

**“The Way Forward to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”
Canadian Pugwash Group Conference, Pugwash, N.S. July 9-12, 2015**

Summary Report

Introduction: In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan and the founding of the United Nations as well as the 60th anniversary of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, the Canadian Pugwash Group organized a thematic conference at the Thinkers’ Lodge, a National Historic Site, in Pugwash, Nova Scotia. The conference had 27 participants and 13 observers. The detailed conference program with links to available individual presentations, biographies of speakers, as well as the recommendations generated by the four thematic breakout groups of the conference and communicated to the Government of Canada are annexed to this report.

Public Forum: The public forum featured speeches by Dr. Kennette Benedict and Mr. Poul-Erik Christiansen. Dr. Benedict’s address “The Legacy of Hiroshima- 70 years on” highlighted the major role civil society had played over the decades in achieving progress on nuclear disarmament. She spoke of the impact of fear, both as a motivating impulse (e.g. the negotiation of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in the wake of public outrage over the presence of radioactive elements in babies’ teeth and mothers’ milk) and at times fear was manipulated by authorities to paralyze public responses. She stressed the incompatibility of nuclear weapons with democratic governance and expressed the hope that recent initiatives such as the series of conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons would lead to an empowered citizenry playing a full role in nuclear decision-making.

As a representative of Young Pugwash, Poul-Erik Christiansen spoke on the topic of “How will the next generation champion disarmament?”. He noted the pressing need to bridge the gap between civil society and governments and the importance of understanding the perspectives of others in resolving conflicts. He believed the younger generation of activists was well equipped to optimize the potential of information and communication technologies to advance the movement’s goals.

The discussion period highlighted the necessity to find ways, beyond the underlying fear of a nuclear holocaust, to motivate engagement, especially on the part of youth to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. The need to counter “the atrophy of our democracy” and promote better accountability for nuclear weapon-related decisions was also a refrain.

Current Context I: The first panel of the conference featured addresses by Douglas Roche on “Pugwash at 60 and Nuclear Disarmament: A Call to Humanity” and Sergei Plekhanov on “Cold War Redux: Implications for Nuclear Disarmament”. In explaining why after so many years nuclear disarmament has not been achieved, Douglas Roche enumerated five reasons: 1. Duplicity of the nuclear weapon states; 2. Timidity of the non-nuclear weapons states; 3. Irresponsible media; 4. Weary and

confused public opinion and 5. Lack of leadership. Despite these limitations there is no escaping the imperative to obtain a global law against nuclear weapons “before they kill us all”. Recalling the clarion call of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto to “remember your humanity, and forget the rest”, Roche drew hope from the growing humanitarian movement that was insisting on nuclear weapon elimination as a condition of common security. Concerned with current splits in the nuclear disarmament community, he advocated building bridges between the rival camps in favour of a ban and those supporting a convention and uniting around the aim of a global law prohibiting nuclear weapons.

Recognizing the chill that the deterioration of relations between Russia and the United States has brought to the disarmament enterprise, Sergei Plekhanov recalled that basic tensions in the strategic interests of both parties existed and could not be simply wished away. The game of the great powers would continue, but it should be conducted in a responsible way that would not undermine “the lesser evil” of mutual assured destruction and provide incentives for cooperation.

Discussion included questions as to how current Russian military doctrine is best interpreted and means by which divisions in the disarmament community could be overcome. References were also made to how the prism of climate change and that of human rights could be used to promote greater engagement on behalf of nuclear disarmament.

Current Context II: This panel featured presentations by Erika Simpson on “The 2015 NPT Review Conference: An Assessment; Peggy Mason on “Modernization Programs of the Nuclear Weapon States” and Paul Meyer on “The Challenges of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East”.

Having witnessed some of the failed NPT Review Conference this spring, Erika Simpson said no one should be surprised that the serious problems plaguing this ‘cornerstone’ treaty could not be simply papered over in a vague outcome document. The impasse on nuclear disarmament reflected the continued reliance by the U.S and its NATO allies on nuclear deterrence and the mirroring of this stance by other nuclear-armed states. Part of the solution will also entail bringing North Korea back into compliance with the principal NPT obligations. While the Iran nuclear deal represents a possible bright spot for the non-proliferation pillar, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy pillar poses intractable problems to long-term safety and security.

