

Motion Urging Government to Take Leading Role in Reinvigorating Nuclear Disarmament—Debate Adjourned

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire, pursuant to notice of March 29, 2007, moved:

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to take a leading role in the reinvigoration of the urgent matter of nuclear disarmament in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at the Preparatory Committee Meetings scheduled to convene April 30 to May 11, 2007 in Vienna which act as a prelude to the next Treaty Review Conference in 2010; and

That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to take a global leadership role in the campaign of eradicating the dire threat to humanity posed by nuclear weapons.

He said: Honourable senators, may I first, before introducing the subject, recognize that in the gallery we still have our ex-colleague Senator Roche and representatives of non-governmental organizations who are involved in the efforts to eliminate the use of nuclear weapons. They have demonstrated an enormous amount of patience, and I applaud them and thank them for staying on and demonstrating that perseverance as we have an opportunity to discuss and present this motion.

I present this motion in regard to non-nuclear proliferation and, ultimately, the eradication of the use of nuclear weapons. Today is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I consider the presence and use of nuclear weapons to be an aberration of human rights. It is also the fiftieth anniversary of the Pugwash movement to control and, ultimately, eradicate the use of nuclear weapons, so it is in that atmosphere that I would like to present this motion.

Nuclear weapons are the most extreme, massive violation of human rights imaginable. These weapons of mass destruction are immoral, indiscriminate, and they violate the right of every human being to basic peace and security.

In its advisory opinion in 1996, the International Court of Justice ruled unanimously that the threat or use of nuclear weapons "would generally be contrary" to humanitarian and other international law regulating the conduct of warfare and that states have a legal obligation to disarm.

Only nuclear weapons can kill hundreds of millions of people in a few hours and potentially bring about the end of life on our planet, and we discussed Kyoto. Contrary to popular propaganda, it is the nature of these weapons themselves that is evil and not certain peoples who may acquire them. Any possession of weapons designed to cause the massive annihilation of human beings is wrong and cannot be made right by specious arguments regarding deterrence. We have reached the point where no single state can operate alone; we must work together to create global security and to prevent global destruction.

The public of Canada and around the world are grossly uninformed as to the dire situation we all face, which has been compared to being asleep at the controls of a fast moving aircraft that is

running rapidly out of fuel. Each day we are threatened with 27,000 nuclear weapons; approximately 2,500 of these are capable of being fired in less than 30 minutes. The number of nuclear-capable states is in danger of increasing well beyond eight or nine, and the potential exists for many regional nuclear arms races.

More than 30 countries, including Canada, are members of alliances that rely on nuclear weapons as part of their security.

The North Korean nuclear test of October 9, 2006, uncertainty concerning Iran's nuclear program, proposed modernization of nuclear weapons at extensive costs and the threat of nuclear terrorism pose new security challenges to us all.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime created in 1970 is in danger due to the following: a failed 2005 review conference — they are held every five years; states that possess nuclear weapons or who refuse to sign the treaty; the 2006 United States-India nuclear deal, which permits India to produce more nuclear weapons; and, a denial by nuclear weapons states to honour their legal obligations to reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals, essentially, to disarm in the nuclear sense. We are poised precariously on the precipice of a frightening cascade of nuclear weapons proliferation.

At the end of January this year, the bulletin of the atomic scientists advanced the hand of its doomsday clock to five minutes to nuclear midnight due to the increased potential of accidental or intentional nuclear exchange. Leading scientists around the globe agree that a nuclear incident is inevitable through deliberate acts or accident. We have narrowly escaped nuclear Holocaust on several occasions due to computer or human error in the past, and trust me when I state that.

Bipartisan, distinguished American cold warriors such as Mr. Schultz, Mr. Perry, Mr. Kissinger and even Mr. Nunn have recently made 180-degree turns and now cry out against the myth of nuclear deterrence and plead for abolition of "the world's most suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal weapons" systems. The moral weight of the Nobel Peace Laureates has been applied recently to an international appeal calling for the reduction of nuclear threat. The warning signs are all there.

(1730)

[Translation]

The world has finally become aware of the threat humans pose to the environment. There are inherent links between the environment and nuclear weapons. Without global security, it is simply impossible to achieve the cooperation that must exist between countries to remedy environmental problems. Scientists agree that a single, isolated nuclear accident could cause irreversible damage to our already fragile climate. If we do not take action immediately, it may become impossible to correct environmental problems. The world must immediately recognize the threat that nuclear weapons pose to the survival of humanity, and to what extent the environment could be permanently destroyed by the use of these weapons. What is more, these weapons are not free.

