

**Statement by Alyn Ware,
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Disarmament,**

to the

**House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and
International Development, March 2, 2011**

I wish to thank the Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development for inviting me to speak in the place of Commander Robert Green who unfortunately had to return to his home and family in Christchurch following the devastating earthquake there last week.

Commander Green has just released a book on the subject of *Security Without Nuclear Deterrence*, based on his experience as a Bombardier-Navigator in British Royal Navy Buccaneer nuclear strike jets and anti-submarine helicopters with nuclear depth-bombs, later as a Commander in the UK Ministry of Defence, and finally as Staff Officer (Intelligence) to the Commander in Chief Fleet during the 1982 Falklands War.

Commander Green has personally moved from one who accepted and was part of the implementation of a nuclear deterrence posture – to one who argues that nuclear deterrence should now be rejected because it undermines security, creates instability, provokes proliferation, cannot address the core security issues of the 21st century, can feasibly be replaced by non-provocative defense, is morally repugnant, illegal and financially costly.

I believe that Commander Green's arguments for the rejection of nuclear deterrence are credible and deserve serious consideration. Indeed, a number of countries including my own, which formerly ascribed to or were covered by nuclear deterrence doctrines or security arrangements, have successfully shifted to non-nuclear security.

Commander Green has requested that I draw your attention to an op ed by him on this topic in the current issue of Embassy – Canada's Foreign Policy Weekly.

However, I am not going to argue Commander Green's case today. I am the Global Coordinator of a cross-party network of parliamentarians for nuclear non-proliferation and

disarmament the membership of which includes some legislators who support the immediate rejection of nuclear deterrence and others who believe that nuclear deterrence is important to maintain until we achieve a nuclear-weapons-free world, or at least come close to this goal.

My key point today is that there now exists a possibility – in fact a unique window of opportunity – to make progress towards the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world regardless of whether or not the position of your party or government supports or rejects nuclear deterrence.

The resolutions adopted by the Canadian Senate on June 2, 2010 and the Canadian House of Commons on December 7, 2010 reflects this reality – and also the reality that there is a key role for influential middle power countries like Canada to take leadership in advancing the framework for a nuclear weapons free world through a global nuclear weapons convention.

The proposal put forward by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for States to commence negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or framework of mutually reinforcing instruments, does not require rejection of nuclear deterrence prior to the start of such negotiations. Security issues that are currently addressed, or perceived to be addressed, by nuclear deterrence could be part of the negotiations. This would certainly include any issues relating to the possibility of break-out or non-compliance – such as fissile materials and warhead verification. It might also include parallel negotiations on missile controls, space weapons and security assurances.

At some stage in the negotiations there would need to be a shift to sole-purpose doctrine, i.e. that the only purpose of the existing nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack. Such a shift would allow the conclusion of negotiations and entry into-force of a nuclear weapons convention and its implementation leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons under a phased and verified program of disarmament steps.

The United States has already indicated its commitment to a sole-purpose doctrine in the recent Nuclear Posture Review – and has taken the first step by adopting a policy of ‘primary purpose to deter nuclear weapons.’

There will be difficulties in the negotiations for countries such as Israel and Pakistan – that use their nuclear weapons to counter regional threats that they perceive to be strongly

imbalanced against them. However, such perceived threats could be addressed through binding security assurances.

The Model Nuclear Weapons Convention circulated by UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon as a starting point for negotiations, addresses many of these and other critical issues – and offers possible approaches. The International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, co-chaired by Gareth Evans (former Foreign Minister of Australia) and Yoriko Kawaguchi (former Foreign Minister of Japan), commends the Model Convention, but calls on governments to become more involved in considering the legal, technical, political and institutional elements outlined in the Model Convention in order to develop a working draft for negotiations.

States Parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty agreed in 2010 that “All States need to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons” and noted in this context the UNSG’s Five-Point Proposal for Nuclear Disarmament including the nuclear weapons convention.

In addition, the States Parties expressed their “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons,” and reaffirmed “the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”

The International Court of Justice, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and most recently a gathering of international law experts in Vancouver have indicated that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is not compatible with such law due to the indiscriminate, inhumane and long-term health and environmental effects of any nuclear weapons use.

These developments provide a role for middle power countries like Canada to, not only engage with the nuclear-weapon-States encouraging them to take nuclear abolition steps, but also to work with other like-minded countries to get the ball rolling on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the development of the legal, political, technical and institutional measures to implement this.

Such a process cannot start in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva because of the veto power of any one of the 65 member countries. The Ottawa process for the Landmines Convention and the Oslo process for the Cluster Munitions Convention demonstrate the possibility of a like-minded process. Nuclear weapons are similar to these weapons in being

indiscriminate and thus unable to comply with international humanitarian law. But they differ in other respects – so the process would not be exactly the same.

Finally, to return to nuclear deterrence. I indicated earlier that it is not necessary to reject nuclear deterrence in order to start the negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention. However, the process would be made much easier and achieved much faster if nuclear deterrence – or at least extended nuclear deterrence – was abandoned or quickly phased out.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his five-point-plan calls nuclear deterrence a ‘contagious doctrine.’ If some States continue to assert that nuclear weapons are essential to their security, it provides rationale (however dubious) and political cover for other countries to follow suit, and it prevents the development of comprehensive controls to prevent proliferation also to non-state actors.

In support of the UNSG’s plan, a group of cross-party leading parliamentarians from countries under extended nuclear deterrence relationships released a paper in October 2009 entitled *Implementing the vision for a nuclear-weapon-free world: Time to close the nuclear umbrella*, which argues that regional and global security environments and mechanisms have changed considerably since the end of the Cold War making it now feasible to abandon extended nuclear deterrence and strengthen security through non-nuclear means. The paper thus celebrates the fact that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, representing over 150 parliaments, has endorsed the UNSG’s five-point plan – and calls on parliaments around the world to take further action to help implement the plan. The letter from UNSG to all parliaments in February last year reaffirms the vital role that parliaments have to play in this process.

I thank you most sincerely for your time and I look forward to your discussion of these and related points.

Attached Annex:

Implementing the vision for a nuclear-weapon-free world: Time to close the nuclear umbrella – article by parliamentarians or former parliamentarians from countries allied to the US and which either accept, or previously accepted, extended nuclear deterrence.