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CAN A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST STILL BE AVOIDED?*

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June 1983

Prime Minister Olof Palme; chairman of the 'Bundestag Committee'
on disarmament and arms control Egon Bahr; Academician Georgi A. Arbatov,
Admiral Noel Gayler, Dr. Verheggen, physicians for the prevention
of nuclear war, ladies and gentlemen;

It is a great honor for me as a peace researcher to try to draw the conclusions from this plenary session, so rich in information and in proposals. You physicians are indeed, as has been pointed out in one of the speeches, the guardians of humanity. Unfortunately, however, there are those in this world who seem to have a lighter view on the sacredness of human lives. And you may certainly ask what credentials I have, a peace researcher, a social scientist amidst physicians and politicians. However, I am not quite without credentials in the world of physicians.

Thus, my father was a physician, also involved in public health. So was his father. So was his father again. My mother was a nurse, and her father was the Norwegian Director General of Health, at that time. When I was born an uncle of mine told my father: "A physician has been born." But, you see, it did not turn out that way. Everything was pointing in that direction, but this very example shows you that nothing is predetermined in this world, that any fate can be averted if you only exercise a sufficiently strong will. So, the first conclusion is: however dark the clouds, we should never give up!

We peace researchers have politics as our field, and our findings are certainly political ones. It is the task, indeed the duty of a peace researcher to share his conclusions with the public, just as physicians facing a medical catastrophe will try to come to rescue, and not withdraw from the scene only asking for more money for research in order to write one more paper, one more book. So, what is the kind of concrete conclusion that I as one member of the peace research community would recommend in the highly dangerous situation in which we find ourselves? It goes without saying, but I nevertheless say so,

that for these conclusions I alone am responsible, they do not necessarily represent the opinion of the organization behind this very timely conference.

More precisely, I have a six point program very much building on the four excellent politicians in front of us, and all of them essentially asking for initiatives that can be made unilaterally, although they would be better if they could be agreed upon multilaterally.

First, building on the type of thinking suggested by Dr. Arbatov, following the Breshnev no-first-use declaration for nuclear arms presented by Gromyko to the Second special session for disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly, June 1982: that the Western side reciprocates, also issuing a no-first-use declaration. It would not necessarily have to be unconditional. Since the official rationale for not having a first-use declaration in the West is the Soviet numerical superiority in tanks, in the European theatre, it could be coupled to a withdrawal pledge for a certain percentage of these tanks on the Soviet side. It could also be combined with a further build-up with anti-tank weapons on the Western side, although there are those who think that the capability is already sufficient. A Soviet willingness to reciprocate with this conventional cut in weapons that although they are conventional are also highly offensive, would greatly facilitate the acceptance of a no-first-use pledge not only among Western politicians but also in the public opinion at large.

Second, this should be followed up by some principle of nuclear free zones. We are here in the fortunate position that we can build both on Prime Minister Palme's initiative, as expressed in the Palme commission report, in favor of a nuclear-free corridor, a 2 x 150 km zone along the East-West border in Europe, free from nuclear combat weapons. This would be a confidence building measure of some significance, and also raise the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. A nuclear-free

corridor could then be seen as a preliminary step for the implementation of the very important proposal of Dr. Bahr: that there should be no nuclear weapons on the soil of countries who do not possess them. As Dr. Bahr has said in his annexe to the Palme Commission Report: "Even the intention of negotiating such an agreement would provide the world with new hope." The proposal is easily understood and would provide us in Europe with a promise of survival so far denied us. It should be pointed out, however, that if the proposal is implemented there would still remain on the soil of the non-superpower part of the European continent the French nuclear force of considerable magnitude, now rapidly "modernizing". This might become a major problem in the future, for this reason one should ask of all those who organize demonstrations "N'oubliez jamais l'ambassade française!" And for this particular organization it would be hoped that the contingent of French physicians against nuclear arms would be particularly numerous to reduce the significance of this "parti napoléonien" which seems to be running France with communists, socialists and gaullists being the left, center and right wings respectively.

Third, and I am here building on the type of thinking which Admiral Gayler is an important representative: change in military doctrine. Neither a no-first-use pledge, nor a nuclear-free zone (nor a nuclear freeze for that matter) would in and by themselves guarantee non-use of nuclear weapons as long as the military doctrines remain the same, assuming that a war will sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, become a nuclear war. As has been pointed out by the "gang of four" (George Kennan, Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Gerard Smith) in their famous Foreign Affairs article last year, and much more clearly so in the report of the Union of Concerned Scientists (the "gang of 16", including the four mentioned, but also a number of British and German military and political experts, and Admiral Gayler): there has to be a change in military doctrine advising everybody, including the lowest ranking soldier, how to respond defensively with conventional means. The nuclear deterrent would still remain, withdrawn to the superpowers. But the whole military thinking and exercises would have to be in terms of conventional defense, with no nuclear first use to fall back upon.

