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Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Non-Proliferation: A New Beginning for Canada¹

Canadian Consultation on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament
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On 19th October this year, Canadians took a historic decision in rescuing their democracy and dignity. They charted a way forward that should lead to a restoration of Canada's place in the world as a leader in promoting global and regional security and well-being in a world to be made free of nuclear weapons in our lifetime along with fewer other artefacts of death and destruction.

After a decade in the doldrums of diplomacy, bizarre interventions in international security fora, squandering

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of its well-earned reputation as a ‘helpful fixer’ and a ‘middle power’, hopes abound that Canada will arise phoenix-like from the ashes of near irrelevance on the international stage and reclaim its rightful place in the enlightened community of nations that seek a world without nuclear-armed alliances and without any nuclear weapons.

Incoming Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s “sunny ways” approach. He would be wise to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious father, the late Pierre Elliott Trudeau, in setting out a “new foreign policy for Canadians” that puts “Canada First”; a Canada above out dated Cold War alliances and along the path to a new “strategy of suffocation” – that suffocates nuclear weapons and doctrines out of existence.

The newly renamed Department of Global Affairs (formerly the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – no Canadian federal department has gone through more name changes, yet accomplished so little in the past decade), in recent years has sunk into mindless Facebook-like “follower” mentality under the defeated government. The department sorely needs



revitalization, a new zeitgeist and self-confidence that firmly puts “Canada First” – it no longer should be burdened by the mediocrity and narrow self-serving interests of Washington, Brussels, London and Paris. This is not to advocate a go it alone approach but to stress the need and importance of renewed Canadian leadership based on its unique values of multilateralism, internationalism, multiculturalism, humility, justice and peace.

During the past decade, it not only was a great pity but sometimes also a matter of some embarrassment when Canadian representatives rose to take the floor in disarmament forums in Geneva, Vienna and New York, to utter ideological inanities that no one paid much attention to – ill-advised positions from the (former) Prime Minister’s Office relegated Canada’s voice into insignificance. Compare this with Pierre Trudeau, who in 1966 as a member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, became so annoyed with the instructions from capital on South Africa that he refused to follow them. Sadly, to my knowledge, none of Canada’s storied diplomats has stood up to the nonsense spouted by the Prime Minister’s Office during the preceding ten years that found its way into

Canadian interventions in disarmament forums. Many of us Canadians working for peace and security in the international realm, like me, generally cringed with embarrassment and avoided eye contact with other delegates whenever a Canadian statement was delivered. Though, as reported, the Justin Trudeau government has removed the leashes on the mouths of civil servants, many diplomats still are unsure what to say, as they seem to have lost their compass. Just last week in Vienna, the hapless Canadian delegation was seeking informal views from other delegations regarding its statement concerning the forthcoming IAEA report this week on the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme – not surprisingly it was advised by some that for a change silence from the Canadian desk might be the most appropriate statement! This because over past years bellicose statements by Canada under instruction from (the former) PMO stood out for their vehemence and “aggressive stupidity” as one West European diplomat's characterization (ouch!) – Canada was one of a handful of countries not to welcome but to cast doubt on the 14 July Vienna agreement between the EU/E3+3 and Iran. Civil society representation in Canadian arms control delegations, banished in recent years, also needs to be restored. Along with “happy

ways” it is time to reinvest the global (foreign affairs) department with new blood and new instructions.

Before proceeding further, I would like to dedicate my remarks today to the memory of Mark Moher, Canada’s former Ambassador for Disarmament, who unfortunately passed away in Ottawa earlier this year. Mark was a good friend of mine, a loyal servant of Canada, a stalwart diplomat who did not shy away from speaking truth to power. Mark was an unapologetic Canadian patriot, putting above all Canada’s national security interest, and recognizing that while bilateral and alliance relations were important they could not and did not prevail over Canada’s own national priorities as defined by Canadians. Speaking at an NPT workshop that I had the privilege to organize at the Château de Divonne in France, on 6-8 June 1999, Mark made one of his usual impressive speeches focusing on the importance of nuclear disarmament and said:

“‘The nuclear disarmament agenda’. Simple words, yet words that raise some fundamental questions that from time to time are worth readdressing. First, what do we want to do about nuclear weapons, and, second, what actions do we wish to take?... Collectively we have to

confirm our essential perspective;... if the further discussion of the NPT's future is to be viable, is to answer the question directly, without casuistry, subterfuge, or conditionality: we want to eliminate all nuclear weapons. We should be prepared to reassert and reaffirm this objective...While the primary responsibility rests with the nuclear-weapon States (and the corresponding accountability is also theirs), there must be a way to enable all States to engage responsibly and appropriately in the pursuit of "the nuclear disarmament agenda". This is the rationale behind Canadian advocacy of the need for substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues in the NPT context, in the Conference on Disarmament, and elsewhere...."

We need more Canadian diplomats in the vein of Mark Moher, to speak truth to power forthrightly, to stand up and defend Canadian interests unflinchingly, to fly the Maple Leaf proudly and to exercise Canadian leadership despite opposition – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government should give them the leadership, wherewithal and support to do so.



Though sadly we have lost Mark Moher, I would like to salute the indefatigable dedication and energy of The Honourable Douglas Roche, Officer of the Order of Canada, Senator, Member of Parliament, Ambassador for Disarmament, author of 21 books to date, recipient of eight honorary doctorates, among many other distinctions. I am both humbled and inspired that Doug Roche, like the Energizer bunny “*keeps on going and going*” and has never given up on his dedication and tireless quest for nuclear disarmament. I am deeply honoured to have Doug Roche consider me as his friend for nearly three decades and to have invited me to discuss nuclear disarmament issues with you here today – thank you very much, Doug!

A recent publication that highlighted Doug’s continuing dedication cited him as saying that now is the time to rebuild Canada’s international reputation, to engage vigorously in a United Nations agenda for peace, and the appointment of a distinguished Canadian as ambassador to the United Nations to present a renewed internationalist foreign policy. The publication noted that at 86, Mr Roche is not expecting an invitation, though if one were to come he would not say no. Justin Trudeau, wherever you are, I hope you are listening!

Doug Roche would make a noble UN ambassador and shine a powerful light on the most pressing issues of our time: nuclear disarmament, climate change, regional conflict resolution, growing inequality, among others.

In his 1997 book on nuclear weapons, Doug Roche referred to *The Ultimate Evil*. William Walker, Professor of International Relations at the University of St Andrews, drew attention to the risks of nuclear weapons in his book *A Perpetual Menace: Nuclear Weapons and International Order*, in 2011. Writing at the dawn of the nuclear age in 1946, Bernard Brodie talked about *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order*. While Doug Roche and William Walker noted the dangers of nuclear weapons and the importance of doing away with them, Bernard Brodie discussed the newfound power of atomic weapons and their place in international politics following a catastrophic world war – it is a matter of concern that a new generation of scholars and policymakers are now finding new rationales for nuclear weapons in security doctrines. These days there is a great paucity, a vacuum, in leadership on thinking about nuclear weapons and the existential threat posed by them. The only personage, who is talking sense about the futility of

nuclear weapons, besides Doug Roche of course, is Pope Francis. In his address to the General Assembly on 25th September this year, Pope Francis in speaking truth to power admonished that *“An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction – and possibly the destruction of all mankind – are self-contradictory and an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations, which would end up as “nations united by fear and distrust”. There is urgent need to work for a world free of nuclear weapons, in full application of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in letter and spirit, with the goal of a complete prohibition of these weapons”*.

Earlier in my talk I noted that Canadian arms control diplomacy had lost its moral compass. On 2nd November, just four weeks ago, the great land of Canada cast a thunderous “no” vote in the First Committee of the General Assembly on the resolution on the “Humanitarian Pledge for the Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”. In this negative vote, Canada provided succour to other rogue naysayers, including all NATO member States as well as others in nuclear-armed alliances – heck, even North Korea did not cast a “no” vote, it abstained!

