

A great deal has been written about nuclear proliferation and nuclear non-proliferation since the first detonation of a nuclear explosive device in 1945. This paper can at best provide a brief summary of the main events. The high point in the history of non-proliferation is of course the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (1968-70). The establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (the IAEA or "The Agency") in 1957 is also highly significant, especially since it is the international body that is responsible for onsite inspections and safeguards measures that assist the member states of the Agency to demonstrate that no nuclear material is diverted to non-peaceful purposes from safeguarded nuclear facilities. Besides these international efforts, many countries that supply nuclear related materials, equipment or technology have developed national policies that they apply to the export of such nuclear items. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to describe the development of Canada's non-proliferation policy since 1945 and to explain its current highly articulated state in the wider context of the developing international non-proliferation régime.

Before briefly tracing the evolution of the current non-proliferation régime, and of Canada's non-proliferation policy as one part of that regime, one clarifying observation should be made. International efforts to minimize the risk of nuclear proliferation have taken place against the background of the spread of nuclear explosive capability, from the United States in 1945 and the Soviet Union in 1949 to the United Kingdom and France in the 1950s and the People's Republic of China in the early 1960s. As a result, two types of proliferation have generally been designated: "horizontal" proliferation, which refers to the spread of nuclear explosive capability beyond the five Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) identified above; and "vertical" proliferation, which refers to the growth of the nuclear explosive programs of the five NWS. This paper deals only with the evolution of the international non-proliferation régime designed to respond to the threat of horizontal proliferation.

A risk of horizontal proliferation emerges from the possibility that the nuclear material, facilities and technology used in nuclear research and in the power-generating industry might be diverted or misused to develop a nuclear explosive device. A major consideration is that the proliferation of nuclear weapons is one important factor in global and, even more so, in regional security, although it is not necessarily the most critical factor. The essential determinant of proliferation is the degree of political incentive or disincentive (rather than the technical means) which countries face. Thus, while diversion of nuclear items from the civilian nuclear fuel cycle is one possible