

After START--What Next? David Speedie Interviews Jayantha Dhanapala

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Jayantha Dhanapala

DAVID SPEEDIE: I'm David Speedie, Director of the Program on U.S. Global Engagement at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs in New York.

We are delighted to welcome to the Carnegie Ethics Studio today Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala. Ambassador Dhanapala's résumé would take up the entire program. Let me just say that he is a former UN under-secretary-general for disarmament affairs, a former ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United States, prior to this, and the UN office in Geneva prior to that.

He is currently the 11th president of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning [Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs](#), and a member of the Governing Board of the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) [SIPRI]. In other words, he is a true global citizen in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Ambassador Dhanapala, welcome to the Carnegie Council.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Thank you, David. Thank you for having me.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Let's jump in at the deep end, as it were. Arms control, and nuclear arms control in particular, in a sense, may have fallen a little out of fashion in the post-Cold War period. The Cold War was over. The immediate threat of immediate annihilation had receded. Some recent events have brought the question, particularly, of nuclear arms control and nonproliferation into the public eye, with the [New START](#) [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty] agreement between the United States and Russia, the nuclear summit in Washington, and now, of course, the business that brings you to New York, the NPT Review Conference, [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty](#).

Before we get into any specifics, what is your overall view of the state of play in arms control today?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Your conclusions are partially correct. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, this opportunity to try to ensure that we no longer had a weapon-based security should have been seized. But it was not.

We did, however, move on conventional weapons. That was largely because of civil society, not because of the governments of the world. Be bold on small arms and light weapons. I was in the United Nations when the United Nations took leadership. We held a conference [[United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms](#)] in 2001 and adopted a program of action to try to reverse the trend regarding the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. That program of action is being regularly monitored.

We also have a lot of work being done on tracing and a lot of work being done on the question of antipersonnel landmines. [Jody Williams](#) and the [International Campaign to Ban Landmines](#) grouped with a number of likeminded countries, like Canada and Norway, and were successful in having a [mine-ban convention](#) negotiated outside the framework of the United Nations, largely because of the obstructionism of the big countries. But now we have over 150 countries subscribing to that mine-ban convention.

More recently, we have the cluster munitions ban, again a combination of a groundswell of protests from civil society together with some special countries which have teamed up for another very productive effort.

But on nuclear weapons, I agree, we have had a lot of setbacks. That was partly because of this complacency, that we no longer have a danger of a nuclear exchange. Indeed, what President [Obama](#) said in his [Prague speech](#) was that, while an all-out nuclear war may be less possible, a nuclear attack is more possible, because we have nine nuclear-weapon states today, 23,300 nuclear warheads in the world, and the new danger of terrorist groups wanting to acquire nuclear weapons.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I want to get to the non-state actor question in a moment, but let me ask you about START. Obviously, the New START was welcomed. It had been protracted, delayed beyond the two presidents' original calendar. Any reduction, of course, is presumably welcome, to around 1,550 on the U.S.-Russia side each. But I remember a quote from, maybe, the Cold War era. I don't remember to whom it should be attributed. Someone said, "All I know is that their 50th weapon is going to be more significant than our 5,000th." In other words, 50 nuclear weapons can do a lot of harm.

This can't be the endgame, presumably, that we are looking at in terms of reduction, the bilateral equation with U.S. and Russia—I think 90 percent of the 23,000 weapons you mentioned.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: It cannot be, because the aspiration of the peoples of the world is to have zero nuclear weapons. Indeed, President Obama's vision of a nuclear weapon-free world, which is widely shared by governments, as well as the people, would certainly not be satisfied with this modest reduction that we have achieved.

But as you say, modest reductions have got to be welcomed. The fact of the matter is that the United States and Russia together own 95 percent of the nuclear weapons in the world, and the fact that they have gone back to the traditional arms-control and nuclear disarmament trend, which was, unfortunately, abandoned for eight years, is most welcome.

So since 1991, when the START treaty was negotiated, we are having, for the first time, actual nuclear reductions that are verifiable and irreversible. This is very welcome news. I would have liked those weapons to be destroyed, and not just moved from deployed status to non-deployed status, because they can always come back at some point, and a destroyed weapon is more surely a weapon that is out of circulation than one that is merely shifted from one status to another.