In all 150 of the 193 UN Member States are supporting the humanitarian pledge. Canada just could not bring itself to urge *“all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of their existing obligations under article VI, and call upon all States to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal”*. One might well enquire where are the “happy ways” to follow *“the imperative of human security for all and to promote the protection of civilians against risks stemming from nuclear weapons”*?

The website of Global Affairs Canada declares, *“Canada is concerned about the devastating consequences of a nuclear detonation. We welcomed the 2013 Oslo and 2014 Nayarit Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons as valuable opportunities for fact-based discussions on the issue. (No mention of the Vienna HINW Conference in December 2014?)*

Canada supports a pragmatic and step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament, the last step of which would be a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) to ban

the development, production, use, and possession of nuclear weapons, while setting a clear timeline for irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament. In Canada's view, NPT universalization, entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) are more practical and realistic options to pursue in the short and medium term".

It seems that Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Honourable Stéphane Dion, has yet to issue instructions on the new "happy ways" because the website despite advertising itself as being Global Affairs Canada still carries the verbiage of the previous government to the effect that *"Canadian policy on nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament is led by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), in consultation with other departments and agencies, as appropriate"*. Tear down this terminology, Mr Dion and replace it with the true values of Canada – remember your humanity – recall the words of Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King of 15 November 1945 calling for *"the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction"*.

Canada's voting record at this year's First Committee reflects the previous government's regressive stance. It pretty much either voted "no" or abstained on resolutions pertaining to nuclear disarmament – what a pity? As Ambassador Paul Meyer has pointed out in his op-ed, "Running interference for our nuclear allies" on the humanitarian pledge, Canada along with the nuclear allies voted to maintain "alliance solidarity with the nuclear-weapon States" and rejected the "utility of developing a legal ban on the possession and use of nuclear weapons". Meyer referred to the explanation of vote by Germany on behalf of the umbrella States that *"focusing prematurely on legal measures or perceived legal gaps is not a panacea to our steadfast efforts to proceed with a pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament"*.²

Canada, for its part, co-sponsored the resolution on "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", that renewed *"once again the determination of all States to take united action towards the total*

² Paul Meyer, "Running interference for our allies", EMBASSY, 26 November 2015.

elimination of nuclear weapons, with a view to achieving a safer world for all and a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons” and included several elements from the President’s draft final report from the failed 2015 NPT Review Conference. This resolution echoes the well-worn “step-by-step” approach that has run out of steam – no “happy ways” here.

But all is not lost. The General Assembly will take up the resolutions forwarded by the First Committee on 7th December, next Monday – which should provide just sufficient time for Ottawa to send new instructions to restore sanity to Canada’s voting pattern on disarmament resolutions. Just as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is reversing Canada’s ill-advised policy on the environment and the aerial bombing in Iraq and Syria, he also can reverse Canada’s opposition to the humanitarian pledge and the convention/ban on nuclear weapons and firmly place Canada in the lead – after all, Canada was the first country to renounce nuclear weapons.

With a new Liberal government in office, the wheel should turn full circle. On 10 December 1998, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and

International Trade (SCFAIT) in its report entitled *Canada and the Nuclear Challenge: Reducing the Political Value of Nuclear Weapons in the Twenty-First Century*, made 15 recommendations³. Some of these are still valid today:

Rec.1: That Canada adopts the fundamental principle – that Canada will work consistently to reduce the political legitimacy and value of nuclear weapons....

Rec.3: That Canada intensifies its efforts...to advance the process of nuclear disarmament...[to] encourage the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their unequivocal commitment⁴ to enter into and conclude negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Rec.5: That Canada endorses the concept of de-alerting all nuclear forces.

³ Full disclosure: I contributed to the work of SCFAIT on producing this report.

⁴ Note that Canada was the first to introduce the concept of the “unequivocal commitment”.

On 19 April 1999, the government's response to the SCFAIT report accepted all but one of the committee's recommendations⁵. Many of these recommendations could form the basis of a re-energized progressive Canadian policy on nuclear arms control and disarmament.

