

Consultative Group Discusses Non-Proliferation Policy Options



Mr. Ben Sanders, Ambassador for Disarmament Peggy Mason, Mr. Don McPhail and Professor Ashok Kapur at the Consultative Group meeting held in Cornwall on January 11 and 12, 1990.

The Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs met in Cornwall, Ontario, on January 11 and 12 to discuss "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Options for Canada." The Consultative Group is a group of approximately 60 Canadians that meets periodically under the chairmanship of the Ambassador for Disarmament to advise the government on its arms control and disarmament policies. Its membership comprises academics, private researchers, former government officials, peace activists and others who are knowledgeable about and interested in arms control and disarmament issues.

The topic for January's consultation was chosen with the upcoming Fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in mind. Ambassador for Disarmament Peggy Mason — who will head the Canadian delegation to the Review Conference, which begins on August 20 in Geneva — noted in her opening remarks that the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is one of Canada's highest arms control and disarmament priorities. She asked the Group to identify and evaluate a range of policy op-

tions that Canada might consider pursuing in three areas: safeguards and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy; encouraging universal adherence to the NPT; and adjuncts and alternatives to the NPT.

To set the context for its workshop discussions, the Group heard from three speakers about the NPT itself. Mr. Don McPhail, head of the Canadian delegation to the 1980 NPT Review Conference and now Special Advisor to the Privy Council Office in Ottawa, suggested that while the NPT is an imperfect instrument, it has helped to circumscribe proliferation and remains an essential contributor to international security and stability in the nuclear age. Dr. Ashok Kapur, of the Political Science Department at the University of Waterloo, presented a contrasting perspective, arguing that the NPT has done little to curb the activities of those states determined to develop a nuclear weapon capability and, as such, should not be given much prominence in Canadian policy. Mr. Ben Sanders, New York-based Chairman of the Programme for Promoting Nuclear Non-Proliferation, contended that a world without the NPT is unthinkable.

While the Treaty has not lived up to all expectations, it has served useful purposes and has a bright future if it is effectively defended.

After much deliberation in both workshop and plenary sessions, the Group offered a number of policy options, the majority of which fall into six broad themes.

First, the Group called for greater recognition of the underlying incentives states have for developing nuclear weapons, and for the development and application of policies to reduce those incentives. Proposals for regional security arrangements, nuclear-weapon-free zones and the application of regional confidence-building measures reflected such thinking. So, too, did suggestions for augmented Canadian and UN roles in fostering regional security, particularly through peacekeeping.

Second, the Group felt that Canada should promote the creation of incentives and disincentives to encourage adherence and discourage non-adherence to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Suggestions were widely voiced for the use of current nuclear trade arrangements, development assistance and debt relief as forms of leverage to promote greater compliance with regime principles and practices.

Third, the Group urged Canada to press for more consistent behaviour on the part of states that supply nuclear materials. Many participants argued that Canada should vigorously promote policies aimed at encouraging greater acceptance by suppliers of safeguard requirements over the provision of nuclear material and technology.

Fourth, the Group observed that strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is crucial to the maintenance of the non-proliferation regime. It was suggested that Canada support policies aimed at increasing the