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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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● (0905)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good morning, colleagues. This is meeting number 59 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

This morning, we leave our report and our regular study of democratic development to have a briefing session on disarmament.

Our witnesses will include, from Project Ploughshares, Mr. Ernie Regehr, who has appeared before a number of committees of Parliament; and also, from the Middle Powers Initiative, we have the Honourable Douglas Roche, former senator and long-time advocate of this.

I was just handed a report that is almost 10 years old now, *Canada and the Nuclear Challenge: Reducing the Political Value of Nuclear Weapons for the Twenty-first Century*. A number of our guests today appeared before the committee in regards to this report issued nine years ago by our committee. So we appreciate their long-standing expertise in and input into this subject.

You've been here before, and you know how the committee works. We'll have opening comments from both of you of approximately 10 minutes, and then we'll go into the first round.

Welcome. It's good to have you here.

Also, in the second hour we'll have another witness, Mr. Meyer, who also testified before the committee back when we did our report. We really look forward to that as well.

The time is yours.

Hon. Douglas Roche (Chairman, Middle Powers Initiative): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm here representing the Middle Powers Initiative, which submitted a report called "Towards 2010: Priorities for NPT Consensus" to the recently concluded first preparatory meeting for the 2010 review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Mr. Chairman, I've attached this report to my statement. I think it has been distributed to the members in both languages.

This report summarizes seven priorities for action identified by the MPI based on four meetings of the Article VI Forum, which were held over an 18-month period in New York, The Hague, Ottawa, and Vienna, involving 30 invited like-minded states, including Canada.

The seven priorities are as follows: verified reduction of nuclear forces; standing down of nuclear forces, which is known as de-alerting; negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty; bringing the comprehensive test ban treaty into force; strengthened negative security assurances; regulation of nuclear fuel production and supply; and improved NPT governance.

I want to thank the Government of Canada for the support received for the Article VI Forum process. I commend the work of officials in the foreign affairs department, notably the Ambassador for Disarmament, Paul Meyer.

Canada has consistently upheld the need for a balanced implementation of the NPT's three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. But more high-ranking political leadership is now urgent. MPI's analysis of the Canadian and other middle power statements made at the NPT preparatory meeting shows that stronger political weight is needed to respond effectively to the present nuclear crisis.

The facts are stark. The total number of 27,000 nuclear weapons is, in the words of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, headed by the Swedish diplomat Hans Blix, "extraordinarily and alarmingly high". Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says the world is sleepwalking toward nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Yet the declared nuclear weapons states are all engaged in efforts to modernize their nuclear arsenals, despite the ruling by the International Court of Justice that they must conclude negotiations toward elimination.

Moreover, India and Pakistan each have an estimated 50 to 60 nuclear weapons, and Israel has 200. These three countries do not even belong to the NPT and all are engaged in modernization. The eight countries now in the nuclear club have a combined population of 3.1 billion, which means that 48% of the people in the world live in a nuclear weapons state.

World attention is focused on North Korea, which tested a nuclear weapon in 2006, and Iran is now claiming an ability to move toward large-scale enrichment of uranium. Of course neither country should be allowed to build nuclear weapons. But these states are flashpoints off a volcano. The volcano is the present arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear crisis can be stated in a nutshell: a two-class world in which a few states arrogate unto themselves the possession of nuclear weapons while proscribing their acquisition by any other state is not sustainable.

Where is the voice of Canada in this world crisis? Where is the policy statement by the Government of Canada addressing the totality of nuclear weapons, the paramount security issue in the world? Is there not a two-class standard in criticizing Iran for enriching uranium while remaining silent on the U.K. government's decision to extend its Trident nuclear system well into the second half of the 21st century?

The moral, legal, and military case against nuclear weapons is better understood than ever before. The intellectual argument that nuclear weapons are needed for security is now largely rejected by most states as baseless.

● (0910)

Nuclear weapons opponents recently gained surprising support when four prominent American figures, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry, and Sam Nunn, who have all held high posts in the U.S. administration and Congress, came out for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In an op-ed article in the *Wall Street Journal*, they warned that "the world is now on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era".

Their article, calling for a series of action steps, was in vivid contrast to the negativity displayed by the Bush administration. Of 31 votable nuclear disarmament resolutions at the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 2006, the U.S. cast the sole no vote 12 times. Altogether, the U.S. was in a minority of four or less 20 times.

What is Canada doing to work with such like-minded states as the New Agenda Coalition, comprised of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden, to influence the most powerful country in the world that its policies must be revised to save the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2010? What is Canada doing to press the U.S. to get its tactical nuclear weapons out of the European countries: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Turkey? NATO's continued insistence that nuclear weapons are "essential"—that's their word—flatly contradicts the NPT. Canada cannot have it both ways: to support elimination of nuclear weapons through the NPT and also to support NATO's continued nuclear weapons.

The Canadian government should show a greater sense of urgency in dealing with the overarching problem of nuclear weapons. This is the point made by Senator Roméo Dallaire, who, on April 17, 2007, said, "Why does Canada, as a middle power that does not have any nuclear weapons, not take this leadership role and initiate the process to abolish and eliminate these nuclear weapons?" On May 3, he returned to the subject, stating, "It is Canada's moral obligation to assume a proactive leadership role to save the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—our last best hope to stave off a frightening cascade of nuclear proliferation from which there can be no rescue."

Mr. Chairman, it is Senator Dallaire's motion, which was unanimously adopted by the Senate on May 3, that urged: "That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to take a global leadership role in the campaign of eradicating the dire threat to humanity posed by nuclear weapons."

On July 5 to 7, 2007, the Middle Powers Initiative will join with the Pugwash movement and work with Senator Dallaire in sponsoring an international extraordinary workshop, Revitalizing Nuclear Disarmament, to observe the 50th anniversary of Pugwash. This is a moment for Canada to step forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Roche.

We'll go to Mr. Regehr.

Mr. Ernie Regehr (Senior Policy Advisor, Project Ploughshares): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to be here. I'm pleased to address the committee on behalf of both Project Ploughshares and Veterans Against Nuclear Arms.

