

Thank you very much for inviting me. It is a great privilege to be here.

We are gathered here this evening to remember the horrific – and to date only – use of atomic weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, on 6 and 9 August 1945 respectively.

First, I wish to briefly recall Canada and Canadians’ special responsibility in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament because of our country’s role in the development of the nuclear bomb and of plutonium. And because Canada was the first country with the ability to build an atomic bomb but chose not to do so.

I turn next to the words of a celebrated Japanese-Canadian survivor of the Hiroshima bombing, Setsuko Thurlow, who has since dedicated her life to the abolition of nuclear weapons:

Speaking in August of 2020 to the prestigious American NGO, the Arms Control Association, Setsuko described the image of a young deceased child, burned beyond recognition and swollen two or three sizes larger than normal and said, in part:

“it’s the image of this four-year-old child that is burned to my retina. It’s always there.

That image just guided me, and it’s the driving force for my activism. Because that child came to represent all the innocent children of the world without understanding what was happening to them. They agonized.”

She concluded her comments with the following:

If I don't speak out, who will? I actually experienced it. I saw it. It's my moral responsibility. So, I have my experience to warn the world. "

I was Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament to the UN from August 1989 to January 1995. During that time I visited Hiroshima many times and Nagasaki once, in the context of a UN-sponsored tour of Japan to speak to crowds of Japanese citizens worried about the then upcoming 1995 NPT Review and Extension conference, so-called because its original 25 years duration was coming to an end and states parties had to decide on what kind of extension. Japanese citizens, with their horrific knowledge of nuclear weapons use, were understandably concerned about an indefinite extension – the goal of western NPT states parties because of the vital role that treaty plays in stemming the spread of nuclear weapons to new countries, as well as being the only legally-binding commitment by the 5 declared NWS (USA, Russia, China, France and the UK) to negotiate nuclear disarmament. The Japanese were concerned of course that an indefinite extension would let the NWS off the disarmament hook so to speak.

As everyone I hope knows, the final agreement included both an indefinite extension and a range of substantive commitments by the NWS towards nuclear disarmament, steps which were built upon in the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. But then, as the international climate chilled for a variety of reasons, progress not only stalled but nuclear modernization processes accelerated and important arms control treaties fell by the wayside. The increasing frustration of the non-nuclear weapons states parties to the NPT was further exacerbated by the continuing deadlock of the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, bound as that forum was by a consensus model, which clearly frustrated the will of the overwhelming majority.

As you all here know, the result was the majority expressing its will through a vote in the UN General Assembly to negotiate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, also called the Nuclear Ban Treaty.

That treaty, is now in force with 92 signatories and 68 parties who have ratified the treaty. It fulfills the promise of Article VI of the NPT in establishing a framework for complete nuclear disarmament and for verification protocols. But no NWS participated in its negotiation and it is adamantly opposed by the 5 NPT nuclear weapons states and those NPT non-nws including Canada, that shelter under NATO's nuclear umbrella, although NATO's excessive and unseemly antipathy to the treaty has moderated somewhat under the Biden Administration. A change in tone but not in substance.

As to why Canada has not ratified the treaty – it cannot do so without absenting itself completely from NATO's nuclear policy – which it is not prepared to do.

Let me turn now to the 2023 Doomsday Clock Statement by the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of American Scientists (The Doomsday clock was created in 1947, two years after the founding of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists by Albert Einstein and University of Chicago scientists who had helped develop the first atomic weapons in the Manhattan Project). The latest Doomsday clock statement, published on 24 Jan 2023 begins:

“This year, the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moves the hands of the Doomsday Clock forward, largely (though not exclusively) because of the mounting dangers of the war in Ukraine. The

Clock now stands at 90 seconds to midnight—the closest to global catastrophe it has ever been.”

Before focusing on the nuclear risks specific to the Ukraine conflict, it is useful to remind ourselves of the extent of the nuclear danger, as reflected by the Doomsday Clock, *prior* to the Ukraine war. The last time it was changed was in January 2020, when it was moved forward to 100 seconds before midnight.

So not exactly a rosy picture then either, with rising tensions between Russia, China and the USA and massive nuclear weapons modernization processes underway, led by the USA which, as of January 2022, had a total sustainment and modernization program of its nuclear forces projected to reach a total cost of 2 trillion dollars over the next 30 years, with \$634 billion projected for the next 10 years.

To quote from the US Arms Control Association:

Other nuclear-armed states, notably Russia and China, are upgrading and may be posed to increase the size of their arsenals ... But ...the current and planned U.S. financial investment in nuclear forces is unrivaled by any other nuclear power.”

Now turning to the heightened nuclear risks due to the Ukraine conflict. The 2023 Doomsday Clock statement included the following:

“Russia’s thinly veiled threats to use nuclear weapons remind the world that escalation of the conflict—*by accident, intention, or miscalculation*—is a terrible risk. The possibility that the conflict could spin out of anyone’s control remains high.”

