

## **Restoring Canada's Nuclear Disarmament Policies**

**Expert Seminar, February 3-4, 2008  
Cartier Place Hotel, Ottawa**

**Sponsored by Middle Powers Initiative, Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the Rideau Institute, Canadian Pugwash Group, Physicians for Global Survival, and The Simons Foundation**

On Monday February 3rd and 4th a group of government officials, NGO representatives, and academics convened to discuss Canada's role in nuclear disarmament at the conference "Restoring Canada's Nuclear Disarmament Policies."

### **What's Happened to Canada's Nuclear Disarmament Policies?**

- In 1951 Canada worked on a U. S. drafted disarmament treaty to prohibit atomic weapons. Canada held a leading role in nuclear disarmament at that time.
- In the 1950s, Canada, as a member of NATO, was involved in the shift within NATO towards greater reliance on nuclear weapons.
- In the early 1960s, debates between Deifenbaker-Pearson about installing nuclear weapons on Canadian soil grabbed the attention of the public.
- In 1963, the Conservatives were voted out with Canadian fears that loyalty to NATO has become more important than fears about nuclear weapons.
- In the late 1960s, Canada co-sponsored the "Irish Resolution" at the UN, thought by many to be a real challenge to NATO nuclear policy.
- In 1970, when the nuclear-nonproliferation treaty came into force, Canada was recognized as playing a leading role in its adoption.
- In 1996, the world demonstrated their support for the NPT, while Canada voted in favour of only a portion of the treaty.
- In 2002 and 2003, Canada voted in favour of the New Agenda Coalition.

### **What Needs to Be Done?**

- It is imperative that the Canadian government play a leading role in disarmament, especially now that the U.S. has indicated that they do not feel deterred to use nuclear weapons.
- There needs to be an ongoing discussion about the challenges of relying on nuclear deterrence and Canada has an important role to play in this process. One step that could be taken is the completion of a cost benefit analysis of nuclear versus non nuclear deterrence, and a subsequent discussion of policy alternatives, in relation to NATO.
- Under NATO's Strategic Concept nuclear weapons are considered essential to global security and stability, Canada should push for a review of NATO's nuclear weapons policy.

- Canada, who is currently a member of NATO's nuclear planning group, should consider withdrawing or abstaining from this group.
- Canada should refuse repeated American offers of nuclear defence.
- The Canadian parliament should consider enacting criminal legislation, where Canadians at home and abroad are forbidden from participating in the development of nuclear weapons.
- The Canadian government should use public education to build support for disarmament and non-proliferation issues.
- The Canadian government should work to support processes of verification. Canada has experience in this area and could be instrumental in the re-establishment of a verification research unit.

The preceding information and recommendations were presented by Robin Collins, Chairperson of the Council of the World Federalist Movement, Bev Delong, Chairperson of the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and Peggy Mason, Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament [1989-1994] and member of the group of 78. The introduction to this session was provided by Steven Staples, director of the Rideau Institute.

### **Nuclear Weapons in Today's Canadian Foreign Policy**

*“Some argue that the use of nukes is necessary to protect our way of life. Just the opposite is true. The very existence, short of the contemplated use of nukes, is sufficient to erode profoundly our humanity and our way of life.”*

Senator Romeo Dallaire

There is significant debate over whether Canada's foreign policy towards nuclear weapons has changed since 9/11, the government posits that the policies and positions remain consistent, while academics and activists note troubling changes. **Michael Byers**, the Canadian Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law notes an incredible lack of political will within the current Canadian government to take a defined and contradictory [to that of the U.S.] stance on the matter of nuclear disarmament, and in particular on the issue of the use of nuclear weapons in Iran. Interestingly, between 2002 and today the Canadian government has added an important condition to their commitment to nuclear nonproliferation, indicating a significant change in their position.

*Canada has long held a policy objective of non-proliferation, reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We pursue this aim steadily, persistently and energetically, **consistent with our membership in NATO and NORAD and in a manner sensitive to the broader international security context** [The portion in bold is new]*

(<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/arms/nuclear2-en.asp>)

The change in this statement can only be assumed to be a political directive, suggesting

that Canada's stance on nuclear weapons may be further aligned with the U.S. Additionally, according to Michael Byers, this statement indicates that a country that has refused to build nuclear weapons, and then eliminated nuclear weapons from its soil, is now indicating that security trumps legal obligations to disarmament.

