

Media Release
For Immediate Release
11 May 2007

MacKay raising nuclear issue with NATO president welcomed by Pugwash Group

(Ottawa) Canadian members of the Nobel Prize-winning Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs welcomed Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay announcement that he raised the issue of NATO's nuclear weapons policy with the president of NATO at the alliance's recent meeting in Oslo, Norway, last month.

"We view this as a positive development and an important first step," said Dr. Adele Buckley, chairperson of the Canadian Pugwash Group. "Now it is time to place a debate on NATO's outdated and dangerous reliance on nuclear weapons squarely before the alliance's members."

The Canadian Pugwash Group wrote to Minister Mackay on March 16, 2007 raising concerns about NATO's provocative reliance on nuclear weapons, and urging the minister to "put a discussion of NATO's nuclear weapons policies on the agenda of upcoming NATO meetings."

In response to a question from NDP Foreign Affairs critic Alexa McDonough echoing Pugwash's concerns, Minister Mackay told Parliament on May 8, 2007, "[Nuclear disarmament] is something very near and dear to the heart of the group from Pugwash who have long been advocates of this. I recently took the opportunity while in Oslo, Norway at a NATO meeting to discuss this subject with the German foreign minister who is currently serving as president of NATO. This particular subject matter will remain very important to all Canadians."

The Canadian Pugwash Group is the affiliate of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Inspired by Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs were founded at a controversial meeting of Eastern and Western scientists in the village of Pugwash, Nova Scotia in 1957.

This year, on July 5-8, nuclear scientists and disarmament experts will mark the group's fiftieth anniversary by once again meeting in Pugwash to discuss nuclear disarmament.

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