

Revisiting the Hiroshima Declaration:

Can a Nordic-Canadian Nuclear-weapon-free Zone Propel the Arctic to Become a Permanent Zone of Peace?

Notes for an Address to a Pugwash Canada Conference on Policy Imperatives for an Arctic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone

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INTRODUCTION

I want to begin, not only by thanking Adele Buckley for her invitation to speak at this conference, but for her long-standing dedication to the cause of a peaceful Arctic. Few represent better than she the spirit of Albert Einstein who admonished us that, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Adele’s career is a shining example of the truth that we have to learn to think in a new way about the environment, about our definition of security, and most important, about the scourge of nuclear weapons.

The Pugwash Group, of which she is such a prominent part, has dedicated itself since 1957 to using the expertise and moral authority of science to persuade humankind of the folly of relying on weapons of mass destruction. As the manifesto of Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein - which led to the inaugural meeting in Pugwash, Nova Scotia - proclaimed “Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.”

So Pugwash has been devoted since its founding to injecting into the hard-headed discussion of peace and war the dimension of moral choice. Indeed, the determination of scientists to ensure that our leaders did not make their nuclear choices in a moral vacuum was there from the start of the atomic age.

In 1939, it was Albert Einstein, fearful that Hitler might use the achievements of German physicists to get the bomb, who urged Franklin Roosevelt to begin a research program on the military implications of the recently discovered process of nuclear chain reaction. Roosevelt eventually created the Manhattan Project and America built and dropped the bomb. But before the decision was taken in 1945 to incinerate Japanese non-combatants, scientists – including some who had helped Einstein write his 1939 letter – petitioned the decision-makers of the Manhattan Project that instead of making an attack on Japan without warning it would be better to either explicitly warn the Japanese about the extreme danger facing them or even to publicly demonstrate the power of the bomb. In June 1945, for example, the Franck Report recommended “a demonstration before representatives of all the United Nations on a

deserted or barren island.” This advice was rejected. In July 1945, a second attempt was made: 70 scientists connected to the Manhattan project tried again by petitioning President Truman “that such attacks on Japan could not be justified, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed after the war on Japan were made public in detail and Japan given an opportunity to surrender.” This advice was also not heeded.

THE LONG DIFFICULT ROAD OF THE CRITIC

Critics, especially of the prevailing nuclear orthodoxy, however, must get used to being rejected. I know this from my personal experience as an advisor to Pierre Trudeau. Throughout his career, Mr. Trudeau was preoccupied by the nuclear menace: he began his tenure as Prime Minister in 1968 by pledging to rid Canada of the nuclear roles and weapons that had previously been acquired as part of our NATO and NORAD commitments. The agreements that allowed the United States to store and use nuclear weapons on Canadian territory were rescinded. Mr. Trudeau could therefore declare that: “We are thus not only the first country in the world with the capability to produce nuclear weapons that chose not to do so, we are also the first nuclear armed country to have chosen to divest itself of nuclear weapons.”

The five non-nuclear NATO members (Italy, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey) currently allowing US nuclear weapons on their soil may wish to consider the Canadian precedent.

Having unilaterally divested Canada of nuclear weapons, Mr. Trudeau next turned his attention to the global arms race. In 1977, he made a speech at the first United Nations Special Session on Disarmament advocating a strategy of “nuclear suffocation” in which he called for a comprehensive test ban to impede the development of nuclear explosives and a prohibition on the production of fissionable materials for weapon development. Today, thirty-five years later, we are still waiting for the United States to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and progress continues to stall on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. In 1983, during Mr. Trudeau’s so-called “Peace Mission,” he continued to advocate a “strategy of suffocation,” this time recommending a ban on the testing and deployment of anti-satellite systems to prevent an arms race in outer space. Alas, today, China, India and Russia are attempting to join the United States in developing an advanced anti-satellite capability. We are exporting our arms race to the heavens.

