Keith Best
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Give Peace a Chance

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very much aware of the tremendous honor that you have done me by inviting me to come to speak on this auspicious occasion. It is a privilege which I shall treasure for a very long time, but it is also a daunting one. Without exception, all my distinguished predecessors who have given this annual memorial lecture have shared in common a distinction, intellectual capacity and lucidity which is quite beyond my own attainment. I am here only through my friendship and the high regard in which I hold your President, who has made such a distinguished contribution to the political and academic life of this country and the memory of that most famous alumnus whom we honor today. In his book about LBJ, your President tells us that the great man insisted on all his speeches being no longer than 400 words. I fear that I shall not match that brevity today, but I can recommend its adoption as a self-denying ordinance for all politicians.

I confess that there is nothing in my antecedents which qualifies me to speak to you today other than a deep love and fascination for the United States and her people which I indulge as frequently as I am able by making several visits a year. The U.S.A. has all the responsibilities and opportunity that derive from being the greatest nation on earth. I feel that I am in the greatest state of that nation. At last Wednesday’s Texas Delegation luncheon held on the Hill in Washington I was told, “If you’re Texan you can’t explain it and. if you’re not you wouldn’t understand anyway!”

Well, I am eager to learn!

We in Europe tend to forget the size of the U.S. and that it is farther to travel from Seattle to New York than from New York to London. No part of my country is more than 70 miles from the sea. Our European community is now larger than the U.S. in population, but in Europe there are 12 different countries and many more different languages.

America has, to a great extent, enjoyed insulation from the violence of modern times. This is because domestic peace has been the norm for generations in the United States and, indeed, in North America. I need hardly remind you that the last invasion of American soil was carried out by the British in the War of 1812. The last war on American soil ended in 1865.

Since then war has been a faraway business, something done “over there.” The tragic, undeclared war in Vietnam only reinforced this feeling of alienation. One can see this in the length of time it took for America, as a nation, to afford recognition of its Vietnamese experience; witness, for example, the gap between the final troop withdrawals and the building of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. Since then, American policy-makers have preferred to work through proxies in troubled areas, again contributing to that sense of insulation.

Despite our geographical position as an island, Britain has not enjoyed the same insulation. Britain has in this century twice been embroiled in the horrors of war very close to home.
The battle of Britain was fought in the skies over our lands, and in the end it was only Hitler’s decision to invade the Soviet Union that saved Britain from a long and bloody land struggle.

Britain has had military commitments since the War as well: the Communist insurgency in Malaya, the Falklands War and, of course, the continuing struggle in Northern Ireland.

The United States is Britain’s closest ally, a relationship that we value greatly. We are mindful that twice this century the United States has broken out of isolationism to save Western democracy in Europe, but it is Europe that has been the battlefield and which has seen the greatest devastation. We are still left with the scars. There are still areas of bomb damage to be seen today in some of our cities. Every time I enter the House of Commons, in the Palace of Westminster, our Debating Chamber, I pass through the Churchill Arch which, on Churchill’s instructions, remains in its original bomb-damaged state as a permanent reminder of the days in the last war when the Chamber was completely destroyed by a bomb yet the dark cloud of fascism could not overshadow the Mother of Parliament.

For me, it is a telling and salutary remembrance that freedom and democracy have a high price. It is because Europe is so weary of war that we feel frustrated with either super-power which at any one time appears to deny the possibility of genuine arms control. The commitment of more than one million troops assigned by NATO to Europe is an obvious manifestation that European soil would once again provide the battleground. This is why we are so eager to see arms control.

While discussing the historical backgrounds of our respective nations, we must look at the long-term effects of colonialism. The British Empire put our small island in charge of vast territories in every region of the globe.

The rise of our empire was paralleled by the American effort to expand and then fill its own national borders, the British idea of the “white man’s burden” having its counterpart in the American “manifest destiny.” While both nations grew at an astounding rate, American expansion was directed inwards and left a legacy of introspection. As the Mexican writer Octavio Paz recently commented in Time magazine: “America is best at understanding itself and worst at understanding others.” In Britain’s case, the colonial heritage leads to a continuing fascination with how other nations run - even when we can no longer run them ourselves. The American political/tradition is one of independence rather than global interdependence.