Since the end of the Cold War, some \$12 billion has been spent on developing technology that is powerful enough to blow up our planet several times over. This disgraceful and immoral waste

of global resources continues to escalate today. Countries that already have nuclear weapons want to modernize them. To what end? Consider how these funds could be used to promote peace and security around the world, if only they were used to feed, educate, care for and create jobs for the less fortunate.

What steps should we be taking? What tools do we have at our disposal? A nuclear non-proliferation treaty — the last, best hope the world has of eliminating the nuclear nightmare — is within reach. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is the most powerful international treaty. In October 2006, the UN General Assembly voted 168 to 4 in favour of abolishing nuclear weapons.

Canada must take a leadership role at the Non-Proliferation Treaty preparatory committee meetings to be held in Vienna from April 30 to May 11, in order to champion not proliferation, but eradication, which is covered by this treaty.

Recently, attention has focused on the threat of proliferation, to the point where people have forgotten the crucial issue of nuclear disarmament. In the treaty, these two issues are inextricably linked. States that do not possess nuclear weapons have agreed not to acquire any, although they still have the right to use peaceful, civilian applications of nuclear technology such as nuclear energy and medicine, whereas states that do possess nuclear weapons have agreed to eliminate their nuclear arsenal. Nevertheless, we are modernizing our nuclear weapons.

Non-proliferation requires disarmament. We have to continue to exert pressure so that states possessing nuclear weapons comply with both aspects of the treaty and, in due course, keep the promise they made more than 35 years ago to disarm. Canada must urge all the other non-nuclear-weapon states to adopt and implement the additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which today constitutes the benchmark for monitoring compliance with the treaty.

Inspections must be carried out, and states that violate the terms of the treaty must be condemned and held to account before the international community. I suggest that we must negotiate the abolition of nuclear weapons by means of a convention like the treaties against land mines and chemical and biological weapons. The treaty simply does not go far enough. It lacks the teeth to enforce the basic expression of our human right to security: disarmament and the destruction of nuclear weapons. It does not prohibit outright the possession of nuclear weapons and makes no reference to their legality. This is not covered in the treaty.

Most member states of the United Nations are calling for immediate negotiations on a convention on nuclear weapons that would ban the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat and even the ultimate use of nuclear weapons. No physical or financial obstacle is preventing us, within a decade or less, from freeing the world from the man-made scourge of nuclear weapons. The only things lacking are moral leadership and political will.

Why does Canada, as a middle power that does not have any nuclear weapons, not take this leadership role and initiate the process to abolish and eliminate these nuclear weapons? In my opinion, we should intensify our efforts to ensure the coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and thereby prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and a possible arms race. Some 177 countries have signed the treaty, but ten more must ratify it for it to come

into force. A treaty banning the production of fissile material for the purposes of weapons production must be negotiated without delay.

Have we really allowed the situation between the United States and India to get to a point where these two countries have ultimately agreed to allow India to increase its stockpile of nuclear weapons and, in doing so, create an arms race in another area of the world that is extremely sensitive to any sort of conflict?

We must intensify our campaign to decrease the alert level of the nuclear arsenal in the United States and Russia and to eliminate the option of launch-on-alert policies in nuclear war plans. This launch-on-alert option determines, in a matter of five minutes, whether the enemy threat of using nuclear weapons is legitimate or not. If the threat is legitimate and real, nuclear weapons are deployed before the enemy nuclear weapons can neutralize them.

We must also encourage all the nuclear powers to adopt non-use policies regarding non-nuclear-weapon States. Why is there such urgency when the cold war is over? Or is there another war we are unaware of and for which these nuclear stockpiles absolutely must be maintained and updated at a cost of billions of dollars?

Especially since the procurement policies of countries with nuclear weapons accommodate processes for creating new, sophisticated, more effective nuclear weapons, if we can look at it that way. It is brazen hypocrisy to ask other countries to give up their nuclear weapons and to forego purchasing others when these weapons are given greater prominence in one's own security policies. The modernization of nuclear weapons for offensive purposes is quite simply scandalous. It is just incredible that the five permanent members of the Security Council are major users and owners of nuclear weapons. They do not see that it would be useful to promote the treaty to eliminate the use of nuclear weapons and therefore these weapons continue to be improved.

We should stop supporting the nuclear policies of NATO, which are incompatible with our obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. On the one hand, we are against nuclear weapons and we say so. On the other hand, we are a member of an organization with a treaty based on the availability of nuclear weapons. There is actually an intolerable contradiction between our commitments under the treaty and our membership in an alliance which gives such importance to nuclear weapons in its security policies.

(1750)

In the post-cold war world, there is no longer any reason to state that nuclear weapons play a vital role within the alliance.

