

It is with a solid reputation as a country historically involved and committed to non-proliferation, as well as one on the leading edge in developing the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, that Canada comes to the Third Review Conference. Canada is a country which deeply respects and values the NPT as an invaluable international treaty embodying the objectives of Canada's arms control, non-proliferation and peaceful-uses policies. These are:

-- to encourage negotiations between the super powers leading to a cessation of the nuclear arms race, with the long-term goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control;

-- to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons;

-- to promote and facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as an essential instrument of international security cannot be over-emphasized. It is a vital security lynch pin which benefits all countries by reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation.

The NPT is the legal embodiment of a bargain made between the nuclear and non-nuclear states. The non-nuclear states agreed to forgo the acquisition of nuclear weapons (i.e., horizontal proliferation) in exchange for an undertaking by the nuclear states to halt the arms race in nuclear weapons (i.e., vertical proliferation). This agreement, the outcome of long negotiations, is clearly set out in Article VI of the Treaty:

"Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

At the first review in 1975, many non-nuclear states expressed their frustration that the nuclear powers had not fulfilled their commitments under Article VI. By 1980, these feelings had turned to hostility, preventing the adoption of a final statement, which was interpreted by some as meaning that the Second Review Conference was a failure.

Since there has been little progress in disarmament in the past five years, we can be sure that once again there will be vigorous debate on the perceived failure of the superpowers to implement their obligations to cease the arms race. As in 1980, there is a very real danger that a lack of tangible progress relating to Article VI will hold hostage any agreement on other matters relating to safeguards and international nuclear cooperation.