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Oral History Interview with Jayantha Dhanapala

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President of the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference

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Jayantha Dhanapala

Sri Lanka / Conference President

Oral history interview conducted by Michal Onderco by Skype on 7 February 2017

Michal Onderco:

And part of this project is that we interview the main participants in the conference and try to get their firsthand impressions. So what I have is a few questions -- quite a few -- and they are divided into three groups. They are divided into questions that relate to issues that were before the conference, at the conference, and after the conference. As we speak today, I will be making a recording of our discussion, and you will have an opportunity --

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes.

Michal Onderco:

-- to review the transcript, of course.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Before we begin--before we begin, may I ask you whether you have read all that I have written on the conference, because --

Michal Onderco:

I have not.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

--there is very little point in going over ground that I have already covered in my writing if you have read it.

Michal Onderco:

Well, I've read the book that you have written for UNIDIR, and I have read the book that you have written with Tariq Rauf.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes. In addition to that, I've had various essays in various collections including in the Oxford Handbook on Modern Diplomacy analyzing the anatomy of that conference and many others where, of course, what is in the book is you could use, but in a slightly different format. So if you've read that, then that's fine. We're going to be going over ground that I have already covered.

Michal Onderco:

Yes. At the same time, for the oral history -- it's also important to discuss some other things you may have covered in the book, but people who, at a later stage, will read through the transcript of our discussion may not have. So sometimes some of the issues that we will be talking about, you may have intentionally touched, and it's fine if you make allusion to that you developed this in your book more in-depth.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Okay. Okay. Go ahead.

Michal Onderco:

Yes. So I want to start by asking, essentially, how did you become the conference President? Can you tell me about the process for election of the President, and why did you decide to run for it?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, first of all, I was director of the UN Institute of Disarmament Research from -- I think it was -- 1987 to 1992. I'd already been an office bearer of the 1985 NPT Review Conference, and in 1990, I was an observer, being outside the diplomatic service, I was in the UN, and I watched the 1990 conference go down the drain. And it occurred to me that what was singularly lacking was professional conference management. And that it was sadly a conference which was allowed to slight and, therefore, fail to achieve a successful result.

Michal Onderco:

Yeah.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

And I then realized that the 1995 conference was far too important a conference to be left to chance, and I decided that my own knowledge of the treaty and my diplomatic experience required me to put my name for what is a possible candidate as the President. Now, I had already been a member of the program for the Promotion of Nuclear Non-Threat Proliferation, the PPNN, which is a group of committed diplomats who had an interest in PPNN and NPT and wanted it to survive. It was co-chaired by Professor John Simpson of the University of Southampton and Ben Sanders, a retired UN official. And we used to meet frequently funded by various foundations in order to study the treaty in detail and to try to ensure the success of the 1995 conference.

I returned to my diplomatic service in 1992, and my government agreed to put my name for what was a possible candidate, and because we were from the Non-Aligned Movement, I think we had every right to obtain a position as President of the NPT. And so the Asian group first endorsed my candidacy. Then the NPT, the Non-Aligned Group, the NAM group endorsed it, and it was finally a success.

Michal Onderco:

Yes.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I, then, proceeded to equip myself with the necessary consultations with various groups in order to ensure the success of that conference. And that's how we began.

Michal Onderco:

Before we go on, were there other candidates for you that were sort of serious contenders?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes, we understand that from the Socialist group that there was a Polish candidate, but Poland being a candidate from the Socialist group, which was a minority group, had very little chance considering the overwhelming majority of the non-aligned, so the Polish candidate was not a serious candidate. He disappeared very early in the consultations.

Michal Onderco:

When you became President, what was your goal? Were you already committed to a

particular position or an extension of the treaty?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I was not except that I had very strong views about the implementation of Article VI and the need for a consensus if at all possible rather than a divided house. So I was very conscious of the need to get agreement in the conference by consensus in order to have a successful conference.

