



Bev Delong  
Canadian Pugwash Group  
Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons  
Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention  
Project Ploughshares

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Dear Ms. Delong,

Thank you for your correspondence of October 30, 2023, containing the report entitled *Canada's Role in Nuclear Disarmament in a Multipolar World*.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the sustained advocacy and expertise offered by civil society in support of nuclear disarmament. Your engagement is helping to build well-informed and inclusive strategies for real progress. I thank you for the thoughtful reflection and time that you and your colleagues have put into this report, and reaffirm your call for States to prioritize trust-building to advance our mutual security and disarmament goals.

I share your serious concern about the state of nuclear arms control and the international disarmament machinery. Canada agrees that the mechanisms designed to protect us from the use of nuclear weapons are in need of reinforcement and strengthening, and that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use must remain a guiding principle for nuclear disarmament.

As you rightly point out, many of the fractures plaguing our current system existed prior to Russia's unjustified, illegal invasion of and war against Ukraine. These fractures are exacerbated by Russia's reckless nuclear rhetoric and its efforts to undermine integral treaties, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and New START. Growing areas of conflict across the globe have the potential to deepen the cracks in these systems – all pointing to the need for comprehensive and renewed momentum towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Canada is deeply concerned about the slow pace of disarmament and joins the call for urgent action on the elimination of nuclear weapons as the only guarantee against their use. We are working hard to advance a pragmatic and inclusive approach to disarmament, both within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) process and in informal groupings. As a member of initiatives such as the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Vienna Group of 10, Canada has made significant contributions towards advancing treaty implementation, including efforts to strengthen the review process. We are firm in our belief that Nuclear-Weapon States must make concrete progress on their Article VI commitments and obligations. Transparency and improved reporting are critical to such progress, and we will continue to be staunch advocates in this regard.

It is for this reason that, at the 78<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly's First Committee, Canada introduced a new operative paragraph in our resolution on a treaty banning production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This new language explicitly calls for States possessing such fissile material to engage in transparency and confidence building measures among themselves with the aim of commencing negotiations, and requests that this work be facilitated by the UN Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We continue to believe that a treaty, which is long



overdue, would be an integral step towards disarmament. This initiative that we have introduced would serve to bolster communications, mutual trust, and ultimately political will, among States possessing fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Canada did not observe the Second Meeting of States Parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as the TPNW remains incompatible with Canada's NATO commitments. That said, we reaffirm our intention and willingness to work with all States, within the NPT framework. Indeed, we have been intentional in working with TPNW States and non-TPNW states alike to find areas of convergence in order to achieve our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. As an example, Canada collaborated with states including Egypt and the Philippines at the Working Group on Strengthening the NPT Review Cycle, held in July 2023 in Vienna, in advance of the NPT Preparatory Committee. At the Working Group, Canada sought to advance broadly supported proposals for improving transparency and accountability of the Nuclear Weapon States.

Canada has also repeatedly called for the immediate resumption of bilateral talks between Russia and the United States to conclude a follow-up agreement to New START prior to its 2026 expiration, and we appreciate the United States' clear signal that it is willing to discuss nuclear arms control with Russia irrespective of other global events. In this regard, 2023 meetings between the United States and China, at both the leader level and expert level, were also a step in the right direction.

Canada remains committed to using a variety of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy tools to address today's challenges – and urge our allies to do the same. Canada's ongoing work on nuclear risk reduction, including in forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, advocates a comprehensive review of all available options to prevent miscalculated, escalatory, unintended, and unauthorized use of nuclear weapons as a vital measure to lower the temperature of the current environment. Creative, innovative, and collaborative efforts are key to ensuring security for all while advancing towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We view the P5's statement on January 2, 2022 "that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" as a starting - not end - point, and proactively work with our partners to build upon that goal until general and complete disarmament is achieved.

Thank you again for your continued engagement and for sharing your report with us. Global Affairs Canada welcomes ongoing engagement with you on these critical issues.

Alison Grant

Director General for International Security

Global Affairs Canada