It is ironic, therefore, that the United States, more than any other Western country, must consider the global repercussions of her actions.

In Britain, the political Left promotes the idea of one-sided or unilateral disarmament together with an anti-Americanism which causes many of us distress but which could spread. In the British context, unilateralism can mean several things: for Britain to abandon her own nuclear deterrent, for U.S. missiles and bases to be withdrawn from British soil both are now the policy of the official opposition or, in the extreme, for Britain to leave NATO altogether. If Britain alone were to take any of these measures, although the NATO alliance would be weakened seriously, one could still imagine a credible Western deterrent against the Soviet Union.

It would be, therefore, a most drastic step for an American to promote unilateral nuclear disarmament. If America renounced her nuclear weapons, it is clear that the West
would be left without a nuclear deterrent. Most of us are unwilling to accept the possible consequences of the loss of deterrent power.

Consequently, as a result of the pressures on American international politics, the mainstream of the American peace movement has been represented by the supporters of a nuclear freeze.

The British peace movement, however, relieved from American-type pressures, is more sensitive to pacifist sentiment abroad, particularly the strong anti-nuclear feeling in some Commonwealth countries.

Whilst the peace movements of both Britain and the United States may be genuine in their concern, neither represents the path to a lasting peace. The over-cautious approach of the Freeze amounts to no more than a holding pattern of the current arms race. The British approach, particularly unilateralism, is sensitive to worldwide eagerness for peace but is reckless with respect to the possible consequences of drastic measures such as unilateral disarmament. In neither country does the peace movement offer hope about the sweeping changes that must be made in the way nations make decisions in the international arena.

It is an axiom of modern life that we live in a dangerous world, and the longer we do so without catastrophe, the more there is acquiescence or at least a belief that little can be done to change the situation. That I wholly reject. We must continue to negotiate from strength but not belligerence.

Peace has been an elusive goal from the beginning of time but we should define our terms. Peace does not mean harmony, it does not preclude controversy or competition nor the striving of human beings against one another either collectively or individually. It does not mean an end to disputes. We should remember that parliamentary debate is a direct substitute for armed struggle. We fight our battles with words rather than swords. The essential element of peace is the resolution of conflict without recourse to force of arms through the arbitrament of international tribunals acting according to agreed procedures and norms which we call international law.

It is a simple enough concept, so why has it proved so elusive? There is no one here who would contemplate seriously a domestic situation in their country in which the laws were inchoate and uncertain, there was no police force and no courts to enforce such law as there was. Such a contemplation would be met with derision. Such a situation would lead to anarchy. Yet that is precisely the situation we see in the world today in which might is right and the strongest prevails whatever the justice of the cause. The Falklands/Malvinas are British sovereign territory. In a flagrant breach of international law they were invaded. The United Nations could pass a resolution condemning the action but it was powerless to act to redress the breach. It was only because the UK, assisted in a material way by the U.S.A., was able to mount a task force that the status quo was re-established after a tragic loss of Argentinean and British life. What would be the situation today if the Falklands/Malvinas had belonged to some other nation quite incapable of mounting such a task force. They would still be in Argentinean hands, just one more example that in the world today the heavy hand of the dictator can still grasp what it chooses, very often with little fear of consequence.

In a civilized society that must be unacceptable. Why is it that humanity which can reach out to the stars, bring pictures of what is happening in one part of the world instantaneously to another, eradicate terrible disease and be so creative in art and
architecture, cannot organize itself so as to put beyond doubt its own survival. The answer, of course, is that it can but that it chooses not to.

Peace can be achieved in one of two ways: either the hegemony of one dominant nation or group of nations over others or else by mutual coming together of nations which voluntarily remit their sovereignty and freedom in the interests of a greater global security. Throughout history we have seen many examples of the former and they have been very successful. Yet ultimately, because such societies are despotic, they sow the seeds of their own destruction. It is only in this century that nations have come together to try to achieve peace on the basis of mutual respect and understanding and to try the other way. The tragedy is that these attempts have been made only after the two greatest wars in history in which our young people were left dead and bleeding on the battlefields. I still entertain hope that in the first century in the human story in which we have seen the first world wars, we may yet see a significant move towards the first world peace. Ultimately that means strengthened global institutions such as the UN with an individually recruited standing force to enforce the decisions of international courts acting under universally accepted laws. Such institutions must be placed under the democratic control of, as the UN Charter’s preamble states, “We the peoples of the United Nations,” not the governments as is now the case.

