

"Starting from, not ending with, Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco, we must seek to make certain that never again shall an aggressor be permitted to strike down one nation after another before the peace-loving nations of the world organize and take concerted action against it. If we have not learned, from the history of the last thirty years, that it must be the supreme objective towards which we must all strive, we are incapable of learning any lesson."
L.B. Pearson, "Canada and the San Francisco Conference, 4 June 1945."
Words and Occasions, 65-66.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

In 1995, the countries that have signed the NPT will gather in New York for a conference. One of the goals of the meeting will be to decide whether or not to extend the Treaty for a fixed period, fixed periods or indefinitely. Canada is pressing strongly for an indefinite extension. This would guarantee that the NPT would continue as a means of controlling the spread of nuclear weapons.

Canada is also working with other states to strengthen the IAEA's ability to detect nuclear cheating. We are encouraging those nations that have not signed the Treaty to do so. As well, Canada is working to build confidence among nations in regions where tensions exist, as reducing fears over security lessens the attraction to nuclear weapons.

Chemical, Biological and Toxin Weapons

Chemical and biological weapons are hideously effective at maiming and killing vast numbers of people. They are held in the weapons stores of many nations. Canada, along with Poland, has traditionally been a leading co-sponsor of a General Assembly resolution on the need to ban chemical weapons.

These efforts paid off in January 1993 when the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which was negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, was opened for signature. The CWC bans the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. To date, the Convention has been signed by 150 countries, including Canada. The CWC will enter into force when it has been ratified (confirmed by a nation's law-making body) by 65 countries. To be effective, conventions such as this one must have a strong verification process. This is the means by which the world can be assured that countries that have signed the agreement are abiding by its terms. Verification is done by experts whose job it is to inspect a country's installations to make sure that nothing untoward is going on. Canada worked hard to strengthen the verification provisions of the CWC. This Convention allows inspectors greater access than has been possible under previous treaties.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will implement the Convention. Canada is helping to set this organization up in The Hague, Netherlands. Canada has signed the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which bans the development, production, acquisition and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. Recently, Canada was involved in an Experts Group study on building a verification process into the BTWC. In September 1994, a conference in Geneva looked at the ideas this group put forward. Canada wants to see an effective verification process set up and will work toward having it included in the BTWC.

UN Arms Register

Weapons of mass destruction are a major concern for Canada. However, bullets, grenades, shells and so on — so-called conventional weapons — can be just as lethal. The 1991 Gulf War pointed out the extreme dangers posed by build-ups of conventional weapons in regions of tension. Canada joined with several other nations at the 1991 General Assembly to try to deal with this issue.