We've produced a longer paper on the subject of our disarmament agenda for Canada, and I'll see to it that all members of the committee receive a copy. I encourage you to review the brief history of VANA in that report in particular. It is an extraordinary organization of veterans who understand the realities of war, who know that the virtually limitless destructive power of nuclear weapons is not a source of security in the world, and who have channelled their particular experiences as veterans into a decades-long call for the world to end this overarching danger.

This year's preparatory committee for the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference has confirmed two central realities. First, if the ailing NPT is to fulfill its foundational role in advancing global security, it must be solidly balanced on its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses. Second, the international community is now well beyond simply debating a range of disarmament and non-proliferation options; rather, it is looking for meaningful implementation of an already agreed-to agenda.

While all states are bound by the articles of the NPT treaty, there are four types of states in the non-proliferation regime. Each type of state faces particular implementation roles and challenges.

The biggest category is non-nuclear weapons states. In exchange for forgoing nuclear weapons themselves, they have received the legally binding promise of disarmament by the nuclear weapons states, and they have access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Access requires that they continuously verify their non-weapons status through safeguard agreements with the IAEA. Many have yet to fulfill their obligations, and of course Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in much more serious violation of their safeguards and NPT obligations. Furthermore, about three dozen of these states are in possession of nuclear power technology and thus must sign and ratify the comprehensive test ban treaty before it can enter into force. Several of them have yet to do that.

Nuclear weapons states, the second category, are under legal obligation to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. They renewed their commitment to do that at the 2000 review conference, although they are not bound by a specific deadline. In the meantime, nuclear weapons states are obliged to fulfill specific commitments they made through the NPT and through the review conferences of 1995 and 2000. I won't go through that list; Senator Roche has already referred to much of it. Irreversible and verifiable cuts to arsenals are at the core of their obligation. Failure to meet these obligations constitutes non-compliance with the treaty, just as failures by non-nuclear weapons states to meet all of their safeguard requirements does.

In the third category are India, Israel, and Pakistan. They are de facto nuclear weapons states, but they are not signatories to the NPT. That does not mean they escape all disarmament obligations. They are bound by the NPT norm of nuclear disarmament, and as members of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, they are certainly obligated to pursue in good faith the currently agreed objectives of that body, which includes the prevention of an arms race in outer space, legally binding negative security assurance to non-nuclear weapons states, and a fissile materials cut-off treaty. The CD also negotiated the test ban treaty. All three states with nuclear technology must ratify the treaty for it to enter into force. India and Pakistan also are in direct violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1172, which unambiguously calls on them to end their nuclear weapons programs.

● (0915)

The fourth category is non-nuclear weapons states within NATO, a group that obviously includes Canada. They find themselves facing a stark contradiction: affirming within NATO that nuclear forces are essential to alliance security, while at the same time affirming within the NPT that nuclear disarmament is essential to global security. It is a contradiction that must be resolved in favour of the latter commitment.

So what priorities should Canada pursue within this broad and essentially agreed disarmament agenda?

The first and foremost item is that to continue to set the right course, each new Canadian government should, as a matter of course and at the highest level, reaffirm Canada's fundamental commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. With that unwavering goal always at the core of its efforts, Canada should continue to actively promote the early implementation of the broad nuclear disarmament agenda that we've been talking about.

There will necessarily be some shifts in priorities according to their circumstances, but within that, Canada should focus on several items that it has a good opportunity to influence. First among these is attention to the disarmament machinery. Nuclear disarmament depends first and foremost on the political will of states simply to do it, but the institutional mechanisms through which they pursue that fundamental and urgent agenda are critically important.

The continuing dysfunction in the CD suggests that it is once again time for Canada, along with like-minded states, to explore having the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly form ad hoc committees to take up the fourfold agenda that lies dormant now in the CD—that is, the non-weaponization of space, negative security assurances, the fissile materials cut-off treaty, and new approaches to nuclear disarmament broadly.

In the context of the NPT, Canada should continue to press for a more effective governance structure involving annual decision-making meetings, the ability to respond to particular crises such as the declaration of a state party's intent to withdraw, and a permanent bureau or secretariat for the treaty. In that context, Canada has made and should continue to make a point of promoting transparency through regular reporting by states on their compliance efforts and fuller NGO participation in the treaty review process.

Second, the conflict regarding Iran's uranium enrichment program raises important issues about the spread of weapon-sensitive civilian technologies to which all states in compliance with their non-proliferation obligations are now legally entitled. It is in the interest of nuclear disarmament that access to these technologies be severely restricted and placed under international control through non-discriminatory multilateral fuel supply arrangements. Canada, as a state with high levels of competence in relevant technologies, should take an active role in investigating and promoting international fuel cycle control mechanisms.

Third, the U.S.-India civilian nuclear cooperation deal has led to proposals to exempt India from key guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Canadian technology and interests are directly engaged. Canada must be at the fore of international efforts to bring India, Israel, and Pakistan under the rules and discipline of the nuclear non-proliferation system. In particular, and at a minimum, Canada should insist that the Nuclear Suppliers Group require that India ratify the test ban treaty and abide by a verifiable freeze on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes before any modification of civilian cooperation guidelines is considered.

Finally, Canada cannot avoid promoting within NATO a resolution of the NATO-NPT contradiction, in favour of the NPT disarmament commitment.

Thank you.

● (0920)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr and Mr. Roche.

We'll go into the first round of questioning.

Mr. Dosanjh, you have seven minutes.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): I will share it with my colleagues. I'm sure they may have some questions.

Thank you very much for your presentations. Both of you are quite learned on these issues, which are very complex issues, and I don't pretend to understand them in their full complexity.

However, it seems to me that both of you touched on the point that if those nations that are sort of officially nuclear don't progressively and actively engage in disarmament, how can anyone credibly ask anyone else to not seek nuclear weapons? It is not about big nations or small nations; it is about each nation believing it has the right to do what it pleases, unless others encourage them to be part of a network of states.