But this is world government you will exclaim. Yes, it is, but before I lose your attention altogether as you write me off as a heady dreamer detached from reality, I ask you to consider two propositions. First, can there be any other logical way of achieving lasting peace when all other methods have failed or are inherently unstable? Secondly, politicians should be allowed these dreams. Without vision and an ultimate goal, we do but build castles in the sand and leave nothing for future generations to grasp, even though we may not reach our goal in our lifetime.

I must point out that the idea of world government is deeply rooted in many intellectual traditions. The Greek philosopher Zeno urged his fellow Greeks to look beyond the all-important demos or city and “to see in all men our fellow citizens.”

For the Romans, of course, a world state was part of their political outlook—and they set about creating a world order, which remains the single most influential enterprise in the history of Western civilization.

The idea of a universal city or universal state is fundamental in the development of both Christian and Islamic philosophy.

In the modern period, world government has been further advanced in theory by secular thinkers. In the 18th century, Emmanuel Kant outlined a plan for a community of all nations of earth. In this century dozens of models for world government have been advanced by various thinkers.

The impulse to a universal order is perennial in civilization. The idea of world government has been embraced by men of vastly different ages and cultures. On the other hand, the differences amongst the world government models point to the difficulty in finding a common denominator sufficient to unite the peoples of the world. One such is disarmament, the other is development.

If we work hard to achieve world consensus on these issues, then the case for world government will be too compelling to resist. The tenuous state of the global economy and the growing needs of the developing world must eventually force all governments to work together and cut defense spending. Far better to do it because it is
morally correct and necessary rather than be forced to do it through economic circumstance.

Complete disarmament may be a faraway goal, but the possible economic and social fruits of global disarmament are described by A. Fonseca Pimentel, the former distinguished head of the Brazilian civil service, in his book, *Democratic World Government and the United Nations* by reference to three examples: “The Federal Republic of Germany and Japan, which were forbidden to have armed forces as an imposition of the peace treaty, experienced a strong economic expansion called the “German miracle” and the “Japanese miracle.” Costa Rica, having abolished its armed forces by virtue of its Constitution of 1949, is the most developed country in Central America and one of the most progressive and prosperous in Latin America.” I might add that the U.S., with the strongest military forces in the world, however necessary, is now the world’s largest debtor nation.

The road to disarmament is also the road to economic development. It is the thrust of my argument that this is also the road to a world democracy. These goals of which I speak will not, of course, come about overnight. Rather, we must view them in terms of a process. The process is the evolving international cooperation, already enshrined in institutions such as the United Nations, the European Community and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD. We must strengthen these and other institutions. It is central to our hopes that we build deep trust among nations. This can only be done by more cooperative ventures and by peaceful arbitration of disputes through an international authority. As the links between nations grow stronger and as their differences are worked out in negotiations, both armies and borders will gradually become obsolete, if - and only if - nations can be expected to follow such a logical evolution. From our perspective in 1986, we see a definite limit to the growth of international cooperation and this limit is based on the idea of national sovereignty.

Sovereignty, however, is already an anachronism. The claim of absolute independence is out of step with a world in which interdependence is the prevailing fact. The obsolete idea of sovereignty is now being modified in theory and practice. France, Italy and West Germany, all with great traditions in legal and political theory, have included provisions in their constitutions allowing the limitation of national sovereignty in order to further peace and security in the world. These nations recognize the fact that in these times no nation is an island, and no nation can afford to behave like one. The future must be guided by constitutional changes at the national level along the lines of these three countries, and a parallel increase in cooperation at the international level. Chernobyl and the possible changes in the planet’s climate due to the destruction of the tropical rainforests demonstrate that environmental factors know no national boundaries and can be dealt with only through international law and cooperation. The defeat of terrorism can be achieved only through international agreement. The establishment of a system of international institutions, both economic and political, can be the only way forward. As far back as 1929 the *Encyclopedia Britannica* put it thus:

The theory that all states are equal and possess all the attributes of sovereignty, was never true. It is still more at variance with the facts in these days, when a few great states predominate. With the creation of the League of Nations, the theory of sovereignty has become still more academic and impractical. The sovereign state is now obsolete. Even the
United States is not entirely sovereign. There is no state more regionally bound by treaties. The only valid sovereignty is that of the Rule of Law.

