

"Any war that is postponed is a war that may never be fought."

Canadian publisher Floyd Chalmers

also generates a climate in which the use of such weapons remains a viable option to those that have them.

In January 1994, the CD in Geneva began talks on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Canada has long been a vocal supporter of a CTBT and has undertaken landmark research into the seismic verification of nuclear tests. This expertise has made it possible for Canada to play a leading role in the CD talks. Canada believes the Treaty should be open to signature by all. It should also be subject to close verification. However, perhaps the CTBT's greatest value will be symbolic: it will show that nations with nuclear weapons are willing to reduce their reliance on them.

Cut-Off Convention

In order to make nuclear weapons, so-called fissionable materials are needed. These are elements, such as uranium or plutonium, whose nuclei can be split to create a massive explosion. The technology to produce fissionable materials is not easy to develop.

For many years, Canada has introduced a General Assembly resolution aimed at halting the production of such materials for weapons purposes. In 1993, the resolution was adopted by consensus.

As a result, Canada's ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament has been asked to find ways of negotiating a "cut-off" convention in this area. Canada would like to see such a convention focussed on those states that now have nuclear weapons. An agreement would also be needed on strong verification procedures that emphasized nuclear enrichment and reprocessing plants.

Land Mines

There are an estimated 85 to 100 million land mines in place around the globe. Most of these have been laid to terrorize civilians rather than to defend military installations. Cambodia is one country that suffers more than most, with an estimated four million mines buried in the countryside. In 1993, between 300 and 700 limbs a month had to be amputated there because of land mine injuries.

The 1981 Inhumane Weapons Convention tries to control the use of land mines against civilians. However, the Convention has a number of weaknesses: there are no verification or enforcement procedures; it does not apply to internal conflicts; and the provisions for the exchange of information about the location of mines when the fighting ends need strengthening. Moreover, the Convention has been ratified by only 40 nations (including Canada). In 1995, a review conference will take place. Canada will work with other countries at this meeting to improve the Convention and encourage more states to ratify it. Canada also wants to see an international agreement to control the transfer and stockpiling of land mines. At the 1993 General Assembly, Canada co-sponsored a resolution that called for a halt to the export of antipersonnel mines.