Michal Onderco:

You said that you started to equip yourself - where did you take your advice from, or who did you consult in the running for the conference?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, within the Sri Lanka government, we had a number of diplomats based in New York as well as in Geneva who had experience of the NPT Review Conferences in the past. But beyond that, the group that was in the Program for the Promotion of Nuclear Non-Proliferation were also friends who had expert knowledge of the subject, and so there was always expertise available to me to through those circles and that network.

Michal Onderco:

You mentioned that you tried to discuss with different groupings, and I know that in later stages -- in later periods -- it was customary for the future President to travel to as many as 70 or 80 countries to sort of take the temperature. Did you do the same?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes. Well, the Sri Lanka government was not in a financial position to send me around the world to consult with all the groups, but I was able to visit some key diplomatic capitals like New York and Geneva and was able to meet a fairly representative group of delegations in order to get some idea as to how the conference would unfold. And in addition to that, of course, I was in regular contact with the office bearers of the conference after the conference elected its office bearers. The chairmen of the three Main Committees and that also helped to try to have some kind of an order or strategy for the success of the conference.

Michal Onderco:

Were you already, at the time, for example, in touch with the countries that proved to be the key to the conference? So the P5, of course, but also, for example, Mexico, South Africa, Canada?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes. They were key countries. I didn't forget that Canada was a key country at that time, but I think Mexico was certainly a very prominent member of the NAM group and Ambassador of Mexico in the CD was very important. And, of course, the depositary states and the P5. I didn't visit Beijing, and I didn't visit, you know, Washington especially, on these occasions. I, essentially, confined myself to the key multi-lateral capitals and New York and Geneva.

Michal Onderco:

In your discussions, what was emerging as the main sticking points?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, the main problem I saw was that the Western Group was committed to an indefinite extension, and there was no halfway house, such as a rollover or period of ten years or fifteen years. Then an alternative view had not been formulated by the

NAM. So that was just one position of an indefinite extension, but there were many, many countries who were very, very wary of that and were unhappy that we weren't automatic, indefinite extension to the treaty when there was so much that had been done under the previous Article VI and Article IV.

Michal Onderco:

When did you see the sort of alternative positions form? Did you see them also form already before the conference -alternatives to the indefinite extension?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

It was only on the eve of the conference that we had rumors that the South Africans had a strategy -- or they were willing to trade an indefinite extension for a strengthening of the review process. So that came on just the eve of the conference beginning.

Michal Onderco:

You say "we," so whom do you mean by "we"?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I meant, you know, us as far as I was concerned, the Presidency and my advisors.

Michal Onderco:

Okay. So you said you already moved towards the conference. When the conference started, how would you take the mood in the general debate that took place?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, the general debate had some people expressing their views explicitly as to what they wanted.

Michal Onderco:

Yes.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Others were not explicit.

Michal Onderco:

For example?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

For me, in order to obtain the sense of the conference, to interview delegations which had not made an explicit statement about what their choice was regarding the outcome of the conference. People made general statements about wanting a smooth conference and so on. I questioned the leader of the delegation and asked them specifically -- this was done in confidence, in the Bureau of the President, and I was able then to ascertain and have a checklist as to how many would be for indefinite extension and how many would be against. I found that there was a majority in favor of an indefinite extension, but with the provisos that it should be protected in terms of having certain nuclear disarmament yardsticks established. And that was where the South African proposal -- the papers that they had submitted of strengthening the review process and having yardsticks and having measurements for these obligations of various state parties -- came in very useful.

Michal Onderco:

And I will get to these positions in a second, but I want to still stick with the temperature at the conference. One of the innovations that you decided was to convene smaller countries in Presidential consultation. How did you come up with that idea? That's my first question, and the second question is - in the books you say that you couldn't involve all the countries so you had to select a small number of countries, and you did try to have geographical representation -- but how did you select the individual countries?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Firstly, the device of Presidential Consultation was not unique. It was already adopted by Ambassador Mohammed Shaker in the 1985 Review Conference where I was a prominent office bearer as chairman of Main Committee 1, so it had been tried before, and done successfully, and I thought it was an important conference mechanism for me to adopt once again. I realized, of course, that in the selection of the members, it would be very subjective and possibly controversial, but it was very simple to operate: for example, you needed to have the P5. You needed to have the important non-aligned countries involved and key regional partners. So all those were done by me.