As I have tried to point out, a great number of rational, legal, political and economic arguments can be used in making the case for increased international cooperation and, eventually, world government. But we have also a need for faith - faith that the historical process, the succession of human triumphs and follies, will point us in the right direction.

In June 1945 in the United States a remarkable book was published by Emery Reves which he called The Anatomy of Peace. The publishers were confident that the book was of first-class importance, but they had not foreseen the stir it was to cause, not just in America, but throughout the world.

The book became a best-seller. It urged that peace will exist only when absolute national sovereignty which causes anarchy in international relations gives way to universal legal order, when the relationship between nations is regulated not by treaties but by law. In his brilliant analysis of the problems confronting the world, he looked at the same recent history through the eyes of the different nations. It is a fascinating exercise, and one soon discovers that such totally different perceptions make it hard to believe that the events being written about are the same ones. He wrote: “It is surely obvious that agreement, or common understanding, between nations, basing their relations on such a primitive method of judgment, is an absolute impossibility. A picture of the world pieced together like a mosaic from its various national components is a picture that never and under no circumstances exists.

For many centuries such an approach was unchallenged and unchallengeable. But the scientific and technological development achieved by an industrial revolution in one century have brought about in our political outlook and in our approach to political phenomena a change that is as inevitable and imperative as the Renaissance brought about in our philosophical outlook. In one century, the population of this earth has more than trebled. Since the very beginning of recorded history, for ten thousand years communication, was based on animal power. During the American and French Revolutions transport was scarcely faster than it had been under the Pharaohs, the time of Buddha or of the Incas. And then, after a static eon of 10,000 years, transport changed within a single short century from animal power to the steam and electric railway, the internal combustion engine and the jet propulsion plane, which means that if I fly by Concord from London to New York I arrive before I took off in time. Improved communications make the world a global village, and the first item of news on the television screens may well be satellite-beamed pictures of what is actually happening at the same time on the other side of the planet. Yet still there are those who do not see the imperative of moving towards closer international cooperation.

In Europe we have the model of regional unity that might serve as an example for greater international cooperation. During the 1939-45 war Roosevelt and Churchill discussed whether post-war order would best be fostered by setting up a world organization or by regional unity. Under Roosevelt’s insistence they plumped for a world system. It still needs to be complemented by encouragement of regional groupings for economic development, regional settlement of disputes and ultimately local forms of federation.
In Europe, the first drive to political union in the 1950s failed despite the passionate commitment to overcome nationalism in the early post-war period. Residual fears, and the very nationalism which needed to be overcome, blocked the way. Instead, Jean Monnet channeled the energies of reconciliation into the much more practical and immediate tasks which pressed on political leaders: the joint reconstruction and development of the coal and steel industries and later the creation of an economic community. Yet the European Community was created with an ulterior political goal and the knowledge that the pooling of economic policy implied a new step forward in human relationships, social and political.

The community has come so far precisely because its founders, and those who have built it, brick by brick, were working for the long-term goal of a political united Europe, a permanent union of peoples living together in peace and common institutions. The Community is neither a super-state, nor even a federation. But it is much more than a collective of separate nation states. It is a new kind of community, subtly changing the relationships and loyalties of the people concerned. As Monnet put it, “We are not coalescing states, we are uniting men.” It can be no surprise, therefore, that the greatest success of the European Community has not been so much in its economic policy but the way in which, increasingly, its foreign ministers speak with one voice on a variety of different issues, such as we have seen on terrorism. Having pooled a considerable amount of sovereignty, the European Community will go further forward into a new political dimension, however, only if the veto and insistence on national interests are limited to a minimum. The same is true, of course, of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

We can perhaps find a hopeful link between our present situation and a future international order in the existence of the United Nations, which offers a real, though yet unfulfilled, promise of a peaceful future.

