

# Disarmament

*Rajiv Gandhi*

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We have come together in the New Year, a year which begins with a breath of hope for the survival of life upon our planet. We are gathered in a city known for its love of peace and harmony. In this bracing winter afternoon,

Stockholm seems suffused with the freshness of a new stirring in the air. We thank Prime Minister Carlsson and the friendly people of Sweden for giving us an opportunity in this beautiful city to reflect upon the distance we have covered and the horizons that lie ahead. As Dag Hammarskjold said:

"Only he who keeps his eye fixed on the horizon will find his right road."

When Olof Palme, Indira Gandhi and our distinguished colleagues in the Six-Nation Five-Continent Peace Initiative issued their first Appeal in May 1984, the dialogue between the nuclear powers had collapsed into accusations of ill-faith and mutual recrimination. When we met in New Delhi three years ago, the dialogue had just resumed. At Ixtapa, there was a glimmer of hope. Now, we have a treaty on the complete elimination of a category of nuclear missiles.

Something of the credit for this must go to the good sense of ordinary people, whose hopes and aspirations we have sought to articulate. Millions across the globe, including those in the nuclear weapon States and the military alliances, have instinctively perceived the incompatibility between nuclear confrontation and lasting of peace. The Six-Nation Five-Continent Peace initiative has given voice to their perceptions.

We sincerely congratulate General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan on their vision and on the sensitivity they have shown to the need to dismantle and destroy nuclear weapon systems. The INF Treaty is a historic beginning, historic, certainly, but, equally certainly, just a beginning. There can be no relapsing into

the comfortable complacency of coexisting with the instruments of our own destruction.

What has been achieved will prove a pyrrhic victory unless it leads irreversibly and without interruption to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The process may involve the phased reduction of levels of nuclear weaponry. But the goal must remain the dismantling of all nuclear arsenals, as the precursor to general and complete disarmament.

Warheads have been uncoupled from missiles in one class of nuclear weapons. This is not enough. Warheads must be eliminated. Equally, the pursuit of peace must be uncoupled from strategies of nuclear deterrence, and such strategies must be universally repudiated. The militarization of international relations must end. The international order must be based on peaceful coexistence. We have to have a world free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, eventually, we have to have a world free of all weapons.

It is disturbing that, in certain quarters, there is a strident assertion that disarmament is not only utopian but dangerous. We must change the thinking of establishments reared in the theology of nuclear deterrence. They argue that nuclear weapons keep the peace. This is false. If nuclear weapons exist, they will one day be used, as they were in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as all weapons have been throughout history. And, on the last day, it will make little difference whether their use was by design or by accident. The nuclear debris will bury all hopes of reprieve. There will be no going back, no survival, none to tell the tale. There will be no lessons to be drawn for the future — or there will be no future.

Therefore, even as we congratulate the United States and the Soviet Union, we seek assurance that the treaty they

have signed in Washington constitutes the commencement of a time-bound process of nuclear disarmament. What has been covered so far is just a tiny fraction of the awesome armouries of global annihilation- 97% remains. Only the United States and the Soviet Union have initiated this small step.

This small step must lead to many more. The other three nuclear weapon powers must be inducted into the process. The process of global nuclear disarmament must be reinforced by those countries which are able to cross the threshold of not doing so. There must be no assistance, surreptitious or overt, to those trying to acquire nuclear weapons.

There must be no adding of new dimensions to nuclear weaponry. The chimera of an impenetrable shield in space must be abandoned. There is no "ultimate defence" that can be devised by technology. The search for technological answers thwarts the real search for durable peace. There is no technological solution to the problems of war and peace. It is in the human mind that the defences for peace are built. Human destiny cannot be mortgaged to a machine.

All quantitative improvements in nuclear weapons must be foregone so that reductions in stockpiles are not offset by weapons of greater destructive power, more accurate and even more swift. Hence, the ineluctable need for an immediate moratorium on all nuclear tests, to set the stage for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Another great danger arises from new weapons systems and subtle refinements in sophisticated armaments. We should cry halt to this arms race in emerging technologies. The race is on in conventional and nuclear weapons. It is also insiduously penetrating totally new areas. We should identify these technological

developments, debar their military applications, and prevent the emergence of new ways of dealing death.

What we need to end is the option of unleashing global devastation or holding the survival of humanity to ransom. We must protect humanity as much from the known dangers of extinction as from those that are still unknown.

There must also be radical reductions in conventional armaments. The process of conventional disarmament should begin where the bulk of such arms is concentrated and extends to other regions of the world. The ultimate objective should be general and complete disarmament.

What we seek is not a marginal adjustment in the machinery of nuclear confrontation, nor a partial or temporary scaling down of the arms race. What we seek is an effective structure of international security, a structure that discards obsolete mindsets, dangerous delusions, and destructive strategic doctrines. Distant though the prospect of a nuclear-free world might seem, it is a prospect. We must start giving thought now to the international order we would like to see prevail in a world which is rid of nuclear weapons. We have to revert to first principles of nonviolence and tolerance, of compassion and understanding—of one world for one humanity. Coercion must give way to reason. Spheres of influence and special privileges must yield to a true democracy of nations. The cornering of resources for weaponry must be transmuted into the sharing of resources for global development. The pursuit of dominance must be replaced by coexistence and cooperation.

*Speech at Opening Session of Six-Nation Five Continent Peace Initiative, Stockholm, 21 January 1988.*