The picture you paint is very complex, but it's also very depressing, because you say that these states that are officially nuclear have no specific timetable to follow but have a commitment to disarm. I think that we, as Canadians, because of the NATO duality that we engage in, lose credibility on the international stage. As a government and as a country, we have to tackle that issue, and we are falling behind. We are not in a leadership position.

You obviously have outlined some of the issues of what we should be doing. But what do you think is the single most important step the Canadian government at this point can take? Is it dealing with the duality around NATO, or is it something else?

● (0925)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll get the answer, and then we'll come back to Mr. Wilfert for another question. Thank you for the question, Mr. Dosanjh.

Mr. Roche.

Hon. Douglas Roche: Thank you, Mr. Dosanjh. You pose a challenge to us to name the single most important thing.

There is a range of things that have to be done. But when Hans Blix was asked that very question as the chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, whose report came out about a year ago—and I know he was here in Ottawa—he was asked, of all his 60 recommendations that are in this report, which is the single most important, he said unhesitatingly that it was to get the comprehensive test ban treaty ratified to shut off nuclear testing everywhere in the world.

Therefore, I would have to say in answer to your question that the single thing, if you forced me to confine it to one, would be for Canada to press the United States to ratify the comprehensive test ban treaty. I went through an unfortunate experience in 1999 when the U.S. Senate actually voted against the ratification of the CTBT. I won't go into all the reasons for that, but it certainly revolved around a lot of domestic issues that do not pertain at this time.

So if we want to stop North Korea from testing, or anybody else, we have to have a universal regime. There are 10 states that are required under the terms of the CTBT—there are 44 altogether and there are 10 remaining—that have to ratify. It is my belief that were the United States to revisit this, and there are some signs that they may be willing to revisit it in the next administration starting in 2009, the other states that have still to ratify it would fall in line.

So I think Canada should put pressure on the United States to do this. It's in the interests of the United States as well as in the interests of everybody else to have a world in which nuclear testing is a thing of the past.

The Chair: Mr. Regehr, you wanted to add to that.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: Very briefly, it is to second what Mr. Roche has said, but also to say that because there are various issues that come up, I think it's fundamentally important that Canada have the fundamentals absolutely correct and on record.

The Prime Minister spoke at the General Assembly of the United Nations in the fall of 2006 and made a very limited reference to nuclear disarmament there. It was on the Iran question, and I'm not sure that the present government at the political leadership has made a clear and unequivocal declaration on the objective of nuclear disarmament.

That needs to be clear front and centre, so that when we encounter the India decision, for example, and what we do on the U.S., we don't calculate it on the basis of what are Canada-U.S. relations and try to finesse something, but that we are pursuing a fundamental principle, that when we are in NATO forums we understand there is a fundamental principle that we are pursuing in those forums.

On the specific item, absolutely, I think the need to articulate clearly that principled position is important as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr.

Mr. Wilfert, you have another couple of minutes.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm sorry, Mr. Roche, I missed the beginning of your presentation, but I have a couple of quick questions.

Our last nuclear statement as a government was made in 1999, and so it is out of date. It very much reflects the paradigm of the time with regard to the Cold War. The Canadian government, both this one and previous ones, have condemned any reliance on nuclear weapons by non-allied countries, but we continue to treat nuclear weapons as useful, even necessary, I would suggest, as an element of our national defence and that of our allies.

First of all, do you agree that we should be updating our statement? Secondly, how practical is it for us to withdraw our support for NATO nuclear policy, which clearly is in conflict with the NPT obligations, and at the same time work with our like-minded allies for advances given the present conditions that we see both in Europe and obviously with regard to our relations with the United States? This would clearly, in my view, put us at significant odds with Washington.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you.

Could we have very quick answers, if possible?

Hon. Douglas Roche: First of all, yes, I do believe that the Canadian government should update its petition. There should be, as I indicated earlier, a statement at the highest levels of the government, a Canadian petition to support and become proactive in the diplomatic and political engagements in pursuing negotiations toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Canadian government's position, of course, irrespective of who has been in power all through the years, has been to oppose nuclear weapons, but we do this in an ambivalent way, which you hinted at in your question. On the one hand, we supported the year 2000 review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which declared an unequivocal undertaking of the total elimination of nuclear weapons via a program of 13 steps. Canada, of course, signed on to that. At the same time, we're manifesting support for a continuation of NATO's position, which is to call nuclear weapons essential, the supreme guarantee of security, and to have tactical nuclear weapons stationed in the five European countries that I mentioned. This is absolutely incompatible, incoherent. I believe that the ambivalence in Canadian policy should be cleared up and that now is the time to move ahead.

The chairman made reference earlier to the report that this committee did in 1999, which is an outstanding report. It led to Canada's getting NATO to review its policies. Well, they did review their policies, but they repeated them. Now, I think, there is less opposition within the non-nuclear ranks of NATO to pursue a study that would lead to some reformulation of the strategic concept, which would take nuclear weapons out of the equation and, of course, take them out of Europe. This, I think, is a very important issue for Canada, and it ought to be pursued.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Roche.

Go ahead very quickly, please, Mr. Regehr.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: Briefly, I think the practicality of predicting an outcome is not great, but Canada's commitment to NATO is not in doubt. It's not ambiguous, and I think it's in a strong position to keep raising the question. It can't be done unilaterally by Canada; you have to do it together with like-minded states in Europe. There are those, so build alliances with Norway, Belgium, and so forth. It's very practical to pursue it, but to predict an immediate outcome is another matter.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr.

Madame Lalonde, pour neuf minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you to both of you for being here. It is always a pleasure to hear from you. It seems to me that every time we meet with you, the world is a more dangerous place. I don't know whether it is an illusion, but I believe this to be the case.

I would like to start by asking you the following question. Are there not at this very moment new countries that are considering getting nuclear arms because they believe that it would be a political asset? Have countries such as Iran, Korea and others concluded that Saddam Hussein has seen his country invaded and bombed because he didn't have any nuclear weapons? In order to avoid finding themselves in the same situation, are these countries trying to acquire such weapons?