We have largely the institutions that we need but lack the political will to make them work. Would that we could recapture the spirit of 1945, which gave birth to a renewed belief in internationalism. The charter of the United Nations itself set up the Security Council as a world peace-keeping authority empowered to take decisions by simple majority vote, yet the veto stultifies it even though it ought not to be exercise~ in conflicts in which the member of the Security Council has a direct interest. Moreover, each member of the United Nations “undertakes to comply with the decision of the International Court of Justice in any case to which it is a party.” The members, in theory, accept the supremacy of international law. The Military Staff Committee, which was meant to be at the heart of peace-keeping, has become a farce and meets for one minute a month in a ceremonial parody of the charter’s aims.

We should remember the words of Raymond Aron in his book Peace and War Between the Nations: “Such steps (those related to complete and’ universal disarmament) will require inroads into national sovereignty and real freedom in the flow of both people and information across now closed (or tightly controlled) frontiers. These changes may seem impossible, and maybe they really are. Even so, we must face them and try to solve them because the anarchistic multipolar nuclear world we are now rushing straight into is even more impossible.”

We need to practice more the biblical passage from Isaiah which was Lyndon B. Johnson’s favorite: “Come now, let us reason together.”
If the greatest cause of conflict in the world is misunderstanding or misapprehension of the potential adversary’s position, and I firmly believe this to be the case, then we must never lose any opportunity to break down those barriers of misunderstanding. In achieving this we must learn to view the world from the other person’s perspective. The ability or reluctance to do this will color significantly the judgment of the individual nation. There will be those who regard the Soviet Union as an evil empire with which no business can be done and that the only ultimate security can be achieved through its elimination rather than any other course. There will be those foolish and found individuals who will regard any seemingly rational proposals and suggestions from the Soviet Union as being a manifestation of friendship. Such people are naive and fail to peer through the Iron Curtain to see the denial of human rights and other abuses that occur in a totalitarian state.

There will also be, however, a further group, represented in increasing numbers in Europe, which does not minimize the shortcomings and limitations of the Soviet system but which recognizes that we must live on this planet together, accommodating if not accepting alien philosophies in other parts of the world and prepared to acknowledge the desire and difficulty in certain elements of the Soviet leadership to achieve a reduction in the level of armaments. The greatest danger to the Western world is that the U.S. should appear unreasonable to its allies. If the U.S. administration appears always to ridicule any proposal whatever that comes from the Soviet Union and to press ahead with nuclear weapons tests and the continual enhancement of weapon systems together with the introduction of weapons in space, then such an attitude will not be regarded as being reasonable to Europeans.

It lends enhancement to the persuasion of the protestations of the Soviet Union. Unless we are careful, such a difference in perception could undermine the NATO alliance, and that we must never allow to happen. In terms of common heritage there is little to divide the people of Western Europe from those of Eastern Europe other than an artificial Iron Curtain which has been drawn only during the last 40 years.

In Mikhail Gorbachev we are dealing for the first time in Soviet history with a operator who understands how to communicate with the Western European citizen and to use Western media. There is no doubt in my mind that in Western Europe today the propaganda battle as to who can prove to be the more reasonable in questions of arms limitation and the reduction in nuclear weapons is being won by Mr. Gorbachev rather that President Reagan. That is terrible, but until that truth is recognized in the United State of America we shall not together be able to deal with its implications.

It is as unrealistic for the Soviet Union to think that through the Doctrine of Marxism/Leninism it can ever convert free citizens in the Western world to the cause of autocratic communism as it is for us to believe that the whole of the Eastern bloc consists of repressed citizens craving to embrace the Western way of life. There is an affection for the status quo in any society, wherever it is. The Soviet people are very patriotic and will naturally defend their system if it is attacked from outside. If you have traveled through East Germany, as I have, you will have seen all the television aerials directed towards the West so as to pick up Western TV. Of course, it is true that there are many courageous citizens who seek to escape from the East to the West, but it would be quite wrong to assume that this attitude is representative of the majority of citizens, most of whom are
able to look at the Western world with a detached air of interest, and sometimes amusement.