Statesmen, like Trudeau, at least can commit their own countries to a given track, even if they cannot persuade the superpowers. Think-tanks, NGOs, or advocacy groups like Pugwash do not even have that satisfaction. In 1987, for example, Mikhail Gorbachev in his famous Murmansk Speech unveiled a proposal for an Arctic Zone of Peace. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference, which had long advocated a nuclear-weapons-free Arctic joined forces with the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, the Ottawa working group of the Canadian Institute for International Affairs, the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, and the Canadian Arctic Research Committee to develop a proposal for a new cooperative Arctic Council, whose agenda would include peace and security. When the dust had settled in 1996, the eight Arctic states had indeed created an Arctic Council, but had excluded one specific topic from the agenda – security – the very reason that so many NGOs and aboriginal leaders supported the

idea of the Arctic Council in the first place. To quote Einstein again, “Perfection of means and confusion of ends seem to characterize our age.”

THE HIROSHIMA DECLARATION

The Interaction Council of Former Heads of State and Government was formed in 1983 by Prime Minister Fukuda of Japan and Chancellor Schmidt of Germany. Since that time, the Council has consistently advocated nuclear disarmament. Meeting in Hiroshima in 2010, the Council added its voice to the efforts of groups like the Global Zero Commission, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, the Middle Power Initiative, Mayors for Peace, Pugwash, Scientists for Peace, and the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. Jennifer Simons, whose foundation is a major backer of the Global Zero Commission, took the initiative, along with the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, to organize in February 2011 a conference entitled, “Humanitarian Law, Human Security” that eloquently captured the essence of the anti-nuclear weapons movement with the simple phrase: “Nuclear weapons are incompatible with elementary considerations of humanity.”

Currently Co-chaired by Jean Chretien of Canada and Chancellor Vranitzky of Austria, and aided by distinguished experts like Sam Nunn, former chairman of the US Senate Armed Services Committee, the InterAction Council met in Hiroshima, Japan in 2010 where the former leaders met with the Hibakusha, the survivors of the nuclear attack on Hiroshima (one man even remembered as a small boy seeing the US aircraft arrive over his city). “Speaking for Hiroshima, in memory of those who fell and those who still suffer the lingering injuries of nuclear attack,” the Council declared, “As long as anyone has nuclear weapons, others will seek them.”

Revisiting the Declaration only two years after its issuance makes for solemn reflection. The New START Treaty was ratified in 2011, committing Russia and the United States to a significant reduction in nuclear weapons over the next seven years. This is excellent news. But the InterAction Council also called on states to commit to a no-first-use policy, yet NATO for the moment still clings to its traditional nuclear posture. Nuclear weapons systems should be taken off high alert, the Council urged, but in response to US ballistic missile defence installed in Eastern Europe, Russia has threatened to expand its high alert policy. Similarly, the Council emphasized the problem of nuclear terrorism and “loose nukes” but only this week, Russia announced that it might not renew the Nunn Lugar Cooperative Threat Program, which has effectively destroyed over 7600 nuclear weapons. The much heralded Joint Data Exchange Centre to share early-warning data on missile launches remains unrealized 14 years after President Clinton and President Yeltsin proudly announced it. The Council also called on states to abstain from modernizing their forces, but such modernization of their nuclear forces continues apace. Horizontal proliferation in North Korea and Iran continues. We are fast losing momentum in the effort to move to zero nuclear weapons.

THE ARCTIC AS A ZONE OF PEACE

The Hiroshima Declaration recognized the basic point that if we are truly to move to a nuclear-weapon-free world, we need to replace competitive arms races with the notion of common security. This will take time but the strategy the InterAction Council recommended is to move on short, medium, and

long-term benchmarks simultaneously. As part of that approach, the InterAction Council recommended that the Arctic Council should begin to discuss security issues within its mandate and that a possible nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Arctic should be one of the items examined. The InterAction Council asked, in effect, if Mikhail Gorbachev's 1987 vision of an Arctic Zone of Peace could be realized.