Exceptionally, I mean, there was Finland who felt like they had been left out, but there was no justification for having Finland in when several other Nordic countries were already present, so I took the decision on my own, and except for -- I think -- Finland who expressed some dissatisfaction of being left out, I think we were all agreed that it was a very fair selection of the members of the Presidential Consultation. In any event, I required representatives of the various groups to go back to their groups and report on what was discussed in our group, because it was very democratic, and Non-Aligned, for example, reported back to their group. The Western Group also, likewise, reported back and then came back from reactions from the other members who were not present in the Presidential Consultations.

Michal Onderco:

During the conference, there was already the NAM meeting in Bandung taking place. And how did that meeting influence what was going on in the conference and in the Presidential discussions?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, first of all, I was a critic of the timing of the conference. I think that conference should have taken place before we began the NPT Review and Extension Conference. But since it came right in the midst of our conference, there were a lot of people who were waiting until that conference gave the green light to the Non-Alignedists to what their position should be, and that was not a very smart way of proceeding. I had to wait until the Chairman of that conference, Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Ali Alatas, whom I knew quite well, came to New York, and we had a meeting in order to convey to me what the sense of the non-aligned were on that, and they had not yet devised an alternative position. It was, in any case, too late, because by that time, a lot of borderline countries had committed themselves, including South Africa. That was a very influential country at the time having just emerged from apartheid with the aura around their leader, Nelson Mandela. And so it was too late for the Non-Aligned Movement to come up with any credible alternative. I understood that if there was a negotiated outcome with their interested circle, it would be possible to have a consensus.

Michal Onderco:

Of course, before the conference, many observers noted that there was a lot of influence by the P5 who tried to sort of, in one way or another, influence other countries. Did that continue at the conference?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Who? Which country? I didn't hear you?

Michal Onderco:

The P5, were they trying to influence other countries?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Oh, yes. We know that the Americans went down around the world twisting arms and pressurizing countries to do it, and that went on right until the end. There is no doubt about it. Venezuela was a victim of that strong-arm tactics, because their Ambassador adopted a position that was unfavorable to the U.S., and then he found himself changed, and a new ambassador came in to represent. So things happened like that on the way.

Michal Onderco:

And another country that is frequently mentioned is also Mexico.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes, Mexico, from the very beginning, was identified as being one of the difficult ambassadors who had very strong views on the NPT. And he was, as a result of bilateral diplomacy, which we only heard about through rumor but not with any kind of factual basis, he was effectively silenced. He was present at the consultations but did not speak.

Michal Onderco:

What did you make out of it?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, I thought it was absolute disgraceful diplomacy on the part of the United States. And we are seeing more and more of it today with Trump.

Michal Onderco:

How was your relation with the P5? Let me ask you this way.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

China did not play an active role. They played a much more backseat role, and they were willing to go along with the consensus that talked about a smooth extension, so there was no difficulty with the Chinese, because they were not pushing a very strong line. The French, the Americans, and the Brits were more or less in one camp, and reluctantly behind them were the Russians who also were in favor of an indefinite extension but were not as firmly -- should I say -- evangelical about it.

Michal Onderco:

So they wouldn't go around and try to pursue other countries?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Not that we were aware of. Whether they did in private, I don't know.

Michal Onderco:

And when you mentioned that the Chinese didn't have a strong line, would you say that they may not have fully committed to the indefinite extension?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

They were ready, I think, to go along with the consensus -- for example, if the non-aligned had, early enough, come out with an alternative like a 20-year extension with a rollover, and if that found a consensus, the Chinese would have gone along with it.