I mention this because we must learn to accept that alien systems will exist in this world for a very long time and we must learn to live together. It was Martin Luther King who said, “We have flown in the air like birds, we have swarmed in the sea like fishes, but we have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers and sisters.” The best we can hope to do is to build bridges of understanding with other nations of the world through student exchanges and increased contact, as was described so eloquently by House Majority Leader Jim Wright when delivering this lecture in 1984.

If we are to reduce the obscene denial of God and man by which we continue to produce weapons for ending civilization when every second a child is dying somewhere for want of care and sustenance, one of the first steps must be effective arms control. This can be achieved only by creating a climate of closer mutual understanding and trust. Confidence in adherence to arms control measures by a potential adversary is critical to any lasting arms control agreement. This is where monitoring and verification have such an important role to play.

I hope I am not being over-optimistic in detecting a new air of determination between the super-powers to ensure that negotiations take place. The Soviets have made it quite clear that the disgraceful detention of Mr. Nick Daniloff has not been allowed to stand in the way of the Summit even if this meant having to climb down from their position. After more than two years of negotiation and stopping the clock itself, the Conference in Stockholm reached important agreement about prior notification of troop movements, the attendance of observers at major maneuvers and, perhaps most importantly, the ability of one power to insist on inspection following an allegation of evasion of the agreement. Now we have the announcement of the important meeting between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev in Iceland.

This has been achieved only after long and frustrating negotiation. For many observers of nuclear arms control there has been a dialogue of the deaf between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. It is true to state that at anyone time either Washington or Moscow seem to be interested in genuine negotiation but the problem has been that those times have seldom coincided. In the 1960s, U.S. administrations were very keen on verification and on-site inspection, but it was the Soviets that objected to such an intrusion. Now the roles are reversed. It is the Soviets who are endorsing proposals for on-site inspection and monitoring and the United States which appears determined to continue testing nuclear weapons and developing a new generation in the Star Wars program.

This sense of frustration at lack of progress has been felt outside Europe. At the end of the 1970s a small group of parliamentarians came together to try to get something done. That body was known as Parliamentarians for World Order, with some 600 legislators in 35 different countries and a Secretariat in New York. I preside over its International Council. In the summer and autumn of 1983 we put a proposal to a selective group of Presidents and Prime Ministers from different continents to create an initiative which could develop into an intermediary between the super-powers and thus facilitate the strengthening of third party political pressure to break the deadlock which for a number of years had blocked negotiations on new arms control and disarmament matters. ‘The Presidents and Prime Ministers of Argentina, Mexico, Tanzania, Greece, India, and
Sweden agreed to form such a group. The effort was not a formal state action but was undertaken by the leaders personally and has become known as the Group of Six.

We called this effort the Five Continents Peace Initiative. Originally, it was restricted to general policy declarations, but in recent months the Group of Six has entered directly into dialogue with President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev and recently issued a detailed proposal to undertake the verification of the nuclear testing moratorium. This is the first time that a group of non-nuclear states has declared its willingness to put money, manpower and machinery into facilitating an agreement between the super-powers by offering to provide in an independent way the necessary verification arrangements.

In January 1985 the six leaders came together for the first time at the Delhi Summit. It was decided that in bilateral visits to the capitals of all five nuclear weapons states during the first six months of 1985, the leaders would explain their proposals. Parliamentarians Global Action, as our body had come to be called, was instructed to publish a booklet explaining the policy objectives of the initiative, and when it was published in the autumn under the title “Ending the Deadlock,” the leaders endorsed it with an introduction. The Six urged in the Delhi Declaration that “progress in disarmament can only be achieved with an informed public applying strong pressure on governments” because “only then will governments summon the necessary political will to overcome many obstacles which lie in the path of peace.”

In the summer of 1985, Parliamentarians Global Action commissioned a study by a group of American scientists on the feasibility of third party verification of a testing moratorium.

The proposed monitoring system could be installed within six months using readily available instrumentation and maintained by small crews. Data gathered at the sites by a third party would be compiled and made available to both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The third party would never need to pass judgment on anyone but could simply provide objective data. A testing moratorium would help to establish a positive atmosphere for negotiation for a comprehensive test ban and provide a fund of practical experience invaluable to the problem of verifying a permanent ban.

