Second Session of The Preparatory Committee For The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

GENERAL DEBATE

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Seconde Session du Comité Préparatoire de la Conférence d'examen du Traité de Non Prolifération Nucléaire de 2005

DÉBAT GÉNÉRAL

Intervention de M. Christopher Westdal
Ambassadeur auprès des Nations Unies et de la Conférence du Désarmement.

Genève, le 29 avril 2003
Congratulations, Ambassador Molnar, on your election. We have hope and confidence in your skill. We have been much impressed by the high quality of your preparations. We will do all we can to help you succeed.

This year we are meeting in very serious times. Of immediate concern to States parties, the norms of our Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty face sharp challenges. As we confront these challenges and reinforce measures to contend with them, we take heart that this Treaty has already demonstrated its lasting value. The Chairman’s Factual Summary last year, in its first words, reaffirmed the Treaty as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament; preserving and strengthening it are vital to international peace and security. We must all, however, make manifest our continued strong support for the regime.

Since we last met, the Treaty has gained a new adherent, one long-awaited. Canada is happy to welcome Cuba into the NPT family. We look forward to Cuba’s constructive participation in the work of this meeting, and to working with all States parties towards an outcome in 2005 that reinforces the values we all share. We also welcome Cuba’s ratification of the Treaty Tlatelolco, which brings to full membership the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of Latin America and the Caribbean. With Cuba’s accession, the NPT is one step closer to universality.

It is time for the last few steps to be taken. We reiterate our call to India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. A hard security analysis tells us that proliferation of nuclear weapons diminishes, rather than enhances, our individual and collective security. Countries accept international obligations such as the NPT’s because they believe this contributes to their own security.

Mr. Chairman, Canada profoundly regrets the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s recent announcements and actions. These are matters of global importance and of concern which all NPT States parties have clear responsibility to address. We deplore the violation by the DPRK of solemn Treaty obligations assumed of its own volition as a sovereign state. We recognize that various bilateral and multilateral efforts will be essential in resolving this issue, and applaud recent diplomatic initiatives to that end. Pending the resolution of this issue, the DPRK must halt unsafeguarded operations of its nuclear facilities and refrain from reprocessing spent fuel. Speaking from this platform, I appeal to the DPRK on behalf of Canada to reconsider its recent NPT decisions and to fulfill all the obligations of Treaty adherence.

Indeed we are all bound by just those obligations. We member States have repeatedly overcome conflicting priorities and unpromising international contexts. The indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 – far from a foregone conclusion – was achieved. A consensus outcome for 2000 – deemed unlikely – was secured. In each case the process by which we review and maintain this Treaty was strengthened. These achievements arose from the active, constructive engagement of all States parties, Mr. Chairman and so will a positive outcome in 2005.

Mr. Chairman, given their long-term implications, the challenges we face are starker than ever: non-adherence by outsiders with nuclear ambitions; non-compliance; potential
threats of nuclear terrorism; erosion of several agreed steps toward nuclear disarmament; change in strategic doctrine foreshadowing the potential design and development of new or modified nuclear weapons; conflation of WMD threats inconsistent with the spirit and letter of vital negative security assurances; and insistent questions in key quarters about the reliability of verification inspections, upon which reliability this Treaty and the regime it sustains are based.

In the face of these difficulties, it is heartening that we are not alone and can seek the partnership, collaboration and guidance of other institutions. Non-compliance of States parties with their obligations is as well a matter for the IAEA and, ultimately, for the Security Council. Indeed, non-compliance may require new, creative mechanisms, along with criteria for their use. The role of verification is in fact critical. Above all, we must address the problem of non-compliance in ways that reinforce rather than undermine multilateral verification regimes. Verification is an essential element in the integrity of the NPT; without independent verification there can be no confidence in the compliance of our partners and no means for each of us to demonstrate our compliance. For the verification of nuclear activities, and of compliance with this Treaty, the proven expertise and experience of the IAEA, mandated by Article III, are paramount. The IAEA is as strong as the commitment of its member States. I reiterate Canada's strong support for the IAEA's execution of its verification function under the NPT and to voice our full confidence in the Agency's performance.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 achieved permanence with accountability. Building upon this promise, the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference included among its 13 Practical Steps toward disarmament a twelfth step calling for regular reports. Some see such transparency as an additional burden. We see it as a boon to security for all: not only in providing information to facilitate our dialogue, but in helping us measure our fulfilment of our own obligations and monitor compliance, posing questions and addressing concerns. To begin to explore and develop the evident potential of reporting, Canada submitted a Working paper to the Preparatory Committee last year. Since then, we have consulted with interested States parties and have submitted a second Working paper to aid further reflection. The main findings of our consultations are that States parties value reports and want to make better use of them. We are confident that that value and better use will be evident through the course of this Preparatory Committee. I encourage all to draw on the information presented to stimulate our deliberations. Further elaboration and clarification of reporting would be a valuable outcome from the 2005 Review Conference.