Michal Onderco:

When did you hear about the Canadian proposal for the indefinite extension?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, the Canadian proposal was actually putting into words what was already an American position, so there was nothing unique about it. The Canadians like to think they played a prominent role in the conference [laughs]. They did not. This was entirely the personality -- the ambassador was trying to promote himself.

Michal Onderco:

Mr. Westdal, you mean?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I'm being frank with you now, because it's been many, many years, and I know the divisions involved. [laughter] Sometimes it goes on, but they thought they had a bigger role than, in fact, they do.

Michal Onderco:

So you think that, basically, Canadians were only doing what the Americans were asking?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Absolutely. Absolutely. And they were trying to get brownie points from the Americans.

Michal Onderco:

Did you see any -- because the way how the Canadians/American position got accepted - I mean, the South African proposals made it possible for the Canadian position to be accepted? Did you see any cooperation between South Africa and Canada?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I didn't see it at the time, but Canadian diplomats subsequently revealed it in a post-conference meeting that we had where he explained that there had been some contact between the South African delegation and his delegation on the strategy to be adopted.

Michal Onderco:

Yeah. Coming back to the Canadian proposals -- they tried to sort of collect as many signatures and as many co-sponsors for the proposal. Why do you think Canada didn't go for a vote? Why was there a seeking of a consensus?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Because there was no agreement on the rule of procedure governing of vote. And that is why my decision with regard to saying that I judged there to be a consensus was important, because there was no agreement. And there was a lot of debate on the rules of procedure, whether even the decision as to whether to vote or not should be conducted in open or in secret. So that was an issue.

Michal Onderco:

Were you in contact with the Canadians as they were trying to collect the signatures for their proposal?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, I did -- they did bring it to my notice, and I expressed disfavor of that proposition, because I didn't think that conference could be pressurized into adopting their proposal through a round paper -- a round robin system of getting signatures. And I thought it was also challenging the President's...

Michal Onderco:

Authority?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I thought it was a challenge of the President's conduct of the conference.

Michal Onderco:

How did the discussions start to shape up in the Presidential discussions?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I decided that after the usual discussion of the generalities of the general issues involved to focus on three pieces of paper: one was based on the South African proposal of strengthening of the Review Conference, which was one document. The other document was the objectives and principles of the NPT, which was going to be the benchmarks by which countries would be -- whose performance would be assessed under the NPT at the Review Conference, and then I had in mind germinating the idea as to how to translate that into a decision, because a decision had to be taken ultimately according to Article X of the NPT. So a lot of our time was spent on the formulation of those two documents, and once I reached finality on that, then I devised myself the means of interrelating the two decisions with a final decision that would be operative in terms of the treaty provision. And that's how it happened at the end, and that was done at the very final part of the Presidential Consultation. And once it got the approval of the Presidential Consultation, then I presented it to the entire house.

Michal Onderco:

So if South Africans couldn't come up with this strengthen the process and with the Principles and Objectives, what was your plan for how to get NPT extended?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I had no plan except to think that -- if that was, in fact, the consensus, that was the rule of the majority, and that and the treaty only talks about a majority having to decide that they wanted an extension indefinitely or by periods. So the majority that I was able to establish through my personal consultations and through a review of the contributions to the general debate was very clear. That was going to be an indefinite extension. Now, how to achieve that was the question, because everybody said they wanted an "indefinite extension, but" -- and the but was important, because the but said they wanted reservations. They wanted clear-cut undertakings with regard to nuclear disarmament. How were we going to frame that? And that is where the South African papers were very extremely useful, and they were stretched out and formulated and even shaped by the contributions of the others in the Presidential Consultations.

Michal Onderco:

How was the cooperation of the South Africans in the Presidential Consultations of

these papers?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, there were three very important members of the South African delegation. One was Ambassador Minty who subsequently went on to play an important role in Vienna and other places. There was two other white South Africans, and I should get the names of the gentlemen involved, but you can check that very easily. But they were extremely helpful, and there were times, I think, when Ambassador Minty made decisive interventions on behalf of his delegation, which were quite important.

