

Canadians Call for End to Nuclear Weapons in NATO

We are Canadians engaged in the study of the diplomatic, security, physical, health, environment and legal implications of the use of nuclear weapons. We reject policies of reliance on nuclear weapons' threats and use for security.

We are alarmed at Canada's continuing support for NATO policies which permit the threat and possible use of nuclear weapons. These policies disregard the massive human, environmental and economic catastrophe that would result should even a small nuclear weapon be exploded. The destructive power of an average nuclear warhead is roughly 20 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb.¹

These policies fail to respect the most authoritative statement of law on nuclear weapons delivered in 1996 by the International Court of Justice. It confirms that, for all practical purposes, the use, and threat of use, of nuclear weapons are illegal. The Advisory Opinion also concludes unanimously that "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."²

We are strong supporters of the obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the "NPT") to eliminate nuclear weapons and the 13 Practical Steps agreed upon in the year 2000. Although Canada has retained its "seat at the table" in NATO since the date of that opinion over 10 years ago, we see no evidence of Canada having success in calling for progress toward nuclear disarmament and an end to NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons. NATO's policies currently include:

- the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons³
- the possible first use of nuclear weapons⁴
- the deployment of nuclear weapons in, and plans for their use by non-nuclear weapons states ("nuclear sharing")⁵
- continued planning for the use of nuclear weapons⁶

Thus NATO's current policies are in absolute contradiction to the obligations undertaken by NATO states within the NPT regime.

We are equally disturbed by current American policies on nuclear weapons and the implication this may have for NATO. American policy currently anticipates:

- the retention of nuclear weapons on high levels of alert status⁷
- the development of new nuclear weapons⁸
- the use of nuclear weapons against chemical and biological attack⁹
- the use of nuclear weapons against certain named non-nuclear states¹⁰

The planning for nuclear use and the execution of such a plan may make officials and parliamentarians responsible liable to prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We therefore call upon the Government of Canada to call on all NATO states for a review of NATO's strategic doctrine, specifically requesting:

- 1) the development by the NWS states within NATO of concrete plans - with specific timetables - for implementing their disarmament commitments as called for by former Secretary General Kofi Annan on November 26, 2006;
- 2) an end to reliance on nuclear weapons in planning by all NATO states to bring NATO into compliance with international humanitarian law; and
- 3) unilateral action by NATO in removing and dismantling all nuclear weapons assigned to NATO in Europe
- 4) discussions on the viability of the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone for Europe.

An announcement by NATO that their member states will no longer maintain nuclear weapons for security would be a very significant step forward. NATO would not serve as a model for those seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. The dismantling of NATO's nuclear weapons would serve to remove targets from terrorists. And it would be strong evidence of NATO members showing "good faith" in their compliance with the disarmament obligation under the NPT.

This statement has been endorsed by the individuals listed below the Footnotes.

FOOTNOTES

1. “NUCLEAR WAR: Consequences of Regional-Scale Nuclear Conflicts”, Owen B. Toon, Alan Robock, Richard P. Turco, Charles Bardeen, Luke Oman, Georgiy L. Stenchikov, *Science* 2 March 2007: Vol. 315. no. 5816, pp. 1224 - 1225
2. Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996 on the Legality of the Threat and Use of Nuclear Weapons located at: <http://www.icjij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=4&k=e1&case=95&code=unan&p3=4>
3. NATO’s strategy documents indicate the continuing reliance of those states on nuclear weapons rather than their compliance with the legal requirement to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons. More specifically, the North Atlantic Council met in Washington, DC on April 23rd and 24th, 1999 and the resultant Alliance Strategic Concept approved of the following:

“62. The fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They will continue to fulfil an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies’ response to military aggression. They demonstrate that aggression of any kind is not a rational option. The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States; the independent nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, which have a deterrent role of their own, contribute to the overall deterrence and security of the Allies.” (underlining inserted)

Such retention is a clear breach of the agreement set out in the “13 Practical Steps” agreed upon within the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and of Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), under which all states are obligated to negotiate an agreement for the elimination of nuclear weapons. NATO has not decreased its arsenal in the last 10 years.

4. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter permits self-defence only in response to an armed attack. First use would also breach the legal prohibition on disproportionate responses during warfare.

5. “Nuclear sharing” is a breach of Articles 1 and II of the NPT.

6. Despite the clear legal requirement to negotiate an agreement for the elimination of nuclear weapons, NATO’s Ministerial Meeting of the Defence Planning and Nuclear Planning Group met in Brussels and issued a Final Communique on June 8, 2006 in Press Release (2006)063

6. At our Nuclear Planning Group meeting, we reviewed the status of NATO’s nuclear forces and

other related issues and activities. We re-affirmed that the fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. In keeping with this goal, we continue to place great value on the nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO, which provide an essential political and military link between the European and North American members of the Alliance. We recalled that NATO's nuclear forces are maintained at the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability. We noted with appreciation the continuing contribution made by the United Kingdom's independent nuclear forces to deterrence and the overall security of the Allies, and reaffirmed the value of this capability. The dangers inherent in the growing risk of nuclear proliferation underscore the importance of NATO maintaining a credible and flexible deterrent posture.

7. In this regard, we note that deterrence and defence, along with arms control and non-proliferation, will continue to play a major role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives. We reaffirmed our full commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation efforts and an essential basis for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In this context, we expressed serious concern over the possible consequences for security and stability, resulting from instances of non-compliance with the Treaty. We call again on all countries to abide by their commitments in this domain.

Such planning is a breach of the obligation undertaken in Step 9 of the “13 Practical Steps” wherein states agreed to take steps for “A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies....”

7. This breaches the agreement with the 13 Practical Steps of 2000 that they would “further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems”.

8. Such planning is a breach of the Art.. VI disarmament obligation under the NPT.

9. Such planning breaches the legal requirement that a military response must be proportionate.

10. Such use breaches the negative security assurances given by the nuclear weapons states to get the NPT extended in 1995. These threats fuel the desire by non-nuclear states to acquire these weapons. United Nations Security Council resolution 984 can be located at:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N95/106/06/PDF/N9510606.pdf?OpenElement>

Endorsing Groups and Individuals

Groups

Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians/ Alliance de Canadien/nes juif/ves concerné/es

Les Artistes pour la Paix*

Canadian Federation of University Women

Svetlana S. MacDonald, Clerk, on behalf of Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

Ray Morris, on behalf of Kairos Committee, Salmon Arm

Physicians for Global Survival

Project Ploughshares

Project Ploughshares Calgary

Project Ploughshares Fredericton

Religions for Peace Canada

Science for Peace

Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (Saskatchewan)

Audrey Tobias on behalf of Veterans Against Nuclear Arms, ON-QUE Region

Voice of Women for Peace (Ontario)

World Federalist Movement - Canada

**Les Artistes pour la Paix, although in agreement to sign this appeal, oppose Canada's participation in NATO.*

Individuals

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