

Nuclear Spread



of its citizens believing the world is closer to a nuclear war, yet only four percent have taken part in a peace demonstration, and only two percent belong to a peace organization. If we are relying on our legislators to push for peace, we must make sure they have a clear mandate to move in that area.

Canada, to its credit, has advanced nuclear capability but is a signatory of the 1968 United Nations - sponsored Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. Canada also demands that any country which purchases any technology or supplies which could lead to a nuclear weapons production to open their facilities to the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Britain, Australia and Canada were the only countries to agree with the U.S. that inspection of a country's nuclear facilities in fact should be a condition of sale.

The Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the sole global multilateral

negotiating body dedicated to arms control and disarmament issues. Its membership stands at 40 and includes all five nuclear powers from all geo-political blocs: the East, the West and the Neutral/Non-aligned.

The CD has been working since 1980 on an interesting treaty that, if drafted properly, could become a powerful legal model for any kind of nuclear arms ban or treaty. Its subject: chemical weapons.

Whereas nuclear bombs are mankind's most devastating weapons, chemical weapons are close to its most horrible. Nine hundred thousand deaths in the First World War — ghastly, choking, agonizingly slow deaths — attest to its gruesomeness. They represent none of the "morality" of war that we, as civilized humans, like to maintain in our conflicts. The need, then, for a chemical weapons ban has been established, and since evidence shows they were used in the ongoing Iran-Iraq War and possibly in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, the CD feels an immediate need for a convention.

As Douglas Roche, Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, explains, the negotiation of a chemical weapons convention is of four-fold importance:

- it would represent a disarmament treaty and not merely an arms-control measure;
- it would be an effective non-proliferation treaty;
- it would be a comprehensive treaty that would ban development, production, stock-piling and the transfer of chemical weapons with the provision for the destruction of stockpiles and production facilities and appropriate verification;
- a chemical weapons convention would be a law-making treaty with far-reaching legal implications.

Its objectives then, are much the same as a nuclear-weapons convention and serves as a great practice attempt for the drafting of a nuclear treaty. It appears as a heartening step toward the day when different world states (a rather abstract and human-made distinction anyway) can agree that some weapons, some forms of aggression, are just to immoral to be allowed existence.