Regarding Iran, I regularly read the *Haaretz* newspaper in its English version. Several Israeli leaders have been urging the United States to put an end to Iran's nuclear program because they cannot tolerate such a situation. They also stated that if the United States would not do it, they would deal with it themselves. Everybody remembers what happened in Irak in 1981.

It seems to me that this dimension is extremely important and is being neglected. Could you give us some guidance so that we may understand and correctly interpret the situation and act accordingly? We can do everything else that has to be done, but if the dynamic is such as described, we could be heading blindly together toward a catastrophe.

● (0935)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lalonde.

Mr. Regehr, do you want to start on this one?

Either/or. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Douglas Roche: Thank you. With your permission, sir, I will answer in English.

[*English*]

Iran poses a dilemma for the world because it's symptomatic of what the real problem is. The real problem in the world is not Iran pursuing the development of nuclear energy, which has the capacity for their building a nuclear weapon if they pursued it that far. That is a problem, to be sure, but it's not the real problem. The real problem is getting the cooperation of the international community to implement the fullness of the non-proliferation treaty, which calls for disarmament steps, non-proliferation, as well as the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

What right do we have to say to Iran that they cannot develop nuclear energy or that they cannot enrich uranium when other states are doing it too? Even here in Canada, Canada should be careful of its credibility on this issue, because it is contemplating a situation in which uranium would be enriched within our country. If we're going to say to Iran, you can't do it but other states can, because we're good states, this gets into another two-class system in the world. It leads to the fundamental issue of nuclear weapons today, namely, a two-class world.

I think Canada is eminently positioned to speak in the international community for the integrity of a nuclear weapons policy that would affect everyone.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Roche.

Mr. Regehr.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: Briefly, it is a dangerous situation, and we've been reading about the numbers of states in the Middle East that have declared their intention to pursue nuclear power: Jordan, quite actively; Saudi Arabia; and some of the gulf states. Unfortunately, I think part of that interest is not simply a benign interest in energy, but also it's to keep options open in anticipating what Iran is going to do.

That brings us back to Israel and the declaration in 1995 and subsequent declarations of the commitment to a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East. That's a very particular and important objective. I think it relates to the issue of the proposed deal with India. If we are now in a position of relaxing the nuclear cooperation arrangements with India, that will also inevitably devolve to Pakistan and to Israel. Then we have a situation of Israel being permanently, in effect, accepted as a nuclear weapons state, and the possibility of preventing Iran from acquiring weapons in that context is very, very difficult. Then you can see a kind of alarmist falling of the dominoes in the whole region. These are interrelated items, as they are related to the role and record of the nuclear weapons states themselves.

The Chair: Madam Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you.

This does not reassure us, but it indicates one possible road map.

I have a technical question. At the end of Mr. Regehr's report, in paragraph 2, entitled *The Internationalization of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle*, it says that Canada has some experience.

● (0940)

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Lalonde, I'm sorry, which report is that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I am talking about Mr. Regehr's report.

[*English*]

The Chair: From Mr. Regehr?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I quote from the report:

> It is in the interest of nuclear disarmament that these technologies be severely restricted and placed under international control through non-discriminatory multilateral arrangements. Canada, as a state with high levels of competence in relevant technologies, should take an active role in investigating and promoting international fuel cycle control mechanisms.

Could you give us more details on this issue?

[*English*]

Mr. Ernie Regehr: Well, as we were saying, in order to prevent the wide distribution of technology that has quite immediate weapons applications, the proposal is to place the sensitive technology, such as uranium enrichment and the reprocessing of fuel, into multilateral hands, into international controls, rather than make it the prerogative of individual nation states.

Canada, because it has skills in this area, needs to play an active role in promoting multilateralism, but when we do that, we have to genuinely promote multilateralism, not multilateralism as long as our own national prerogatives are protected. So we can't go internationally and say there should be multilateral control of the fuel cycle but we'd like to develop uranium enrichment in our own country because we have the technology and the means to do it. If it's multilateral, it has to be multilateral.

If we're going to say, as Doug has said, that we can do uranium enrichment in our country, we're not going to be able to shut down the Iran issue. It's a complicated issue that needs physical scientists involved and the expertise of the officials, and so forth. But again, the fundamental principle is that these technologies should not be under national control, they should be under international control, and Canada should not argue that position while also trying to retain a national prerogative to pursue them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr.

Thank you, Madam Lalonde.

Mr. Khan and Mr. Obhrai will do a split.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Gentlemen, thank you very much for being here.

Now, I want to get on to a more practical side of things, the evolution of nuclear weapons for a certain purpose—I don't need to go into that history—and the recent example of over a million troops being on the border of India and Pakistan, almost a million troops on either side, eyeball to eyeball. I think if they had not had nuclear capacity, there would have been a war that had terrible impacts.

This is a response to what you said, sir, that nuclear weapons for security is not valid anymore.

You also said that you need a stronger weight. I don't know who you're referring to, perhaps the U.S., Russia, China? Who was that heavyweight, that stronger weight that you require?

Given that the nuclear weapons exist and given that nuclear science exists and is advancing, don't you think it is naive to assume that we can turn the clock back and eliminate or even control the science?

What I'd like to hear, sir.... This is a very complex question, and by no means do I support nuclear proliferation, but can you give us a comprehensive and attainable solution? I don't think statements in the United Nations are going to bring about any good. Is that a realistic approach? Is it attainable? Can it happen?

Those are the kinds of answers I'm looking for, sir.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Khan.

Mr. Roche.

Hon. Douglas Roche: Thank you very much, Mr. Khan.

First, on “weight”, what I meant was that the Canadian government should speak at the highest levels, go to the highest levels—the Prime Minister, the foreign minister. The full exposition of the policy of the Government of Canada on this subject is very much needed.

On the security, it's pretty clear that nuclear weapons cannot be used and have not been able to stop the wars that have taken place over the past 30 or 40 years.

On India and Pakistan, the presence of nuclear weapons in both countries, in my view, exacerbates the situation rather than having an ameliorative effect. We have moved beyond a period when any one nation can hope to guarantee its own security by an overpowering military might, including nuclear weapons. Modern history is replete with examples of this.