But notwithstanding that, I think this is a good development. I hope the treaty is quickly ratified, both in the United States Senate and in the [Duma](#).

After that, we have been promised that there will be more substantial reductions.

DAVID SPEEDIE: It's interesting, however; I read a [piece](#) by Secretary [Robert Gates](#) in *The Wall Street Journal* last week. I won't go as far as to say it was a sort of bellicose statement in support of a treaty that was designed to reduce danger, but at the same time, he says, in defending the treaty from the U.S. point of view—and presumably advocating ratification in the Senate—that the "administration is proposing to spend \$80 billion over the next decade to rebuild and sustain America's aging nuclear infrastructure, especially our national weapons labs and our science, technology, and engineering base," and "sustain and modernize our nuclear weapons, their delivery systems, and supporting infrastructure."

So there is sort of a "yes, but" to this, isn't there?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: I read a statement today which said it's like having an anti-whaling treaty while killing whales.

DAVID SPEEDIE: That's right, exactly.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: I think this is a Faustian bargain, something similar to what happened when the [Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty](#) [CTBT] was signed by the [Clinton](#) Administration. They gave the weapons laboratories a lot of money for a stockpile stewardship program. But they are not satisfied with that. The military-industrial complex, about which General [Eisenhower](#), turned President Eisenhower, in 1961 had just warned us, is still alive and kicking. It earns a huge amount of money. Of the \$1,464 billion spent by the world on military expenditures in 2008, 41.5 percent is spent by the United States alone. It has unquestioned supremacy in conventional weapons and also in nuclear weapons.

So you have enormous economic problems—problems of debt, problems of joblessness. Nobody addresses the huge amount of money that is spent on the nuclear weapon program, which can achieve enormous savings if it is reduced substantially, let alone eliminated.

DAVID SPEEDIE: On this question of ratification of START, START is only the start. There are other things—the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which, by most astute observers, will have a harder passage in the Senate than START, and so on. There is a tendency, I think, for us on this side of the equation to decouple things, to look at START as one silo, CTBT as another, missile defense as another.

We'll get beyond the bilateral issue in a moment.

The Russians tend not to see it this way, in my experience. Is this a learning process for us, to learn that there is a linkage of these different components of nuclear arms?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: I think there is a fundamental attitudinal change that was brought about by the end of the Cold War and the implosion that took place in the Soviet Union. Russia tended to be neglected for many years.

The Russians, I think, were very humiliated by that, because they were still a great power. They were an important producer of oil and gas. They have huge mineral resources. And they have still a great deal of influence in the world, not the least because they are a nuclear-weapon state.

They felt that, particularly during the [Bush-Cheney](#) years, there was inadequate dignity that was given to them in terms of their relationship with others. The expansion of NATO right up to their doorstep also did not help, and bellicose statements that were made.

They have proved to be very valuable partners in trying to achieve a solution to the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] problem and the six-nation talks there. They have been trying to be helpful with regard to Iran by being a party to [ElBaradei's](#) proposal that they should enrich some of the uranium exported from Iran. As you know from the news today, that is likely to be accepted now by the Iranians.

So they have a number of uses, if they are only engaged. That engagement has only just begun under the Obama Administration, and they welcome that.

I think they have, however, very serious concerns. I mentioned the expansion of NATO. That is one.

The other is the ballistic missile defense program. We have abandoned—when I say "we," I think the world has seen the abandonment of the more ambitious [SDI](#) [Strategic Defense Initiative] program which President [Reagan](#) had. It was not possible to have this global shield. It was technically unfeasible. Many people, like [Ted Postol](#) at MIT, have told us that.

We also know that now the more limited theater missile defense program, which again is not technically foolproof because you can't have an invulnerable shield—you only have more people developing decoys and more missiles in order to get through the shield.

