

“How will the next generation champion disarmament?”

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“The Way Forward to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”

Thank you very much to Dr Benedict for her excellent speech.

And thank you to the organizers of the conference – Adele Buckley, David Harries, Bev DeLong, and the whole Canadian Pugwash group – for inviting me to address this session. It is my real pleasure to be here, particularly noting that we are in the high school where this talk should resonate: my thanks to the Principal Shawn Brunt for facilitating this.

It is my first time to visit this town, so I’m extremely grateful to have been invited; by way of preamble, I wanted to just touch on my personal experience of how I came to be standing here as a representative of the “next generation.”

I’ve been involved with Pugwash for some 8 years now; firstly, through the British Pugwash group – you might have guessed by now I’m not a Canadian – whose offices were a short walk from my University in London. Those offices also hold a great deal of history for those involved in Pugwash; they served Prof Josef Rotblat, organizer of the very first meeting and the first Pugwash Secretary General, for many years.

I recently Skyped with a number of the high-school students here in town and they wanted to know how and why I became involved. In one sense, it

was quite happenstance; while helping organize a meeting in London at my University, the International Pugwash people decided they would also do a meeting there.

And it was really through this first connection that I got to where I am, even got here to Canada to study my PhD with a supervisor I was introduced to at that Pugwash meeting. It was primarily because of the energy, enthusiasm, and positive encouragement of one person in particular, Sandy Butcher, now the Executive Director of Pugwash.

To me, Sandy, and the many others throughout the Pugwash network, represent the belief and conviction that young people must continue to become involved in this work. I can't use the word unique, but it is certainly unlike any other network I have known. The Pugwash Conferences really has a strong track record of engaging younger scientists and students in its work and opening up amazing opportunities.

This is a long-standing tradition within Pugwash – since Lord Russell insisted that the youngest of the signatories to the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, Joseph Rotblat, chair its launch at a press conference 60 years ago this very day. As you will know, that Manifesto and Josef Rotblat's involvement led to the meeting here in Pugwash in 1957. And indeed Cyrus Eaton invited his great-nephew Giovanni Brenciaglia, who is with us this evening, and was then a student, to the 1959 Pugwash conference.

Students formally began to participate throughout the 1970s as both helpers, aides, and substantively in terms of their participation at meetings. By 1979 a solely international student Pugwash meeting was organized in the US and there was a similar student conference that took place that year in Canada.

Students and young people were increasingly integrated into the Pugwash meetings and their presence was not just noted but very much welcomed: speaking in 1999, Joseph Rotblat said,

“The students in Pugwash have opportunities to influence the new recruits to science, a most important task since our future depends on the responsible attitude of the young generation... It is vital to make students think on ethical issues and social responsibilities, so that they will not be lured by siren calls of rapid advancement and unlimited opportunities.”

Since 1997, the International Student and Young Pugwash network (or ISYP) has organized an international conference of their own immediately prior to the so-called “senior” Pugwash conferences, which has enabled unparalleled interactions – certainly for us students, the opportunity to mix with the great minds, experienced experts from a variety of fields, and very senior officials.

(I remember some of the faces of the new students’ who attended our last conference in Istanbul in 2013, when on the first day the President of Turkey, and the Foreign Ministers of both Iran and Turkey all spoke at the Pugwash conference.)

Throughout the conferences I have attended, the senior people attending are always exceptionally generous and graceful in giving time to speak to the younger attendees.

But similarly, the interactions are a two-way street – I firmly believe, as do many in this room and elsewhere, that your generation, that is, with all due politeness for the term, the “seniors” to us students, also benefit from having keen and eager young people in the room for the kinds of discussions Pugwash does. Fresh thinking, which is essential for the kinds of topics we deal with, can often come from people who simply see things in a different way, from different perspectives.

The reason I mention these examples is that I’ve been asked to address: “How will the next generation champion disarmament?”

The current generation, that is the many represented in this room who have the wisdom and experience of many years’ work on these issues, thinks of the future not just in terms of a nuclear weapons free world but also about how they must achieve that – it is my belief that a fundamental part of this is the responsibility to train, encourage, and invest in the younger generation to continue their work.

If we take a look at the spectrum of the disarmament field, we find a whole host of organizations and individuals performing a variety of different activities. Broadly, we refer to this sphere as civil society – not government, not business, but rather citizens collectively pursuing the goal of nuclear and WMD disarmament.

The interesting feature about Pugwash (and other organizations doing similar work) is its ability to bridge this divide between civil society and government. Often meetings might include serving officials; but equally, Pugwash identifies “people of influence”, individuals who have access to the corridors of power or a respected voice to speak out.

In addition to the core work on nuclear weapons and other WMD, Pugwash works in areas where these weapons are present and destabilize the security environment. So in the Middle East, in South Asia and in North East Asia, Pugwash carries out dialogue to inject ideas and fresh thinking in to the policy communities there.

The opportunities that my colleagues and I have been given to meet with and speak to officials, experts, retired government officials, scientists, academics, and activists has been frankly unbelievable.

