

A Leadership Role for Canada

Presentation to:

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE)
May 31, 2007

*By Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C.
Chairman, Middle Powers Initiative*

I am here representing the Middle Powers Initiative (www.middlepowers.org), which submitted to the recently-concluded first preparatory meeting for the 2010 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty a report, "Towards 2010: Priorities for NPT Consensus." This paper, which I attach as an appendix, summarized seven priorities for action identified by MPI based upon four meetings of the Article VI Forum (New York, The Hague, Ottawa, Vienna) involving 30 invited like-minded states (including Canada). The seven priorities are:

- verified reduction of nuclear forces
- standing down of nuclear forces (de-alerting)
- negotiation of a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty
- bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty into force
- strengthened negative security assurances
- regulation of nuclear fuel production and supply
- improved NPT governance.

MPI thanks the Government of Canada for the support received for the Article VI Forum process, and commends the work of officials in the Foreign Affairs Department, notably Ambassador for Disarmament Paul Meyer. Canada has consistently upheld the need for balanced implementation of the NPT's three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy. But much more high-ranking political leadership is now urgent.

MPI's analysis of the Canadian and other middle power statements made at the NPT preparatory meeting shows that stronger political weight is needed to respond effectively to the present nuclear crisis.

The facts are stark: the total number of 27,000 nuclear weapons is, in the words of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, headed by the Swedish diplomat Hans Blix, “extraordinarily and alarmingly high.” Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan says the world is “sleep-walking” toward nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.

Yet the declared nuclear weapons states are all engaged in efforts to modernize their nuclear arsenals despite the ruling by the International Court of Justice that they must *conclude* negotiations towards elimination. Moreover, India and Pakistan each has an estimated 50-60 nuclear weapons and Israel 200. These three countries do not even belong to the NPT, and all are engaged in modernization. The eight countries now in the nuclear club have a combined population of 3.1 billion, which means that 48 percent of the people in the world live in a nuclear weapons state.

World attention is focused on North Korea, which tested a nuclear weapon in 2006, and Iran, now claiming an ability to move toward large-scale enrichment of uranium. Of course, neither country should be allowed to build nuclear weapons. But these states are flashpoints off of a volcano. The volcano is the present arsenals of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear crisis can be stated in a nutshell: A two-class world in which a few states arrogate unto themselves the possession of nuclear weapons while proscribing their acquisition by any other state is not sustainable.

Where is the voice of Canada in this world crisis? Where is the policy statement by the Government of Canada addressing the totality of nuclear weapons, the paramount security issue in the world? Is there not a two-class standard in criticizing Iran for enriching uranium while remaining silent on the U.K. Government’s decision to extend its Trident nuclear system well into the second half of the 21st century?

The moral, legal and military case against nuclear weapons is better understood than ever before. The intellectual argument – that nuclear weapons are needed for security – is now largely rejected by most states as baseless.

Nuclear weapons opponents recently gained surprising support when four prominent American figures, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry and Sam Nunn, who have all held high posts in the U.S. Administration and Congress, came out for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In an op-ed article in the *Wall Street Journal*, they warned, “The world is now on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era.” Their article, calling for a series of action steps, was in vivid contrast to the negativity displayed by the Bush Administration.

Of 31 votable nuclear disarmament resolutions at the U.N. Disarmament Committee in 2006, the U.S. cast the sole no vote 12 times. Altogether, the U.S. was in a minority of four or less 20 times.

What is Canada doing to work with such like-minded states as the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden) to influence the most powerful country in the world that its policies must be revised to save the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2010? What is Canada doing to press the U.S. to get its tactical nuclear weapons out of the European countries, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Turkey? NATO's continued insistence that nuclear weapons are "essential" flatly contradicts the NPT. Canada cannot have it both ways: to support elimination of nuclear weapons through the NPT, and also support NATO's continued nuclear weapons.

The Canadian government should show a greater sense of urgency in dealing with the over-arching problem of nuclear weapons. This is the point made by Senator Romeo Dallaire who, on April 17, 2007, said: "Why does Canada, as a middle power that does not have any nuclear weapons, not take [a] leadership role and initiate the process to abolish and eliminate these nuclear weapons?" On May 3, he returned to the subject, stating: "It is Canada's moral obligation to assume a proactive leadership role to save the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — our last best hope to stave off a frightening cascade of nuclear proliferation from which there can be no rescue."

His motion, unanimously adopted by the Senate on May 3, urged "...the Government of Canada to take a global leadership role in the campaign of eradicating the dire threat to humanity posed by nuclear weapons." On July 5-7, 2007, the Middle Powers Initiative will join with the Pugwash movement and work with Senator Dallaire in sponsoring an international Extraordinary Workshop, "Revitalizing Nuclear Disarmament," to observe the 50th anniversary of Pugwash. This is a moment for Canada to step forward.