

Conclusion

The Non-Proliferation Treaty came into force in 1970 with its ratification by 40 countries. Today, about 100 more nations have signed the NPT. While the failure of some countries with a nuclear capability to sign the Treaty remains a serious ongoing concern, President John F. Kennedy's pessimistic prediction of a world populated by 15 to 20 nuclear weapons states by 1975 has not come true. By creating legal barriers against proliferation and by promoting an international non-proliferation ethic, the NPT can be legitimately called a major success in promoting international peace and security. A key ingredient of this success has been the confidence generated through verification by IAEA safeguards.

The growth of IAEA safeguards, since their modest beginnings in the 1960s, has been considerable. By the end of 1988, IAEA safeguards agreements had been concluded with about 100 countries, including Canada, and as a result of extensive safeguards coverage under NPT and non-NPT agreements, over 500 nuclear facilities worldwide are under safeguards or containing safeguarded nuclear material.

It is primarily the existence of this credible and effective safeguards system that makes

today's international trade in nuclear equipment and materials possible. It is safeguards that monitors the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries as well as between industrial countries. Very little, if any, trade or transfer would take place without the non-proliferation assurances provided by IAEA safeguards.

Canada's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and IAEA safeguards remains unwavering. This commitment is demonstrated by the fact that, today, Canada's nuclear non-proliferation policy is among the strictest in the world. In addition, Canada has made a major contribution to strengthening the credibility of IAEA safeguards through co-operation in the application of safeguards at facilities in Canada and through the work of the Canadian Safeguards Support Program. Few countries can claim as significant a role over such a long time.

At times Canada has paid a commercial price as a result of its leading role in nuclear non-proliferation. However, the Canadian government in a policy announcement in December 1976 clearly stated that:

... we are prepared to accept the commercial consequences of being clearly ahead of other