Canada, historically, has been considered a moral authority on the issue of nuclear disarmament, but today Canada lacks the political leadership to use this moral authority to advance this issue internationally. To assert broader leadership on the issue of nuclear disarmament, he suggests that Canada play an important role in the negotiations with Iran, that we leave the nuclear planning group, and that we declare Canada a nuclear weapons free zone [NWFZ]. While, there are calls for the arctic to become a NWFZ, Michael Byers asserts that declaring Canada a NWFZ is a good first step towards achieving this goal, and he suggests that the Canadian government should seriously consider making this claim.

In contrast to the evidence, arguments, and thoughts presented by Michael Byers, **Mark Gwozdecky**, Director, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (Nuclear) Division, DFAIT, purports that the Canadian government has maintained a consistent commitment to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non proliferation. He suggests that "Canada believes in, and is working toward, a world eventually free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons." However, he states that the pursuit of this goal must be consistent with increases, not decreases, in our collective security.

Mark Gwozdecky notes troubling setbacks in non-proliferation within the international community, including North Korea's defection from the NPT, Iran's non compliance with its Security Council obligations, and the discovery of a nuclear trafficking network, demonstrating that non-state actors do play a role in non-proliferation. Canada has played an active role in the Six Party Talks, now supporting further political, commercial, and development linkages with North Korea based on the resolution of the nuclear crisis.

Troubling setbacks in nuclear non-proliferation have been complemented by setbacks in nuclear disarmament, where the review conference of the NPT failed to agree on an outcome document in 2005, the CTBT has failed to enter into force, and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has failed to agree on a work programme since 1998. Despite challenges, the Russia and the U.S. has continued to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, Canada has continued to urge states to ratify the CTBT and continues to support the three pillars of the NPT.

Mark Gwozdecky notes, that whenever nuclear non-proliferation or disarmament is discussed, there needs to be recognition that "until [nuclear weapons] are completely eliminated, nuclear weapons continue to have a deterrent effect." Additionally, although recently political leadership has been concentrating on disarmament issues surrounding Iran and North Korea, it must be recognized that achieving disarmament in these countries would be a significant boost for the NPT.

Despite Canada's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as

posited by Mark Gwozdecky, in a speech written by **Senator Romeo Dallaire** and read by **Kim Kroeber**, the Senator expressed his disappointment with current Canadian foreign policy as it relates to nuclear weapons. Senator Dallaire posits that the trouble with Canadian foreign policy is that it does not reconcile the moral imperative to abolish nuclear weapons with the assessment of national gains. Nuclear weapons are not necessary to ensure security, but in fact, dramatically increase insecurity, and threaten our way of life. He suggests that the Canadian government can recognize the need to uphold basic human values and abolish nuclear weapons, rediscovering the moral foundations of Canadian foreign policy, without committing political suicides, as past government's have improved domestic support by opposing U.S. policies. Additionally, he states, that the government must recognize that Canada's role in NATO is in direct conflict with our NPT obligations.

The world is starved for leadership on global issues that endanger humanity, and in the international situation posed by nuclear weapons calls out for intervention. The challenge posed to the Canadian government is whether they are ready to pursue a leading role on this issue. Senator Dallaire calls on the Canadian government to formulate a consistent, coherent nuclear policy, with the ultimate aim of abolishing nuclear weapons.