The new Government should request a Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons to address the question of nuclear weapons in our age, with particular reference to Canada, and provide an opportunity for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast to make their views known. In line with the new focus on transparency and accountability announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the views of Canadians should

⁵ The recommendation of SCFAIT on not burning MOX in CANDU reactors to dispose of ex-weapon plutonium was rejected by the government, as the CANDU-MOX option was a viable one to contribute to the disposition of weapons plutonium and Canada was willing to proceed but in the end the US backed out for domestic political reasons. Full disclosure: I supported this option and prepared the case for the government for a specific campaign to burn ex-weapon plutonium in CANDU reactors as a safe option contributing to nuclear disarmament. See, for example, Tariq Rauf and Joanne Charnetski, "Swords into Ploughshares: Electricity from Surplus Weapons Plutonium Burn-up in Canadian 'CANDU' Reactors", <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/ionp/swords.htm>.

be duly reflected in Canada's foreign and security policy priorities.

Progressive policies need to be supported by institutions. In the Throne Speech of December 1983, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced the establishment of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS) to work on defence and arms control matters. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney shut down CIIPS in 1992 to save C\$5 million per year. The independent Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament (CCACD)⁶, partly funded by the-then External Affairs Canada, lost its government subsidy in 1995 and shut down.

In contrast, the US Congress in 1984 set up the United States Institute for Peace, as an independent, non-partisan, federally funded research organization. Earlier, in 1968, the US Congress established the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars as a non-

⁶ Full disclosure: I worked at the CCACD from 1986 until its demise in 1995. The Centre took the lead in many Canadian NACD initiatives such as on the NPT, IAEA safeguards, BTWC, CWC, CFE, Open Skies, naval arms control, strategic nuclear arms reductions, Arctic Council, environmental security, human security, etc.



partisan policy forum for independent research, as the official living memorial to the US' 28th president – Woodrow Wilson, the only president of the US with a PhD! (How many of you knew that?) Both of these institutions are thriving and enjoy bi-partisan support even though the two political parties in Washington are at loggerheads on every other matter.

Why do I refer to these US research institutions, as I am not one generally to recommend emulation of the US? It is because; I strongly believe that Canada must have an independent, federally funded, international research institution based in Ottawa to work on Canadian and international security matters. Like its two US counterparts, the Government of Canada should endow a new centre with assured, predictable and sufficient funding as well as a suitable building – one could be put up next to the Canadian War Museum with a view of the Chaudière Falls? And, Justin Trudeau could inaugurate the *Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Centre for Canadian and Global Security* before the conclusion of his first term in office – it is, do-able!

In September 2010, Canada joined in the establishment of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative

(NPDI) to take forward the consensus outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.⁷ Four NPDI countries, Chile, Mexico, Nigeria and the Philippines showed their true mettle and joined the Humanitarian Initiative, but Canada stayed loyal to its umbrella partners in its aversion to it. Unlike the NPDI, the New Agenda Coalition has taken the lead in advancing NPT Article VI “effective measures” to focus on enabling a choice between two legal approaches: the stand-alone Comprehensive Convention/Ban Treaty or the Framework Agreement of mutually supporting instruments. Canada along with some other umbrella and other States favours “building blocks” to complement the “step-by-step” approach, and that the final measure of nuclear disarmament will depend on a prevailing environment of trust and confidence. This approach is no longer feasible, if it ever was – drastic action is the order of the day given the new realities.

A good measure of the new government’s commitment to work towards a world without nuclear weapons

⁷ Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates - Nigeria and the Philippines joined the Initiative in September 2013.

would be for Canada consider jettisoning the NPDI – sarcastically referred to by some as the “New Procrastination and Delay Initiative” – as well as the so-called “building blocks” approaches, and to throw Canada’s weight behind the preponderance of global opinion in defining the elements of a convention/ban treaty. This is the right option and the right time for Canada to take a lead in pursuing a rational and independent policy and to join the mainstream. It is clear, as shown in the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna conferences that any possible residual deterrent utility of nuclear weapons is outweighed by the risks of their retention and accidental use. President Obama’s Prague speech is a distant memory, its vision in doubt; a trillion dollar nuclear modernization is in the offing that will ensure the continuation of nuclear weapons at least to the end of the century.

