



compliance with any future significant arms limitation treaty will need to be verifiable to a high degree of confidence before nations will accede to the agreement. As the debate concerning allegations of non-compliance has illustrated, when this high degree of confidence in compliance does not exist, both the climate and process of arms limitation are damaged. Verification, which addresses both confidence and compliance, is at the very core of this requirement.

The conclusion to be drawn is that, while the negotiation and implementation of agreed verification measures will always be agreement-specific, there is a vast scope for constructive activities by governments and international bodies in refining and expanding the technological, organizational and institutional options available for verification purposes to governments and their negotiators.

Canada, through a modest verification research programme, is working to improve the verification process. It has committed resources to this end, based on the conviction that a variety of useful work on verification problems can be accomplished outside, and in advance, of negotiations towards specific agreements. To this end, we encourage other Member States to explore with us this vital element in the arms control and disarmament process.

Given the severe financial crisis facing the United Nations, Canada will circulate copies of our comprehensive reply to all member states and interested organizations. In these circumstances Canada would request that only this letter be circulated as a document of the United Nations General Assembly.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen H. Lewis
Ambassador and Permanent
Representative
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to the United Nations"

Canada's Position on Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

The following article was prepared by the Arms Control and Disarmament Division of the Department of External Affairs.

Canada has been sympathetic in principle to the concept of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZ) where they are feasible and would promote stability. While we have not considered such zones to be fully satisfactory alternatives to the ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the countries of the areas concerned, we believe that, in the absence of universal or near-universal adherence to the NPT and provided certain principles are observed, the creation of such zones can make a significant contribution to the objectives of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Canada's position on each NWFZ proposal is determined on a case-by-case basis, but we believe that, to be effective, such zones must apply to a defined geographic area, be based on proposals which emanate from and are agreed to by most countries in the area concerned including the principal military powers of the area, not give military advantage to any state or group of states, contain adequate treaty assurances and means to verify that all countries abide by the commitments involved and not permit countries of the area to have an independent nuclear explosive capability for whatever purpose.

At the United Nations General Assembly, Canada has supported resolutions calling for the establishment of NWFZs in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and South Asia.

The Government does not support a declaration of nuclear weapon free status for Canada because, while in fact Canada does not possess nuclear weapons, nor are such weapons stationed on Canadian territory, we continue to participate fully in NATO, a defence alliance which deploys a nuclear deterrent. The declaration of a nuclear weapon free zone would be inconsistent with membership in that alliance.

Regarding the proposal for a NWFZ in Central Europe, there are a number of reasons why Canada and most of NATO do not support this idea. The proposal strikes at the very essence of NATO's ability to deter aggression in Central Europe by reserving the right to use nuclear weapons, if need be, against the preponderance of Warsaw Pact conventional forces. Thus a reduction and eventual removal of battlefield nuclear weapons in Central Europe would only be feasible once conventional parity had been reached. Even then there would be difficulties since nuclear munitions could be more quickly reintroduced in Eastern Europe because of the Warsaw Pact's significantly shorter lines of logistics. Thus, any agreement would be of small military significance, would be difficult to negotiate and to verify and could create an unfounded impression of enhanced security.

The establishment of a Balkan NWFZ would remove US missiles from the region while leaving untouched nuclear weapons stationed on Soviet territory (which is not included in the proposal) within easy striking distance of the area. It should be noted that a political declaration of the Warsaw Pact established a link between the proposal for a denuclearized zone in the Balkans and a similar zone in Northern Europe. Implementation of the proposal would expose NATO's southern flank to the threat of Soviet attack and would not contribute in any substantive way to nuclear arms control or the reduction of tensions in Europe as a whole.

From a Canadian perspective, a Nordic NWFZ cannot be a viable concept unless the Baltic Sea and parts of the Soviet Union were to be included in the geographically defined region. The likelihood of this happening is remote. Furthermore, although there are no nuclear weapons in Norway or Denmark, a formalized Nordic NWFZ commitment, which would include those two NATO countries, would further reduce NATO's options to repel any Warsaw Pact aggression in the region.