And with respect to being naïve in aspiring to a nuclear-weapons-free world, this is not just a sermon or a homily; it is a legal requirement under the non-proliferation treaty. All states are obliged to pursue negotiations toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, from a political point of view, it is totally impractical to think that in the 21st century we can go on with the status quo, the status quo being defined as a number of states holding to themselves the right to have nuclear weapons while proscribing their acquisition by any other state. It's simply not working.

In the words of Kofi Annan, the recently departed Secretary-General, we are "sleepwalking" toward a catastrophe.

I cited the four prominent American statesmen—Shultz, Kissinger, Perry, and Nunn—who, in a remarkable piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, said that the time has now come for a nuclear-weapons-free world and to pursue this by certain steps that need to be taken.

No one thinks that the abolition of nuclear weapons can occur overnight. That's not the idea. It is the refusal of the major states to start heading down that avenue in a concrete, practical manner that is destabilizing the international regime today and weakening the non-proliferation treaty, which is the single best guarantee we have against nuclear warfare.

● (0945)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Regehr.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: I would just add, very briefly, that I was encouraged by your point that you do not support the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and so that's the challenge we hold in common. How do we make good on that concern?

We can't turn the clock back, but we can control the science. We can control the technology. And in fact, the record has been of fairly effective control of the technology. The breakout of technology to new regimes is very limited. The International Atomic Energy Agency is there and controls the technology and the science on a daily basis. It needs to be strengthened. It needs to be further reported.

I think one thing we can say is that we will never reach a point where the nuclear problem has been solved and now we'll go on to other things. There will always be temptations for somebody to pick up the science. They will have to be vigilant at all times. The institutional arrangements through the International Atomic Energy Agency to prevent proliferation will always be necessary and present and will require the energetic diplomatic support of countries like Canada.

The Chair: You have a minute, Mr. Khan.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Senator, you just said "refusal of the major states". Russia just announced that they have the ability to penetrate the missile shield. So it is that issue that is so crucial: how do we have these countries reconcile? As Russia and China are becoming wealthier, they are going to be competing in military hardware and nuclear technology, and so on, to remain in lockstep with the United States and others for their own security. How do you convince them to back off? How do you convince the Iranians, who lost a million people in the war with Iraq, supported by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, that it won't happen to them again? Some people will argue that they have legitimate concerns. How do we reconcile those issues before we...?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Khan.

Hon. Douglas Roche: Thank you, Mr. Khan.

In brief, the pursuit of international law is the only way in which we can hope to live in a stabilized world as the 21st century goes ahead. I think Russia is manifesting, in the announcement that you just referred to, that there is indeed a renewed nuclear arms race going on now.

We have entered what I call the second nuclear age, the first age being in the Cold War, and now in the 21st century nuclear weapons are being built into the military doctrines of the major states as permanent instruments. This is completely against the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and it's against what I would call the risk factor. The risk of going down the avenue that will lead to nuclear disarmament is much less a risk to the world than the present maintenance of the status quo is a risk to the use of nuclear weapons.

● (0950)

The Chair: Mr. Regehr.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: You mentioned the Russian missile test, and that's reflective of the action-reaction cycle of nuclear arms.

In the early nineties and throughout the nineties we were in a situation of action-reaction in a downward spiral, and there was then a complementary action to reduce nuclear weapons. It's possible.

The ballistic missile defence proposal of the United States is part of an action-reaction cycle that's starting to escalate that again. The Russian interest isn't breaking through the defences. It's possible for states to take initiatives that produce constructive reactions to their action, and that action-reaction cycle on a downward spiral is what we have to pick up again.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr.

Very quickly, Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Yes, thank you very much for coming. Of course, I was here when you were here last time with former Prime Minister Kim Campbell.

The questions that are coming out here are legitimate questions in reference to this legal instrument, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. From your own testimony, everybody is relying on that to be the police thing that will ultimately reach the goal you have been looking for and we all have been looking for: the elimination of nuclear weapons. However, let me ask you this question, and I can ask this question to the other witness too.

The report card. The NPT says that we'll work to reduce and eliminate the disarmament portion of it. What is the report card today of the five permanent members who have been exempt and who have been told that they need to eliminate theirs?

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the proliferation that is going on in the former states is creating a very dangerous situation. Has anybody worked this out to see the report card? Has the U.S., the Chinese, or anybody else reduced to meet this NPT requirement that is there? Or are these people ignoring the NPT? And if they are, then why would somebody else come along and say we want to stick to the NPT as well?

My second short question here is this. The India nuclear deal creates a new situation. Would there be a need for a new instrument coming in here to take these kinds of national interests into account?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

Hon. Douglas Roche: Thank you.

I'll deal with the first question, and Mr. Regehr will deal with India.

First, I was puzzled by your use, Mr. Obhrai, of the word “exempt”. I'm not sure if you meant to imply it, but let me state clearly that the major nuclear powers are not exempt from their obligations under the non-proliferation treaty. With respect to reporting and ignoring, I would not say that the major states are ignoring the non-proliferation treaty. They come to all the review conferences. There was just a two-week meeting in Vienna preparing for the 2010 review; the nuclear-weapon states all participated. But they are trying to have it both ways. They are trying to pretend that their modernization programs are off on the side, and they want to keep the focus on Iran and North Korea.

I want to assert, as a person who believes in the elimination of nuclear weapons, that of course Iran and North Korea and any other country should be stopped from getting a nuclear weapon, but it's not going to be a successful campaign as long as those who have them think that they can go on pursuing them and ignoring their obligations.

They are deficient in their reporting, but Hans Blix says in his report—and eminent people from around the world say—that there are 27,000 nuclear weapons, that 95% of them are held between the United States and Russia, and that of that number about 2,500 strategic nuclear weapons, the smallest of which is about eight or ten times more powerful than the bomb that went off in Hiroshima, are being held on what's called alert status, meaning they could be fired on fifteen minutes' notice. So the risk of an accident, of a computer malfunction, of something happening, or of a destabilized regime somewhere infiltrating the whole nuclear weapons system is very high for the world.

