

## 5. CANADA AND NUCLEAR WEAPON-FREE ZONES

### Background

Nuclear Weapon-free Zones (NWFZs) consist of defined geographic areas in which the manufacture, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons is prohibited. Various types of NWFZs exist and have been proposed since the 1950s. They have been supported as a means to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and provide a confidence-building measure (CBM) in the pursuit of regional security, as well as constituting steps in a progressive "denuclearization" of the planet.

The first NWFZ was proposed at the United Nations by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki in 1957. The Rapacki Plan would have prohibited the manufacturing, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and West Germany. While the Plan had Soviet support, it was opposed by NATO and subsequently dropped. The Plan did, however, succeed in generating widespread interest in the establishment of regional denuclearized zones.

Five NWFZs have been established by international agreement: the Antarctic Treaty of 1959; the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, following a unanimously adopted UN resolution calling upon nations to refrain from introducing weapons of mass destruction into outer space; the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967, establishing Latin America as the first populated NWFZ in the world; the Seabed Treaty of 1971; and the Treaty of Rarotonga of 1985, establishing a South Pacific Nuclear-free Zone. The latter, negotiated by the thirteen members of the South Pacific Forum, bans the deployment, production, and testing of nuclear weapons in their area. The question of transit and visiting rights for ships and aircraft