In the autumn of 1985, the Six wrote a letter to both President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev stating “we are ready to offer our good offices in order to facilitate the establishment of effective verification arrangements. Third party verification could provide a high degree of certainty that testing programs have ceased. We propose to establish verification mechanism on our territories to achieve this objective.” At the Mexico Summit some ten months later, the Six issued a detailed plan that involved placing both instruments and personnel inside the territories of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R.

In response, Mr. Gorbachev extended the Soviet Moratorium on testing beyond the 31 March. He later extended it again to the end of this year, referring on that occasion to the appeal in the Mexico Declaration by the Six and accepting the group’s proposals of third party verification. These developments show clearly that non-nuclear states can act as a third party to get a super-power to make key concessions that probably would not be made if requested by an adversary. It is also a major breakthrough that the Soviet Union should accept the presence on its soil of monitoring stations at existing test sites provided by a third party. Judging by discussions which a delegation from Parliamentarians Global
Action had with various officials in the US administration, the reply from President Reagan could also be positive.

These developments are the most significant we have yet seen in achieving a genuine check on testing nuclear weapons combined with the mutual confidence of verification.

The U.S. Congress has shown itself ready to respond, first by the freeze proposals and now with the amendment that would involve a cut-off in funding for the U.S. testing program. The text of the amendment offered by the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee describes a one year limitation.

The amendment also refers to reciprocal monitoring arrangements. All these matters are related, and it was decided that the vote in the House would take place the day after the Six published their verification plan at the Mexico Summit. The outcome was an overwhelming victory. The amendment was passed by 234, against, 155. The issue has now been taken to the Joint Conference of the House and the Senate and will form one of the key questions in the November U.S. Elections. On 7 August the U.S. Senate passed a resolution by 64 to 35 calling on President Reagan to resume negotiations towards concluding a verifiable comprehensive test ban treaty.

Altogether, 45 governments have in one way or another indicated their support for the Five Continents Peace Initiative. Parliamentary debates have shown the broad basis of support for the Six. More than 120 members of the US Congress have written to President Reagan to urge his cooperation with the Six and 160 members of the Bundestag sent a similar message to Chancellor Kohl of West Germany. It is, in this respect, worth noting that a few days before the Mexico Summit, Chancellor Kohl sent a long message to the Six in which he states, “My Government is committed, just as the Six, to a comprehensive nuclear test ban at the earliest juncture . . . . I have noted with satisfaction that the Six have declared the readiness of their countries to make their territory available for the purpose of verification.” These words of encouragement from the head of an important NATO country are, together with the support shown in many parliaments of other allied countries, an indication of the role the six can play in providing a focus for the support for a test ban. The role of the “third party” has many positive possibilities in a world where there is a need to support proposals by one super-power without directly offending the other.

A great number of nongovernmental organizations, public movements and grass-roots groups have actively supported the initiatives. Pope John Paul II, The World Council of Churches and other religious leaders have issued statements of support. A statement signed by 83 Nobel Laureates and seven other well-known scientists in support of the Five Continents Peace Initiative has been presented to the Six. In 1985 the Beyond War Award was given to the leaders in a global television program that was beamed simultaneously to 140 locations throughout the world, spanning thirteen time zones.

As a major step towards a reduction of reliance on nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test ban could be introduced by using the amendment procedures in the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty which provide any signatory state with the right to put forward an amendment, and if a third of the signatory states, of which there are 112, deem the amendment to be worthy of consideration, the three depository states - the U.S., U.S.S.R. and the U.K. - would have to call together a formal conference. Furthermore,
the Partial Test Ban Treaty was worded in such a way that by a simple omission of a few lines it could become a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

It was decided to consult the people who had been responsible for negotiating the Treaty in the Kennedy administration. Professor Abram Chayes, the Legal Advisor to President Kennedy, wrote a detailed memorandum for parliamentarians Global Action in which he strongly recommended that his approach should be attempted. In April 1985 eleven former officials in the Kennedy administration who were responsible for negotiating the Treaty wrote to parliamentarians Global Action formally endorsing this new method of achieving a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Among those who signed this letter were Averell Harriman, Herbert Scoville, George Ball, Arthur Schlesinger, John Kenneth Galbraith and Jerome Wiesner. Parliamentarians Global Action sent the proposal in the summer of 1985 to a selected group of non-nuclear states, and it was decided to draft a resolution for the UN General Assembly in which the idea would be formally launched. The resolution was carried by 121 votes against 3, but 24 countries abstained. Only the U.S., the U.K. and France voted against it.

