

Official Response to the eDiscussion on Non-Proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament
Policy Research Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
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Policy makers at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) have reviewed statements made by participants during the eDiscussion on non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament (NACD). They have also read and considered the views expressed in the nine policy position papers submitted to the site by five different Canadian universities from across the country. Below are responses to the main questions and observations emerged during the debate.

Addressing NACD Threats to Canada
Global Partnership Program

Several participants have noted the gravity of the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the importance of reducing this threat. These weapons could of course be acquired by terrorist groups or states of proliferation concern and used against us.

In recognition of this threat, the G8, under Canada's leadership, launched the [Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction](#). G8 leaders committed to raise up to US \$20 billion over 10 years for projects to address non-proliferation, disarmament and counterterrorism issues, initially in Russia and the Former Soviet Union. Canada has committed up to CDN\$1 billion over 10 years. This is one of Canada's most important security initiatives.

Through the Global Partnership Program Canada is making a concrete contribution towards achieving these goals, by working on the destruction of chemical weapons, dismantling nuclear submarines, improving the security of nuclear and other radiological materials, redirecting former weapons scientists and improving biosecurity and biosafety.

Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)

Another step Canada has taken to combat the proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems, and related technology is through the implementation of the [Proliferation Security Initiative](#) (PSI). Building on existing multilateral non-proliferation efforts, the PSI seeks universal adherence to its Statement of Principles and the active participation of all states that have the capacity and willingness to take steps to stop the flow of such items at sea, in the air or on the land. More than 70 countries have expressed their support for the PSI. The [Canadian Forces](#) are active in maritime interdiction operations, including the surveillance, interception and boarding of commercial vessels to verify, re-direct or impound their cargoes in support of the enforcement of sanctions mandated by the United Nations Security Council or under national laws.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

Several participants noted the necessity for all states to sign the [NPT](#) and desired that Canada should play a leadership role. As stated in the 1999 Government Statement entitled "Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation: Advancing Canadian Objectives", it is primarily the responsibility of those states possessing nuclear weapons to negotiate among themselves the reduction and eventual elimination of their nuclear arsenals. At the same time, all non-nuclear weapon states continue to have a deep and abiding stake in the process. Further disarmament and non-proliferation measures will therefore not be achieved without substantial involvement not only by the nuclear weapon states but by the entire international community. Furthermore, all states must remain committed to all three pillars of the NPT "bargain": non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is preparing for the 2007 NPT Preparatory Commission session of the 2010 NPT Review Conference that will take place in Vienna from April 30 to May 11, 2007. Nominally, the PrepComs are designed to resolve administrative and other non-substantive issues well ahead of the Review Conference in order to allow more substantive discussions to take place. They also allow for ideas and concepts to be developed and discussed in advance of the Review Conference. The most important outcome of the 2007 PrepCom will be the establishment of a positive, constructive and productive tone for future sessions. This environment was lacking at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, which ended without agreement on a substantive outcome. The 2005 meeting

revealed that a number of states were unwilling to work in the spirit of compromise and to display political leadership. It will be important for the PrepCom to achieve (a) firm support for the Treaty by State Parties; and (b) a willingness to compromise in order to make progress on addressing urgent non-proliferation and disarmament issues. Further, Canada is promoting the early entry into force of the [Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty](#) (CTBT) and reaching an agreement on a negotiating mandate for a [Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty](#) (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Several participants also noted concerns of the increasing non-compliance with international treaties. Canada addresses these infractions within multilateral mechanisms and institutions, such as the IAEA and the UN Security Council. Notably, Canada condemned North Korea's announced withdrawal from the NPT in 2003 and its subsequent nuclear test in October 2006 as irresponsible and dangerous actions that seriously undermined both regional peace and stability, and global efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. In response to North Korea's nuclear test, the UN Security Council swiftly approved Resolution 1718, which Canada strongly supports and is fully implementing. We continue to support the framework of the Six-Party Talks and believe it to be the best forum for addressing North Korea's security, economic and political goals. Similarly, Canada has been highly critical of Iran's non-compliance with its NPT obligations and refusal to honour its commitments under the November 2004 agreement to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. As in the case of the DPRK, Canada fully supports UN Security Council resolution 1737 which imposes sanctions on Iran in response to its refusal to adequately address international concerns about its non-compliance issues

Although not without challenges, the Government of Canada views the preservation and enhancement of the NPT and the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime as integral to Canada's national security and to the human security of future generations of Canadians. A world in which states choose to acquire nuclear weapons is inherently unstable and dangerous. The more nuclear weapons there are and the more states that possess them, the greater the threat of nuclear catastrophe, whether deliberate or accidental. The only sustainable strategy for the future is the elimination of nuclear weapons by all states through a progressive reduction.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

In addition to the initiatives taken under the Global Partnership Program, Canada works to strengthen the [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention's](#) (BTWC) norm against biological weapons through the creation of an instrument which will deter and expose activities in violation of the Convention. As well, Bill C-87, the "[Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act](#)", established the Canadian National Authority on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to ensure the effective implementation of Canada's CWC obligations while working in cooperation with the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) (OPCW) in The Hague.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

The eDiscussion participants did not always agree on the need for disarmament of small arms and light weapons. While the Government of Canada recognizes the legitimate interests of legal firearms owners, producers, brokers and retailers, it is the position of the federal government that *illicit* trade in small arms and light weapons has devastating impact on people throughout the world.

Currently over 600 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation throughout the world – more than one for every ten people. An additional 8-10 million are added to the global arsenal each year; such weapons are instrumental in the deaths of more than 350,000 people each year – approximately 1,000 every day. Because we recognize that the proliferation and misuse of small arms hamper humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts, curbing the excessive accumulation of small arms is a priority for Canada at the global, regional, national and community levels.

Canada adopted the politically-binding [UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects](#) (UN Programme of Action) and encourages countries to implement the [International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons](#). As well, Canada also supports, in

principle, the negotiation of a comprehensive, legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which would prevent the illicit flow of conventional arms into conflict zones.

Canada remains active at the regional and sub-regional levels to reduce the humanitarian impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in affected regions. To this end, Canada has supported important regional meetings in Africa, Central America, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. For example, the South Asia Small Arms Initiative, supported by the [Human Security Program](#), brought together civil society groups and governments from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal to work towards a common approach to reduce the spread of small arms. Canada has also supported weapons collection and destruction activities in the Balkans, Africa and the Americas.

Future Initiatives

While governments are the ones that must ultimately decide to bring about the end of nuclear weapons, it is only through the sustained energy, passion and creativity of citizens that we can achieve the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. On an issue as important as nuclear weapons, it is vital that Canadians from the full spectrum of society have the chance to make contributions to our national policy. For many years, the Government of Canada has actively engaged with members of civil society on nuclear issues. In addition to the methods of engagement the Government currently utilizes, such as presentations at universities, formal consultations with academics, NGOs and the private sector, and the inclusion of Canadian NGOs in official Government delegations to NPT meetings, we are eager to have a sustained dialogue with Canadians from all walks of life on NACD issues. New technological advances such as the Internet are providing new alternate means for communicating with a broader spectrum of Canadian society than before. The Government plans to work with the academic community, NGOs and the private sector to determine the best way of maintaining the dynamic engagement and outreach that was featured in the eDiscussion.

In August 2007, Canada will host an informal meeting of states in Geneva to complement the formal UN process on small arms and light weapons. Among other things, the meeting will seek to refine global principles to govern the transfer of small arms and light weapons.