

Minister  
of Foreign Affairs



Ministre  
des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

APR - 3 2008  
AVR

Walter Dorn, Ph.D.  
Chair  
Canadian Pugwash Group  
215 Yonge Boulevard  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5M 3H9

Dear Doctor Dorn:

The Office of the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister, has forwarded to me on November 27, 2007, a copy of your letter, (Folder: 635004), concerning the U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement and the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone treaties for the Arctic. I regret the delay in replying to you.

The Government of Canada is closely following developments related to the U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. Potential civil nuclear energy cooperation between the U.S. and India is a complex issue which requires careful consideration given its potential implications for the non-proliferation regime.

Although finalization of the text of the U.S.-India agreement is an important development, several additional steps are necessary before the U.S. and India can engage in nuclear cooperation. These include conclusion of negotiations between India and the International Atomic Energy Agency on a safeguards agreement and consensus agreement in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to allow for nuclear trade with India.

Since the mid-1970s Canada's national policy and our subsequent multilateral undertakings have prohibited nuclear cooperation with India. Although no formal proposal yet has been made, Canada, as a member of the NSG, would consider a proposed exemption for India from the Nuclear Suppliers Group Guidelines with caution, but with an open mind. An important consideration in reviewing the proposed exemption will be to ensure that the initiative does not undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Canada welcomed recent steps taken by India in the context of its agreement with the U.S., to adhere to more nuclear non-proliferation norms. However, we believe that India could do more to join the international non-proliferation and disarmament mainstream.

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Canada

Canada remains committed to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Strengthening the NPT and assuring its ongoing integrity and viability is a fundamental aspect of our commitment.

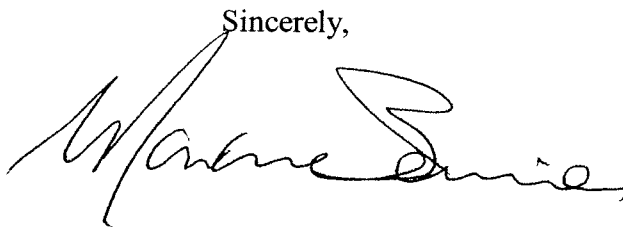
You also raise the issue of the creation of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Arctic. Canada made the decision not to become a nuclear weapon power at the beginning of the atomic age and, ever since, our objective has been the non-proliferation, reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. We have pursued this objective steadily, persistently and energetically in a variety of fora, 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 can help to promote the cause of peace and security, but only if a number of key conditions are met. These conditions include the agreement of all states concerned in the region, arrangements to ensure adequate verification and compliance of the declaration, as well as international recognition.

To be successful, any treaty declaring a nuclear weapon free zone in the Arctic would need to address a number of complex issues related to existing legal provisions, regional and international security arrangements and guarantees, and possible impacts on the rights of states under international law. Recognizing the realities of the international security environment, Canada is not pursuing any declaration of a nuclear weapon free zone in the North.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxime Bernier', written in a cursive style.

Maxime Bernier