Michal Onderco:

What was the idea behind the strengthened reprocess? Did you want the review process to be involved in more substantive questions of the treaty performance?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes, because, you see, people felt that there was ceding control of the treaty to the nuclear weapons states and the nuclear weapons states could ride rough short over the non-nuclear weapon states. So if you were going to maintain some leverage, they had to be a more active Review Conference, which could help to shape the future of the treaty, because once we granted an indefinite extension, the feeling was that we were losing all leverage, political leverage, as far as the non-nuclear weapons states were concerned. And, in fact, it has proved to be true.

Michal Onderco:

And in the -- what do you -- what, as the Conference President, where do you see the particular appeal of these two documents, for example, for the NAM?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

For the NAM -- I think the NAM, if they maintain their influence and maintain their ability to press home their point of view, the review conference were pressure points. And our intention was not only to make the review conferences themselves a pressure points, but even the various preparatory committee meetings. But it was unfortunately that hope was denied them because of the way in which the government of nuclear weapons states and their supporters were rough shouldered during the prep conference. And made them not decision making.

I think that I'll have to stop this in another ten minutes or so, and maybe if you haven't finished, we will have to reschedule another meeting, because I've got a lot of things on my hands right now.

Michal Onderco:

Okay. So, I want to still talk a little bit about the principles and the objectives and about the the principles and objectives document holds a lot of promise, and can you -- can you summarize how in the Presidential Consultations, how was this document interpreted by both the non-aligned countries and also by, for example, the Western or the sort of Northern countries?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, they all agreed that it was important to have the documents as a means of benchmarking the performance of the parties to the NPT. And, also, to ensure that countries were not losing their rights as parties to the treaty by surrendering the whole question of the indefinite extension. So the indefinite extension had a trade-off, and this was seen by everybody as a trade-off, and of course, some people were more sincere than others in seeing it as a trade-off. And others not.

Michal Onderco:

The conference was in, one way, successful because it led to the extension of the treaty, but it also -- the review process as such failed in the conference. And very often, particularly the Main Committee I is mentioned as the problem in that respect.

And you mentioned that in your books as well. In your books you say that you received many complaints about the conduct of Ambassador Ayewah. I was just sort of curious: what sort of complaints, and from whom?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, I think it was generally felt that the Nigerian ambassador was not consultative in his conduct of the committee's business and that there was no attempt to try to reach some kind of consensus between the different points of view. And by the time I stepped in, because I was very busy with the Presidential Consultations, when I discovered that there was a problem, and I tried to go, but the divisions were far too severe. Now, I think there was also a reaction on the part of the non-aligned. The non-aligned found that there was no alternative but to go for a indefinite extension, because that was majority of the conference's sense of view. And I think it was, again, because the non-aligned failed to come up with an alternative view well in time, before the Bandung conference. And so this -- we had a reaction on the part of the nonaligned to try to withhold consensus in the review part of the conference. So you think that Ambassador Ayewah was sort of encouraged in persisting in his non-consultative attitude by the NAM.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes, by the NAM, by Indonesia, by several other countries, and that was very evident in the attitude of the NAM when it came to adopting a consensus document in the Review Conference, start of the conference. But as far as I was concerned, the most decisive part of the conference was the decision on the extension. And since that had been achieved with the other aspects on strengthening the review process, I was satisfied in my own conscience that we had achieved a reasonable result.

Michal Onderco:

Do you think the expansion would be possible without the agreement on the Middle East?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

No, it would not have been possible. That is why I said that repeatedly and repeatedly. We were almost blindsided by that issue because the Arabs had first given the task of finding a solution to the Middle East problem to the Saudi Ambassador who had come down and failed to achieve in his success, and then they came to me at the last moment. And it was very difficult to find a solution. Fortunately, the depository states also in a meeting, which we had separately, agreed to co-sponsor that separate resolution on the Middle East, and because I gave it the status of having a part of the package, the Arabs agreed. Now, you can say that we were very successful, because at the time of 1995, not every Arab state had joined the NPT. But after it, everyone did join. So that was a very successful end to try to ensure the applicability of the treaty to the Middle East. It was only Israel that continued to stubbornly keep out, which is why in 2010, there was a crisis, and they had to have a resolution. They had to have a provision for the resolution to be adopted in some way. And that's what led to the facilitator being appointed in the name of the Finnish format.

