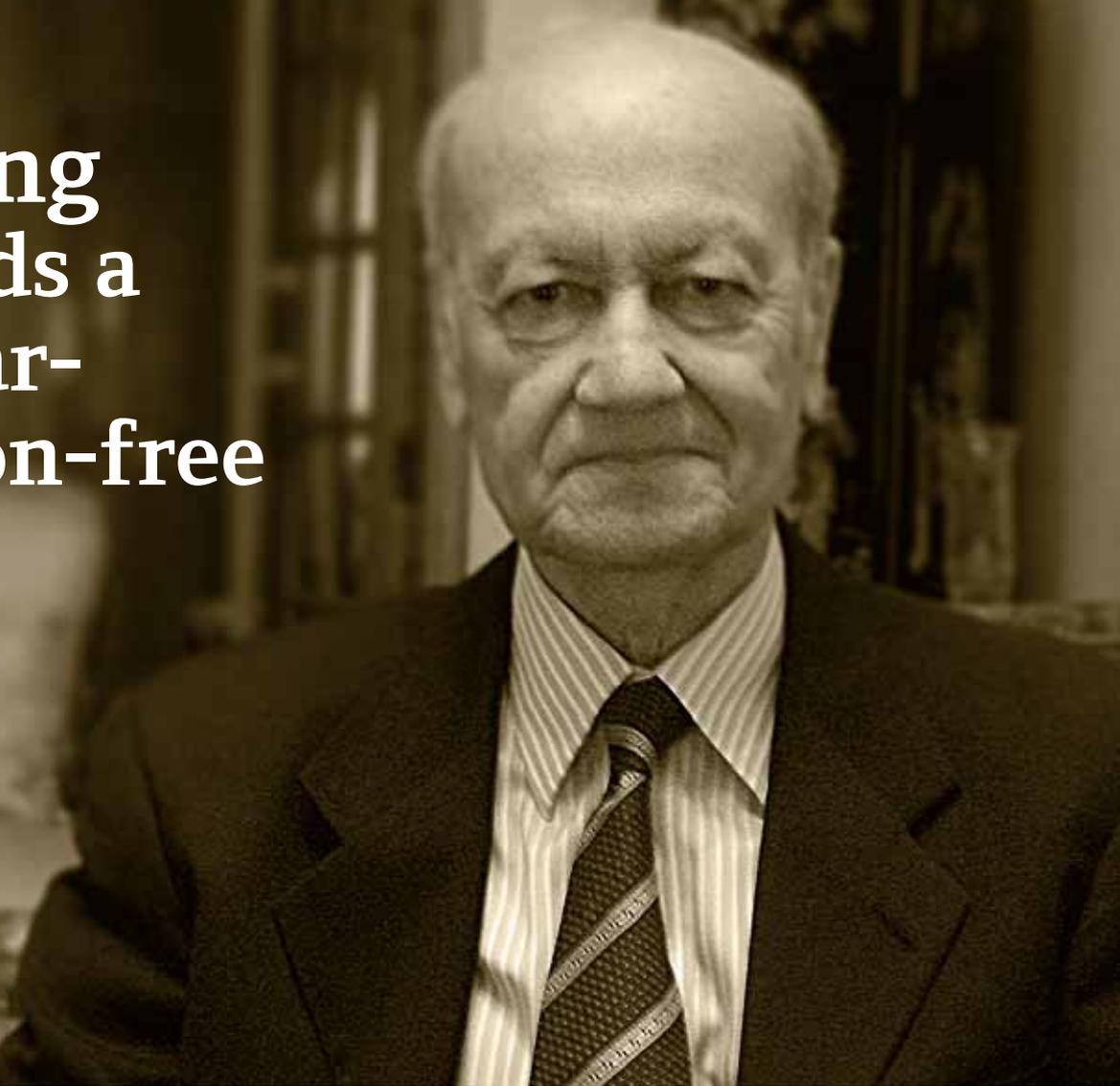


## VOICES

# Moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world

BY TALAT MASOOD



For the last 65 years, the world has become so used to nuclear weapons that the very thought of people talking about a world free of nuclear weapons was considered idealistic and unsettling, especially for those who have been hard proponents of nuclear theology. After the four former United States' iconic figures of the Cold War – senior statesmen George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn – wrote their first op-ed in the Wall Street Journal in January 2007, a movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons seems to be gradually gaining momentum.

### **DANGER OF A CATASTROPHIC NUCLEAR EXPLOSION**

There is a growing realization that two main threats loom large over

the horizon that could completely destroy humanity. One is climate change, affected by the world's heavy reliance on hydro-carbon fuels. The other is an even greater danger, posed by a catastrophic nuclear exchange either by design or accident.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in May 2010 provided a valuable opportunity to draw attention to the serious risks inherent with nuclear weapons and the urgent need to work collectively towards eliminating them. A world free of nuclear weapons was clearly articulated as a goal for the first time in the Conference and the final document, albeit modest, laid a framework for adopting a more comprehensive approach towards this objective.

