Nations, survived only the some 20 years - between WW I and WW II. The United Nations has now lasted over 60 years.

Many types of controversies have disappeared

It is striking that several types of armed conflicts that historically have been common have disappeared in large parts of the world. Let me mention four:

- Controversies about borders used to be a common cause of armed conflicts. In large parts of the world - not all - borders have become settled over time. With freer trade and traffic many borders have also lost some of their significance.
- The ambition of colonial states to stop independence movements caused many armed conflicts. Violent struggle for emancipation can still be seen in several places, but the era of colonialism is over.
- The ambition from times immemorial to acquire territory led chieftains, kings and governments to wage war. However, wars are no longer waged for conquest. Perhaps Saddam Hussein was one of the last rulers to do so - in the Shatt-el-Arab and in Kuwait.
- The ambition to spread religion or ideology led to Christian crusades, Islamic jihads and Communist expansion. Today there may be desperate suicide bombers but there will be no wars of civilizations.

Between major military powers today tensions are about the means they could use against each other in a controversy, but we do not see the serious controversies. Friction and controversies between these states today are about exchange rates, dumping prices, and - perhaps - pollution and CO2 emissions. You do not go to war on such issues. While the competition about oil, gas and other raw materials may get more severe it is not unreasonable to believe that this will play out in prices rather than bullets.

Areas of peace on the globe are expanding

An important positive development, partly linked to the points I have mentioned, is that over time the geographical areas of peace in the world have been expanding. There are, indeed, civil wars and areas of severe armed conflicts, but

- War between the states members of the European Union has become unthinkable.
- More and more people also doubt the risk of a war between the EU and Russia - even though relations have soured somewhat.
- Looking outside Europe we find that war between the US and Mexico is unthinkable today though in the past these two states sometimes waged war.

Until the end of the Cold War, we worried about a nuclear war and a 'Mutually Assured Destruction' - MAD. We were dangerously close to such a war during the Cuban crisis.

The end of the Cold War helped to bring some peace and disarmament

However a major change toward a more peaceful world resulted when the long ideological battle of the Cold War ended. A good deal of cooperation and disarmament resulted in the first part of the 1990s:

- In 1993 the Convention against Chemical Weapons was concluded - after some 20 years of negotiation.
- In 1995 the Non-Proliferation Treaty was extended without any final date.
- In 1996 a treaty comprehensively prohibiting all nuclear weapons tests was adopted.
- From a Cold War peak of some 55.000 the number of nuclear warheads has gone down to some 27.000.

Dismaying points on the path to peace

Now let me turn to the dismaying side of the picture. From the second half of the 1990s the outlook for peace has come to look less rosy:

- There is still use of armed force between some states and armed violence inside many states. There also remain dangerous flashpoints, like Taiwan or Kashmir.
- In 2003 the armed intervention began in Iraq and it is not over.
- With the end of the Cold War the pressure of public opinion to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons dwindled.

- After 9/11 2001 there is concern about the threat of further terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- In 2002 North Korea withdrew from the NPT, expelled IAEA inspectors, resumed the production of plutonium and, later set off a nuclear explosion.
- Today, Iran is developing a program for the enrichment of uranium, raising fears of a future production of nuclear weapons.

What can we do?

What can we do to help move the community of states toward a secure peace? Is there something to learn from history? How did feuding clans - for instance, in Europe - overcome the use of force, establish peace and evolve into national states?

How did peace come to early European societies?

By force, conquest, alliances, marriage unions, or agreements successful chieftains achieved control over expanding regions and a monopoly or near monopoly on the possession and use of arms within these regions. In return for loyalty and submission they provided protection to their subjects, upheld order - the King's peace - developed law and judged in differences between the subjects.

The process occurred at different times and over areas of varying size. Through military power and organization, the Pax Romana of the Roman Empire extended far and for a remarkably long time - but eventually broke down. Could there today be a similar development to peace and order in the international community?

My conviction is that a world community in peace and without vast armaments under national control will eventually evolve through negotiations and consent. As peace has evolved in Europe, however, it is not absurd to ask whether some in the US have had some vague thoughts about a global Pax Americana.

- The US appears determined at the present time to maintain its military supremacy - including space supremacy - by devoting more resources than any other state to its military program. Indeed, as much as all other states together, or 645 billion dollars of the world total of some 1.3 trillion dollars in 2006.
- A US security strategy made public in 2002 asserted "a distinctly American internationalism" the aim of which was to help "*make the world not just safer but better*".
- The same strategy made clear that the US felt free to intervene militarily - if need be unilaterally and without any authorization from the UN - against any growing threat, from 'rogue states' or terrorists.