Fourth, and here I move closer to the type of position taken by the European peace movement: everything possible has to be done to transform the military machineries so that they are capable of credible, inoffensive, non-provocative military postures. Today there is a vast knowledge of what this might mean both in terms of conventional military defense (with small, dispersed units with high fire power, "smart rockets", etc.), paramilitary defense, (guerrilla) and non-military defense. A mix of these three components will be much stronger than the sum of the parts, there is a synergistic effect that comes out of this type of mobilization of the population for purely defensive purposes. In medical parlance this would be like mobilizing the antibodies, the white blood corpuscles, the cellular anti-bodies and so on, making the society capable of defending itself against unwanted intruders. In medical parlance this is also known as increasing the resistance capacity of the body, secondary prophylaxis. It is purely defensive, it does not make human beings externally aggressive. Human beings can still, skin to skin, do wonderful things to each other. And it in no way excludes primary prophylaxis, finding ways of decreasing the exposure to lethal destruction, meaning getting rid of these horrible weapons. And here the small-pox campaign analogy taken from the World Health Organization, so well presented today by Dr. Lambo, is appropriate. The seek-and-destroy program of that campaign should also apply to nuclear arms. We know more or less where they are, and Admiral Gayler has told us how they can be destroyed. Let me only add as a side remark that this would liberate an enormous amount of fuel for nuclear reactors, and although they would be for peaceful purposes not all of us are equally convinced that they represent a positive step forward in the search for energy supplies, particularly if it should take the form of building more nuclear reactors, not only of having diluted reserve fuel for the existing ones.

Fifth, there is another way of obtaining secondary prophylaxis like when we build healthy bodies through healthy ways of life: by building a less vulnerable society. This also means building stronger societies, societies that depend less on the outside for resources and markets and hence might be less tempted to use offensive weaponry to secure their trade routes both ways. It means building societies without fundamental internal contradictions so strong that they sometimes think

they need outside aggression as a way of diverting attention away from internal problems. Obviously I am now talking about some of the basic economic problems of the West, and the basic political problems of the East. A West less dependent on the outside in order to run its economies would be a vastly less dangerous West. And an East with a more harmonious political situation would be a vastly less dangerous East - particularly, like for the West, as perceived by the other side. And perceptions are important in this matter. Politics is based on perceptions more than on realities, as our knowledge of realities will always be limited.

Sixth, the search for new patterns of cooperation. Out of the first détente of the mid 1960s, initiated by that great French statesman Charles de Gaulle, but at the expense of building a force de frappe, came a pattern of East-West cooperation essentially based on economic relations, on trade and joint ventures. It proved to be vulnerable because of the economic superiority of the West and the changing terms of trade, mainly favoring the West, with the exception of countries able to export oil or gas. Debts accumulated. I am not suggesting that East-West trade should be abolished, only indicating that if we want to build a second détente then East-West relations have to be less dominated by economic concerns. More particularly, I think a case could also be made for hundreds, thousands of encounters and discussions across the borders, at all levels, governmental and non-governmental, where East-West groups would discuss two basic themes: what are our problems, what are the possible solutions?

Being a peace researcher I have had the occasion to do quite a lot of that, and two findings that stand out - neither of them any surprise for you - are the following:

What frightens peoples in the West about the East in general, and the Soviet Union in particular, can be put in one word: stalinism. The mechanism is something like this: "If you can do that type of thing to your own people and also to the peoples in Eastern Europe in general,

then you might one day do it to us". The Soviet Union denounced stalinism in the 20th Party Congress of 1956. That act was a great contribution to peace, I can still remember the sense of relief that went through so many of us. But stalinism is not dead. It has its ups and downs in terms of infractions of what today is referred to as the first generation of human rights, the civil and the political rights. And here I might ask you, Academician Arbatov and our other Soviet friends in this room: you are very high up in the political power structure, could it not be that what you would gain in tension relief by giving more freedom of expression and assembly to your dissident groups, and particularly to those as concerned as we all are with peace and disarmament, would greatly outweigh the challenges this might imply to the present power structure? Any step in this direction, any effort to create a higher level of inner peace in the East would be a contribution to that outer peace we all want so much. Continue the fight against stalinism!