Drawing on major studies undertaken by the Federation of American Scientists, Peggy Mason documented the apparently inexorable actions by nuclear weapon states (NWS) to modernize their nuclear arsenals in defiance of their NPT disarmament obligations. She stressed the exorbitant costs of these programs and the strategic danger represented by the claim that modernization will render nuclear weapons “more useable”. She also denounced the continuing complicity of

those five non-nuclear weapon states in NATO that have accepted nuclear weapon delivery roles for their militaries.

The Middle East conflict has proven a protracted problem for the international community, not least within the context of the NPT. Paul Meyer outlined the history of the idea of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East as it has been addressed at successive NPT Review Conferences: from the original resolution on this subject adopted at the 1995 conference to the 2010 conference's promise to convene a meeting dedicated to this topic before the end of 2012. Factors explaining this inability to deliver on the 2010 commitment were presented as well as reflections on how differences over the Middle East zone were exploited as a pretext for rejecting an outcome document that revealed more fundamental fissures in the NPT membership concerning nuclear disarmament.

Discussion focused on the consequences of the failed Review Conference for future progress on nuclear disarmament as well as the prospects for advancing the aim of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East in the absence of clear NPT guidance on a way ahead.

Current Context III: This session received presentations by Martin Larose on "The Fissile Material Challenge: The GGE and Beyond"; by Adele Buckley on "Arctic Security: Prospects for a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone"; and by David Harries on "Strategic Foresight and a World Without Nuclear Weapons".

The recently completed report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on aspects of a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), which was chaired by Canada, was the focus of the presentation by Martin Larose. He stressed the utility, for future negotiators, of the group's examination of the chief substantive issues posed by the envisaged treaty, including definitions, the handling of past production and options for verification. There was a close inter-relationship between these aspects. Choices made in one area would have major implications for other dimensions of the treaty. The report would be a valuable reference when and if the international community finds a way to commence work on this long-standing goal.

The growing significance of the Arctic as a "global commons" and a region being opened up as a function of global warming is a backdrop to efforts to enshrine the Arctic as a nuclear weapon free zone. Adele Buckley outlined the evolution of the concept and the support it has received from many civil society groups in the region including early advocacy by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. She noted that such a nuclear weapon free zone would be unique in covering only a part of the territory of participating states and in the inclusion of two nuclear weapon states (Russia and the U.S.), but suitable arrangement could be developed if the political will were present to codify the Arctic's nuclear weapon free status by means of a treaty.

The principles of strategic foresight were presented by David Harries who explained that it could be summarized as the development of shared long-term visions to

inform short-term decision-making. He observed the dismal track record of predictions of the future and the importance of recognition that “context is king” and that circumstances will have changed between the time when plans are drawn up and when they are implemented. He enumerated a series of “what if” contingencies that could have major implications for reaching a world without nuclear weapons, such as the reactions to a future large-scale nuclear accident.

Discussion included speculation as to what impact the GGE report might have on the UN General Assembly in making progress on initiating FMCT negotiations and the various factors that might lead to successful establishment of nuclear weapon free zones.

Breakout Groups: The conference had four breakout groups organized along the following themes: Strategic Foresight’s role in progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; Ballistic Missile Defences and Outer Space Security; Nuclear Disarmament and The Use of Force and Challenges to Conventional Arms Control. These groups met for three and a half hours in order to generate recommendations for consideration by the Government of Canada. The recommendations were subsequently refined and endorsed by the CPG Executive and the communication conveying them is appended to this report. For some of the groups more detailed notes on their discussions are also included in the annex.

The Humanitarian Impact of the Nuclear Weapons Movement: A Game Changer for Nuclear Disarmament? A keynote address on this theme was delivered by Randy Rydell who recalled that the moral prohibition against the use of inhumane weapons is rooted in ancient practice. He outlined the development of the humanitarian imperative movement on nuclear disarmament, characterizing it (to cite Victor Hugo) as an “idea whose time has come”. The manner in which key civil society groups such as the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, Inter-Parliamentary Union and even the Conference of US Mayors have endorsed the call for a focus on the humanitarian imperative for nuclear disarmament has the potential to be a ‘game changer’. This however will require the democratization of nuclear disarmament, the application of the rule of law and actual congruency, i.e. policies and practices on the part of nuclear weapon states that are truly aligned with the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The Way Forward: Options: In this session presentations focused on three approaches that have been suggested as a means to fill the legal gap that exists with regard to the possession and use of nuclear weapons. Cesar Jaramillo spoke on “The Ban”, John Burroughs on “The Nuclear Weapons Convention” and Bev Delong on “Probing Existing Initiatives to Discern Smart Steps for Disarmament”.