- In the US National Defense Strategy of 2005 it was stated that, I quote: "*The end of the cold war and our capacity to influence global events open the prospects for a new and peaceful system in the world.*"
- In spite of these and similar statements, it seems unlikely, especially after the war in Iraq that the US would aspire to establish and uphold a global Pax Americana. It appears more likely that it will return to the leading role it used to play in the efforts to maintain peace through a 'cooperative security order' that may include a gradual reduction of national military forces and transfers some of competences to international institutions.

The globalization of law

If the monopoly or near monopoly on the possession and use of arms is one of the premises of a peaceful community - whether national or global - law is a second and institutions for the settlement of differences is a third.

I am not suggesting that law invariably leads to durable social or international peace. Unfair or unjust rules may indeed lead to conflict. However, law generally reduces the potential for conflict between states as well as individuals and it gives guidance for the settlement of conflicts when they arise. Take the simplest of examples: we do not need to debate with our fellow way-farers whether we shall meet on the left or right. It is settled by a rule.

The rules of international law grew over the centuries and during the last hundred years they have expanded exponentially through treaties. International tribunals and various mechanisms for supervision and dispute settlement have grown in number, but most rules are respected routinely and without access to court.

We must note, however, that in the crucial area of rules regulating the use of armed force in the international community development has been tardy and remains shaky.

It does not take much research to see that clear-cut legal restrictions on the use of armed force in the international community have been asserted only from the 20th century.

Machiavelli (1492-1550), as one might expect, did not urge any restrictions. He is cited as saying:

"that war is just which is necessary' and every sovereign entity may decide on the occasion for war." (Ibid. p. 11)

In the 19th and 20th centuries sentiments became strong to outlaw the use of particularly cruel weapons and the recourse to war.

The United Nations

However, it was only in 1945, through the Charter of the United Nations that a leap forward was taken in the development of legal restrictions on the use of armed force between states.

The authors were no pacifists, but they also knew the horrors of war. In Art.2:4 they laid down a general prohibition of the threat or use of force between members. They made two exceptions:

- First, states have the right to use force in self-defense "if an armed attack occurs", until the Security Council has taken the necessary measures. This right has generally been interpreted to comprise the use of force when an attack is 'imminent'. States do not have to wait for the bombs to fall on their territory but can meet the bombers even outside the territory.
- Second, the Security Council can decide on or authorize the use of force in a broader category of cases, namely, when it determines that there is a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression".

During the Cold War Security Council action war largely blocked by the veto given to each of the 5 permanent members. However, the situation changed drastically after the Cold War, when consensus decisions became common in the Security Council. Most importantly, in 1991 the Council authorized the broad alliance created by President George H. Bush to use force to stop Iraq's naked aggression against an occupation of Kuwait. President Bush spoke about a new 'world order'.

Regrettably, this order did not last long. In March 2003 the Alliance of Willing States invaded Iraq without there being any armed attack by Iraq and in the full awareness that the Security Council would not authorize the action.

The political justification given for the Iraq war was above all the contention that Iraq retained and developed weapons of mass destruction in violation of Security Council resolutions. It is unlikely that any other argument would have persuaded the US Congress or the UK parliament to authorize armed action.

The US did not officially argue that the war was justified as a preemptive or preventive action against an Iraqi threat, but there is no doubt that this view was held. It was in line with the US National Security Strategy that had been published in September 2002 and that stated flatly that a limitation of the right to use armed force in self-defense to cases where "armed attacks" were occurring or were "imminent" would be insufficient in the era of missiles and terrorists. (Above, p.6).

As I see it, the 2002 strategy and the 2003 war show that the US administration said good bye to the legal restrictions that the US had helped to formulate in San Francisco on the threat or use of force - at any rate as regards actions to stop the development of weapons of mass destruction. It is hardly the UN Charter restrictions that, so far, have held back the US in the case of Iran.

How damaging to the UN legal restrictions on the use of armed force is the unauthorized 2003 invasion of Iraq? It is hard to say. The restrictions have been disregarded by others, especially during the Cold War. However, such actions have not been preceded by national doctrines amounting to a renunciation of the restrictions.

Apart from legal aspects, a problem with all preemptive or preventive military actions is that they must rely on intelligence: Before an attack has taken place or is visible and imminent, how do you know it will come and justify you to act in self defense? And if you do not have the right diagnosis - how can you find the right therapy?

In the case of Iraq much of the evidence invoked was what has been termed 'faith-based'. Indeed, some of it was even 'fake-based.' The inspection reports of the UN inspectors that I headed (UNMOVIC) and the IAEA were ignored. My inspectors carried out some 700 inspections of some 500 different sites, dozens of them proposed by the intelligence organizations, We had reported no finds of WMDs. Quite to the contrary, we had expressed doubts about some of the evidence that had been presented.

One of the lessons of the Iraq war is that information gained by independent international inspection should not be ignored. I never claimed our inspectors were smarter than the agents of national intelligence. But I could sincerely say we were in nobody's pocket.

