

Minister
of Foreign Affairs



Ministre
des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

MAY 29 2007

Dr. Adele Buckley
Chair
Canadian Pugwash Group
6 Tepee Court
Toronto, Ontario
M2J 3A9

Dear Doctor Buckley:

Thank you for your letter of March 16, 2007, concerning Canada's nuclear policy and participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). I regret the delay in replying to you.

Canada has a long-standing commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (NACD). The *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT), of which Canada is a State Party, serves as the codification of the values and norms around which Canada's nuclear NACD policy is based. Canada has consistently promoted and supported universal adherence to the NPT and is committed to exploiting all opportunities to enhance and strengthen the NACD regime, of which the NPT is a key element. We will continue to press for further major reductions in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States and to reinforce the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime through the implementation of those mechanisms and instruments that will contribute to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Our commitment is equally strong for the other two pillars of the NPT – non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For the NPT to continue to make a relevant and indispensable contribution to the NACD regime, equal emphasis must be placed on all three pillars.

Within NATO, Canada has been a strong supporter of efforts to ensure the Alliance continues to uphold the global NACD regime. Non-nuclear NATO allies, including Canada, participate with nuclear nations in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group. The Group met in plenary on May 3, 2007, and will meet at the level of Defence Ministers in June. This forum provides a unique opportunity to influence the development of the Alliance's nuclear policy. NATO's nuclear policy, set out in the Alliance's Strategic Concept of 1999, describes the fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear forces as "political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They will continue to fulfill an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to military aggression."

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The Alliance is committed to reducing its nuclear forces and Canada is a strong supporter of this objective. As you note in your letter, in December 2000, Canada, along with Germany, was one of the most vocal proponents of NATO's decision to endorse the 13 Practical Steps towards disarmament from the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Thus, all NATO members (as NPT States Parties) and the organisation itself have accepted the commitments in the document. NATO's contribution to nuclear disarmament has been significant. NATO has reduced the number of weapons available for its sub-strategic forces in Europe by over 85 percent. In addition, all nuclear weapons for surface maritime forces have been removed.

Another important sign of Canada's action on this front is our voting record on the "Towards a nuclear-weapons free world" resolution tabled annually each fall at the United Nations General Assembly's First Committee. The resolution calls upon the nuclear weapon states to accelerate the implementation of the 13 Practical Steps Towards Nuclear Disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. First introduced in 1998, the resolution quickly built momentum with the exception of NATO countries who initially voted against it. However, as of the 2005 session, a majority of NATO states, including Canada, have voted in favour of it. This is a tangible sign of Canada's commitment, as well as that of many allies, towards nuclear disarmament.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and share your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter G. MacKay", written in a cursive style.

Peter G. MacKay