

Statement to the Government of Canada

Canadian Pugwash Group

October 23, 1999

The Canadian Pugwash Group expresses appreciation to the Government of Canada for its leadership in advancing the nuclear disarmament agenda. The Government's response to the Parliamentary Committee's report on nuclear weapons was positive, and Canada led the way in seeking a formal review within NATO of the Alliance's policies on nuclear weapons.

The past few months have revealed a deep crisis in nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation regime.

- Meaningful discussions at the Conference on Disarmament are deadlocked, the preparatory conferences for the 2000 Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) have failed, and the Russian Duma has not ratified START II.
- India has announced a military doctrine centering on the deployment of a triad of nuclear weapons. A military coup took over the Government of Pakistan which, like its rival India, successfully tested nuclear weapons.
- A negative vote in the United States Senate on ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has put the long-awaited CTBT into a state of collapse. The NPT is in serious jeopardy. U.S. development of a ballistic missile defence system threatens the continued existence of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

The gravity of the above events must not be under-estimated. With the continued development of nuclear weapons, the refusal of the Nuclear Weapons States to begin negotiations leading to elimination of nuclear weapons, and the breakdown of the CTBT, the world is facing new nuclear arms races.

The gains made in the past decade on reducing the dangers posed by nuclear weapons are being wiped out. Immense dangers to the world lie ahead if the present negative trends are not reversed.

Canadian Pugwash calls first for the Government of Canada to be now seized of a new sense of urgent action. Two steps should immediately be taken:

1. The Government should support the new resolution introduced yesterday into the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). The NAC was formed last year by seven middle power States (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) to seek an unequivocal commitment from the Nuclear Weapons States to start negotiations.

Last year, Canada abstained on the resolution stating it did not want to preempt the findings of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Subsequently, the Committee recommended that Canada cooperate with NATO allies and the New Agenda Coalition in pressing the NWS to "conclude negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons."

The Canadian Government accepted this recommendation and pledged to work with the NAC. Operative Paragraph 1 of the NAC's new resolution states:

"Calls upon the Nuclear Weapons States to make an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to engage without delay in an

accelerated process of negotiations, thus achieving nuclear disarmament to which they are committed under Article VI of the NPT."

The time has come for Canada to vote for this resolution, not abstain. There is nothing in the resolution that contradicts Canadian policy. It is both logical and urgent that Canada vote "yes."

2. A "yes" on the NAC resolution will strengthen Canada's request to NATO to review its nuclear weapons policies.

Although the review was promised at the time of NATO's Washington Summit in April, 1999, the three Nuclear Weapons States of NATO, the U.S., the U.K., and France, are reported not to want such a review. They are insisting on the maintenance of NATO's Strategic Concept that says that nuclear weapons are "essential." This policy flies in the face of the findings of the International Court of Justice which unanimously declared that negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons must not only be pursued but concluded.

Canada and Germany are regarded by the non-nuclear members of NATO as strong enough to stand up to the nuclear powers. The non-nuclear members are looking for leadership. The Canadian people want their government to play a leadership role.

It is time for the Government of Canada to hold public hearings in Canada on the views of the Canadian people on NATO's retention of nuclear weapons. NATO's secret decision-making process is no longer acceptable.

The urgency of the world situation today demands that Canada work to save the 2000 NPT Review Conference by:

- Supporting the New Agenda Coalition resolution.
- Holding public hearings in Canada focussed on policies of NATO on nuclear weapons.