

## Education, Diligence Keys to Disarmament

*During the recent U.N.-sponsored conference on disarmament in Sapporo, Japan, Seikyo Shimbun reporter Hiroaki Noyama and the SGI's Congdon Saita Smith interviewed Prvoslav Davinic, director of the U.N. Centre for Disarmament Affairs. The following are some excerpts:*

**SGI:** The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty has been signed by all but three states required to do so [44 of them], but its becoming effective is contingent on the ratification by all of them. What are your thoughts on the proposal made by Ambassador Chusei Yamada to have signatories to the CTBT adopt a protocol enabling the agreement to enter into force even without the ratification of the three remaining States [North Korea, India and Pakistan]?

**Davinic:** Ambassador Yamada's idea is very thought-provoking and was supported by many participants. This type of conference is useful precisely because such new ideas can be put forward informally, and, if they gain support, can be followed up in formal meetings. So it's a good opportunity and a good place to launch such ideas.

**SGI:** Secretary General Kofi Annan indicated in his reform proposals announced on July 16 that your office would be upgraded from the Centre for Disarmament Affairs to become the Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation.

**Davinic:** Yes. The secretary-general made an important political statement in that he recognized the growing role of disarmament in view of the increasing number of conflicts and the remaining stockpile of nuclear weapons. Actually, our office has always been the Department for Disarmament Affairs, so we're back to our original status. In his press conference he stated that the decision to downgrade the department was a mistake. I fully agree with this view.

**SGI:** How has the situation surrounding disarmament changed internationally?

**Davinic:** The situation has changed in many ways. First of all, the nuclear weapons states are no longer at odds with each other. Therefore it's highly unlikely that they would start a nuclear confrontation. This doesn't mean that issues related to nuclear weapons are no longer important. The important change is that we do not feel threatened with nuclear annihilation by design.

At the same time, however, there are still many nuclear weapons left in the stockpiles, and we feel that there is great need to proceed. Today we don't have the drama as if a nuclear war could erupt any day. The sense of urgency has receded. But the necessity for nuclear disarmament is still present. We've got to deal with these issues very persistently.

At the same time, on the other front of conventional weapons, the situation has also changed. In past conflicts, such as in Vietnam and Cambodia, heavy weapons were used like fighters, bombers, tanks and so on. Most present-day conflicts are carried out with small weapons. Small weapons are proliferating because they're easy to acquire, inexpensive and don't require a great deal of training to use. So it is a new feature. These types of weapons that have come to the forefront of international concern are more difficult

to control than those in use during the Cold War era.

**SIG:** The SGI has proposed a world disarmament education campaign. What do you think of this idea?

**Davinic:** It's a very commendable project which we certainly support. Wars start for many reasons. There are sometimes causes that are deeply rooted in the minds of people — certain controversial issues, animosities, and disagreements. In any conflict, resorting to war and violence can never produce good results. You may achieve your objective in the end, but you may lose a great deal in getting there.

The process of education is absolutely necessary. The more you educate people, the more successful you might be in preventing war. Educating people about the consequences of wars and the advantages of resolving conflict through peaceful means, as well as the necessity of disarmament, is an essential part of our present-day environment.

**SIG:** What are your impressions of SGI Representative Kazuo Ishiwatari's statement at the conference regarding the responsibility of nuclear states to work for disarmament? [Please see Aug. 8 *World Tribune*, p. 1.]

**Davinic:** I think it was a very powerful statement which reflected the feelings of many people in the world about this matter. The responsibility is mutual. It is not only for those who don't have nuclear weapons not to acquire them, but also for those who do have them to get rid of them.

From that point of view, there is agreement even on the part of nuclear weapons states. Disagreement, as it became all so clear during our conference, is over how to do it and how fast. Nuclear states feel it must be done incrementally over a period of time. Others favor a more rapid timetable. So, in that sense, the statement of your representative reflected the sentiment of an overwhelming majority of the world population.

**WT**