Nevertheless, there is now, seemingly, a policy decision to have the theater missile defense system, ostensibly aimed at Iran, and not at Russia. Now, Russia says the missiles don't have "Destination Tehran" written on them. It could very well be turned at some point in time to Russia. So they are a little concerned about this—more than a little concerned—and they say, "Why don't we get together and have a common European defense shield?" which seems to be the way in which partnerships operate. But if you still want the Russians to be regarded as the enemy, then, of course, you don't bring them into this partnership arrangement.

The other problem is just the reverse of what we had during the Cold War. They feel very keenly their conventional arms inferiority. The army in Russia is a strong pressure group on the government to retain their nuclear weapons.

Of course, they will get rid of aging weapons. They will go down as much as possible to some kind of secure holding, although, in my view, no nuclear weapon can guarantee your security. They have no political use, and no self-respecting commander today in any army would want to use a nuclear weapon. So that's a dubious posture. Nevertheless, there are people in the Russian army who believe that.

So we have to address those concerns. One way of addressing them is to go back to the [Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty](#), which needs to be radically refashioned to take into account post-Cold War realities. That's very important.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Mentioning Russian cooperation, both actual and potential, on North Korea, Iran, and so on opens up the field here, as it were, to the effect that it's wonderful for a U.S.-Russia New START and so on and so forth. But obviously others would bring in the other seven either declared or undeclared nuclear powers, as well as countries like Japan, Germany, South Korea, certainly at least in terms of safeguarding the command-and-control issues of nuclear conformance. Obviously, again, START is only the start. Bilateral arrangements are only the start.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Certainly we must move from the bilateral nuclear disarmament phase into a multilateral disarmament phase. That can be done in several ways. We have the important Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which has to be brought into force. That can only be brought into force by the eight outlying states which have not either signed or ratified it doing so. Here U.S. leadership is vital. If the United States does not have the treaty ratified, hopefully next year, then we are going to find the others making that an excuse also not to bring the CTBT into force.

We have state-of-the-art verification in the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna. They picked out the two nuclear explosions by North Korea, which were not picked out by others. This shows that with this array of stations that they have around the world and with the equipment they have, we can ensure that there will be no cheating with regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The other area is the [Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty](#), where we have still not got off the ground. Pakistan is on this occasion obstructing it because they want us to address the issue of stockpiles, since they feel that they are in an inferior position vis-à-vis India, particularly since India has, very dubiously, been assisted by the United States and others in the nuclear supplies role, by making an exception for India, despite the principles of the NPT and despite all past agreements in NPT review conferences. If you make such exceptions with regard to Israel in the future, I can tell you that you will destroy the NPT.

DAVID SPEEDIE: The issue of the principles and the actualities of NPT, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, I know are close to your heart. You may have something to say in terms of what's going on in New York at this moment in time. But there is, of course, the issue of the inherent asymmetry or even unfairness of NPT. You have said that disarmament and nonproliferation have a symbiotic relationship; we cannot have one without the other.

This goes back to the two imperatives of NPT, which, of course, are prevention of proliferation and also the commitment to disarm and move back, presumably more expeditiously than has happened. The NPT has been described by one journalist recently as "middle-aged and tired."

Is that a fair assessment? How do you see this question of fairness playing out in the current situation or in the foreseeable future?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: It's a position that I hold very firmly, both as a citizen of a non-nuclear-weapon state and also as the president of the [1995 Review and Extension Conference](#), where, in response to the repeated assurances of nuclear-weapon states that we needed to have an indefinite extension of the treaty so that there was some predictability, for them to proceed with nuclear disarmament, we have had all those assurances and promises given to us completely violated. There is no trust at the moment between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states.

To make Iran or some other country an excuse for not proceeding with nuclear disarmament is again not true. From 1970, when the treaty entered into force, for 40 years, we have not had serious disarmament undertaken, in term of [Article VI](#) of the treaty, which promised nuclear disarmament in return for the fact that the non-nuclear-weapon states undertook not to acquire nuclear weapons legally, and to have that legal obligation ascertained through [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) [IAEA] safeguards.

