

## **India and the Pursuit of Global Zero – A World without Nuclear Weapons**

**Remarks by Shyam Saran at the Global Zero Summit**

**Paris, February 3, 2010**

We welcome this historic summit on ‘Global Zero’ and the resounding reaffirmation it represents of the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. When first proposed, ‘Global Zero’ was indicative of the high hopes and aspirations the world-over for nuclear disarmament. This Summit comes at an opportune moment, when there are fresh doubts emerging whether this is indeed a credible goal. Even the four distinguished statesmen who, in 2007, played such a significant role in putting nuclear disarmament back on the international agenda, seem to be now lowering expectations in their most recent op-ed.\* It’s not that something new is being said by them. It seems to me, however, that the emphasis has unmistakably changed, back to the importance of maintaining a robust nuclear posture. We hope that this Summit will enable us to keep our eyes on the ball and not be deflected from the goal that we all seek. Otherwise, there is likely to be confusion about our commitment to nuclear disarmament and a perception that this is more about further restricting and limiting the access of non-nuclear weapon states, in particular developing states, to civilian uses of nuclear energy, under the guise of strengthening non-proliferation.

Let me acquaint you with India’s thinking on Global Zero, taking into account our own national and then the regional<sup>1</sup>al perspective, though it may be noted that it is difficult to confine the security interests of a country like India to arbitrarily defined regional settings. First, while India is a nuclear weapon state, it is the only such state to declare unequivocally that, in its perception, its security will be enhanced and

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\* Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, San Nunn and William Perry in “How to Protect our Nuclear Deterrent” – Wall Street Journal, 20 January, 2010.

not diminished in a world free of nuclear weapons. This is important because it lends credibility to our consistent advocacy of nuclear disarmament and our willingness to engage, without delay, in multilateral negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and the use of nuclear weapons and on their time-bound destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons.

Second, pending the realization of the above objective, India has taken steps to underscore its commitment to nuclear disarmament and contribute to confidence-building. India has publicly adhered to a policy of non-first use of nuclear weapons and to the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. Despite our well-known reservations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, India is committed to its voluntary unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive testing. We are prepared to negotiate a verifiable FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We are not a Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and cannot respond to calls for universal adherence to that Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon State. Nevertheless, India has impeccable and universally acknowledged credentials on non-proliferation. It is in recognition of India's unmatched non-proliferation record over the past more than half a century that it was possible to persuade the United States and the 45 member States of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to re-engage with India in international civil nuclear commerce under an India-specific Safeguards agreement with the IAEA. India will continue to conduct itself as a responsible and prudent member of the international community and make its own contribution to promoting non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Let me now turn to the regional perspective. It should come as no surprise to this distinguished gathering that India's perceptions are influenced by the current state and the history of developments in our

neighborhood and the larger theatre of Asia-Pacific as they pertain to nuclear issues.

One, India's security has been adversely impacted by the clandestine proliferation of nuclear weapons in its neighbourhood, often ignored and on occasion, encouraged by certain important countries. The activities of the so-called A.Q.Khan network is an ominous reminder of the threats India continues to face in this respect.

Two, India is deeply worried about the potential nexus between clandestine proliferation and terrorism and the ever-present danger of such weapons or vulnerable nuclear materials falling into the hands of Jehadi and non-State actors. While this is a specific threat to India, it also threatens the security of all States. India has welcomed the US initiative to host the Nuclear Security Summit in April this year. However, over the long term, it is also our view that it is only through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and by putting in place universally applicable, non-discriminatory and fully transparent verification procedures, that we can fully prevent and deny nuclear materials from falling into dangerous hands.

Three, it is apparent that the centre of gravity of political and economic power is now shifting towards the Asia-Pacific region. With this shift, it is only to be expected that military capabilities and security assets, gain a higher profile in our region. While India welcomes the lead taken by the US and Russia in reducing their nuclear arsenals, we must remain mindful of security trends, including relating to the improvement, accretion and deployment of strategic armaments, in the Asia-Pacific region. This should be of concern to the international community as well, as we move with practical steps towards Global Zero.

India has welcomed President Obama's speech in Prague re-dedicating the US to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We look forward to the implementation of the bold steps that President Obama outlined,

including his commitment that the US would reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy. We await steps the US & Russia intend to take in significantly reducing their nuclear arsenals. We also await the necessary steps that the other nuclear-weapon States, who are Party to the NPT and committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament, intend to take in this regard. India will be prepared to join in efforts to realize the goal of Global Zero in a manner consistent with its security interests as part of global, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. But, as I said earlier, India remains convinced that its security will be enhanced, not diminished in a world free of nuclear weapons, a vision that was so eloquently articulated by the late PM Rajiv Gandhi in his historic address to the UNGA in 1988.

In the context of Global Zero, the question of time-frame has been referred to and an appeal has been made to realism to argue for a gradual and phased approach. It has been stated that nuclear disarmament is a place on a high mountain which is not yet visible, and the journey to that place is going to be long and arduous.

I believe that this reality must be set against two other competing realities which compel a more urgent time frame. Firstly, we all recognize that as long as there are states which continue to possess nuclear weapons, there will be other states who will aspire to possess them as well. The Global Zero Action Plan has talked about the world being near a “proliferation tipping point” – beyond the capacity to rein it in. So how do we deal with this reality?

Secondly, there is the link between terrorism and proliferation – so starkly brought out in the excellent movie which we saw yesterday. This is an escalating danger and will not be put on hold, while we take our time to achieve Global Zero. In any case, nuclear weapons cannot credibly deter non-state actors or jihadi groups from using or

threatening the use of clandestinely acquired nuclear weapons, even if it is a crude one.

Therefore, I think it would be useful if this movement highlighted these realities as well, in order to reinforce the argument for urgency.

I commend the hosts of this Meeting for bringing together this galaxy of leaders to focus international efforts for Global Zero. I am confident that the deliberations here will add to the international debate, mobilize and sustain political will and help in moving the international community towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

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