### **UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA COMMIT TO NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD**

In a historic joint statement in April 2009, U.S. President Obama and Russian President Medvedev committed their countries to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world and subsequently made a modest beginning by signing the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Following the lead of the nuclear super powers, in September 2009 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The primary reason for this change is that whatever stabilizing impact nuclear weapons had during the Cold War has been superseded by



risks inherent in the proliferation of States possessing nuclear weapons and the related dangers of nuclear terrorism. The nature of the threat has also changed dramatically and nuclear weapons have no role in countering terrorism, cyber threats and asymmetric warfare. Nuclear weapons are only good for deterring nuclear weapons and giving a false sense of prestige but if there are no nuclear weapons, then they have no use. The demand for clean sources of energy has triggered a renaissance in civil nuclear energy and that, too, could result in an increase in the number of States possessing nuclear weapons.

#### **GLOBAL ZERO URGES STATES TO SIGN/RATIFY CTBT**

In parallel, prestigious organizations like Global Zero, the International

Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, and Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, have been highly active in support of this goal. In pursuit of this aim, Global Zero convened a Summit in Paris in February 2010, inviting a galaxy of serving and former presidents, prime ministers, ministers, diplomats, generals and strategists from nuclear and non-nuclear countries. India and Pakistan were also well represented. In order to raise awareness about the escalating global nuclear arms crisis, Global Zero also released a documentary in May 2010 entitled "Countdown to Zero." In the 1960s and 70s, the smartest minds had gone into the strategic field believing in strategic deterrence. It is a good omen that powerful minds are now engaged in finding ways of eliminating nuclear weapons.

The organizers of Global Zero presented a plan of action for developing hard-nosed, practical and comprehensive strategies for eliminating all nuclear weapons. This included a call to all nuclear capable countries to "move rapidly to cease nuclear explosive testing" by signing and/or ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

#### **UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA HOLD ALMOST 95 PERCENT OF WORLD'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Much will, of course, depend on how soon the United States and Russia, who hold nearly 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, ratify the new START and agree to take concrete measures on the further reduction and ultimate destruction of the weapons that both sides have agreed to reduce; only then might the nuclear non-proliferation

and disarmament regime survive and bring about global strategic stability. Failure by the United States and Russia to live up to their disarmament obligations would place in doubt their commitment to Article VI of the NPT regime and provide States like Iran and other non-nuclear weapon States with the chance to acquire a nuclear weapon status.

### PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME IS PRIMARILY INDIA SPECIFIC

In the near term, several other developments will influence the nuclear landscape. Progress has to be made on ratification of the CTBT by the United States and China and the lead has to come from the nuclear super power; only then will Beijing ratify. India considers itself as a global nuclear power and China as a potential threat and is building its nuclear arsenal and conventional capability accordingly. India is unlikely to sign until China and the United States ratify. As regards Pakistan, its nuclear programme is primarily India specific. It is therefore most likely that India

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Meanwhile, the South Asian nuclear rivals are adhering to a unilateral moratorium that they announced after the nuclear tests of May 1998. This needs to be formalized in a regional agreement or a joint statement indicating that both countries have no intention to conduct future tests. It would be a major confidence-building measure and will be useful for ongoing discussions on the CTBT.

Negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) have not started formally in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), although informal unstructured dialogue is apparently taking place. This is primarily due to the position adopted by Pakistan as

it wants the agenda to be determined first before it is willing to participate in the discussions. In fact, Pakistan feels that there is a need for a Fissile Material Treaty wherein all aspects are dealt with instead of the current focus on the cut-off issue. By adopting this route, a comprehensive and equitable regime could be put in place that is verifiable and quantifiable.

### THE INDO-U.S. NUCLEAR DEAL

The Indo-U.S. nuclear deal provides India with the opportunity to enhance its nuclear capabilities substantially. It will have the capability to build up stocks of fissile material at a faster pace as eight of its nuclear reactors are not under safeguards. Islamabad fears that once India is able to import nuclear fuel from abroad for its safeguarded nuclear plants, its domestic uranium could be diverted for the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Pakistan remains under a lot of pressure from the other CD Member States for blocking the formal proceedings and it may have been more appropriate if the same position was taken inside the Conference. Ironically, while India continues to build its nuclear weapons



*The Global Zero Summit in Paris, 2 to 4 February 2010, was attended by around 200 international political, royal, military, business and faith leaders. Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, and the actor Michael Douglas, were in attendance.*

arsenal to match China's capabilities and to build reserves of fissile material, it wants to gain time and finds Islamabad's position very convenient. Clearly, the best course for India and Pakistan should be to engage in meaningful dialogue on how best to allay each other's concerns and take a positive approach in the CD to make the world a safer place.

### NUCLEAR DETERRENCE IS NO LONGER USEFUL

In principle, Pakistan is officially committed to general and complete nuclear disarmament but in reality, both India and Pakistan have strategic programmes. Pakistan's nuclear programme is based on the threat assessment in which conflict resolution with India is a central element. It also justifies its nuclear status to counter India's conventional superiority and the nuclear threat. India claims that it has a border dispute with China and an ongoing conflict over Kashmir with Pakistan. Regrettably, there are strong pressure groups in both these countries that continue to oppose any reduction or slow down in the nuclear programmes until they attain the limits of their doctrine of credible and minimum deterrence.