### **Analysis of Canada's votes in U.N First Committee 2007**

*"The government seems torn on the NPT/NATO issue, and the lack of authoritative statements by the political leadership is a cause of confusion and concern. What is clear is that Canada has ceased to be either a champion or a leader in ridding the world of the ultimate evil of nuclear weapons."*

Hon. Doug Roche and Jim Wurst

In a very interesting and important report, **Doug Roche**, O.C., Chairperson Middle Powers initiative, former Canadian ambassador on disarmament, and **Jim Wurst** discovered that Canada's voting pattern in the UN Disarmament Committee reflects policy incoherence and Canada's failure to pursue a leadership role in upholding the NPT and abolishing nuclear weapons. Canada has continued to support and play a leading role in the New Agenda Coalition resolution to "accelerate the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments." However, in 2007, Canada abstained or voted "no" on half of the resolutions [28 in total – 10 abstentions and 4 no votes] put before the committee, some of which would normally be considered consistent with Canada's traditional stance on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Most notably, Canada abstained in the vote on the New Zealand resolution which recognizes the need to take "further practical steps to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems." Canada explained their abstention by stressing Canada's role in NATO, a body that still considers deterrence an important part of international security. The citation of NATO as a reason for abstention calls into question whether the NPT is still a central element of Canadian foreign policy or whether Canada's role in NATO has become more important than the NPT. Especially since NATO's assertion that nuclear weapons are "essential to preserve peace" is largely incompatible with the NPT's goal to eliminate

nuclear weapons.

Considering the fact that other NATO states voted for the resolution, Canada's abstention is disconcerting because it may reflect our renewed alignment with the U.S., who consistently votes 'no' and is antipathetic to the NPT. Throughout 2007, Canada abstained on several resolutions for which it normally has shown support and this incoherence is reducing Canada's stature on nuclear issues. Examples of this incoherence can be found in Canada's abstention on Mexico's proposal which would have the U.N. hold a conference to identify appropriate ways of eliminating nuclear dangers, also Canada held back its traditional co-sponsorship of the CTBT before offering its support, and finally, Canada abstained on a resolution calling for Israel to join the NPT despite having voted for the resolution in previous years. There is no doubt that the Canadian government is committed to the NPT, but this research has demonstrated that the Canadian government may be torn on nuclear issues. According to the Hon. Doug Roche and Jim Wurst, "the lack of clarity in Canada's voting record stems from the government's ambiguous stance." It is time to ask leaders to clarify Canada's position.

### **Engaging Parliament**

Political parties and Parliamentary committees have the capacity to play a leading role in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in Canada. To address the role of parliament, Alexa McDonough, NDP Member of Parliament, and member of the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament (PNND) and Brian Wilfred, Liberal Member of Parliament, and the foreign affairs critic discussed their views on nuclear issues.

**Alexa McDonough** expressed several valid concerns about the role of parliament in nuclear issues. Firstly, she discussed the challenge of getting MPs out to see the many interesting speakers on nuclear issues, and cites consistently low attendance for their minimal impact. Secondly, multilateral policies are hindered due to the division within the Liberal party, this has been a concern both under Liberal and Conservative leadership. Despite these challenges, Alexa McDonough is committed to getting nuclear issues on the agenda, and she herself has written many letters to government addressing, amongst other things, the current NATO-NPT tensions and inconsistencies in Canadian foreign policy. In her view, despite government rhetoric which states the he converse, there has been an obvious shift in Canada's position on nuclear issues. One of the greatest challenges is how to engage parliament in the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. According to Alexa McDonough, without public education and increasing pressure from civil society organizations, or a serious nuclear threat, moving nuclear issues up the parliamentary agenda will be very challenging.

The speaker from the Liberal party, **Brian Telferd**, asserted Canada's continued opposition to nuclear weapons; however, like Alexa McDonough he also sees a need for Canada to take more action on these issues. Additionally, he expressed concerns about the spread of the nuclear threat beyond states to include non-state actors.

There is a need to engage parliament and to build support for this issue. To complement the many calls for action in parliament, Robin Collins raised an important point, that to engage parliament means engaging the people that hold parliament responsible. Unfortunately, despite the dire consequences of nuclear weapons and the global dangers they pose, it is challenging to engage the public on this issue.

