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The Disarmament Bulletin

A review of Canada's arms control and disarmament activities

Dept. of External Affairs
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Gulf War Highlights Need for Better Proliferation Control

Canada offers proposals for post-hostilities planning

The Persian Gulf War highlighted the global consequences of the virtually unrestrained build-up of arms in a country outside of Europe and North America. Official and public opinion in many countries has been jarred by the revelations of enormous expenditure on arms by Iraq and the resulting costs — and risks — of the war effort. Unfortunately, gross overarmament is not a condition unique to Iraq. Nor is it a condition unique to the Middle East.

The human, economic, military and political costs of the Gulf War are large, but they can perhaps be partially offset if we have the foresight and will to learn the War's lessons. Foremost among these is to recognize the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, as well as by massive build-ups of conventional weapons.

There are already several regimes and processes in place — both unilateral and multilateral — to deal with proliferation. These include the Australia Group for control of chemical and biological substances, the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the



Canadian Forces personnel in the Gulf wearing protective gear against possible chemical weapons attack. Canadian Forces photo

negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a chemical weapons convention. They include the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its associated safeguards, designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. They include the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which controls the export of

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