

4.15 Da Ruan and the World Council of Nuclear Workers

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On Monday, September 17th, 2007, the General Assembly of the International Agency for Atomic Energy (IAEA) was abuzz with rumours. The year 2006 had been marked by an exceptional event, the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mohamed El Baradei, the Director General. And everyone had his own thoughts, his own opinion, his comments, his exegesis, remarks and observations on the repercussions that the prize would have on the future of nuclear energy across the world, on the reactions of the so-called ecologists to the prize, and on the future of El Baradei when his term as the head of the IAEA came to an end ...

At the opening session, the score of members of the Board of Administration came along in single file, in a procession where monotony vied with their rhapsodic platitudes. Then came the usual ballet of the delegations, eager to present the nuclear programme of their countries, their proposals for a safer world, the right to nuclear energy for some of them, and its prohibition for others, the various definitions of the others, reversing according to whether the delegation at the podium was pro-Israel or Arab-speaking. Yet the same words systematically returned in a multiplicity and albeit constant identity of form, each member was keen to congratulate the new Nobel Peace laureate, in the most original, the most flattering, and the most eulogistic way possible, reflecting the many faces of hypocrisy.

And they all wondered whether the Royal Academy of Sciences of Sweden would be present to mark the great esteem of its members for the new laureate, although the vast majority of the delegates were unaware that the attribution of the Nobel Peace Prize was the domain of Norway and not of Sweden.

On the television screens scattered throughout the building where the conference was held, recalling the programme of the day, an announcement was quickly registered by all. It said that in the afternoon, during the plenary session, Mohamed El Baradei would receive the Atoms for Peace prize, from the name allocated to the speech given by US President Dwight Eisenhower to the United Nations on December 8th, 1953, and which led to the creation of the IAEA. The rumours grew, and along with them the idle talk and hearsay of those who always know more, distorting, revisiting the information, to restore it in a false-true reality fabricated from fictions and inventions. And since, in a world populated by diplomats, everyone is always obliged to know a little more than his neighbour, the word spread that in addition to awarding the Nobel Peace Prize, the Royal Academy of Sciences of Sweden was going to award to Mohamed El Baradei the famous and henceforth illustrious Atoms for Peace prize.

Barely a handful had remarked that this prize was to be awarded by the World Council of Nuclear Workers. And among these slightly more attentive readers, it

was quickly added that the nuclear workers were cited simply because El Baradei wanted to associate the nuclear workers with the ceremony, so that the smallest contributors would not be overlooked at this great celebration, which consecrated nuclear energy as a peaceful form of energy.

Away from the hullabaloo, the members of the delegation of World Council of Nuclear Workers were discussing the precise organisation of the ceremony with the IAEA's protocol division, its legal department, the general secretariat, the private secretary of the director general, and above all, the security services. Who would take the floor, for how long, in what order etc. A consensus was rapidly reached on the name of the Japanese representative of WONUC, who would describe the framework surrounding the creation of this prize by WONUC, so as to mark the homage that we all owed to the Japanese people who had suffered personally from the horrors of the militaristic disasters of nuclear energy. They all hoped that the President of WONUC would then take the floor.

And suddenly, in the middle of the meeting, breathless, still holding his suitcase, barely landed from a plane flying from Mumbai or from Hong Kong, entered Da Ruan, China's representative of WONUC. He was absolutely determined to attend. In his view, as in the view of the other WONUC representatives, the creation of the Atoms for Peace prize by WONUC, and the choice of the IAEA's Director General as the first winner, was highly symbolic of the importance of nuclear energy in the search - beyond the illusory sustainable development bandied about to the point of indigestion by the ecologically-politically correct - for a lasting peace for humanity. Da Ruan had met André Maisseu, the president of WONUC, for the first time at Santos in Brazil, at a conference where Dr Maisseu had come to present a model of economic development in which the mathematical portion was based on fuzzy logic. During the ensuing period, Da Ruan and André Maisseu, who became inseparable, explored all the beach restaurants of Santos, to enjoy the thousand and one ways in which the Brazilians, as worthy Lusitanophiles, processed cod, and to debate fuzzy logic, neuron networks, cognitivism and other connectionisms.

Moments later, it was universally agreed that Da Ruan should be the second speaker, and that the Atoms for Peace prize should be awarded to El Baradei in the form of a medal and a (small) cheque. Da Ruan energetically refused, arguing that this was a role of the president of WONUC and not his own. Only at the very last minute, bowing to the insistence of all, did Da Ruan agree.

His address to the 3000 delegates present at the General Assembly of the International Agency for Atomic Energy was full of subtlety, tact and intelligence. He gave his speech in English, with a few sentences in French and Mandarin.

It was then that the confusion that prevailed in many minds between the Nobel Peace Prize and the Atoms for Peace prize took an exciting turn. The ceremony was over, the dance of the aspirants to a Nobel Prize in Physics, Chemistry, Medicine and Economics reached its apogee. All the candidates who were seeking the ultimate recognition of their efforts, necessarily (in their opinion), the most complete, most grandiose, most miraculous that humanity had been able to generate, crowded around Da Ruan, inviting him to dinner, inviting him to come and visit them at their universities, all expenses paid - obviously - and to this and to that

event. All these aspirants to supreme glory and immortality – and perhaps the accompanying cheque – were convinced that Da Ruan was THE representative of Sweden’s Royal Academy of Sciences, with the ultimate power to award these Prizes.

Da Ruan was initially amused. Then, the waves of wily hypocrisy annoyed him. And we all finally got together, the entire delegation of WONUC, all hands aboard, to dine among true friends and to have a good laugh, that same evening, at a small inn at Grinzing, in the Vienna hills, where, according to the tourist brochure, Beethoven composed his 6th Symphony. As to the robe of the new white wine that we quaffed, it was necessarily fuzzy!



Da awarding the Atoms for Peace Prize to Nobel Prize winner El-Baradei at IAEA in Vienna on September 17, 2007