Cesar Jaramillo explained the emergence of the ban proposal as a reflection of a shift in discourse that had been brought about by the impetus of the humanitarian imperative movement. The ban idea was born out of an enormous frustration with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament as not one of the NPT’s five nuclear

weapon states had achieved full nuclear disarmament despite the treaty having been in force for 45 years. The ban supporters believe it can be an effective instrument of stigmatization even if no nuclear weapon states participate in its negotiation. He noted that a ban could be part of a broader framework of agreements, but observed that despite strong support from some quarters of civil society even states that had endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge emerging from the 2015 NPT Review Conference were noncommittal as to what treaty path to follow.

Disarmament in both its nuclear and conventional aspects has a long history of support by the UN and John Burroughs conveyed some of this history and key decisions of the General Assembly. He noted that while all NPT states parties had an obligation under Article VI to promote nuclear disarmament and that this led many to consider a multilateral nuclear weapon convention as the best vehicle, there was also the option of the nuclear weapon possessor states agreeing on disarmament among themselves. He remarked on the general silence of governments regarding the ban proposal and suggested that one possible initiative to clarify the way ahead would be the convening of a nuclear disarmament summit along the lines of the series of nuclear security summits that have been organized since 2010.

The myriad of existing international organizations and ad-hoc groups concerned with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues was outlined by Bev DeLong. She advocated a strategy that would aim to make greater use of these entities and discern creative approaches in order to make headway on nuclear disarmament. The possibility of extending existing conventions (such as the Convention of suppression of acts of Nuclear Terrorism) and their domestic law equivalents to provide a broader prohibition on nuclear weapons was a feature of this approach.

Discussion was largely focused on the relative merits of the two leading proposals for providing a nuclear disarmament treaty and the desirability of restoring a unity of approach amongst supporters of nuclear disarmament.

The Way Forward: Activist Groups: This session featured presentations by Michael Hurley on “An Irish Perspective on New Agenda Coalition and the Way Forward”; Marius Grinius on “The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative” and by Macha MacKay on “Civil Society Engagement”.

The currently six nation New Agenda Coalition (NAC) has been an influential force within the NPT context for several decades and had a major impact on the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference (e.g. the 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament). Michael Hurley explained the power of the NAC as a cross-regional grouping to challenge the entitlement claimed by the nuclear weapon states. He saw the NAC continuing to function as a bridge-builder and champion of nuclear disarmament within the NPT and noted the special role Ireland had played in the establishment of the treaty. Noting that the NAC had not endorsed any particular diplomatic path forward, he stressed the need for states to decide among

themselves as to what forum and format would be best to achieve their nuclear disarmament objectives.

The currently twelve nation Nonproliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) grouping had been established in 2010 as a vehicle for promoting implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the NPT Review Conference that same year. As a cross-regional grouping of non-nuclear weapon states, but one that contained several NATO members and other prominent allies of the U.S. the NPDI had “the ear of the P5” and tried to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation aims through collaboration with them and other NPT parties. Marius Grinius enumerated several of the policy inputs the NPDI had contributed to the NPT process, notably its sustained emphasis on transparency and the promotion of standardized and comprehensive reporting by NPT states parties.

In her presentation Macha MacKay stressed the constructive role that civil society has played on the nuclear disarmament file and the mutual benefits that could flow from regular consultations between governments and concerned NGOs as had been the practice in past years. Civil society represented the *vox populi* on these subjects and a productive partnership should be maintained. She noted the challenges of maintaining democratic accountability on these files especially in light of the lack of governmental follow-up to the unanimous motion of Parliament in 2010 on nuclear disarmament.

Discussion covered several issues connected with the NPT process, including the significance of the proposal for a new Open Ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament to be established by the UN General Assembly this fall and the broader implications of the nuclear deal arrived at between Iran and leading powers. Reference was also made to Global Zero and its recent promotion of a de-alerting agreement as a step towards cooperation amongst nuclear weapon states on nuclear disarmament.

Concluding Panel: The concluding panel provided an opportunity for some “in house” reflections by Shawn Brunt on behalf of the Thinkers’ Lodge Society and by Sandra Butcher, Walter Dorn and Pierre Jasmin on the theme “Canadian Pugwash and Existential Threats to Humanity”. These speakers voiced their hopes and expectations for Pugwash’s future actions on behalf of a world at peace and free of nuclear weapons and paid tribute to those who have contributed so much to this cause over the years.

With Thanks to our Sponsors

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