Michal Onderco:

Yes. At the time, did you see any chances for the success of the resolution in terms of bringing Israel on board?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I didn't expect Israel to join the treaty overnight, but I did expect there to be some kind of a negotiations with regard to having an applicability of the NPT to the entire Middle East, which would then make it possible for Israel to join the NPT.

Michal Onderco:

Of course, the United States were very strongly involved in those negotiations with the Arab countries. Did you notice any sort of promises that were made by the United States to Arabs on this issue?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

A lot of that negotiation was conducted bilaterally between the United States and the Arabs, and through the Egyptian ambassador at the time who subsequently went on to be the Secretary General of the League of Arab states, Nabil Elaraby. He was a very skillful diplomat. I was not privy to those discussions that were conducted between the Arabs and the Americans, or the other two depository states, but we had a draft, and I made certain suggestions with regard to the draft, and it was I who made the suggestion that they should be part of the package, which satisfied the Arabs enormously.

Michal Onderco:

Did you have already a very early-on idea that there should be a package? Because the idea that you took all these things together as a package is an interesting idea. You have that already or did it emerge from the conference?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

It emerged as I conducted my negotiations, and it was held very close to the chest by me. Because I wanted everybody to feel that each of the documents had an equal status, although legally, I knew that what was important was in terms of Article X to give weight to the decision on the indefinite extension. That was what mattered in terms of the treaty. But to give it equal weight, I thought it was necessary to have that package and to wield the three decisions together along with the resolution in the Middle East.

Michal Onderco:

So did you see that any of them had substantively less value, but they were important to satisfy, for example some of the parties?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

That is true, and I think that was, in fact, the objective that was achieved. Everybody felt that, as a package, it was acceptable.

Michal Onderco:

Yeah. So which one did you feel had substantively less value?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, all of them together. I didn't want to make any distinction between one or the other. I think all of them together -- you could say the operative part of it was the decision in terms of Article X to extend it indefinitely. And that decision taken without a vote, where there was in fact majority, because I had to stick to the language of the treaty that there was a majority in favor of an extension.

Michal Onderco:

And did you have -- immediately after the decision was made -- there was a protestation from Nigeria.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

There were -- there were several statements made after, and that's the normal practice in the U.N. where countries accept a consensus or accepts decision without a vote but then go on to make their own private reservations. And that was done by, I think, a few countries. Syria was certainly one I remember. But the record is there. You can check it. I'm not sure --was Syria there? I think there were about four or five countries who made statements.

Michal Onderco:

Did you, at the time, expect NPT to welcome new members in the future?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, yes, because there were several countries that had not signed up. I mean, by that time, India and Pakistan had still not done what they did in 1998. And Israel, although it was a nuclear weapons state, could very well have become a new member. And DPRK, which left the conference, could very well have returned at some future point, so I didn't rule out the possibility of countries joining the NPT.

Michal Onderco:

Did you feel, at the time, that the expectations for the future of the treaty were too high to be lived up to?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, in so far as Article VI was concerned, I felt that unless there was a demonstrative attempt on the part of the nuclear weapons states to disarm, there was going to be problems in the future, and I had hoped that the way in which the decisions have been framed would convince the nuclear weapons states and their supporters that there was a strong feeling on the part of the non-nuclear weapon states. That unless this was done, the treaty was in trouble.

