

Your excellencies, members of the Danish Parliament, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this symposium on “Current Dangers of Nuclear Weapons”.

At the end of the Cold War, most people heaved a sigh of relief and pushed the problem of nuclear weapons away from their minds. It was a threat to life too horrible to think about. People felt that they could do nothing in any case, and they hoped that the problem had finally disappeared.

Today, however, many thoughtful people realize that the problem of nuclear weapons has by no means disappeared, and in some ways it is even more serious than it was during the Cold War. There are still 27,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many of them hydrogen bombs, many on hair-trigger alert, ready to be fired with only a few minutes warning.

The world has often come extremely close to the disaster of accidental nuclear war. If nuclear weapons are retained for a long period of time, the probability for such a catastrophic accident to occur will gradually build up into a certainty.

Current dangers also come from proliferation. Recently more and more nations have come to possess nuclear weapons, and thus the danger that they will be used increases. If a nation possessing nuclear weapons undergoes a revolution, the weapons might find their

way into the hands of terrorists, and against terrorism deterrence has no effect.

The seriousness of the dangers inherent in the continued existence of nuclear weapons is reflected in the eminence of both the speakers and participants at this symposium. We have in this hall today representatives from 31 embassies, and among them are 13 ambassadors. We also have representatives from the Danish Foreign Ministry, the Foreign Policy Council, the Ministry of Defence and the Danish Institute of International Studies. Our speakers are also extremely eminent.

Dr. Hans Blix of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission has very kindly given us 150 copies of the recent report of the Commission. We hope that you will take the report home with you, together with the other materials in the bags on your desks.

I would now like to give the floor to Mr. Jan Mller, the President of SGI Denmark, one of the organizers of this symposium. SGI Denmark is part of a 12-million-strong international movement devoted to peace and to abolition of nuclear weapons through education and dialogue. SGI is centered in Japan, but it has branches throughout the world. So here is Jan to read to us a letter of greeting from the President of SGI International.