

Opening Remarks

**The Simons Foundation
and Global Affairs Canada**

**GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS
CEREMONY**

Lester B. Pearson Building
Ottawa, Canada

March 28, 2019

*Jennifer Allen Simons, C.M., Ph.D., LL.D.
President,
The Simons Foundation*

Thank you, Cindy,

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Canada, Jeffrey!

It is a pleasure to be here participating in the Award ceremony for this year's Graduate Research Scholars in Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, a programme in which the Department of Global Affairs and The Simons Foundation have partnered for fifteen years (2004).

We are very pleased with this programme – with this endeavour to further disarmament education and build a community of disarmament scholars.

I would like to thank Tristan Garcia of the Department of Global Affairs, and Elaine Hynes, from The Simons Foundation, for their excellent organization and management of the programme.

There are few initiatives in schools and universities dedicated to research and education in disarmament education. Yet, on a daily basis we are faced with gun violence in our communities. We are threatened by emerging technological weaponry. Chemical weapons are still in use despite a decades old global ban. And we live in fear of a nuclear Armageddon by accident, miscalculation or deliberate attack.

This programme is a contribution to essential education, to inform and to encourage legislation to counter the weapons trade, to inhibit arms racing; and it is an endeavour to replace policies and practices of threat, of war and violence with diplomacy, multilateralism, peace-building, peace-making and global cooperation.

I hope that the many students who have participated in the programme since 2004 have continued, and will continue, to focus on these issues and pursue careers in academia, in the Foreign Service, in politics, or the NGO sphere in civil society; in order to build a safer, more secure world.

I am pleased that we have returned to the original concept in which the Awardees present their papers during the Global Affairs Consultations with Civil Society – to this highly knowledgeable group - who in their turn, share their expertise, and as well, learn where the young people - whose future with which we are engaged in these discussions - are headed.

The Graduate Research Scholarship programme was in its initial stages in 2002 - in an era when the promise of global peace was high. With the end of the Cold War and with new Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments - particularly the commitment to the thirteen Practical Steps to Disarmament in Article VI - we believed that the world was moving towards the total elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; and that international legal mechanisms would be in place to ensure their elimination for all time. We believed in the spread of democracy, of increasing multilateralism, in international law, in fulfilment of treaty obligations and global cooperation - all heralding a peaceful future.

Yet, here we are seventeen years later, in a crisis situation with potentially the most dire consequences for humanity. We are now facing a “deteriorating international security environment”¹ with attacks on multilateralism and on international institutions; with the growth of authoritarianism, of new strident nationalism, and the potential demise of democracy; with toxic relations between Russia and the US; with unacceptable and growing nuclear risks; the potential disintegration of the arms control treaty process; with a new arms racing more dangerous because of the increasingly blurred line between nuclear and conventional weapons; ambiguity created by dual-use missiles; and emerging military weapon-related technologies and cyber-capabilities.

The situation is “potentially more dangerous than at any point during the Cold War”² during which the Soviet Union and the United States— despite their policy of Mutually Assured Destruction - were intent on maintaining and ensuring strategic stability.

The Award Recipients – Ramesh Balakrishnam, Emily Boytinck, Nicholas Millot and Louis-Philippe Morneau presented their research at today’s Forum on some of the most critical issues impeding progress to a safe secure world and contributed proposals to ameliorate this situation.

For those of you who did not participate in today’s Forum: Louis-Philippe Morneau and Ramesh Balakrishnam address nuclear dangers, one of the most critical issues facing humanity today. Louis-Philippe Morneau’s research deals with the risks associated with dual-use nuclear technology – available to non-nuclear weapons NPT signatories under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - and controlled and monitored by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. He highlights the hazards posed by the NPT’s lack of universality which limits the ability to monitor and control access to this dual-use technology; and is concerned that the push for non-NPT signatory India’s admission to the NSG opens the door to other non-NPT states, also uncommitted to the obligations of the NPT, thus in a position to obtain, and potentially misuse, the technology.

Another risk he identifies is the danger posed by emerging technologies – such as the 3D printer – not constrained under the NPT. These hazards highlight “the limits of the current NPT and Nuclear Supplier’s Group Structure” and need to be addressed.

Ramesh Balakrishnam concerns himself with the tripartite fragmentation of the nuclear disarmament agenda, and analyses the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament. He proposes nine steps in which Canada could engage in order to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and further the UN disarmament agenda.

Nicholas Millot’s research focuses on Chemical Weapons Treaty violations by Russia, Syria, North Korea and ISIS. Russia and Syria are signatories to the Treaty yet, despite the Treaty’s entry into force two decades ago, the international community has failed to respond to the violations. He is rightly concerned that this failure “risks normalizing the future use of chemical weapons.”

Emily Boytinck addresses the issue of women in disarmament and confirms that though women have been in forefront of disarmament as activists - rejecting weapons of mass destruction - they have not played a large part in disarmament negotiations. She learned from her research that when women have participated in multilateral disarmament work, the negotiations have been more effective.

¹ Randy Rydell, quoting Guterres, *The Guterres Disarmament Agenda, Arms Control Today*, Vol. 49, p20

² Wolfgang Ishinger, *Epochal breaks*, *The Security Times*, February 2019

My own experience as a participant in the Women Political Leaders Global Forums in Reykjavik is that women leaders are primarily engaged in picking up the pieces, dealing with the aftermath of wars, of violence. They lead in ameliorating the conditions - lead in peace-making and healing. Women, have not been in the halls of power with the ability to make the decisions on whether or not to develop weapons, to use weapons, to go to war. And to date, they are still not in positions to prevent these negative outcomes.

The new global imperative on improving gender balance will slowly change the current situation as women, with ethical principles and practices, and concern for humanity, will at some point transform the political landscape in order to make a better world. And hopefully, we will have stateswomen/statesmen governing our countries. We are fortunate in Canada to have two such fine women in Parliament, Jody Wilson-Raybould and Dr. Jane Philpott who epitomize these values. So we continue our quest for a more humane, just and peaceful world.

The current challenge we face is to create the conditions conducive to a return to diplomacy, dialogue, and particularly a return to disarmament negotiations, in order to reduce, and eliminate, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and to further peace and global cooperation.

And these students contributions to the Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Agenda provide me with confidence that our work to rid the world of these massively destructive weapons will be carried on until one day – in the not too distant future - we will see the end, for all time, of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Congratulations to you and my very best wishes for your future!

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