To countervail these forces, it is important that an effective public campaign be launched showing that nuclear deterrence is no longer very useful and that the dangers outweigh the benefits. However, it is likely that only when the United States and Russia have reduced their arsenals to 1,000 warheads or less and Britain, France, China and Israel agree to reduce their arsenals, that India and Pakistan may join disarmament negotiations. This is even though the long term interests of the two nations demand that India and Pakistan engage bilaterally on arms control measures at an earlier date and take rational measures that contribute towards nuclear stability.

### NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE MORE A WEAPON OF THE PAST THAN THE FUTURE

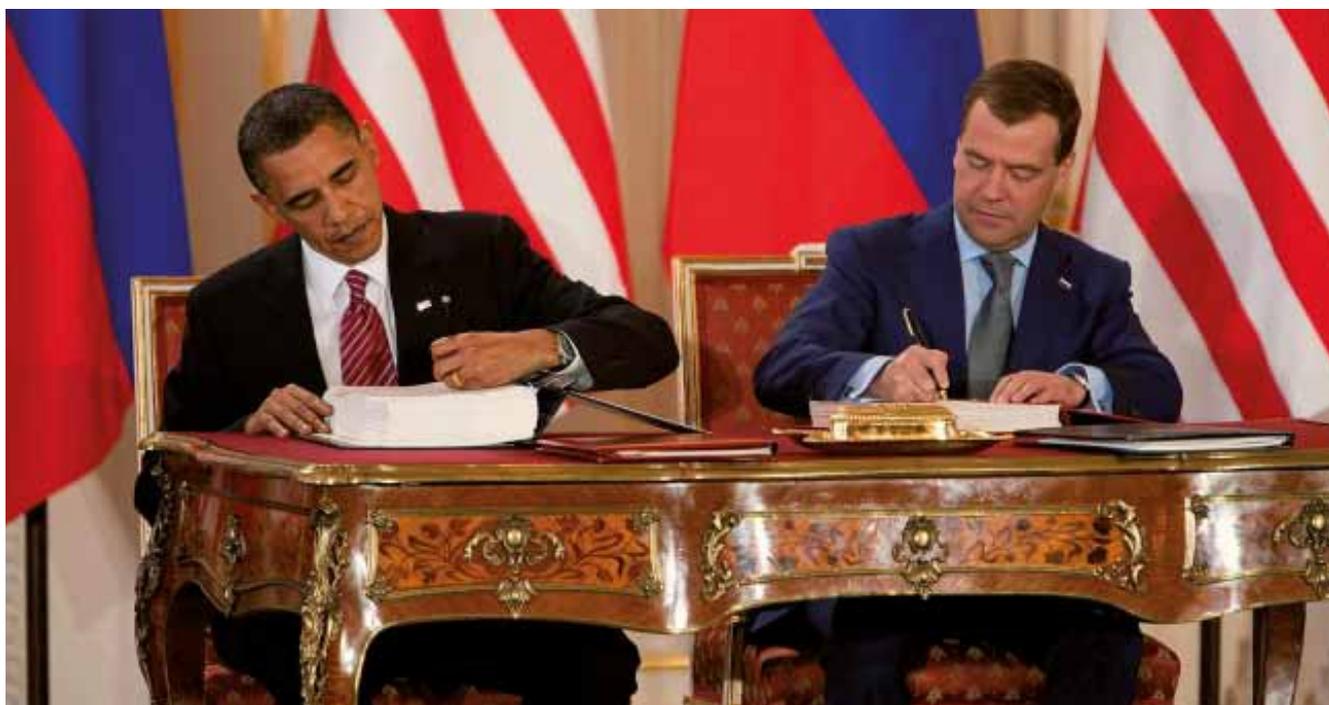
In order to influence the governments of nuclear weapon States to move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, a global campaign for public awareness has to be initiated. Interest in the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons must be revived in the public consciousness. Young people are uniquely placed to take

the lead. Truly, nuclear weapons in a more pragmatic sense are more a weapon of the past than of the future. The time has come for the idea to be concretized to make our world a safer place. As Hans Blix, the Swedish politician/diplomat, once aptly remarked, the world has to find ways of moving away from "Mutually Assured Destruction" to an age of "Mutually Assured Stability", however daunting the challenge may be.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

##### LIEUTENANT GENERAL TALAT MASOOD

served in the Pakistani Army for 39 years, retiring in 1990 as Secretary for Defence Production in the Ministry of Defence. Prior to this, Lt Gen Masood was chairman and chief executive of the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Board. He writes regularly on security and political issues for national newspapers and foreign magazines and is also a prominent commentator on national and international television and radio networks. Lt Gen Masood is the chief coordinator for Pugwash and its council member.



Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev sign the new START during a ceremony at Prague Castle in Prague, Czech Republic, 8 April, 2010. (Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)