



## ***20th Anniversary Conference Opening Remarks***

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December 3, 2009

Dear Ladies, Gentlemen, Distinguished Dignitaries, President Ramaswamy, and Friends, it is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you to our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference on the Power and Promise of Nonproliferation Education and Training. **As the old saying goes, “the proof is in the pudding,”** and for us the proof of concept about the importance of nonproliferation education is your presence here today.

20 years ago this past August I was given an unusual opportunity by Monterey Institute President Robert Gard. Although he hired me in August 1989 to be a Professor of International Policy Studies and to head a small Center for Contemporary Russian Studies, he was receptive to my idea to found what at the time was a novel idea—a Center for Nonproliferation Studies. His approach was one of minimal bureaucracy, and, if I remember correctly, his main principle was—“If you can raise the money, do what you think makes the most sense.” It was a welcome and very rare philosophy, but it also was an indispensable condition for my ability to quickly transform our start-up enterprise into the world’s largest research and training center devoted exclusively to nonproliferation studies. It is a great pleasure for me to have General Gard in the audience and also to see a number of my former students and staff members from the late 1980s and early 1990s here with us today.

An important early landmark in the development of CNS was linked to a conference Sandy Spector organized at the Carnegie Endowment in the fall of 1990. At the time, Sandy was already one of the leading—if not the main figure-- in the nonproliferation field, but the annual nonproliferation conference was then a relatively small affair with perhaps 75-100



attendees. My task at the conference in 1990 was to speak about Soviet nonproliferation behavior, an issue about which I had written rather widely. I was particularly nervous about my presentation, however, because the person who was to comment on my talk was none other than the Soviet Ambassador to the IAEA, Roland Timerbaev—a towering figure in Soviet diplomacy, but one whom I had never met. Although I was tempted to pull my punches, I decided to speak candidly—as is my style—and I noted what I saw as the rise of imprudent Soviet nuclear export behavior, something I blamed in part on the tiny number of independent NGO nonproliferation experts and the increasing tendency for economic and political considerations to trump prudent nonproliferation behavior. Much to my surprise, Ambassador Timerbaev said that although it was hard for him to say so, he had to agree with Professor Potter’s observations. Thus was born our subsequent 20 years of close collaboration, including his decision the next year to join CNS as Diplomat-in-Residence. By early 1991, with assistance from Roland and support from the Carnegie Endowment, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the W. Alton Jones Foundation, and the Ploughshares Fund, I initiated a Soviet Nonproliferation Visiting Fellows Program, and selected our first batch of 12 of the best and the brightest young Soviet journalists, scientists, and scholars—a number of whom were from non-Russian republics, many of whom were from outside Moscow, and few of whom knew much about nonproliferation at the time. I believe it is testimony to our selection process that **nine** of those individuals today continue to work professionally in the field, and four of them are with us today—Vladimir Orlov, Elina Kirichenko, Alexander Pikayev, and Slava Paznyak. [the five others include Oleg Bukharin, Alexander Bolsunkovsky, Eugene Sharov, Ildar Aktamsyan, and Sergei Galaka.]

Despite what I regard to be the unusual power and promise of nonproliferation education, a fixation by many foundations and national governments on quick fixes to complex problems and demonstrable indicators of success is a major challenge for those who tout the merits of education and training. One simply is hard pressed to demonstrate the impact of the approach in one year or two or even 4-5 years. Today,



however, I believe we are in a position to indicate—by means of your participation and presence, that, in the words of Kofi Annan, “education is simply peace-building by another name.”

I cannot tell you how proud I am of the magnificent international community of young-- and now also somewhat aging—nonproliferation specialists we have helped to build. I look forward to the next two days of our conference to collectively explore the power of nonproliferation education, and to identify additional steps that should be taken.

Before I introduce our opening keynote speaker, let me first thank some of the key parties who made this conference and our Saturday events possible. Most importantly, I wish to thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York and its Program Officer Pat Nicholas for Carnegie’s very generous grant in support of our conference. I also want to express appreciation to the Monterey Institute, the Swedish Radiation Authority, Cary Neiman, Joe and Sheila Mark, and Lynn Huizenga for their financial contributions to our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the tremendous support I have received from many of my staff in the preparations for this conference, but especially the contributions of two of my staff members, Edith Bursac and Kenley Butler, who have worked countless hours to ensure that you are here and that we will have a great program.