A nuclear-weapons-free zone is a commitment by countries in a specific region not to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons. Countries in nuclear-weapons-free zones commit to a total absence of nuclear weapons either through not acquiring them themselves or allowing nuclear weapon stationing by a nuclear weapon state. The onus of responsibility falls most heavily on the states that make the commitment to abide by the non-nuclear weapon rules and create verification systems to monitor compliance. The main responsibility of the nuclear weapons states is to respect the wishes and norms of the states taking the non-nuclear weapons pledge.

Five such zones, comprising 100 countries, exist today (Latin America 1967, the South Pacific 1986, Southeast Asia 1997, and Africa and Central Asia both created in 2009).¹ In effect, nuclear-weapon-free zones quarantine the nuclear weapons virus to those states so unwise as to sanction their use. The value of such zones in strengthening non-proliferation and promoting the global zero objective is obvious. This year for example, is the 50th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis, which brought the world so close to nuclear annihilation. That crisis was precipitated by the Soviet Union placing nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba: the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America, whose protocols have been ratified by all five

In addition to these zones, Mongolia became a one-state nuclear-weapon-free-zone in 2000 (recognized by the UN General Assembly), and the Antarctica Treaty (1959), the Outer Space Treaty (1967) and the Seabed treaty (1972) prohibit nuclear weapons in the respective areas they cover. 5 nuclear weapon states, ensures that Latin America and the Caribbean will never again be subjected to such nuclear brinksmanship.

The InterAction Council suggested for its medium-term strategy, that the Arctic might be a worthy candidate for similar nuclear-weapon-free status. But it recognized that the Arctic is not Latin America in that two nuclear weapon states (the USA and Russia) are part of the region. So a nuclear-weapon-free Arctic necessitates major changes in the existing nuclear weapons postures of the two nuclear superpowers. That is the bad news.

The good news is that the Arctic is an excellent place to begin implementing a philosophy of common security since progress towards that end has been so rapid since the end of the Cold War. Rather than nuclear-armed Bomarc anti-aircraft missiles deployed under NORAD to strike Russian Bear bombers flying down from the high Arctic – which was the northern defence policy when I first arrived to work in Ottawa in 1967 – today, the Canadian Chief of the Defence Staff hosts fellow northern chiefs of defence (including Russians) at Goose Bay to discuss cooperative support measures for emergency management. The Arctic Council announced a new Search and Rescue Treaty in 2011 and is currently working on a similar formal undertaking on possible oil spills. Whatever stall or freeze there is on the US-Russia restart button for arms control, on cooperation in the North, Russia is a real leader. We should build on this goodwill by creating, perhaps within the Canadian-Polar Commission and its Russian counterpart, a

bilateral task force to expand links and mutual learning on subjects like permafrost, sea ice, and transportation corridors like the Arctic Bridge through Churchill Manitoba. Currently, Canada, Russia, and the United States cooperate trilaterally in the air/sea, search and rescue exercises, and Canada must make urgent investment in equipment and training to ensure that we can meet our obligations in the new Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement. Moving to Global Zero requires Russia as an enthusiastic partner and the place to start is in the Arctic.

The Canadian Pugwash Group in 2007 took the lead in issuing a call for an Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone comprising the territory and waters north of the Arctic Circle. This idea is strongly supported by Arctic residents themselves. A recent poll by the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation shows that nearly 80 per cent of respondents from across Canada and the Nordic states back an Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone. However, as Pugwash noted, such a zone would impact Russia's nuclear capability far more than the United States' because the Russian nuclear submarine fleet is stationed in the Kola Peninsula. So one of the questions this conference must address is: if the burdens of a nuclear-weapon-free zone disproportionately affect the Russian military, what incentives could be offered to them to make such a zone a real possibility? Second, if, as Pugwash has recommended, Canada should declare its own nuclear-weapon-free zone, which includes the waters of the Northwest Passage, what capability would Canada have to build to detect nuclear submarines in our waters, and if we could detect them, what would we do about them? The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea privileges freedom of the seas including the rights to innocent passage, and most of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones recognize this. But you need a robust verification system to distinguish between permitted transit and prohibited deployment.