This is one reason why the Ceasefire.ca and Rideau Institute weekly blog posts focus so relentlessly on the need for diplomacy to end the horrific conflict in Ukraine and help fashion a just and sustainable peace.

It seems clear that Putin's overriding motivation for such nuclear threats is to keep NATO from directly entering the war. And NATO has refrained from so doing.

This is the glaring lesson from the Ukraine war where nuclear deterrence has indeed worked to deter NATO from direct military involvement against a nuclear peer adversary because of the overriding risk of escalation to all-out nuclear war.

The actions of the USA and NATO – that is their military restraint - put the lie to NATO's [doctrine of flexible response](#) and to the absurd notion of nuclear war-fighting with so-called tactical nuclear weapons.

The oft-repeated phrase by the 5 acknowledged nuclear weapons states under the [Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty \(NPT\)](#) - and recently reaffirmed by Putin - “that a nuclear war cannot be won; a nuclear war must never be fought” - has been shown by the Ukraine war to actually mean that ANY war between nuclear-armed peer adversaries cannot be fought because of the danger of escalation to nuclear war.

This brings me to the recent statements by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively calling on nuclear-armed (and presumably nuclear umbrella) nations to “show courage and make the decision to break free from dependence on nuclear deterrence.”

The war in Ukraine has shown the ultimate wisdom of that message.

But the plain fact is that nuclear-armed states and their allies are not going to discard their nuclear weapons – no matter the dangers they pose - without an alternative security paradigm. Otherwise, their fear would be that without nuclear deterrence, the likelihood of war with unbelievably dangerous new hypersonic conventional weapons (enhanced by AI) would be more, not less, likely. To put this another way, our goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons will be futile if we cannot demonstrate to the NWS that it will *not lead to a world where devastating conventional war among great powers is more likely in the absence of nuclear weapons to deter them.*

I am sure that this is not something most of you want to contemplate. But it is an absolute necessity to face if we are to get rid of nuclear weapons. We have to restart the vital work begun at the end of the cold war but then abandoned in the frenzy of globalization and American triumphalism – to move away from a competitive, zero-sum approach to security - which leads to the security dilemma of steps by one side to enhance their defences being perceived as a threat by the other side, leading them to increase their defences and on and it goes, with ever more money spent on weapons that make everyone less and less safe and which divert funding from urgent human security needs, and the international cooperation required to avert climate catastrophe and the destruction of nature in addition to preventing nuclear Armageddon.

As I said at the Global Affairs – CSO arms control consultations at the end of June:

This is not something new; it was really what the Stockholm process of security and confidence-building measures back in 1985 was all about for Europe and which led to the CSCE and then the OSCE, the ultimate aim of

which was to build a truly cooperative security architecture in Europe, but which atrophied for many reasons, not least massive American arms industry lobbying for NATO expansion.

This cooperative security-building effort cannot wait until ideologies align; it is too important and the mutual value is mutual, that is, common security.

And the alternatives are just too dangerous and inhuman as we see every day with the Ukraine war.

So what can Canada do to contribute to this long overdue and ever-more urgent rethinking of security? To answer that I need to first recall the unanimous resolution by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN) in its June 2018 [report on Canada and NATO](#),

Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada take a leadership role within NATO in beginning the work necessary for achieving the NATO goal of creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. That this initiative be undertaken on an urgent basis in view of the increasing threat of nuclear conflict flowing from the renewed risk of nuclear proliferation, the deployment of so-called tactical nuclear weapons, and changes in nuclear doctrines regarding lowering the threshold for first use of nuclear weapons by Russia and the US.

Through this recommendation the National Defence Committee had identified a constructive and timely approach for Canada to begin a long-overdue conversation within NATO on how to move away from the nightmare of mutually-assured destruction (or even worse, the lunacy of nuclear war-

fighting) toward the [vision of sustainable peace and common security](#) grounded in the UN Charter.

And we heard from officials at the consultation that Canada is indeed pursuing a dialogue within NATO although not mentioned in the Government's official response to the Committee's recommendation.

So the immediate work is for Canada to initiate or to enhance the dialogue within appropriate NATO NACD forums so as to quote begin the work necessary for achieving the NATO goal of creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons.... including moving to no first use and eschewing tactical nuclear weapons.

How significant it would be for new members like Finland – and possibly Sweden – to hear NATO engaged in such discussions.

There is no time for Canada to lose, and one practical way that Canada might advance these efforts is to consider hosting, with a European partner, a [Track Two dialogue process](#) with officials in their “personal capacity” or perhaps former officials who have greater flexibility, and academic and CSO experts. This process could potentially energize European publics who have repeatedly demonstrated their concerns over the nuclear threat.

And each and every one of us in Canada has a vital role to play in reminding the government, the public, and the media of the growing nuclear dangers and the urgency of Canadian leadership on concrete steps to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Thank you.