

The decision to carve out a new role for NATO's nuclear arsenal "has no political or strategic justification -- in fact, it poses a threat," he said.

The situation today is quite different from that of the 1950s, according to Prof. Keating. In that era, there were no institutions to manage European affairs, so Canada pushed for the creation of NATO to counterbalance US influence. Today, there are other organizations that compete for that role. The OSCE was found as a forum for managing European Affairs in 1991-92, but has mainly lost some of its prestige in the wake of the Yugoslavias debacle. Prof. Keating thought that the OSCE should be revived.

The security situation today is the reverse of what it was forty years ago. A nuclear-armed NATO came into being to offset the Soviet Union's conventional weapons superiority in the 1950s, but today the Russian military is in disarray and the country spends only one-tenth of what the US spends on its military. The Russian nuclear arsenal does remain, but it is best dealt with through incentives for Russia to move away from a first strike posture. In addition, a current threat to European security is the internal break-up of states, which NATO is equipped to deal with.

The enlargement of NATO to include Eastern European states is highly likely, and potentially disastrous if this move serves to isolate Russia. There is an urgent need for political and economic engagement to persuade Russia to eliminate its nuclear arsenal.

Also highly troubling, said Prof. Keating, is NATO's determination to move "out of area" -- that is, out of Europe and into the Third World. Canada has historically insisted that NATO restrict its activities to Europe. In fact, Lester B. Pearson responded years ago to John Foster Dulles' policy of "massive retaliation" by saying that nuclear weapons had no role in regional conflict.

We are now seeing a radical reworking of NATO's mandate. By moving the defence strategy into new areas of the world and extending the role that nuclear weapons can play, NATO is undermining the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and legitimizing the use of nuclear weapons in regional conflicts. "Micro-nukes" in particular, "put out the message that nuclear weapons are available, and increase the tendency to use them," said Prof. Keating.

Prof. Keating concluded that although it is certain that there will be conflict in the Middle-East and Africa in the future, there is no reason to create the conditions for those conflicts to go nuclear.

The Chair next introduced speaker Ambassador Douglas Roche, Ambassador Roche summarized the various points of consensus of the seminar. These were:

The ICI Opinion has determined that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is constrained by humanitarian law.