We, of course, now have got a number of restrictions being introduced with regard to the Article IV, which guaranteed the free flow of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. That is being hemmed in by a number of restrictions. People are asked not to enrich their uranium domestically. They are asked to use international fuel banks and the multilateralized fuel cycle arrangements and so on. This should be a voluntary decision, of course, of countries. Ideally, I would not, myself, want to see my country have nuclear power for energy purposes when there are other, safer means available, without creating climate-change problems, as we know fossil fuels do.

Nevertheless, there is this constant tension in the treaty between the nuclear-weapon states and the non-nuclear-weapon states, because there is a sense of asymmetrical obligations being heaped on the non-nuclear-weapon states and the fact that the nuclear-weapon states have not fulfilled their part of the bargain. This was a central bargain that is constantly being referred to, in 1970.

If you look at the number of nuclear weapon-free zones that exist in the world today, the concept of a nuclear weapon-free zone predated the concept of a nuclear nonproliferation treaty. The first one was the [Treaty of Tlatelolco](#), which converted the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean into being nuclear weapon-free. Here are states who self-assertively and very self-reliantly decided that they would not want to be—

DAVID SPEEDIE: Brazil and Argentina.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Brazil and Argentina—all of them. And they were on the verge of going nuclear. Other countries, like South Africa—today the whole of South Africa is nuclear weapon-free. It has got the [Treaty of Pelindaba](#), which has entered into force.

I was glad that at the opening statement of Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#), she promised that the United States would submit to the Senate the protocols which would respect those nuclear weapon-free zones, the one in Africa and the one in the South Pacific that Australia and New Zealand and other South Pacific states belong to, so that there will be some legal recognition of those nuclear weapon-free zones. So far it is only one nuclear weapon-free zone, the Latin American nuclear weapon-free zone, that is recognized by the United States and the other nuclear states.

DAVID SPEEDIE: A couple of questions about the United Nations. The secretary-general called last week for a deadline for activating, as it were, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, in a statement saying, "We've been talking about this for long enough. We should establish a deadline for CTBT for full implementation."

The role of the United Nations, and international organizations in general, has been, to some extent, called into question. A [Council on Foreign Relations report](#) recently, in a sense, took the United Nations to task in saying that, where there has been any progress—North Korea and Libya were two of the examples—they said this has been achieved by either, in the North Korean case, the [Six-Party Talks](#) or, in Libya, perhaps the role of the United States and so on, and it has not really been a UN or international imperative that has brought positive—is that a fair comment, to say that the United Nations has a very limited track record and capacity in terms of what it can actually achieve?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: I think not, because there is a lot of hypocrisy on the part of member states. They themselves constitute the United Nations. If the United Nations is not acting properly and is dysfunctional, it is because of them. So when the member states want the United Nations to act, it does so.

[Dag Hammarskjöld](#) made the very famous statement that the United Nations was not made to take mankind to heaven, but to save it from hell.

I think the fact that it has been saved from hell is a great tribute to the organization. Ultimately, it rests on the shoulders of member states to be more creative.

The function of the United Nations is to create norms, and it has done that. Norm building and norm establishment is very good, but norm enforcement depends on the Security Council and the other member states. If there is any lack of enforcement, it is entirely because the rest of the member states allow people to get away with it, whether it is in the nuclear area or in some other area. So we do need to have a more cooperative collective security concept which binds countries together and which helps them to ensure that norms are maintained.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You mentioned earlier the question of non-state actors, particularly, obviously, the nightmarish scenario of nuclear components or other WMD, weapons of mass destruction, falling into terrorist hands. I know that you chaired at one point a UN subgroup on WMD and terrorism. Here again, there is a question of what we could really expect of the United Nations, given all the factors. There is a [UN Security Council resolution 1540](#) that calls for a legally binding resolution for all UN member nations to enact and enforce measures to prevent non-state actors from acquiring WMD. But in the General Assembly, states have called into question, as I understand it, the capacity or the authority of the Security Council to impose such a binding resolution.

Where and how are there going to be robust global norms on WMD and terrorism?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Let's look at the facts. There are already 30 international conventions against various forms of terrorism, such as hijacking of airplanes and so on. The most recent is the [Convention Against Nuclear Terrorism](#), which was achieved under the committee chaired by Dr. [Rohan Perera](#), from Sri Lanka. We now do not have an overarching convention about terrorism in general, partly because there is still hesitation on the part of the international community to agree on a common definition of terrorism.

