

The following letter was sent from the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Senator Douglas Roche, Canadian Pugwash and Professor Mel Watkins, Science for Peace in response to a letter to Prime Minister Chrétien concerning the joint seminar ***The NPT, NATO and Canada: The Future of Nuclear Weapons.***



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Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

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The Honourable Douglas Roche, Senator  
Chair  
Canadian Pugwash Group  
c/o The Senate of Canada  
Room 202, Victoria Building  
140 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Roche:

The Prime Minister has forwarded to me a copy of your letter of March 22, 2000, co-signed by Prof. Mel Watkins, past President of Science for Peace, concerning the March 18 Canadian Pugwash Group and Science for Peace joint seminar *The NPT, NATO and Canada: The Future of Nuclear Weapons*. I regret the delay in replying.

As you are aware, the Canadian government is convinced that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the most effective international instrument to achieve Canada's fundamental objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and to ensure peaceful, non-explosive uses of nuclear energy. We firmly believe that future global stability and security depend on the implementation by the international community of all the obligations of the NPT. You will recall that Canada was one of the most active countries in the process of extending indefinitely the NPT five years ago, and I can assure you that it spared no effort to ensure the positive outcome of this year's NPT Review Conference.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference concluded successfully with the adoption by consensus of a Final Declaration on May 20. This outcome is extremely good news. It defied expectations during the run-up to the Conference when the range of recent challenges to the NPT regime—including nuclear testing by India and Pakistan, defeat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the US Senate, and uncertainty about the future of the ABM Treaty—made success appear, at best, a distant possibility when the 187 States parties met to review the Treaty in New York from April 24 to May 19. The 2000 Review Conference was only the third of the six such conferences held since 1975 to achieve consensus on a final report—and one of considerable substance.

Canada went into the Conference with four main objectives: to promote and protect the Treaty's universality; to secure agreement on a non-proliferation and disarmament action plan for the 2000-2005 review period; to achieve a more robust NPT review and assessment process; and to generate the political will for real progress on non-proliferation and disarmament by enhancing the NPT's public profile. All four objectives were fulfilled.

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One positive consensus outcome, which included strong language on South Asian nuclear testing, raised compliance issues involving Iraq and the DPRK, and called by name on the four remaining non-signatories—Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan—to adhere to the Treaty, key elements in maintaining the credibility of the NPT regime and thus promoting and protecting its universality. Another was inclusion in the Declaration of an "unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapons States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals", accompanied by a credible action plan for the next five-year period, including commitments to moving forward on CTBT entry into force and the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Canada also lobbied like-minded countries and the Conference President to win adoption of an improved review process that promises greater accountability by explicitly structuring the work of the Preparatory Committees and Review Conferences and includes, at Canada's insistence, institutionalized access for NGOs. This latter achievement, as well as the precedent-setting participation of members of the NGO community in the national delegations of Canada and of several other countries, advanced the engagement of civil society, which is key to enhancing the NPT's political profile.

While Canada worked hard to advance all these goals through vigorous diplomacy in the run-up to the Conference and active participation in all aspects of its work, our role as chair of the Conference's Subsidiary Body 2 on regional issues (including the Middle East) was decisive. Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, Mr. Christopher Westdal, personally brokered the compromise language on Iraq's non-compliance that brought the Conference to a successful end nearly 24 hours after its scheduled conclusion. Our role in brokering an agreement on regional issues was universally appreciated as fundamental to the Conference's success.

The global non-proliferation and disarmament regime still faces tough challenges, but the agreement that 187 NPT state parties reached on May 20 is a big step in the right direction.

As always, I appreciate your concern and the contribution that you make to Canada's efforts in this important sphere.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Axworthy

c.c. Prof. Mel Watkins