When Mr. Dosanjh asked me what the single most important thing is and I answered that it was the CTBT, if he had given me two things to say, I would have said the second single most important thing, the second single thing, is to get those weapons off alert status. Why cannot Canada go after the United States and Russia together to say, it is wrong, you're endangering humanity by keeping those weapons on alert status, and for heaven's sake, at least show your goodwill by getting them off alert status?

● (0955)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Roche.

Go ahead, Mr. Regehr, quickly. I'm sorry, but we're over time.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: We need a new institutional arrangement for India. The objective is to bring India, Pakistan, and Israel into the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states. That's not going to happen immediately, but we should not go the other direction and simply recognize them as nuclear states without placing them under any disarmament obligation.

How do we place them under disarmament obligation? If we can't eliminate their nuclear weapons, we need to take measures that, at a minimum, freeze them where they are. That means insisting that they ratify the comprehensive test ban treaty and that they put a verifiable freeze on their production of fissile materials for weapons purposes.

India claims to have a minimal deterrence strategy. It has easily adequate weapons and fissile materials to carry out that minimum deterrence strategy. It should be open to a freeze on that, and that's what the condition should be when we enter into a civilian cooperation arrangement with them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr.

We went over time there. Mr. Dewar, you will get extra time. Committee business has been cut back, so we will go a little bit into the next hour.

Go ahead, Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our guests. It is indeed an honour to have you here today, and we are well resourced with your briefs and also your backgrounds.

It is depressing sometimes to look at how far we had come, and in what direction we are going. That's certainly in your brief, and for anyone looking at this issue, part of our challenge is that people have decided that this isn't an important issue. Nothing could be further from the truth, as you mentioned in the quote about sleepwalking into this.

Not to mention that when you have people of the stature and background of Misters Schultz, Nunn, Perry, and Kissinger, this isn't an ideological issue. This is a humanitarian issue, and that was clear from their op-ed. I'm absolutely delighted that they provided the world community with their opinion, because it's worth hearing.

What we're trying to establish here is Canada's position. I know that from *Hansard*, on May 17 in the House, Mr. O'Connor said to the Speaker in response to a question, "Mr. Chair, we are a member of NATO and we stand by NATO's policies. NATO, at this stage, has no policy of disarming from nuclear weapons." Then in response to the person asking the question, he went on to say, "As the member knows, Canada chose, back in 1945 when we participated in creating the nuclear weapons, not to have nuclear weapons. That is our national stand."

This kind of underlines the confusion here. I don't say that to embarrass anyone, because it's what you've already laid out. On the one hand, we are saying that as a nation state, Canada, we are not in favour of the use of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, we have this dilemma with NATO, and it's so critically important that Canada use its role in NATO to establish a position. We can do that without compromising. We can do it by way of stating—and I think your point is an excellent one—a declaration of principle that can be adopted within NATO.

My question to start with, maybe to you, Mr. Roche, is how can we do that? This is a goal—I think there'd be a consensus amongst everyone—that we should attain, but how do we do that within NATO?

● (1000)

Hon. Douglas Roche: Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

The chairman would probably like me to be brief in my answer, so I will be.

First, on "depressing", that's true in some ways, but you have to turn that coin around. I submit that there is an historical momentum occurring toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was done through the indefinite extension of NPT in 1995, making the obligations permanent.

The International Court of Justice said that they have a duty to conclude negotiations. In 2000, there was a unanimous agreement for an unequivocal undertaking in 13 steps. It's only in the past few years that there has been this downturn.

So we have to help turn this around. You're right that this is not an ideological subject; nuclear weapons are a human rights subject. It is the most gross violation of human rights around the world, let alone to those who are actually going to suffer the direct attack. So it should be approached from a human rights point of view.

Last, on Canada and what the minister said, of course we're grateful that Canada is not a nuclear weapons country. We don't have them as such, although I'll leave the history aside. But it isn't enough just not to have nuclear weapons; we must be active in the international community in ridding the world of the scourge of the possession of nuclear weapons. This is endangering humanity.

Finally, I'll make my concluding comment today on what we can do in NATO. This committee, Mr. Chairman, has an illustrious reputation and experience in dealing with nuclear weapons all through the years, as you pointed to earlier in the meeting. Of all the things you study in the 21st century—I realize you have a big agenda, and there are a lot of important things going on in the world—there are two overarching problems: climate change and nuclear weapons. If we turn our back on the obligation to reduce and eliminate the danger to the world of nuclear weapons, we are not fulfilling our responsibilities.

So the Canadian government should be pressing NATO to review its strategy, and this committee is well positioned to advise the Government of Canada to exercise its influence and leadership in joining with like-minded states in NATO—certainly Norway, Germany, and Belgium would be three such states—to work together to revise NATO's policy. This is an achievable goal.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Regehr.

You will get more time, Mr. Dewar, you bet.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I wanted to include a partial question before Mr. Regehr responded, and that is to obviously connect with the question I'd initially posed. Around the CD, is there a way to have Canada perhaps play a role to get that back on track? We were there. The motion was put forward. Maybe helping to influence NATO by using that as a tool—what do you think of that?

Mr. Ernie Regehr: Thank you.

First, briefly on where Canada stands, I think it's important to remember that we have a very long tradition of clear commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. I want to pay tribute to Canadian officials who pursue that objective with great skill and determination. I've been on some of the delegations and I speak with first-hand knowledge of the extraordinary impact that Canadian officials have in these meetings, and the commitment with which they pursue that goal. But it also requires political leadership. The level of energy and initiative that can be taken by officials depends on leadership. And the kinds of statement that you just referred to of the Minister of Defence, which has this kind of compromising element to it, don't help with the level of energy. So that's why these clear political statements are very important to continue.

At the CD, I think there were great hopes. Ambassador Meyer will speak much more directly and effectively on it, but there were great hopes that the issue would be resolved and there would movement toward a negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty in particular. They were dashed again when states refused to agree to it.