It was said that my telephone was bugged at the time. If it was I wish they had listened better to what I had to say...

One must conclude that the question mark that has always hung over the effectiveness of the San Francisco rule against the use of armed force and that seemed to fade in the case of the Gulf War in 1991 came back in bold type with the Iraq war in 2003. It needs to be replaced by an exclamation mark.

A freedom for every state unilaterally to launch preventive wars against any state they claim is a threat would be destabilizing to say the least.

Let me add before I conclude this section on the globalization of law that driving this development of international law is not only an identification of concrete common interests but also a gradual global convergence of values. The body of rules on human rights is a result of such a convergence of values. They are not the expression of any particular religion or ideology but have emerged from a globalizing ethic.

To be sure human rights are frequently horribly violated but they provide common global yardsticks against which the conduct of states and governments is increasingly often measured and challenged. The violations occurring are as dismaying as the continued convergence of values is encouraging. Let me give a few examples:

- the death penalty and other cruel penalties are disappearing in more and more states;
- dueling that in some countries was a socially acceptable way of settling a conflict only 150 years ago is a vanishing custom;
- the spanking of children was perfectly normal in most countries even 50 years ago. Today it is forbidden in a growing number of states.

The globalization of disarmament

I mentioned that while the end of the Cold War gave some important peace dividends in the first half of the 1990s, the second half of that decade was disappointing:

- The disarmament process stagnated. The UN disarmament conference has failed to adopt a work program for over ten years.
- The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty that was signed by the Clinton administration in 1996 was rejected by the US Senate and the moratorium that has been respected by the P 5 was ignored by North Korea which tested a nuclear device;
- The 2005 Review conference of the Non Proliferation Treaty ended in bitterness with non-nuclear weapon states saying that they had accepted an unrestricted prolongation of their commitment to the treaty, while the nuclear weapon states had not taken significant steps toward disarmament.

They were right in complaining that steps they had demanded for decades, such as the comprehensive test ban and a ban on the production of more enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons, had not been taken.

Two years ago Kofi Annan rightly noted that the world was 'sleep walking' into new arms races. By now we must wake up to a second inconvenient truth -- new build-ups of arms.

- The UK has decided on a continuation of the nuclear Trident submarine program.
- The US administration proposes to develop a new standard nuclear weapon (RRW) and is expanding its missile shield by placing elements of it in Poland and the Czech Republic, claiming a need to defend against missiles that might be sent from Iran in the future.
- China is modernizing its armed forces and has shot down a weather satellite of its own, demonstrating a capability for military action in space.
- Russia has resumed routine long distance flights with nuclear-armed planes.
- Iran is developing a uranium enrichment capability that could be used to produce material for nuclear weapons; and the US has three aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf.
- Non-state actors are planning for further terrorism.

Regrettably, we must add something very important, a souring of relations between the big powers.

They all stress that the Cold War is a thing of the past and they are all bent on pragmatism and practice various shades of market economy.

Nevertheless, the mutual confidence between Russia and China on the one hand and the US and major Western powers, on the other is not deep.

The United States is showing concern about China's modernizing her navy and is reported to strengthen its military base in Guam.

The US has been seeking a nuclear cooperation agreement with India. A welcome result should be that India could import the most modern nuclear power technology for efficient CO2 free electricity generation. However, the nuclear agreement could also facilitate for India to make more enriched uranium for nuclear weapons and could lead China and Pakistan to do the same.

Further, even though India will want to retain good relations with China and independence and freedom for its foreign policy, many see in the US initiative for nuclear cooperation an effort to bring India into a chain of states that - if need be -- could contain China.

These measures look like traditional balance of power politics. So do efforts to further expand NATO - to the Ukraine, Georgia and perhaps to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Is anyone surprised that Russia fails to welcome the North Atlantic Treaty Organization naval exercises in the Black Sea?

The fear one might have is that traditional balance of power politics will prompt traditional responses and that new tensions will grow.

Are there signs of hope? Yes

First, I am not suggesting that the frictions between big powers are problematic yet. Rather, I am optimistic enough - some might perhaps say naïve - to think that the accelerating interdependence of states will continue to force us - big and small - into cooperation.

China sits on more US government bonds than anyone else but is, itself, dependent upon world markets.

Europe needs energy from Russia, but Russia needs investments and equipment from Europe, etc.

Accelerating economic relations were calculated to bind European states together in unbreakable peace. It seems likely that the accelerating interdependence will have similar effects in other areas of the world.

Nevertheless, the incipient arms races that are now taking place are worrisome. A very serious Cold War is over. The big military powers should beware of starting new ones.

Revive disarmament and develop the UN

My central message tonight is that in order to move further on the path to peace that opened up at the end of the Cold War the US and the other nuclear weapon states should take initiatives to resume détente and disarmament. They should belatedly begin a step-wise exit from the nuclear weapons era.

