

**Opening Remarks**  
**by Mr. Manasvi Srisodapol**  
**Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
**for the Special Briefing on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**  
**by Professor Gareth Evans,**  
**Convenor, Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation**  
**and Disarmament**  
**and Former Foreign Minister of Australia**  
**Wednesday, 8 October 2014**  
**at the Narathip Auditorium, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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Professor the Honourable Gareth Evans,  
Professor Ramesh Thakur,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to Professor Evans and Professor Thakur, and also to all participants present today.

This morning, we are privileged to have with us two highly-distinguished and internationally-renowned academicians who hardly need our introduction.

Professor Evans served as Australia's Foreign Minister from 1988-1996. He has since remained very active in international affairs and is currently Chancellor of the Australian National University. Professor Evans has also served as President of the International Crisis Group and is co-chairing the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. He joins us today in his role as convenor of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. In whatever capacity, he has, and continues to be a very good friend of Thailand.

Professor Thakur served as Senior Vice- Rector of the United Nations University and UN Assistant Secretary-General from 1998-2007. He is currently Director of the Centre for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (CNND) at the Australian National University, and Adjunct Professor at Griffith University. Professor Thakur has held academic posts in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and is the author of numerous books and publications.

Both of them have joined us to talk about the threat of nuclear proliferation, have some alarming statistics on the global nuclear arsenal, and hopefully provide us with important updates on the progress of global disarmament.

It is appropriate that they should come to Thailand. Thailand is the depository state of the SEANWFZ Treaty, which was signed in Bangkok in 1995 by the ten ASEAN member states expressing their will to collectively ban nuclear weapons and the threat of these weapons from the region. Since then, ASEAN member states have worked consistently to encourage NWS to sign the protocols to the Treaty and we will continue to do so.

In the present day and age, some of us may think that nuclear weapons are far and remote. But we must remind ourselves that the increase and sophistication of state and non-state actors against the backdrop of globalization, and seamless trade also heightens the threat of nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands and brings the issue closer to home.

In fact, many of us here may have heard of reports that nuclear parts and materials may have enjoyed passage through the vicinity of the region. Last year, we even heard of the threat of the use of nuclear weapons not too far from our own region.

Therefore, it is an issue of major concern for Thailand. That is why we will continue to play an active role in various forums, such as the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), the CD (Conference on Disarmament), the PSI (Proliferation Security Initiative) and the upcoming Third International Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna this December. We have also been active at the highest level, sending a special envoy of the Prime Minister to the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague earlier this year. We hope to continue being active in these and other international forums and to further raise awareness among the Thai public at large.

So I am very pleased to see that today, we are joined not only by the relevant agencies whose work directly contributes toward Thailand's commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts but also academics and students. For the latter, I hope you will continue to maintain interest in the issues discussed today.

For Thailand, as is the case with many countries around the world, preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, including among non-state actors are ongoing legal and practical challenges. But we need to continue to overcome these challenges and more importantly, raise awareness, in order to make a meaningful impact on international non-proliferation efforts for the sake of our peace, security and prosperity.

Thank you very much and I wish for us a useful and interesting discussion this morning.

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