

CNANW Letter on Canada's nuclear weapons policy

The United Nations Association in Canada has endorsed the following letter to Minister Graham from the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW). UNA-Canada is a member organization of CNANW.

CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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November 21, 2002

The Honourable Bill Graham,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G4

Dear Mr. Graham,

Re: Canada's policies with respect to nuclear weapons

We are very grateful to hear that Canada cast a favourable vote at the UN on the New Agenda Group resolution. We are aware that this is a result of your knowledge of, and principled leadership on this issue. This vote is consistent with Canada's undertakings and statements at the NPT May 2002 Review Conference and within the Conference on Disarmament. Please be advised that we will be seeking an explanation of vote from other NATO states.

We write to express the deep concern of all nineteen CNANW member organizations with regards to recent nuclear weapons developments, and the current unraveling of the international legal infrastructure relating to nuclear disarmament and abolition. Recent events such as the setbacks with the CTBT, the ABMT, the proposals with respect to missile defence and weaponization of space, the suggestion of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and the funding for developments of mini-nukes make us fear that we are moving more surely toward nuclear war than to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Rarely in recent years has our objective seemed more important, or the achievement of our goal more remote.

We are particularly concerned with the failure of NATO governments to address, let alone reconcile the glaring contradiction between their "unequivocal undertaking" to abolish nuclear weapons under the NPT, and NATO's policy that nuclear weapons remain essential for the foreseeable future. We are asking the Canadian government to make

every effort to urgently resolve this contradiction in a manner that is wholly consistent with our obligations under the NPT and the undertakings related thereto.

Knowing the immense capacity of these weapons to cause destruction, we are further proposing that this problem be seriously addressed by the SCFAIT. More specifically, we are respectfully proposing that you refer to that Committee a request that they examine:

- a) progress in implementing those recommendations accepted by the Government from the SCFAIT's Report entitled "Canada and the Nuclear Challenge", December 1998; and
- b) Canadian progress in implementing the "13 Practical Steps" agreed upon in the Final Agreement of the May 2000 NPT Review Conference.

We would like to advise you that we held meetings about this NATO-NPT contradiction with MPs Irwin Cotler, Stockwell Day and Bernard Patry on October 31st. Mr Day and Prof. Cotler were both supportive of our proposal that the SCFAIT address this NATO-NPT contradiction after the holiday break, next year. Dr. Patry indicated that he would consider it.

Your consideration of this letter is most sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bev Tollefson Delong
Chairperson

cc: All SCFAIT members