There are some countries that believe that liberation movements adopting terrorism should not be outlawed because they are seeking their own freedom from oppression or from some colonial ruler. But others do not believe that. They say, as [Kofi Annan](#) said, that any form of terrorism is reprehensible, whatever the objective of it is. So we don't have a consensus internationally there.

But I think there is today widespread acceptance, particularly after 9/11, that terrorism is abhorrent, in whatever form it is adopted. There is already a great deal of cooperation.

The sentiment of the UN General Assembly is very much a dominant view of the countries outside the Security Council, because they have felt that the Security Council is unrepresentative, that it reflects the realities of post-World War II and 1945, and that those five countries should be joined by other countries that have emerged, in a changing global situation, where the Brazils of this world, Egypt, India, other countries—it's important, in order to have a more multipolar world, where countries who have strong economies and strong political influence must also be recognized as being important to be brought in, in a power-sharing situation in the Security Council.

As long as the Security Council is not respected as being genuinely democratic and representative, there will always be this tension of feeling that the General Assembly, which is a parliament of the world, should be the source of authority rather than this Security Council, which has five permanent members with an ability to veto and the others are just rotational, ten members. So we need to have, I think, Security Council reform, which is, of course, being resisted.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I was going to say, I fear we might get here into the fraught question of Security Council reform, which is, first of all, not entirely on our agenda and, secondly, would take altogether too much time.

But you're absolutely right, of course. And it points to new multilateral arrangements, such as the [BRICs](#)—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization](#), with Central Asian states, Russia, China, and then Iran, Pakistan with observer status. There are simply new arrangements taking place that have to be taken into account.

I may say in passing that we at the Carnegie Council have established a program called "[Rise of the Rest](#)," series that looks at precisely some of the issues that you are dealing with.

But back to the immediate question at hand and into the thorny issue of Iran, a well-respected American NGO said—and this was approximately six years ago—that by sometime in 2006, Iran could be producing fissile material for atomic bombs using both enriched uranium and plutonium.

It's now 2010. The debate still rages over both Iran's intentions and capacity. The IAEA-Iran dialogue has been interesting, to say the least. On the one hand, IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, has questioned Iran's failure to meet obligations in reporting. On the other hand, there is no overt proof of activity that's not allowed under NPT.

What do you think of the situation in Iran?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: It's not a distinction between black and white. It's a shade of gray. The Iranians have only themselves to blame for the fact that they have not been more transparent and more cooperative with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

But having said that, particularly because the Iranians have not reported their enrichment of uranium for several years before the IAEA discovered—and I must clarify that the enrichment of uranium is not prohibited under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, but it is reportable under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, under which Iran operates.

The national intelligence estimates of the United States, as well as many other intelligence agencies in the world, have not concluded that Iran has a nuclear weapon or is close to getting a nuclear weapon. How you read a country's intentions, of course, is a very subjective matter.

I don't think we should be, as it were, bothered about what Israel thinks about it, because Israel has its own motives within the Middle East, and Israel is in no position to preach to the world about acquiring nuclear weapons, having got secretly an arsenal of something like 200 nuclear weapons, according to estimates by SIPRI and several others.

We do need a mature negotiation of this issue. I hope that the deal that has been negotiated by the presidents of Brazil and Turkey will, in fact, stick, where there is this offer to export Iranian fuel—something like 1,200 kilograms—and then let them have fuel from Russia and France for the Tehran reactor. This might be a way in which we can break out of this.

I believe in diplomacy as a solution to the problems of the world, in general, and in particular, to the problem of nuclear proliferation. We have had already Libya come back into the fold as a consequence of diplomacy. Of course, we now have them fully compliant with the NPT. I believe that same task can be undertaken, rather than going into the kind of futile exercise of the invasion of Iraq, which ultimately ended up with the discovery that there were no weapons of mass destruction there.