After the proposal had thus been introduced to the international community, it gained increasing support from a number of different quarters. In the U.S. Senate the proposal was explained and highly recommended in a letter which Senators Edward Kennedy and Charles Mathias wrote to their colleagues. And in his important policy speech of 15 January 1986 Mr. Gorbachev declared that the Soviet Union “is agreeable to this measure too.”

The future for arms control and a comprehensive test ban looks positive. It was as long ago as 1982 that Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the UK, said, “We want a comprehensive test ban.” Negotiations under the committee on disarmament at the UN in Geneva alas, are going far too slowly, but it remains this Government’s objective.” That commitment has been reiterated by British Ministers as recently as last month.

The idea is not a new one, and perhaps the greatest tragedy is that we are now trying to recreate the climate of cooperation and care for control of armaments that existed Twenty years ago. Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty amounts to one brief but meaningful paragraph: “Each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on complete and general disarmament under strict and effective international control.” In March 1968 US Ambassador Goldberg explained to the United Nations General Assembly that Article 6 was added to the Treaty in order to give further effect to the principle that the Treaty should embody an acceptable balance of obligations and that it binds the parties to seek to end the nuclear arms race at an early date and to seek effective nuclear disarmament. One week later Ambassador Kuznetsov of the Soviet Union acknowledged the importance of Article 6 by stating “never before in all of history have states made such a commitment. The Soviet Union intends to observe it scrupulously.” The importance of the measure was summed up by the U.K. Ambassador in Committee. In short, he said, we are all given five years notice, the two major powers particularly, to produce real progress towards a better and a saner world. All this was in 1968.

On 12 June that year, the critical day of the vote in the General Assembly, a man of vision rose to his feet. He was a man who cared greatly for humanity and for achieving Harmony in a troubled world. A man who had a deeply felt emotional commitment to the
needs of people. We honor him here today. Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th President of the United States and Distinguished Alumnus of Southwest Texas State University, looking across at the assembled nations of the world in the only international forum we have, said “I have asked for the privilege of addressing you this afternoon to acknowledge this momentous event in the history of nations and to pledge, on behalf of the US, our determination to make this but a first step towards ending the peril of nuclear war. . It is the most important international agreement in the field of disarmament since the nuclear age began. It goes far to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. It commits the nuclear powers to redouble their efforts to end the nuclear arms race and to achieve nuclear disarmament. We shall, as a major nuclear weapons power, promptly and vigorously pursue negotiations on effective measures to halt the nuclear arms race and reduce existing nuclear arsenals. It is right that we should be so obligated.”

We owe a duty to the memory of LBJ and to humanity as a whole to ensure that those sentiments are pursued until we can achieve a lasting peace and greater global security. I rather think that he would have like that to be his memorial.

If you go to the LBJ Library you will hear his voice condemning the dangers of “isolationism and narrow nationalism.” He wanted so badly to feed the hungry and clothe the poor in the world. He realized that peace can only be an illusion so long as millions of children die unnecessarily through lack of nutrition or covering. Yet you cannot overcome these problems without peace. That is the eternal challenge for humanity. Upon our response depends our claim to be a civilized people. We must embrace that challenge now before it is too late.

You are all young people at the beginning of life’s adventure. You have the ability to use your talents for great good and become the political leaders of the greatest and most powerful nation on earth as did LBJ. If you have a vision of a better world in which human beings live in peace then never let it go for as long as you live. Keep the enthusiasm for such a cause. Keep the fire in your belly. There can be no more noble ideal than to serve humanity in creating a more peaceful world. The people are crying out for peace and we must start a crusade in which the flame of hope and commitment must be kept burning as a bright beacon to illuminate the path for future generations. The spirit of LBJ and the 1960s tells us across the ages to give peace a chance.

Lecture transcribed by Benjamin Hicklin, graduate research assistant, 2007-08