And then there is the other side. In my experience, what frightens many people in the East about the West in general, and the United States in particular derives from the theory and experience in connection with capitalism in crisis. Capitalism in crisis has a tendency to harden, to acquire fascist characteristics in order to control the production machinery within and secure markets without. In this process, experience informs us that capitalist countries may start throwing weapons around. Anything those countries can do, hence, to prove that they are really capable of mastering the economic crisis of their system in general, and reducing unemployment in particular is, hence, a contribution to peace. There may be those who object that this is a marxist perspective as indeed it is. To these people I would say that although I myself am very far from being a marxist the empirical evidence of this century shows very clearly that this is a rather good social science theory. It also has to do with what is referred to as the second generation of human rights, the economic and social rights: any step to implement them (eg by guaranteeing jobs, not only sustenance) is a step in the direction of peace. And again the same formula: inner peace within is very relevant for outer peace without.

However, the list of problems associated with the West in general and the United States in particular is considerably longer. This is not the place to go into details such as listing the global reach of US warfare abroad as opposed to the more security belt oriented Soviet interventionism, highly objectionable as it is. More important is the type of language used by the present US administration, the reference to the other party as the "center of evil". One does not say such things if peace is the goal. Rather, it smacks of an effort to outlaw communism as a totally unnecessary evil, and the militarily highly offensive and provocative postures adopted might lead many to the conclusion that there are those in that administration who see the words as a preparation for action. I think this should be contrasted with the Soviet view of capitalism as a necessary evil, as a stage humankind somehow has to go through and which even has the advantage that it generates a lot of capital and consumers goods that can then be made use of after the revolution. It may not always turn out that way, but such is, in general terms, the theory. It makes for more tolerance, in general terms.

Hence, addressed to Admiral Gayler and to our United States friends in this conference: please do something about it! You have elections, it is your responsibility to see to it that less dangerous governments come into power in your country.

There is another point in connection with the US system, at the interface between armament and capitalism. All of us who try to have dialogues with US researchers engaged in the research and development of this horrible weapons of mass destruction are so often met with the same response: "Yes, yes, I very much agree with you, I do not like these weapons either. But this is my job, I have a mortgagee on my house, my children have to go to college, there are dentist and medical bills to be met - - -". If that is really the question then I would here call for a fund to be established, a fund to pay off the mortgages of these people, and perhaps also meeting other expenses, liberating them from work on these omniscidal weapons so that they can devote their talents fully to highly inoffensive, non-provocative

weaponry if they want to stay within military research, or to research for the building of strong human beings and strong human societies if they prefer the civilian sector. And here is my first contribution, in the type of money that seems to withstand any fluctuations in all these matters: Swiss francs.

We simply have to find ways in which countries can live with each other in this dangerous era and part of the world. And at that point I can think of no better model than Finland, defining its relations to its big neighbor through the Treaty for friendship, cooperation and assistance between Finland and the Soviet Union, of 1948. The treaty puts the obligation on Finland to defend itself in case Finland, or the Soviet Union through Finland, is attacked by Germany or an ally of Germany. This does not make Finland an ally of the Soviet Union since the obligation is limited, nor does it make Finland a completely autonomous country. It is probably unrealistic to ask for a complete autonomy for neighbors of superpowers; this would also apply to Canada and Mexico. But Finland proves that it is possible to combine parliamentary democracy and social democratic capitalism with that type of neighborhood within a framework for mutual benefit. Hence, I would like to call for the finlandization of all of Eastern Europe, linking the countries to the big neighbor in treaties similar to the Finnish one, giving to the populations the right to express themselves in free elections, within the framework of a representative democracy.

To conclude: there are tasks to be done. There is much work, there is a need to reorganize the system of international relations within a framework of "common security" as called for by the Palme Commission. The four politicians in front of you have all of them in their way made important contributions in this direction. So, Dr. Bahr: Wir danken Ihnen! Prime Minister Palme: Vi tackar Dig! Admiral Gayler: We thank you! Academician Arbatov: Mi blagodar'im vas! And last but not least: Dr. Verheggen, on behalf of that soft Soviet Union/United States alliance so aptly guided by Dr. Lown and Dr. Chazov

and our extremely able congress committee chairman, Dr. Verheggen:
Dank U wel! Individually taken your proposals are already excellent. Seen together they are much more than the sum of the parts, there is a synergy here. And they do not come out of the paper exercises of people remote from power and insight: you are or have been in the very center of these affairs, nobody can accuse you of being out of touch. It is so infinitely more realistic than endless arms races and threats of war. In the name of the organization I have been asked to thank you all for having come here, sharing with us your thoughts.

We may lose some battles.

But we shall never give up.

We shall prevail.