We do need also, of course, the countries who claim that they are the high priests of nonproliferation to be perfectly guiltless. First of all, they must proceed with their own Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty promises of getting rid of their nuclear weapons. Secondly, they must not make distinctions between good proliferators and bad proliferators, and give the Indians the deals that they have got because of Realpolitik reasons. You may remember that when the shah of Iran was in charge of Iran, he wanted to have peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and that was encouraged by the West. But now, because we have a different regime heading Iran, it has suddenly become not at all acceptable.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And, of course, one of the points that Iran has raised is that there is a certain double standard here, that South Korea, for example, was embarked on a program that, for perhaps political reasons, was not formally reported to the United Nations, although they had reached a stage of close to nuclear weapon capacity.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: That nuclear weapon capability level is reached by a lot of Western industrialized nations—Japan, Germany, Sweden, Australia. All of them have that. The explanation of a lot of observers is that Iran is trying to reach that stage, and not actually to weaponize their program. If that is the objective of the Iranians, then you can hardly dispute that objective for them to have, if it is necessary for their peaceful development, for their economic development.

DAVID SPEEDIE: One final thought on this, and that is the [announcement today by the presidents of Brazil and Turkey](#). There was a plan fairly recently, the so-called uranium swap, whereby Iran's low-enriched uranium would be essentially shipped out to Russia and then essentially sent to France, where it could be made into fuel rods for peaceful nuclear purposes, nuclear energy purposes. This stalled because of Iran's insistence, as I recall, that the swap take place on Iranian soil, under IAEA auspices obviously and custody, and also be simultaneous. Iran was balking that there would be, I think, a year's delay in the two faces of the swap.

Is this an unreasonable position? Does the announcement by the presidents of Brazil and Turkey advance the proposition somewhat, in your opinion?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: The original proposal was a very imaginative proposal, which came from the former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei.

Unfortunately, it came at a time when there was a certain degree of internal turmoil within Iran. The elections had taken place and there was a dispute between the two candidates, the president, who claims to have won, [Ahmadinejad](#), and [Mousavi](#), who lost out. Mousavi normally would have been a liberal person who would have accepted this. But I think internal pressures led this proposal to receive a mixed reaction from the incumbent president, because there was a concern that the opposition might take advantage of it. This was one explanation that was given in the media.

But now, I think, with the intervention of the presidents of Brazil and Turkey, with their own kind of guarantee that the terms will be adhered to, I think there is a greater sense of confidence on the part of the Iranians that they will get a fair deal and that the terms will be observed. So the uranium will go to Turkish soil and will be there, and the Turks have guaranteed that there will be a return of the enriched uranium, enriched to 20 percent, for use in the Tehran reactor. I think that's a good basis for the settlement.

DAVID SPEEDIE: The other part of the equation, of course, it seems to me—it's a little bit like our discussion of the way Russia feels as to how business is conducted—Iran, of course, feels that there are other items that ought to be on the table, such as Iran's regional concerns, Afghanistan, the whole question of stability in the Middle East and the Gulf and the extended area and so on and so forth. One hopes, obviously, that the day will come when that broader dialogue will take place in which the nuclear question is absolutely critical, but only one critical component.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: I think basically we must accept that a more cooperative Iran rather than an antagonistic Iran would be better for international peace and security, so we should do everything possible within the norms that we have in the world to engage them politically and economically as well.

They do need additional resources for their energy. That is, I think, no longer a question, although there was at one stage some dispute as to what they need nuclear energy for when they have so much oil and gas. In fact, everybody needs nuclear energy today or other forms of energy, because fossil fuels are running out and also they cause climate change. So I don't think that argument is being pursued any longer by Western industrialized countries.

But we do need, I think, in the situation in Afghanistan, in the situation in Iraq—because they are an influential Shiite country, and we don't want to have the Shiite street also in flames, as much as the Sunni street is today, because we will have bombs going off not only in Times Square, but in all the squares of the world if this issue of Iran is not resolved quickly.

DAVID SPEEDIE: As we come to the end of this wonderful conversation, I want to give you a little bit of a breather from nuclear issues. You were, of course, the under-secretary for disarmament. You mentioned at the beginning some of the breakthroughs in the landmines and small arms and so on and so forth. Of course, we tend to forget that in some of the bloodiest conflicts—in Rwanda, there wasn't a weapon of mass destruction in sight. It was fairly crude weaponry that wreaked such awful slaughter of 600,000 people.

