

## Canada Withdraws BW Reservations to Geneva Protocol

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Marcel Masse, announced in September that Canada is withdrawing its reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol so that they no longer apply to bacteriological weapons.

"Let there be no doubt as to the depth of Canada's abhorrence of biological weapons," said Mrs. McDougall. "Our decision to withdraw these reservations underlines Canada's long-standing view that there is no justification whatsoever for the use, or threat of use, of such terrible weapons."

In 1925 when signing the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, Canada retained the right to retaliate in certain circumstances, such as where biological or chemical weapons are used against Canadian citizens. As long ago as 1970, however, the Canadian government declared that it would not use biological or toxin weapons at any time in the future.

"The Canadian Forces have never used chemical or biological weapons. We do not possess them nor do we have the intention of ever acquiring them," said Mr. Masse. "We have only ensured our troops have adequate training and equipment to protect themselves against such an attack. Withdrawing these reservations further entrenches our opposition to their use as a means of waging war."

that expenditure to much more socially-productive uses. In such a case, spending less in one area can lead in certain circumstances to spending more elsewhere, for the common good.

There is also an arms control peace dividend, but it works slightly differently. It involves making an investment up front — spending money on negotiations, contributing to the creation of international mechanisms to verify agreements, as well as setting up national mechanisms to ensure the fulfilment of obligations — so as to create the improved security environment whereby other substantial savings can be realized and the funds diverted to more productive purposes. In our determination to make prudent decisions in light of current fiscal realities, we must take due account of this "multiplier effect" and of the longer-term benefits to be realized through such reasonable initial investments. To put it another way, what price will we pay in the longer term if we fail to do what we can now?

I believe there are many delegations gathered here that are prepared to consider additional confidence-building measures and, indeed, the establishment of a compliance or verification regime. In the case of confidence-building

measures, there are many candidates for consideration. Some non-government organizations, in particular, have been very active in producing proposals for our consideration, and I am certain that my delegation is not alone in expressing its gratitude for these helpful and thoughtful suggestions. Much effort and a great deal of technical expertise have been offered in a true spirit of altruism, and this effort deserves to bear fruit.

We government representatives shall have hard choices to make from the generous menu before us. In this regard, my delegation shall strive to evaluate the various proposals while bearing three characteristics, or criteria, in mind:

- practicability;
- effectiveness in enhancing transparency in relation to compliance with the Convention; and
- economy.

Although it is probably premature at this stage to recite a list of confidence-building measures that may find support at this Conference, there are three in particular that I would like to mention. Canada is of the view that more information can be provided by States Parties with respect to relevant defence research programs, including contractor-performed research. On this subject of

openness, my delegation will soon be circulating through the Secretariat a document entitled "Transparency Mechanisms for the Canadian Chemical and Biological Defence Program." In particular, this document describes the establishment and functioning of a Review Committee which allows certain respected members of Canada's non-governmental community to have access to all aspects of our chemical and biological defence program. We hope that other States Parties may find this experience to be of some interest, and that it will help stimulate further discussion on the subject of openness with respect to such programs.

In the civilian sphere, we also believe that more can be done in terms of reporting certain facilities. Again with a view to stimulating such discussion, my delegation will also be circulating a document prepared by Health and Welfare Canada on the subject of "Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines" outlining Canadian practices in relation to classification of agents according to risk and related physical containment levels.

A final point on the subject of confidence-building measures is warranted. My delegation will be pleased to join with others in proposing that a small group be established and tasked directly with responsibility for a number of Convention-support activities between Review Conferences, including follow-up in relation to annual reports in accordance with agreed confidence-building measures.

The issue of verification has been discussed at previous Review Conferences, as it shall be over the next three weeks. As I have already mentioned, this discussion often gets bogged down in all-or-nothing rhetoric, with the "good" possibly being held hostage to perfection, to paraphrase a popular expression. Furthermore, the discussion often tends to focus on technical matters, forgetting that there is an important political dimension to verification, both at the international and national level. Verification regimes, it seems, are often portrayed as magic black boxes, to which a compliance question is inserted at one end and an unequivocal answer comes out at the other. Of course, we