

Security Building Measures in Europe (CCSBMDE). Canada is also involved in the whole range of arms control discussions which take place within the NATO alliance, as well as being a member of other important organizations such as the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. This endows us with both special privileges and responsibilities in ensuring that we make progress toward true security at lower levels of armaments -- both nuclear and conventional. Canada does not work alone on these issues; we work in concert with our NATO allies and with the members of the United Nations. We do, however, play a leading role.

For various reasons, not least of all that the superpowers own the overwhelming majority of nuclear weapons, negotiations on strategic weapons systems tend to be the preserve of a somewhat exclusive U.S./Soviet bilateral club. Nuclear issues are, of course, discussed in the multilateral context, but it is the rather harsh reality that the political will necessary to implement nuclear arms reductions must come from the United States and the Soviet Union. This does not mean that the concerns of all other countries, Canada included, can be disregarded by the superpowers. World opinion can and does act as a catalyst and pressure on these bilateral negotiations. However, what this does mean is that, while countries like Canada can continue to influence superpower negotiations, we might have more opportunity for leverage and meaningful initiatives in non-nuclear areas. That having been said, there are some significant multilateral nuclear negotiations and agreements in which Canada has played, and continues to play, a significant and instrumental role.

Since the ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968, Canada has been a strong and vocal advocate of a universal and effective non-proliferation régime built around the NPT. The NPT focuses on two areas of nuclear proliferation, both of equal importance -- horizontal and vertical. Stated very simply, the 127 signatories of the NPT have said that they are willing to forgo the acquisition of nuclear weapons (horizontal proliferation) as long as the nuclear weapons states make concrete progress toward reducing their existing inventory of nuclear weapons (vertical proliferation).

Canada was an active participant in the 1975 and 1980 Review Conferences of the NPT. As the international community prepares for the Third Review Conference in September of this year, Canada is working to ensure that the NPT is secured and strengthened as an international instrument preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and providing the means for the peaceful application and transfer of nuclear technology.