Michal Onderco:

And what would you say would be the demonstrable efforts?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Demonstrable effort would be the abolition of the nuclear weapons and the progressive reduction of the arsenals of these countries. Well, first of all, you see, you have to understand that the treaty was taking place in an atmosphere when the CTBT negotiations were going on. And that CTBT was a key issue demanded by the NPT states for a very long time. And I think Mr. Clinton realized that and he was under advice to yield on that issue, so when the CTBT was achieved, even though it has not come into force yet now, and that is possible. Some people might say it was a hoax that was played on the non-nuclear weapon states, but that's a different argument. When CTBT was negotiating -- they renegotiated. That was one -- then we wanted to have the other issue too with regard to fissile control.

Michal Onderco:

Yes. Fissile Material Cut-off treaty.

Jayantha Dhanapala:

And that was also put there in the -- and the wording of the language in that decision with regard to the objectives of the NPT was exactly what we had expected would happen.

Michal Onderco:

There are some observers who say that, for example, if CTBT was adopted, and if FMCT would have been adopted and if there would be another round of bilateral reductions between U.S. and Russia, we wouldn't have been in the situation as we are today with the Humanitarian Initiative. Would you agree with that view?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, it wouldn't have -- not being as intense as it is now, because now what you have seen is an outright rejection of all efforts to try to even reach a halfway house with regard to nuclear disarmament. And in the face of that kind of obstinate refusal by the nuclear weapons state to even give some concessions to their non-nuclear weapon states, I think the situation is a very dire one, and that is what led to the Humanitarian Initiative, and that's what has led to the conference that is now going to be held in March and June of this year with regard to the abolition.

Michal Onderco:

Yes. But did you see the roots of this in 1995?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Yes, in fact, I thought, frankly, I was looking at even a more extreme measure on the part of the non-aligned. I thought there would be a mass exit of about 20 to 30 Non-Aligned countries who would be so fed up with the situation that they would exit the treaty. I mean, but not necessarily go nuclear. But just withdraw from the treaty, because there's an exit clause in the treaty, which makes it plausibly possible for countries to exit.

Michal Onderco:

And which countries did you think were the most likely candidates?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Some of the Arab countries, but we mentioned that there was Indonesia. There was some other -- Malaysia. Some ASEAN countries. These countries and some of the Latin Americans, Cuba and so one would also have joined it - Mexico.

Michal Onderco:

And when it comes to the expectations for the review process and for the Middle East, how did you see those sort of coming through?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

Well, I had hoped that there would be, you know, there had already been discussions between the Arab countries and Israel on the issues of with regard to a nuclear weapons free zone and weapons of mass destruction free zone. I would hope that there would be almost immediately fresh rounds of discussion, but that didn't take place until, you know, 2010. So that neglect, I think, was something that was insulting to the Arab countries who handled themselves, fulfilled their part of the bargain by joining the NPT.

Michal Onderco:

And where would you place the blame?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I'd place the blame entirely on the United States of America and their patronage of the Israelites, which goes on until today, unashamedly. In the face of national law violations.

Michal Onderco:

And would you -- I mean, I understand that you have to run somewhere, so before we end, do you think there is some aspect to the conference for a very long time overlooked and that you think should be made more visible?

Jayantha Dhanapala:

I think the key issues that should be born in mind is the fact that the non-aligned, true nuclear- weapon free zones have long demonstrated they have rejection of nuclear weapons. It did not take the NPT, which was concluded one year after Tlatelolco to force us to realize that it was not in our interest to have nuclear weapons, so our rejection of the nuclear weapons predates the NPT. And, therefore, the NPT is not important to ensure that we maintain that. And the bribe under Article 4 of nuclear energy is not, in fact, working, because there should be much more facilities given to countries who have Footnote A Projects and so on. But, be that as it may, the IAEA system was working very well except, when Saddam Hussein appeared on the scene, and now, DPRK. And Iran. So we have found solutions to some of those issues, but on the question of Article VI, that is still a normal way in which Article VI can be enforced, despite the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, so it's a very one-sided treaty.

Michal Onderco:

Thank you very much for your time.