### **Canada and NPT. Canada and NATO. Which?**

*“The U.S. Development of more nuclear weapons-related technologies for fighting limited nuclear wars on the battlefield, and in space, will make their use more, not less likely. Threatening to use pre-emptive nuclear retaliation against terrorist groups or rogue states makes nuclear war more ‘credible’ now than it has been since the Cuban missile crisis.”*

Erika Simpson

While public interest in nuclear issues languishes, unbeknownst to most people, the global propensity to use nuclear weapons has increased dramatically in the last several years. **Erika Simpson**, executive member Canadian Pugwash Group and Associate Professor Dept. of Political Science, University of Western Ontario, explored America’s new doctrine of pre-emptive strikes postulated in 2002 and later in 2006. In 2002, The U.S. Nuclear Posture Review described three scenarios allowing the use of nuclear weapons, including their use against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attacks, in retaliation for a nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons attack, and in the event of surprising military developments, such as Iran, or North Korea. In 2006, in face of serious criticisms, the Bush administration repeated their commitment to pre-emptive strikes. According to Erika Simpson, the American doctrine will only make the world less secure. Today, the emphasis needs to be shifted away from offensive and defensive weapons to a strategy of minimal deterrence and eventual abolition. Adopting a doctrine of pre-emptive nuclear war will be neither credible nor sustainable.

Most recently, a group of retired NATO army generals have suggested that NATO also adopt a policy of pre-emptive nuclear strikes. This proposition has been met with some opposition, however, there are other people in NATO who would support pre-emptive nuclear strikes, for example, Guy Roberts, the head of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, has indicated that he would support such a program.

Although the U.S. has changed its position on nuclear weapons and others have followed suit, European and Canadian diplomats have abstained from discussing this change, primarily because Europe, the U.S., and NATO would prefer to reserve some tactical nuclear weapons in Europe [NATO is estimated to have 100 tactical nuclear weapons stockpiled in Europe] and would like to avoid any debate on this matter. Thus, they have deflected concerns to issues like Afghanistan and Iraq. In particular, the British and the French would like to retain nuclear deterrence capabilities without further debate, which could trigger domestic and international dissent.

She suggests that currently there is a need to consider moral and ethical arguments, to

talk about changes and permutations in the deterrence arguments, and in particular, to press for debate at the nuclear headquarters of NATO.

The inherent conflict between the NPT and NATO policy poses challenges for NATO member states. **Ernie Regehr**, O.C, Senior Policy Advisor, Project Ploushares identifies several challenges to the success of the NPT and several new threats to global security. One challenge to nuclear non-proliferation is the spread of nuclear know-how and materials. Currently, there are 440 nuclear power plants in 31 countries and it said that there are 240 plants planned to be built in upcoming years. In addition, 10 countries now have the capacity to enrich, and several other countries have expressed interest in developing that capability.

The dissemination of information and technical abilities requires that the international community create an environment unfriendly to weaponizing these materials. We need a security environment, where countries are calculably better off when they forego nuclear weapons creation. One step towards the creation of this environment is through the establishment of a rules based environment, in this regard the NPT is central to this aim. A second step is to create a political environment that is unsupportive of nuclear weapons, sub-section 9 of the thirteen steps of the NPT is essential to this process because it calls for a “diminish[ed]...role for nuclear weapons in security policies to minimize the risk that weapons ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination.” A third step is the creation of ‘safe neighborhoods.’ “Safe neighborhoods refer to countries that have the requisite or potential capabilities to weaponize but choose not to. This is an essential step, if the world would like to increase its dependence on nuclear energy while reducing nuclear weapons.

Another important challenge to the NPT is the NATO doctrine. NATO’s pro-nuclear doctrine will attract emulation by states with nuclear knowledge and material. For this reason, the NATO doctrine needs to be reversed and NATO must commit to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in their security strategies.

Another important challenge to the NPT is the U.S.’s commitment to selective non-proliferation. The American doctrine allows nuclear capabilities to some friendly states, but not to hostile states. The Blix commission has explicitly rejected the suggestion that weapons in the hands of some pose no threat, while in the hands of others are a mortal danger. For this reason it is important to consider how Israel, India, and Pakistan can be brought into the NPT. One way to include India would be to establish a conditional civilian nuclear cooperation with India, where cooperation is based on specific and verifiable disarmament commitments. If this is not possible, then civilian cooperation should facilitate no further development or expansion of India’s nuclear arsenal. Additionally, nuclear weapons states, such as India, Pakistan, and Iran should be asked to ratify the CTBT. Moreover, the international community could determine the conditions under which civilian nuclear cooperation will occur and put a freeze on fissile material until the requisite obligations have been met. For Canada, as a global supplier of uranium, the multilateralization of weapons-sensitive nuclear materials should be an imperative. Additionally, the wording of the NPT, which allows for access to technology without restricting enrichment and reprocessing, must be reviewed. It is crucial that the

international community and Canada work on improving verification and the institutional deficit of the NPT, where there is a need to expand rules and procedures and to improve infrastructure.