I know that my figures are sadly out of date, but I know that SIPRI, with which you are associated, reported in the earlier part of this decade that we were approaching \$900 billion in global military expenditures. As you said, the United States, of course, is larger than the next eight or nine countries combined in terms of expenses. The question of the sale and spread of small weapons, of conventional weapons, and also the [UN Register of Conventional Arms](#), the question of reporting these sales—

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Transparency.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Transparency. What's the state of play there? How does that stand, as I say, almost a decade after these reports from SIPRI? Are you more sanguine about the question of the reporting issue, for example?

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: First of all, as you know, the figures that you quoted are certainly out of date. As I said, it's [\\$1,464 billion](#). That was for 2008. The 2009 figures will come out next month, when SIPRI publishes its yearbook, annually.

On the question of what steps are being taken, there are more and more transparency measures. We have two instruments in the United Nations. One is the fact that we have a declaration giving people the register where they tell us about their imports and exports of ten categories of weapons, including tanks and fighter planes and so on. There is also a register which gives reporting of military expenditures on a model form that is being developed by the United Nations. Together, although it's not totally universal, this gives a fairly substantial percentage of the countries reporting on their conventional weapon possession and transfers.

Now, there is a new development, which is very, very hopeful, and that is the acceptance of the need to develop an arms trade treaty. Many people behind this, including the United Kingdom government, say that it's not a disarmament treaty, but it's a treaty to regulate the sale and the transfer of nuclear weapons. That itself is a very hopeful sign.

It will take perhaps about two or three years to have that treaty evolve. But it will bring in, I think, some kind of measure of order to ensure that there is no leakage of arms transfers to terrorist groups and to non-state actors. It will also ensure that all these transactions will be aboveboard and, hopefully, corruption-free. The arms trade is one of the most corrupt forms of trade going on in the world. It is so secretive. It's being shrouded because of the fact that national security is usually an excuse for secrecy.

But indeed we need to have, I think, more open transactions with regard to arms trading. Nobody denies that countries need arms for their legitimate national security needs and for self-defense. But we need to also ensure that these arms transfers are actually commensurate with the security needs of the countries and that we have the principle of undiminished security for everybody, so that one nation's security is not achieved at the expense of another nation's security. We must all together have this broad framework of collective and cooperative security.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Ambassador Dhanapala, in looking at some of your writings, I came across a piece called "[The United Nations and Its Future in the 21st Century](#)."

Of course, we were immediately arrested by a paragraph that began, "An ethical foundation for the UN." I just want to quote from this briefly: "We must begin with a foundation of ethical values that we can share. The use of the term 'ethics' for a set of moral principles presupposes that we are all bound by a common understanding of what we mean."

Then you go on to say, "Ethics per se would be of little value if it did not have a practical propensity to be applied to human affairs and the improvement of the human condition. It is widely but wrongly assumed that the realm of ethical values and the world of pragmatic politics are wide apart and the twain shall never meet."

Of course, you talk about the achievements of the United Nations as being that nexus.

I don't know if there is a question in there. It's just, I guess, a thank-you for saying this, because it endorses what we try to do at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. Clearly you share the sense of the ethical grounding of policy advancement.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: It was there in the [Millennium Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly](#), where they identified the common values that encompass us as human beings of one planet. That includes the whole question of tolerance. And the [Alliance of Civilizations](#), which is a program that the United Nations has, is precisely that. We need to have, not a clash of civilizations, but an alliance of civilizations, particularly at this time.

DAVID SPEEDIE: In order, as you go on to say, to overcome what Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called "problems without passports." I think you are an admirable spokesman for addressing problems without passports.

Let me just say that we expect this to be the first of several interviews and programs coming up at the Council that will speak to this increasingly important issue of arms control and nonproliferation, with voices not just from the United States, but from the global community, of which you, sir, are an inspiring example.

Thank you so much for your time.

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA: Thank you very much.

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