



November 1, 2022

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Dr,
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

Dear Mme Joly,

On Friday, October 21, the Canadian Pugwash Group in collaboration with the Balsillie School of International Affairs organized a conference in Waterloo, Ontario, on the theme “Restoring a Strained Global Security Architecture”. The conference featured six panels on key topics relevant to current international security challenges and was opened with a video address by Canada’s UN Ambassador, Bob Rae.

The Canadian Pugwash Group wishes to bring to your attention the following policy recommendations inspired by the conference discussions:

1. As part of a comprehensive strategy to respond to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and to uphold the international legal order enshrined in the UN Charter, we would urge a renewed investment in diplomacy with a view to reaching an equitable, negotiated settlement to the conflict. In this context, Canada might begin to explore what role it could play in helping to monitor an eventual ceasefire as part of a peace settlement.
2. Despite Russia’s illegal actions, we believe that it is important for the West to maintain channels of communication with Moscow, both in the short term to minimize the risk of escalation and in the longer term to reinforce strategic stability. Such engagement would involve a resumption of the US-Russia strategic dialogue and the initiation of talks to develop a successor agreement to the New START accord that will expire in February 2026. The NATO-Russia Council should be used as a venue for reviving arms control and disarmament negotiations. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its various political-military mechanisms should be fully utilized.
3. As we mark the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the international community is being rudely reminded of the existence of a global nuclear weapons arsenal and the risks attendant upon these weapons, including irresponsible threats of nuclear weapon use being employed as a coercive tactic. Any use of a nuclear weapon would be catastrophic, and there is no certainty that the resulting escalation could be controlled before it reached “Armageddon” levels. In this light, we encourage Canada to re-energize its efforts on behalf of multilateral arms control and disarmament and propose the following specific actions:

4. Canada has been a member of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament from its inception. It would be timely for Canada to offer to host its next ministerial meeting.
5. Although the recent NPT Review Conference failed to agree on an outcome document, it was decided that a working group would be created to consider the strengthening of the NPT review process to ensure greater transparency and accountability, with a report to the 2023 NPT Preparatory Committee meeting. Given Canada's earlier espousal of reform proposals for the NPT, it would be fitting for our diplomats to take an active role in this group.
6. For too long, Canada's work on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) has been undercut by its insistence that any eventual treaty negotiation be undertaken in the moribund Conference on Disarmament. This approach effectively condemns this agreed NPT priority to the dustbin. Canada should opt for a new approach towards these negotiations, including a possible mandate expansion to a more comprehensive Fissile Material Treaty, by utilizing an UNGA resolution to authorize their commencement.
7. The Government agreed with recommendation #21 of the House Standing Committee on National Defence's 2018 report on "Canada and NATO" which called on Canada to take "a leadership role within NATO in beginning the work necessary for achieving the NATO goal of creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons". We would support further Canadian efforts to promote these objectives. Adopting a "No First Use" declaratory policy would represent a positive initial step in this regard.
8. Canada can build on its support for a ban on destructive anti-satellite weapon tests by developing a draft treaty that could serve as a basis for multilateral consideration.
9. We urge Canada to reengage in UN peace operations by providing key personnel, equipment and innovative training tools.
10. We encourage Global Affairs Canada to revive the practice of annual, substantive consultations with Canadian civil society organizations on the full spectrum of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament issues. Such structured exchanges help ensure that official policy formulation takes into account the views of concerned non-governmental groups and provides an opportunity for GAC to explain the programs and actions it has taken.

We are living through an exceptionally challenging international security situation for maintaining peace and the primacy of international law. We believe Canada has both an opportunity and an obligation to contribute to efforts to protect human security and strengthen global governance. Canadian Pugwash Group stands ready to discuss any of these proposals with you or your designated officials.

Respectfully,

Cesar Jaramillo

Chair, Canadian Pugwash Group

c.c.

Hon. Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence

Hon. Michael Chong MP

Heather McPherson MP

Stéphane Bergeron MP

Elizabeth May MP