

From: dnd_mdn@forces.gc.ca
Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2008 11:42 am
Subject: Preventing Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Promoting Nuclear Disarmament
(Canadian Pugwash Group Statements)
To: Walter.Dorn@rmc.ca
Cc: CIMSOPER@pco-bcp.gc.ca, Bernier.M@parl.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Dorn:

Thank you for your correspondence calling for the declaration of a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering the Arctic and expressing concern over possible nuclear co-operation with India.

As you are aware, Canada made the decision at the beginning of the atomic age not to become a nuclear-weapon power, and ever since, our objective has been the non-proliferation, reduction, and elimination of nuclear weapons. We have pursued this objective steadily, persistently, and energetically in a variety of forums, consistent with our membership in NATO, our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in a manner sensitive to the broader international context.

The Government is firmly and actively committed to the protection of Canada's security and sovereignty in the North and, as such, takes an interest in all initiatives that might contribute to this objective. The declaration of nuclear-weapon-free zones could help promote peace and security, but only if a number of key stipulations are met. They include:

agreement of all concerned states in the region;
arrangements to ensure adequate verification and compliance of the declaration; and
international recognition.

To succeed, any treaty declaring a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Arctic would also need to address issues related to existing security arrangements and possible impacts on the rights of states under international law. In light of the realities of the current security environment, Canada is not pursuing the declaration of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the North.

With respect to the proposed United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, and Canada's role as a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, I note that you have also written to the Honourable Maxime Bernier, who is responsible for Canada's international relations.

Once again, thank you for writing. I appreciate being made aware of your concerns and trust this information is of assistance.

Sincerely,

Peter G. MacKay
Minister of National Defence
c.c. Office of the Prime Minister ; The Honourable Maxime Bernier, P.C., M.P. Minister of
Foreign Affairs