(My family and colleagues at University in Ottawa are always incredibly impressed at the kinds of people I seem to meet – but even when I explain that despite the titles and seeming seriousness of their positions, they are very down-to-earth people. Of course, that doesn’t stop people from still saying, “But that’s so cool”)

Now this is the Pugwash model, if you like, of dialogue and it often happens in closed rooms – encouraging lines of communication on issues such as nuclear disarmament, the Iranian nuclear file, or on the disputed territory of Kashmir between India and Pakistan. The idea here is often to get ideas to government officials, to try to convince them of alternative policy paths.

But there are of course other ways in which people champion disarmament.

Sitting in here we have a few members of the young generation who will be participating at our ISYP meeting beginning on Sunday. One of them, Emma Hansen, is a student at the University of Toronto, who last year wrote an excellent piece for the *Bulletin* looking at the most traditional of Pugwash topics, the link between technology and morality.

Indeed, a number of my other ISYP colleagues have similarly written pieces for the *Bulletin* – where they have an excellent “Voices of Tomorrow” feature – and also elsewhere, raising awareness where possible.

This is of course something that many of you do and have done for many years.

So I come now to the main argument that I want to make, that in part responds to the *how* question: this younger generation has grown up in a smaller world – we talk about how globalization has shrunk the world through travel times and communications, and so on – and we are connected via the internet and cellular data that enables us to receive more information, and faster, about what is happening in other regions of the world, what people are writing and thinking.

On the other hand, it also allows us to put out information and communications that reach people quickly on the other side of the world, almost instantly – in fact, instantly in some cases, as just yesterday I was instant messaging with my colleague in Egypt about our ISYP meeting. I think it’s quite hard for a lot of us to appreciate the organization behind the

first conference here in 1957, done almost entirely by postal mail and telegrams across the oceans.

Of course, many of you here also benefit from and use social media, emails, etc. My point is that in starting out on our careers now, we are already forming regional and global networks with like-minded individuals; we are listening and talking to younger and older people alike from around the world.

The dialogue across divides that was so pioneering in the early days of Pugwash appears a lot more tangible to us now. And it hasn't lost any of its vital importance: in our ISYP conferences, we regularly have participants from India and Pakistan, from Israel, Iran and Egypt, in rooms together. This is something that is powerful and beneficial not just for those individuals but all of us in the room. Understanding perceptions that come from different countries, and taking the opportunity to learn what life is like in different countries, is an incredible tool for those involved.

And so, answering the question “how will the next generation champion disarmament”, I would say that it would be in many of the same ways you do now. That is perhaps a bit boring, I'm sorry.

But as a student of how processes, such as Pugwash, transfer the knowledge and ideas out from meetings and get them to the policy communities, the mechanisms are relatively well known and understood. Many in the room do it – you speak directly to government officials, you write op-eds or articles to influence the public; or as I'm doing now, you speak to public audiences.

But the central point I wanted to make is that ISYP, and indeed the many other venues within civil society where this action takes place, will benefit from the interconnectedness that the communications revolution of the past 20 years has brought. Networks for action are critical to the success of the next generation in continuing the global push for disarmament.

I'd like to think that there are many other venues that facilitate such interactions – I'm not sure – so I can only really speak for ISYP when I say that this globalizing dynamic potentially affects the ways in which we, the younger generation, think of and approach disarmament. I think that many young people I've come to know start thinking of nuclear disarmament through the lens of both global and regional insecurity.

The interactions facilitated in ISYP and Pugwash give the younger generation not just a sense of the possibilities for disarmament, that is the technical requirements, but also, vitaly, a sense of the kinds of interactions necessary to address the topics; and the experience of having done so early on in their careers. In a sense, diplomacy now is not just for the diplomats.

So encouraging these interactions and investing in them is really important. Recently I have had the pleasure of writing a book chapter with Sandy Butcher on Pugwash's historical achievements, and so I can refer you to a quote from Herb York, a long-standing Pugwashite whom many of you will have met.

He said,

“anybody can identify former officials and invite them to come, but the trick that Pugwash succeeded at was inviting future officials.

That’s the trick. That’s the hard part.”

Currently, the ISYP network has many brilliant young scholars, scientists, and members of the policy communities from many countries. We hope that some of these will go on to have real positions of influence – just think of your southern neighbours, where the current Science Adviser to President Obama is John Holdren, first involved in Pugwash early on in his career and went on to chair Pugwash’s Executive Committee and receive the organization’s Nobel Prize. Sandy recently told me the story of how Jo Rotblat entrusted John Holdren with rapporteuring one meeting for the first time after someone pulled out at the last minute, and the rest is history.

Nowadays, we can all reach people quicker than ever; we can access information quicker than ever. Arguably, we can organize meetings quicker than ever – although I’m not sure that email always helps!

But to end here, I return again to the Joseph Rotblat quote I mentioned earlier: “our future depends on the responsible attitude of the young generation.” This attitude must be cultivated and encouraged in these forums, and we also need to continue to learn from you, the current generation, in order that we successfully maintain a network of knowledge and experience to influence disarmament policy in the future.

Thank you very much.