

Minister of Foreign Affairs MacKay Address to  
The Middle Powers Initiative  
NPT Article VI Forum Conference  
September 28, 2006, 11:00am, Ottawa

Good morning.

Welcome to Ottawa and to the Lester B. Pearson Building, home of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

I would, in particular, like to welcome former senator and current chair of the Middle Powers Initiative, the Honourable Douglas Roche, and congratulate and thank him of his key role in organizing this gathering.

The 2005 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference failed to agree on a substantive outcome document.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty momentum has stalled; last year's UN World Summit Final Document failed to mention any nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament goals; and the Conference on Disarmament still cannot agree on a program of work. Collectively, we need to work harder to ensure that nuclear disarmament does not drop off the international agenda.

However, good news remains: the NPT is the most widely adhered to arms control and disarmament treaty in history.

Fears of an explosion in the number of nuclear armed states have not been realized.

Indeed, several states abandoned nuclear weapons ambitions while other divested themselves of nuclear weapons in order to join the NPT.

A number of recognized nuclear weapon states, particularly the U.S. and Russia, have significantly reduced the overall number of deployed nuclear weapons worldwide.

And strengthened export controls and counter-proliferation efforts to combat illicit trafficking in weapons of mass destruction items are producing results.

The greatest challenge to the NPT today, however, remains the recognition that the Treaty is a three-way bargain of non-proliferation disarmament and peaceful uses.

Other issues to resolve include:

- the nature of negative security assurances to be extended to the non-nuclear weapon states;
- how to respond to states who withdraw from the NPT, and how to integrate non-signatory states into the nuclear non-proliferation regime;

-clarifying the relationship between the right to peaceful use of nuclear power and the non-proliferation provisions of the Treaty; and  
-further steps in the nuclear disarmament process, including entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Above all, Canada is committed to a coherent, comprehensive and packaged approach toward the NPT that does not neglect any of the “three pillars” on which the Treaty is based: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Article VI Forum meeting provides an opportunity to wrestle with these and other questions, perhaps to bridge some of the differences that have manifested themselves at the 2005 Review Conference, and to build toward a productive 2010 Review Conference.

In concluding, I should not that Canada recognizes and supports the valuable role that civil society can play in the NPT Review process. Our support for this meeting here in Ottawa today is a tangible sign of that belief.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is, after all, more than just a document that binds governments; it is part of the collective heritage of civilized humanity. In this regard, I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you, and once again, welcome.