We've often said that if we can't do it within the CD, we need to find another forum in which to do it. I think Canada was part of a tentative effort in 2005 to move it to the General Assembly. That had a very positive impact on the working of the CD. Now it's time to do that again, but that's going to take political leadership and a recommendation from this committee to explore alternative ways of pursuing an FMCT would be a very valuable thing.

Thank you.

● (1005)

The Chair: I'll give you a little more time, Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Chair, to build on that, I think it would be helpful, if I may, for Mr. Regehr to perhaps pass on to the committee some recommendations in that light, simply to help us with that for consideration. Perhaps you wouldn't mind passing that on to the clerk.

Another question I wanted to look at is our role vis-à-vis the U.S.-India dilemma and Canadian technological interests. Presently, between the U.S. and India, nuclear compromise, if you will, needs to happen. I wondered about the role we can play and where things stand.

Mr. Ernie Regehr: As you know, the history of Canada with India and the Indian nuclear program is very, very important. Canadian technology is used to produce the materials for its nuclear program. This gives Canada an important moral obligation, but I think it also adds to the importance that other countries will put on Canada's voice when it speaks at the Nuclear Suppliers Group. So I think for Canada there's an opportunity for leadership here.

The way in which that leadership is exercised is going to be very important. The bottom line has to be a net non-proliferation benefit. The status quo with India is not going to be retained, but we have to be careful not to fold, because the U.S.-India deal, the way it was originally proposed, essentially welcomes India as a nuclear weapons state and says it's open season on civilian cooperation. We have to resist that, and as I've said, there are a couple of fundamental bottom lines to produce a net non-proliferation benefit: comprehensive test ban treaty, fissile material freeze. I think these are both reasonable claims to make on India.

The Chair: Thank you both.

I think it's always a challenge for a country like Canada to make a difference and let countries know the importance of not going into more nuclear testing and weapons. But if Canada were to simply engage in an irresponsible type of rhetoric, our credibility at the table could be hurt as well. So it's always a balancing act.

Going back to the committee report of 10 years ago, recommendation one was that Canada work consistently to reduce the political legitimacy and value of nuclear weapons in order to contribute to the goal of their progressive reduction and eventual elimination. I think it's good that we let countries know that their legitimacy isn't in having nuclear weapons. There is no political collateral for that.

We've talked a little about India. Just to close, former President Clinton, whom I don't quote a lot, said in 1988, “I cannot believe that we are about to start the 21st century by having the Indian subcontinent repeat the worst mistakes of the 20th century when we know it is not necessary to peace, to security, to prosperity, to national greatness or personal fulfillment.” Just as it's true for the Indian subcontinent, there are other places in the world, all in one part of a continent, that feel there is legitimacy in that. So it is a major challenge for the world to respond accordingly.

We want to thank you for being here.

We're going to suspend very briefly. The second hour is in the same context, and we will welcome Ambassador Meyer. We'll take a short break. Committee business will be cut back a little today because the two movers of motions are not present with us. We will need unanimous consent to do it and I don't think we will get that.

● _____ (Pause) _____

●

● (1010)

The Chair: Welcome back.

In our second hour we have Ambassador Paul Meyer from the Department of Foreign Affairs. He is the Permanent Representative to the United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament.

Welcome, Ambassador Meyer.

His Excellency Paul Meyer (Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, and to the Conference on Disarmament, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you in my capacity as Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament. Since my last session with the committee in December 2004, there have been a number of developments that affect the prospects for progress in the field of non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament, which we can discuss.

In keeping with the committee's previous interests, I will focus primarily on the situation surrounding weapons of mass destruction, but I will also touch upon initiatives relating to conventional arms control and outer space.

Canada has long supported an international order that is premised on a rules-based system that seeks to ensure peace and security through the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. With respect to weapons, Canada has sought to eliminate the most devastating category, the so-called weapons of mass destruction, or WMD, and to work out accords to control other weapons with a view to minimizing the potentially harmful effects in terms of security, international and human. Both strategic and humanitarian motivations have therefore driven our non-proliferation and disarmament policy at the international level.

Chemical and biological weapons are the subjects of complete bans under widely respected international treaties, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1975 and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997, under which these weapons have been or will soon be eliminated from state arsenals. The need to ensure the implementation of these accords is, however, ongoing and demands sustained engagement.

The biological weapons convention, for example, which lacks verification provisions, concluded a successful review conference last December with an agreement to strengthen its operations. Annual meetings of state parties as well as separate annual meetings of experts to consider specific relevant topics were agreed, as was the creation of a small implementation support unit comprising three full-time staff members in Geneva. These measures, while modest in appearance, are actually vital signs of commitment by the 155 states parties to sustaining the power of the treaty and enhancing its implementation.

The situation with chemical weapons is even more encouraging. It has 182 states parties and another six signatory states. Of the six declared possessor states, four will have completed destruction of their chemical weapons well before the April 2012 deadline, while the remaining two, the U.S.A. and Russia, are making steady progress towards this goal.

Of particular significance, the CWC has an excellent verification mechanism in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, headquartered in The Hague, and it has a highly effective inspectorate.

Nuclear weapons, while dwarfing the other WMD in terms of their destructive power, have not yet been subject to the same type of comprehensive ban as that applied to biological or chemical weapons. The international treaty governing nuclear weapons is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT, which enjoys almost universal adherence.

The NPT, which was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970, is a relatively simple treaty that, however, enshrines a complex tripartite bargain between the five nuclear weapons states recognized by the treaty—the U.S., the U.K., France, Russia, and China—and the other 184 states parties. The former, nuclear weapons states, commit to good faith efforts toward nuclear disarmament, in article VI; and the latter, the non-nuclear-weapons states, undertake not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons, in article II. In parallel, all states commit to facilitate cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in article IV, subject to assurances that such cooperation will not contribute to the development of nuclear weapons, in article III.

● (1015)

Although the NPT is arguably the most important international security treaty in existence and has yielded over its 37 years immense security benefits, it is also a treaty that is currently under considerable strain. The last few years have witnessed a variety of attacks on its norms: the covert nuclear weapons programs of Iraq, Libya, and North Korea—the last being the first state to actually withdraw from the treaty—the unmasking of the Pakistan-based A. Q. Khan nuclear black market; the protracted non-compliance of Iran with IAEA; and now UN Security Council resolutions regarding the need to restore international confidence in the peaceful nature of that country's nuclear activities.

