

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CANADIAN PUGWASH GROUP**

**October 21, 2000**

The Canadian government should publicly speak out against US plans to deploy a National Missile Defence system, the Canadian Pugwash Group said today. "The time to speak out is now when Canada can make a difference and before the US makes a final decision," the Canadian Pugwash Group said today.

The Group is an affiliate of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, winner of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize for its work on advancing nuclear disarmament.

"The Canadian people deserve to know where the political parties stand on this key issue, which affects global security", said Senator Douglas Roche, the Group's Chairman and Canada's former Ambassador for Disarmament.

At its annual forum, Canadian Pugwash members said that there is not a credible threat to the US or Canada of ballistic missiles attacking their territories. The nations sometimes called "rogue states", North Korea, Iran and Iraq, are now undergoing reform or are severely restrained and, in any case, would not use ballistic missiles fired from abroad should they wish to damage US interests.

"A driving force behind NMD is the desire for economic and political gain by a variety of members of US industry and government," said Maj. > Gen. (ret'd) Len Johnson. "It is not based on a real threat but on a 'Fortress America' mentality."

National missile defence, even in the planning stage, would:

1. damage and destroy important arms control agreements
2. re-ignite an arms race and a race in countermeasures
3. allow the US to further define security environments world-wide and apply military pressure on an unprecedented scale
4. be used to further justify the unilateral weaponization of space, a global commons
5. hurt global security by diverting funds and commitment from peacekeeping and other peaceful endeavours, including the struggle against poverty in developing countries.

The Canadian Pugwash Group feels that action by Canada is imperative. Members felt that Canada should not be a "fence-sitter" on this vital issue. By not speaking out now, Canada will lose the moral authority to speak in opposition later.

Canada should protect the work that it has done in arms control, an accomplishment that is genuinely threatened by US plans. Canada has in the past taken a bold and principled stand on arms control measures such as landmines and non-proliferation and should take strong stand on this issue.

The Group called on the government and all Canadian political parties to:

- refuse any participation in NMD
- oppose research, development and deployment of NMD
- support Canada's leadership record on disarmament
- push for an international arms control regime for ballistic missile control

"The amount envisioned to be spent on NMD is over \$60 billion dollars", said Walter Dorn, CPG Secretary, "more than the amount the entire world spends in a year on aid for development."