[English]

The nuclear disarmament field is not an easy one in which to work. There is an almost pathological reaction to such a horrific topic, which is, in fact, denial. It is this riddle that can only be overcome with the help of the brave people in the NGO community who have worked selflessly for countless hours, years and, in some cases, decades to save civilization from this weapon of self-destruction.

On behalf of all Canadians, I salute Senator Roche and his colleagues for their ongoing work and for making us aware of the fact that we are living with that threat not only to our security but also to our fundamental ability to live on this planet, for the planet itself is at risk.

What is the way ahead? There is an exciting international campaign underway this month to promote global awareness of the dire threat to humanity by nuclear weapons. I am a proud endorser of the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, and I am excited at working with International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and Mayors for Peace in their attempt to educate a new generation of people about the true nature of nuclear weapons.

I firmly believe that Canada's youth are best suited to be the leading advocates of change. We need to demonstrate that a nuclear weapons-free world is not only within our grasp but is also absolutely essential for our common survival. Nuclear weapons are not an essential requirement of security in this era.

The Canadian launch of ICANw will be announced on April 30. Their website, www.icanw.org, indicates a number of ways that each and every Canadian can participate to make a real difference.

Honourable senators, let me remind you of a bit of history and bring you to the current time with Pugwash, a great little fishing town in Nova Scotia. The Pugwash Conferences on Sciences and World Affairs was founded 50 years ago at the height of the Cold War. In 1957, Canadian industrialist Cyrus Eaton, inspired by the 1955 manifesto of Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, brought scientists from East and West together to his summer home in the village of Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

In 1995, the Pugwash movement and its founder, Sir Joseph Rotblat, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their significant contributions toward the goal of nuclear disarmament.

From July 5 to 7 this summer, the Pugwash Peace Exchange, the Canadian Pugwash Group and the Pugwash Park Commission are celebrating the importance of this piece of Canadian history at Thinker's Lodge in Pugwash, Nova Scotia. They are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the efforts to move this world to a sane plane of nuclear disarmament.

The Middle Powers Initiative, MPI, chaired by Senator Douglas Roche, a former Canadian disarmament ambassador, is a key group of non-governmental organizations that works with middle power governments — of which we are not an insignificant one — to encourage nuclear weapons states to disarm. This July, MPI and Pugwash are co-sponsoring an international conference on revitalizing nuclear disarmament. Would it not be interesting to bring the 1960s "ban the bomb" effort into the modern era?

The Pugwash Peace Exchange is establishing an international peace centre on this hallowed Canadian ground where people of all ages, from all walks of life, and from all corners of the world can come to learn about peace and how they can make a difference. I am very proud to be the honorary patron of this organization, and I am excited to be taking part in these festivities.

To conclude, at the heart of this matter is the frank realization that we must invent a new kind of global security, one not based on erroneous concepts of deterrence which only serve to augment our mutual lack of security. Increasingly, our individual actions have global consequences and only a global solution can possibly extricate us from this horrible predicament of having the ability to literally eliminate ourselves.

In the words of Martin Luther King:

I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation.

We must all learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

I have seen with my own eyes genocide by machete. Although the machete would certainly not be perceived as a weapon of mass destruction, in 100 days it was able to kill 800,000 people. Imagine what nuclear genocide would look like. Any peace based upon the threat of genocide is an immoral bastardization of the concept of peace.

Honourable senators, we have reached a fork in the road of humanity. One path leads to certain apocalypse, the other to a peaceful cooperative world. Let Canada, this leading middle power, blaze the trail down the road of a sustainable future by respecting human rights and doing all in our power to eliminate, to eradicate, to destroy nuclear weapons.

I am not an alarmist. I am a soldier, conscious of the capabilities and the vulnerabilities of those systems. This is the number one threat to the future of mankind. In the past, my warnings have fallen on deaf ears, with tragic results in Africa. I implore each and every person who hears my words today to take them to heart and to learn more, and to take action on the fact that we are more vulnerable to self-destruction in this era than we were in an era that we considered very dangerous, that is, the Cold War.

One advantage of our technological age is that people can make their political voices heard and governments have no choice but to listen or fall. Significant expressions of public concern, both in quality and quantity, can spur governments to increase funding and take actions in response. Our time is running out. The nuclear arms race can have no winner but will lead to the loss of all that we cherish. The very future of our children, grandchildren and the not-yet-born swings in the balance. Surely our destructive capability will not overcome our desire to live, love and prosper. Disarmament is the litmus test of our humanity. We cannot afford to fail in this era. We must not fail, for we are committing genocide upon ourselves.