At the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, held in December 2014, the United States promoted the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) to study ways of verifying nuclear disarmament. The Partnership was formally announced at the Prague Agenda meeting in Prague in December 2014. The

IPNDV now has more than 25 participating States and its work is organized in three working groups: 1. Monitoring and Verification Objectives; 2. On-Site Inspections; and 3. Technical Challenges and Solutions.

The first working group, led by the Netherlands and Italy, will address key monitoring and verification objectives; the second, led by Australia and Poland, will review the lessons learned from various on-site inspections regimes and determine what can be applied to nuclear disarmament verification; and the third, led by the United States and Sweden, will examine technologies that could be used to support future disarmament initiatives.

While this is a laudable exercise, it should not be forgotten that to date there is no agreement or arrangement for the verification of the elimination of nuclear warheads – the INF and START-series of treaties involve verification only of the elimination of launchers (ballistic and cruise missiles and strategic bombers). In more than a decade of work on jointly developing nuclear warhead verification concepts and technologies, the US Los Alamos National Laboratory and the UK Atomic Weapons Establishment still have not been able



to agree on the definition and characterization of a nuclear warhead! The UK-Norway verification exercise involved a simulated not a real nuclear warhead, as such its relevance has been somewhat exaggerated.

The IPNDV offers an opportunity for the new government to reclaim a leadership role in nuclear verification by contributing to the work of the three working groups – and to involve the expertise of civil society as relevant.

As this is an informed audience here today committed to disarmament, I will not discuss several contemporary developments such as the: impasse in Russia-US nuclear disarmament beyond the New START; mutual recriminations between the US and Russia regarding compliance with the 1987 INF Treaty; nuclear modernization; lack of entry-into-force of the CTBT; stasis in the CD; the impact of new advanced conventional technologies (hyper sonic weapons) on the central strategic balance; etc. – these can be taken up in the discussion.

What to do? In my view, for Canada the answers are quite clear:

1. Commission a joint Senate and House of Commons enquiry into the role of nuclear weapons for Canada's security.
2. Push for a comprehensive review of NATO's nuclear doctrine and policy that takes nuclear weapons out of the security equation.
3. Establish a fully federally funded *Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Centre for Canadian and Global Security* within the remit of this government in office.
4. Review continued participation in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative – leave it!
5. Join the Humanitarian Pledge and Initiative but foster a focused dialogue with the nuclear-weapon possessor States on the safety and security of nuclear weapons, roles of these weapons in security doctrines, and alternatives to nuclear weapons for assuring peace and security.
6. Contribute to the security and legal framework of a convention/ban treaty – and work to finalize such a legally binding instrument in the Conference on Disarmament.
7. At the Conference on Disarmament to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament, a fissile material treaty that includes stocks, negative

security assurances, and non-weaponization of space. There is no *one* next logical step towards nuclear disarmament – several can be taken simultaneously.

8. Appoint an Ambassador for Disarmament with a dual mandate not only to represent Canada at international forums but also to canvas Canadian public opinion on disarmament matters and to factor it into Canadian positions.
9. Re-constitute the Consultative Group on Disarmament Matters but with a new, more efficient work mandate.
10. In the forthcoming Throne Speech to clearly outline Canada's position on achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and the strategy on how to achieve it with a leadership role by Canada.

These are a few ideas on ensuring not only a strong Canada, true and free, but also a world true and free of nuclear weapons.

Just before coming to this meeting, this morning I went to the Beechwood Cemetery to pay my respect to Ambassador Mark Moher at his final resting place – and on the way there, one has to pass by the resting place of



Tommy Douglas; on his sarcophagus it says, "*Courage my friend, 'tis not too late to make a better world*". Prime Minister Justin Trudeau could make this endeavour a priority for a new Canada on the international stage.

Thank you very much.