For its part, Canada has once again submitted its own report, covering all aspects of the Treaty, reflecting our conviction that the Treaty is indivisible, its parts immutably interdependent.

I now turn to another key facet of transparency and accountability, the interaction of Treaty members with civil society, including the participation of NGOs with the strengthened review process itself. As in the past, we have included Canadian NGO representatives as members of our delegation. We look forward to hearing the insights of NGO representatives at this meeting and to participating in the events they have planned on its margins. As anticipated last year, Canada will circulate for consideration of States parties a comparative
analysis of NGO participation in the NPT review process and suggestions for its optimization.

Mr. Chairman, we must acknowledge that the regime is not perfect. Neither complete disarmament nor non-proliferation have been achieved. This does not, however, grant any state the license to acquire nuclear weapons. The discrimination inherent in the Treaty can only be supported over time through credible progress leading to the fulfilment of all aspects of its fundamental promises of disarmament, non-proliferation and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They are equal in importance, warranting equal attention and action.

There is no mystery about what needs to be done, whether in disarmament or in non-proliferation. As regards disarmament, we recall the unambiguous undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons and stress the need for action to fulfil the Steps agreed in May 2000. We could bring the CTBT into force, for a start, and, at long last, negotiate an FMCT. Pending their achievement, there must be comprehensive moratoria on testing and production.

As regards non-proliferation, an unacceptably large number of non-nuclear weapon States have not concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA; Canada calls upon them to do so as soon as possible. As well, all States parties should bring into force an Additional Protocol, which has become the current safeguards standard and natural fulfilment of Article III.

We should also reach early final agreement on a well-defined amendment strengthening the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), conduct all nuclear activities to the highest standards of safety and physical protection, and enact and enforce adequate national legislation and regulations, to ensure the full implementation of Treaty obligations.

Non-nuclear weapon States derive tangible and practical benefit from the Treaty through cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, whether agricultural, medical or industrial. Where Canada can be assured that there will be no contribution to proliferation, we are pleased to share our knowledge and expertise with States parties. We are a major supplier of peaceful nuclear expertise to the world, but our national non-proliferation policy requirements governing nuclear cooperation with other states have been among the strictest in the world for the last three decades. Furthermore, we believe that our participation in the Nuclear Suppliers Group is essential in implementing our nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

Because it is such an important security factor, we must not forget the legal obligation undertaken by non-nuclear-weapon States parties, through their unanimous support for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, committing them indefinitely to nuclear non-proliferation. This was due in large part to the strong political commitment demonstrated on the part of nuclear-weapon States in confirming Negative Security Assurances. Cited in UNSCR 984 (1995), these Negative Security Assurances remain vital security benefits of the NPT. We want a strong and unambiguous reaffirmation of these assurances at this meeting. This is more important than ever.
We welcome the statements by nuclear-weapon States at the 2002 Preparatory Committee meeting reaffirming the objectives of the Treaty and the Final Document of 2000 on the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament is in both our general and our particular security interests. Canada welcomed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, the Treaty of Moscow signed by the United States and the Russian Federation in May 2002, and looks forward to the Treaty’s ratification by Russia and its entry into force. Canada believes that codification, verifiability, transparency and irreversibility are vital in the permanent reduction of nuclear arsenals. This point was also repeatedly expressed in reports submitted to the 2002 Preparatory Committee.

I close, Mr. Chairman. Nuclear weapons are unimaginably lethal, irremediably indiscriminate and uniquely dangerous. The more nuclear weapons there are and the more states possess them, the greater the threat of nuclear catastrophe, accidental or deliberate. The only safe and realistic course is to eliminate them. The NPT is thus the codification of values and norms we need to survive, values and norms which will be around for a long time. For Canada, the question is not whether the NPT with its vital values will stand. It is whether we will stand and live by them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.