

FOREWORD

Canada's abhorrence of biological methods of warfare is not always fully understood. It is widely known that Canada is a party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Less well known is that Canada unilaterally moved beyond its obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol when it was announced in 1970 in the (then) Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, and subsequently repeated in 1971 in the United Nations First Committee, that Canada "does not intend to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or use such [biological or toxin] weapons at any time in the future".

This was a firm government commitment, made well before the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) had entered an advanced stage of negotiation. Canadian policy is no less clear today: in 1972, Canada ratified the BTWC; and, at the 1989 Paris Conference on the Geneva Protocol, the Canadian position of 1970/71 was reiterated by the (then) Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark. The third review conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention provides a welcome opportunity to reinforce everyone's understanding of the depth of the Canadian commitment to the abolition of such terrible weapons, and to express Canada's continuing willingness to cooperate with others in the global undertaking represented by the Convention.