They also need to rededicate themselves to the further development and use of the principal common institution for the maintenance of peace - the United Nations.

After the tragic failures of military approaches in Iraq and in Lebanon there should be some hope that major state actors will turn to non-military approaches. Diplomacy is essentially the craft of seeking to solve differences without the use of force and humiliation, for instance by applying economic or financial incentives or disincentives.

In the case of North Korea this has evidently been done in the last few years. As in that case, positive results in the case of Iran are more likely to emerge from negotiations without preconditions than from the threat of armed force. Failure and the development of nuclear arsenals could in both cases have dangerous domino effects.

What then is the agenda for disarmament?

In 1996 the Australian Government-sponsored Report of the Canberra Commission boldly and in detail described the steps needed to eliminate nuclear weapons. Regrettably, the hopeful period during which it was drafted was followed by the US Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a period of stagnation in disarmament that has lasted until now. The Canberra report deserves to be on the table again.

Last year the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission that was sponsored by the Swedish Government and that I chaired presented a Report entitled 'Weapons of Terror, Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons' (www.wmdcommission.org). While it had a broader agenda and was drafted ten years after the Canberra report many of its concrete proposals echo positions expressed in the Canberra report.

On the top of the today's disarmament agenda is full implementation of the most important global agreement in the field - the NON PROLIFERATION TREATY that entered into force in 1970 and that committed:

- the non-nuclear weapon states parties not to acquire nuclear weapons, and
- the then 5 nuclear weapon states to negotiate toward nuclear disarmament.

If all states had adhered and fully implemented their commitments we would now live in a world free of nuclear weapons. As there are four more nuclear weapon states than in 1970 and still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons the treaty has evidently not - yet - achieved its aims. Some even warn about a possible collapse of the treaty and a 'cascade' of states developing nuclear weapons. However, in several respects the NPT has been a great success: Only India, Israel and Pakistan that never joined the treaty and - perhaps - North Korea are new nuclear weapon states. Iraq and Libya tried but were stopped. The world is not milling with would-be nuclear weapon states;

- We should also register that Byelorussia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine that had nuclear weapons on their territories transferred them to Russia and

- joined the NPT. South Africa, too, walked back from a nuclear weapon status.
- While the violations and attempted violations of the Treaty are serious and the treaty needs strengthening, the nuclear weapon states parties need to begin their exit from the nuclear weapons era.
 - States that have renounced nuclear weapons find it is not enough that the - excessive - numbers of nuclear weapons has gone down since the Cold War. They see it as objectionable that the nuclear weapon states parties that would be expected to draw up time tables for the phasing out of their arsenals, are in fact doing the opposite: working on time tables for the modernization of their weapons;

Some steps could be taken without further delay:

- The US Senate could reconsider its rejection of the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT). No other measure could send a stronger signal in the international community that disarmament is moved back on the global agenda.
- 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 could be started to ensure that no weapons be placed in space.
- Nuclear weapons could be taken off hair trigger alert to avoid war by accidents or misunderstandings.
- Nuclear weapons could be removed from Western Europe and Western Russia. It would be valuable to reduce tension - not least if the US were to establish European missile defense links.

What are the prospects for nuclear disarmament?

- Fundamentally, the political and economic relations that have developed after the end of the Cold War should facilitate disarmament. The current incipient arms races do not seem to be in line with the trend to interdependence and integration. The races may in part be driven by the interests of military-industrial complexes and one wonders whether they can last in the absence of differences on significant issues of substance. Will not tax payers object? Today, paradoxically, the most worrisome tensions appear to be not about issues of substance but about the possession of means to settle issues of substance that do not exist or are insignificant: They are about the possession of the most modern and accurate nuclear weapons, about the development of a missile shield or the placement of weapons in space.

- An encouraging sign is that early this year a group of US elder statesmen - former Secretaries of State Shultz and Kissinger, Former Secretary of Defense Perry and former Senator Nunn - published an article with the title 'Nuclear madness'. They urged the US take the lead in an initiative with the other nuclear weapon states in order stepwise to get to nuclear disarmament.
- During the Cold War, they say, nuclear weapons were necessary for deterrent. Today deterrent is not needed between the big powers and the continued arsenals may be an incentive for others, including terrorists, to acquire such 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. With accelerating interdependence there is any case an increasing necessity to cooperate - to protect the global environment, to manage the global economy and to stop contagious diseases. Why not also genuinely cooperate to stop shooting at each other?
- The window 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, not a unilateral one. All countries should have a role in this. The Reports of the Canberra Commission and the WMD Commission may be of help. They both seek a world free of nuclear weapons but also provide a road map for the short and medium terms.
- The UN must play a central role in this order. As Mr. Hammarskjöld said: the UN will not take us to heaven but it might help us to avoid hell.