One way to avoid the complexities of dealing directly and immediately with Russian and American nuclear bases in the Arctic is to concentrate first on a Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone. During the Cold War, Finland consistently advocated for a Nordic nuclear weapon-free zone. In the late 1980s a Nordic senior officials group examined the concept. In 1993, the Nordic Council recommended establishing such a zone. In 2010, a draft law on an Icelandic nuclear weapon-free zone was submitted to the parliament of Iceland, and in 2011, the Danish ambassador for disarmament H.E. Theis Truelsen, spoke to the first committee of the United Nations saying "Denmark believes that we should explore how the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones, including in the Middle East and the Arctic, could become an integral element of a comprehensive multilateral strategy to implement global nuclear disarmament."

Denmark, of course, like Canada, Iceland and Norway, is a member of NATO, an alliance that relies on a nuclear deterrent. A NATO debate about its nuclear strategy, therefore, is a precondition to any nuclear weapon free zone, but I am optimistic that this debate is underway.

NATO's May 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review stated "the alliance is resolved to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons." With this principle now established, it is not a bridge too far for NATO to commit to a no-first-use doctrine and to withdraw all tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, as the InterAction Council has recommended. With that accomplished, it should be possible to accommodate Iceland, Denmark and Norway, none of whom

allow the storing of nuclear weapons during peacetime, if they wish to declare a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Finland and Sweden, members of the Nordic Council but not NATO, should also be members. Like the Nordic countries, Canada does not allow nuclear weapons on our territory. So six Arctic countries already fulfill the conditions necessary for a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Recognizing this, Larry Bagnell, a Member of Parliament from Yukon, in 2011 proposed a Canadian nuclear-weapon-free zone as a private members bill. Once the Nordic countries and Canada create a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the United States and Russia could be invited to eventually join. At a minimum, a Nordic-Canadian nuclear-weapon-free zone, valuable in itself, would also ensure that the Arctic dimension would at least be considered in future Russian and American arms control and disarmament negotiations.

Thus, in applying the framework of the Hiroshima Declaration, there are many short-term steps that can be taken in the Arctic to enhance confidence and build concrete cooperation around areas like search and rescue capabilities. Medium-term, the creation of a Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone, on the way to an Arctic nuclear free zone, would be a real benchmark towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Long-term, the Hiroshima declaration supports the five point plan of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, which calls on states to commit to negotiating a nuclear weapons convention to eventually ban nuclear weapons all together. Over 600 members of the Order of Canada – myself included – have urged Canada to take the lead in bringing states together to begin to seriously examine what such a convention will require. The House of Commons and the Senate have also unanimously called for such an initiative.

In any such nuclear-weapon-free world, verification will be key. Great Britain and Norway are showing the way with a joint initiative on Nuclear Warhead Dismemberment Verification. Canada once had tremendous expertise in the technical arts of verification: in the 1983-84 peace initiative I referenced, Canadian experts were then some of the most knowledgeable in the world on the anti-satellites issue. We need to again build up such expertise within the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defense, especially for verification in the Arctic. Technical expertise in disarmament and arms control must once again become a core strength of Canadian foreign policy and in implementing a philosophy of common security we can join with our Russia and other Arctic Council partners to build a robust multilateral response to the security challenges of the 21st Century. Canada has a constructive role to play, especially in the Arctic, of moving the world towards global zero.

Pugwash, the InterAction Council, and host of other organizations have done their best to educate the world about the horrors of nuclear war. Together, we must never stop working to honour the pledge on the Memorial Cenotaph in Hiroshima's Peace Park: "Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil."