

spread of nuclear arms and increasing regional security in the absence of NPT ratification. At the two special sessions of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament, in 1978 and 1982, Canada supported the final declarations encouraging the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones.

The Canadian Government's stance remains unchanged. It is prepared to study such proposals on a case-by-case basis but it believes that to be effective, any proposals must meet certain requirements: the zone must apply to a defined geographic area; it must be based on proposals which emanate from and are agreed to by most of the countries in the area concerned, including the principal military powers; it must not give an advantage to any state or group of states; it must contain adequate treaty assurances and the means to verify that countries abide by their commitments; and it must not permit the development of an independent nuclear explosive capability in the area.¹

At the Forty-third Session of the UN General Assembly in 1988, Canada voted in support of related resolutions on the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Establishment of a Nuclear Weapon-free Zone in the Middle East (adopted without a vote), Establishment of a Nuclear Weapon-free Zone in South Asia, Denuclearization of Africa (Part A--Implementation of the Declaration), Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (adopted without a vote), and Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic. Canada abstained on Denuclearization of Africa (Part B--Nuclear Capability of South Africa).

As a result of Canada's NATO membership, it has always been opposed to the establishment of such zones in Central or Northern Europe or the Balkans. The Government believes that the establishment of zones in these areas would cast doubts on the effectiveness of the NATO deterrent and expose certain areas to the risk of Soviet attack, without making a genuine contribution to nuclear disarmament.

The Government does not support a declaration of nuclear weapon-free status for Canada. Although Canada does not possess nuclear weapons, and nuclear weapons are not stationed on Canadian territory, Canada is a member of NATO which, as already indicated, relies on a nuclear deterrent. The declaration of a nuclear weapon-free zone, it is maintained, would be inconsistent with membership in that alliance.²

Despite this position the local authorities in approximately 170 municipalities across Canada have declared their areas nuclear-free. Manitoba, Ontario, and the Northwest Territories have each declared themselves to be NWFZs. As a result of these declarations, approximately sixty percent of the Canadian population resides in locally declared NWFZs.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMENT

Proposals to make Canada a nuclear weapon-free zone have been put forward in the House of Commons on several occasions. The New Democratic Party (NDP) has been a strong supporter of Bills declaring Canada a NWFZ. In the past it has put forward

¹ Department of External Affairs, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, "Canada's Position on Nuclear Weapon-free Zones," *Disarmament Bulletin*, Summer-Fall 1986, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*