

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall announced that Canada and the other 21 member nations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) have reached agreement on stricter export control guidelines for ballistic missiles and related technology. The new agreement broadens restrictions on exports to cover missile systems and technology capable of delivering chemical and biological weapons, as well as nuclear warheads. "I welcome this new agreement, which responds to increasing concerns about the proliferation of smaller, lighter missile systems, such as those we saw during the Gulf Crisis," said Mrs. McDougall. "This government has made non-proliferation one of its priority policies, and the transformation of the existing MTCR into a regime covering all weapons of mass destruction is a significant step in achieving this goal."

STATEMENTS:

Canada has long held the view that the spread of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them represent a serious threat to world peace. Because of our own history, Canadians have attached a particular priority to the abolition of chemical weapons. In April 1915, Canadian, French and French colonial troops in the Ypres Salient in Belgium were victims of the first gas attack on the Western Front. As the official history of the Canadian army recorded: "The damp cloths over their mouths and nostrils, untreated with any chemical, helped but little against the chlorine, and with eyes blinded and throats burning men collapsed on the floor of the trench in suffocating agony." Many died. Many more survived to spend the rest of their lives suffering physically and mentally from the effects of that traumatic attack and others like it over the next three years of that war. Almost three quarters of a century later, their agony is still not fully appreciated. Although only a few states now admit to having chemical weapons, many others are reported to have the capability of using them. We were all shocked by the pictures of the Iranian and Kurdish victims of Iraqi chemical weapons. As we saw in the Gulf, the fear that chemical weapons might be directed not only against military forces but also against defenceless civilians has been a constant nightmare. The agreement between the United States and Russia to destroy their arsenals was an important milestone on the way to a world free from chemical weapons. Now we have agreed on a Convention to prohibit their development, production, stockpiling and use and to ensure their destruction. This Convention does more than block proliferation. It is the first agreement ever both to ban a complete category of weapons of mass destruction and to provide for comprehensive verification. Of course our signatures this week are not enough. We must ensure that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will have the necessary political commitment as well as the resources to ensure that the verification regime outlined in detail in the Convention can become an effective reality.

An Address by the Honourable Barbara McDougall, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the signing ceremony of the Chemical Weapons Convention, (Paris, France, January 13, 1993, No. 93/1, As Delivered).

Upcoming Events

- February 1993: Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Meeting (Ottawa)
- February 1993: Meeting of the Working Group on Refugees (Oslo)
- April 6-7, 1993: Canada-ASEAN Joint Co-operation Committee Meeting (Jakarta)
- June 7-12, 1993: General Assembly of the OAS (Managua)
- June 14-25, 1993: World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna)
- July 7-9, 1993: International Conference on High Seas Fishing (New York)
- July 1993: G-7 Summit (Tokyo)

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