

Middle Powers Initiative Forum – New York, April 26, 2004

"Canada and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty"

Mr Paul Meyer, Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament

1. I welcome the opportunity to speak as part of this MPI forum on the theme of "Ensuring Full Implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty". This title nicely sums up our objective at this Third Prepcom getting underway today and the May 2005 Review Conference. Canada considers the NPT as crucial to its own and global security and believes that all member states need to be energetic and proactive in its defence.

2. For Canada, this treaty represents both the bedrock of an international security environment we have depended on for the last 30 years as well as the foundation of much of Canada's non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (NACD) policy. The concept of drawing a line on nuclear proliferation, while pressing for nuclear disarmament is central to both the NPT and to Canada's view of how the international community should advance towards the goal of a nuclear weapon free world. Official Canadian policy, as set out in the Government's statement of 1999, is clear and unequivocal on this point: "The objective of successive Canadian Governments has been and remains the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

3. The NPT provides a uniquely widely supported and legally-binding framework for achieving this goal. The NPT, however, has suffered recently serious blows to its authority.

On the non-proliferation side, there has been the unprecedented withdrawal from the NPT by the DPRK and explicit pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. There have also been revelations of similar violations by NPT States Parties of solemn obligations under the Treaty. On the disarmament side, the multilateral negotiating forum of the Conference on Disarmament remains in an impasse, waiting upon certain nuclear weapon states to complete policy reviews. Progress has been minimal or non-existing on several of the specific disarmament measures set-out in the 13 Steps of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and some states give the impression that they have forgotten altogether what they agreed to at the last Review Conference or else contest the continued validity of these objectives. In our view, compliance with the NPT has to be "comprehensive" covering all its interlinked commitments and we can not expect to sustain its high authority if we are selective in our calls for implementation.

4. We are also of the opinion that it would be a serious mistake of the NPT community to shrug off these recent shocks to the system as representing isolated episodes that will have no long term consequences or to take the integrity and power of the Treaty for granted. In our mind, the compliance problems the Treaty has experienced are symptomatic of serious pressures and vulnerabilities of the NPT regime that demand corrective action if we are to ensure the viability of the Treaty. Active measures taken now by the NPT's 188 States Parties can play a major role in curbing the drift towards nuclear proliferation as well as the drift away from nuclear disarmament. The current Prepcom, with its mandate to try and achieve consensus recommendations for the Review Conference, is a key opportunity to bring forth our ideas and seek to interest the NPT membership in them. We consider that the Prepcom has a crucial role to play in helping to prepare the substance as well as the procedures of the Review Conference. Let me mention some particular initiatives Canada intends to pursue with like-minded company. These are all grounded in the "permanence with accountability" concept that underlay the Treaty's indefinite extension almost a decade ago, and which we continue to view as a complementary bargain to the 'grand bargain' of the Treaty's inception.

a) **Reporting:** We have worked since the 2000 RevCon agreed - in step 12 of the 13 steps - to encourage the submission of regular, in our view this should be read as annual, reports by all NPT members. This is a positive exercise of participatory democracy on behalf of the Treaty goals. It provides a basis for assessing progress on implementation, to compare the relative efforts of different states, to promote transparency and the practice of accountability for all States Parties. We consider it prudent at this juncture not to be overly prescriptive about form or specific content, although our working paper provides suggestions in this regard, but rather to emphasize participation and the role of reports. We will continue to encourage more countries to submit, recognising that as rates of participation increase and more substance is conveyed, positive pressure will build on others, especially the NWS to be forthcoming (although to be fair some of these have provided considerable information albeit informally). These annual submissions can also over time become a valuable input into a revamped process involving annual meetings.

b) **Rectifying the Institutional Deficit of the NPT:** The NPT is the poor cousin of international NACD agreements in many ways, no Governing Council, no dedicated implementing organisation (the IAEA is limited to certain aspects and its membership is not coterminous with that of the NPT), no secretariat and no annual meeting of States Party. We think the shocks to the NPT's integrity of the last couple of years demonstrates the necessity for the Treaty membership to be able to convene and exercise its collective decision-making power more than once every five years. Accordingly, building on earlier ideas, we are suggesting that a new arrangement be put into place that would establish annual conferences of States Parties, of one week's duration, to consider all matters relating to the Treaty's implementation, with a standing 5 person bureau which would be empowered to convene emergency sessions of the Conference when circumstances warranted. We would envisage the UN's Department of Disarmament Affairs continuing to support this reconfigured pattern of meetings as it does the existing preparatory process which it would replace. The quinquennial Review Conferences would remain, with their preparation being undertaken by the last one or two preceding annual meetings. Such an arrangement would empower the Treaty membership; providing for an annual forum in which to comment on the state of health of the Treaty as well as for some basic rapid reaction capability to respond to assaults on the Treaty and its authority.

c) **Civil Society Participation:** Canada submitted a working paper on NGO participation in the NPT review conference at the 2003 Prepcom. This was a detailed paper with a series of practical options set out for consideration. We do not think that this paper needs to be reiterated or revised, we intend, however, to continue to draw attention to its ideas and seek to promote their acceptance by the NPT community. In terms of the Canadian delegation, we will continue our leading-edge practices of interaction with civil society actors at the Prepcom and our example of NGO participation within our own delegation.

5. Our aim for all of the above suggestions, is to see them the subject of appropriate decisions at next year's Review Conference. It will be important in this regard, for these ideas to be supported by States Parties at this Prepcom and in the months leading up to the May Review Conference. Civil society representatives also have a key role to play in generating support for these measures and I hope we can count on your partnership in advancing them. In our view, the adoption of these measures at the Review Conference would go a long way to reinforcing the Treaty's authority and vitality in the face of serious challenges to the NPT.

Thank you.