**Wade L. Huntley**, Director, Simons Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Research, UBC, suggests that the focus should be on the disarmament and non-proliferation pillars of the NPT, and not concentrate on whether states join the NPT, but whether they obey it. The discussion with Israel, India, and Pakistan can be framed around the goals of the NPT without pushing them to join. Additionally, he notes, that many of the international changes needed to further the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation would be greatly facilitated by support from the U.S.

### **Dealing with the U.S.**

*“American foreign policy is a quest for invulnerability.”*

Paul Heinbecker

According to **Paul Heinbecker**, Distinguished Fellow, The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), former Canadian ambassador to the U.N., the U.S. plays an important role in the direction of global nuclear policy. He notes that in all scenarios, in the coming years the president of the United States, whether it be Hilary Clinton, Baraka Obama, or John McCain, will be someone who the international community can work with. Paul Heinebecker believes that with the next American government there will be the opportunity to put the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament back on the table. He notes that under the Bush administration, security was derived from power; however, future governments may again look to international agreements and verification procedures for security. With the right American government, alongside a supportive Canadian government, the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be much easier. However, for the Canadian government to be listened to, and to get credit in Washington, they must demonstrate the capacity to act effectively. With this aim in mind, Canadian foreign policy would benefit from better vehicles and more willing people.

In contrast, **Wade L. Huntley** is unsure as to whether the change in leadership will have such a great impact, unless the nuclear issue becomes an election mandate. Additionally, he fears that much of the debate on nuclear issues is focused on nuclear terrorism – N. Korea and Iran. He notes that it is difficult to judge the impact of a new American government on this nuclear proliferation and disarmament debate, however, he agrees that there is bound to be greater support from any of the current candidates, than that found under the Bush administration.



## Revitalizing Canadian Public Opinion

*“The majority of Canadians support the elimination of all nuclear weapons through an enforceable agreement”*

Result of the Canada’s World Poll

**Jennifer Simons**, President, The Simons Foundation, presented data from a new public opinion survey co-sponsored by the Simons Foundation. The results from this poll, which surveyed over 2000 Canadians, demonstrate that the Canadian people support efforts to reduce nuclear weapons. The survey showed that 88% of Canadians felt that nuclear weapons made the world a more dangerous place. This result is consistent with the public opinion in other states, including Italy, Great Britain, the United States, Israel, France, and Germany, where over 70% of the population in each country also stated that nuclear weapons had made the world a more dangerous place. The majority of Canadians also support eliminating all nuclear weapons through an enforceable agreement [73%]. Interestingly, this question received only moderate support in the United States, Great Britain, Israel, France [between 43-51%], while only Germany [78%] and Italy [84%] have a majority of support for this position. While Canadians have demonstrated that they believe that nuclear weapons should be eliminated, only half the population believes that the use of NATO nuclear weapons capability is never justified [54%]. Additionally, 20% believe they are justified in the event of an actual war, and 19% believe they are justified as a deterrent against a possible attack. This finding could be related to the fear amongst Canadians of non-state actors gaining access to nuclear weapons. Canadians indicated that the use of nuclear weapons by terrorists [51%] was a greater threat than the use by one/more countries [31%], while 15% see both threats as equally dangerous. The rapid dissemination of fissile materials and nuclear technology is cause for concern amongst Canadians who indicated that they are particularly concerned about the spread of nuclear technology, with 73% stating that nuclear technology exports should only be allowed to countries with little/no threat of developing nuclear weapons.

Public opinion supports a leading role for the Canadian government in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. According to Jennifer Simon’s it is now time to move the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament beyond the converted, to reach out to newer, younger, members of the populace.