In addition to these problems for the non-proliferation side of the treaty, there was also serious questioning by many non-nuclear weapons states as to how committed the nuclear weapons states were to fulfilling their obligations for nuclear disarmament, pursuant to article VI of the treaty and the decisions made at the 1995 and 2000 NPT review conferences. Many of these internal tensions were evident at the May 2005 NPT review conference, which failed to produce an agreement on any form of substantive document, an outcome that itself was symptomatic of the difficulties the treaty was experiencing and the breakdown of consensus around its current priorities.

Having just led the Canadian delegation to the first preparatory committee of the new NPT review cycle, which concluded May 11 in Vienna, I can tell you that much more work will be needed to bridge the gaps existing amongst the NPT members and to restore that crucial sense of common purpose that is required for its proper implementation.

Canada and its diplomats, however, do not shrink from a challenge, and I can assure the committee that we have played a leading role in terms of remedial action to reinforce the NPT's authority and integrity. We have consistently advocated for concrete and comprehensive implementation of the treaty across all three of its pillars.

We have also presented innovative ideas for enhancing the authority and accountability of the treaty via the establishment of annual meetings of states parties, a standing bureau for the treaty, provision for emergency meetings of the membership, annual reporting on implementation, and an increased role for civil society.

We will need concerted action across the spectrum of the NPT membership if the core commitments and norms that this treaty contains are to continue to function on behalf of humankind.

Let me now turn from the WMD to the other end of the weapons spectrum, the area of conventional arms. It has also been recalled that civilians, rather than combatants, continue to make up the vast majority of victims of these weapons. These are the weapons that continue to impede sustainable peace and development and for which humanitarian factors, and indeed the obligations under international humanitarian law, play a particularly prominent role.

Multilateral efforts to restrict the use of certain weapons that have indiscriminate or excessively injurious effects have been ongoing for well over a century. The Hague declaration of 1897, which banned the use of dumdum or exploding bullets, is an early example.

The CCW, or the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects—you may now appreciate why there's a penchant for using acronyms in our business—was concluded in 1981, and under its auspices several protocols have been developed prohibiting the use of such arms as blinding lasers and napalm. The latest—fifth—protocol addressed the responsibility of states with respect to explosive remnants of war.

[*Translation*]

Recently, attention has been given within the CCW to the issue of cluster munitions while in parallel several countries met in Oslo in February to start a process towards an international ban on cluster munitions that have unacceptable humanitarian consequences. Canada was one of 75 states participating last week in a follow up meeting in Lima, Peru to consider what the principal elements of an eventual legal instrument might look like.

● (1020)

The CCW will be moving ahead simultaneously with the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts in June 2007, which will aim to provide recommendations for a negotiating mandate to be considered at the CCW meeting of states parties in November 2007. Canada supports both processes, as they are complementary to each other, in our view.

The Ottawa process resulted a decade ago in the Ottawa Convention banning antipersonnel landmines. That treaty which now has 153 states parties continues to make a major contribution to global security with an estimated 40 million stockpiled mines already having been destroyed pursuant to the treaty and the international trade in landmines virtually eliminated. Canada remains one of the most active supporters of the convention and mine action designed to implement it.

Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is an important aspect of Canada's foreign policy. Canada supports full implementation of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and continues to take active measures to address the humanitarian and development impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms while ensuring that the existing and legitimate interest of firearms owners, producers, brokers and retailers are respected.

We also support the UK initiative to develop an arms trade treaty which would provide a comprehensive legal regime to govern international transfers of conventional arms of all types. We hope to participate in the group of government experts which will be developing the framework for such a treaty.

● (1025)

[*English*]

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me briefly turn to outer space—the "final frontier", as a celebrated Canadian once described it. Our global village has become increasingly dependent on satellites for a wide array of practical services. We all have a major stake in sustaining secure access to space, free of threats of attack.

In Geneva, Vienna, and New York, discussions are under way in a variety of fora to identify further measures that the international community can take to preserve a benign space environment. At a conference on disarmament in Geneva, recent discussions and working papers have focused on two broad approaches—the development of a treaty prohibiting the placement of weapons in outer space and the identification of transparency and confidence-building measures that could contribute to ensuring that outer space does not become a new arena for military conflict.

At the UN in Vienna, much useful work has been done on space debris mitigation guidelines, with some attention now turning to space traffic management. Regulating this dimension of state activity poses many challenges, but through constructive international engagement, I see considerable potential for this sphere of arms control as well.

Mr. Chairman, this has necessarily been a very compressed survey of what the government has been doing in the field of non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament. Given the time constraints, there are several areas of relevance that I was not able to touch upon in these opening remarks—for example, the global partnership at the G8, where Prime Minister Harper recently announced an additional $150 million contribution by Canada.

I want to assure you that I would be pleased to address those other areas. I would welcome very much any comments or questions coming from members of the committee.

Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

We'll go into our first round, starting with Mr. Eyking.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Meyer, for coming here today.

I don't know if you were here earlier, hearing some of the comments and questions that were asked during that hour. At any rate, I have a few questions now.

On the whole issue of the disarmament of nuclear weapons, I think one of the key times was in the eighties, during the SALT talks held in Reykjavik, Iceland. I guess that's when they really started talking about disarmament. Since that time, how many have we destroyed? Are we further behind or further ahead, I guess, on disarmament in the world?

Second, Canada seems to have $150 million going to what's called the global partnership program. Is that dealing mostly in Russia? And what do you get for $150 million?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Eyking.

Mr. Ambassador.

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Indeed, on the first question, without having the exact figures, we've come down from about 60,000 nuclear weapons in the world at the height of the Cold War to the figure of 27,000. Clearly that's progress, but equally clearly there's a long way to go still.

On that $150 million contribution, yes, it's essentially in Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union. The projects include decommissioning of Soviet-era nuclear submarines and redirecting WMD scientists in those countries to non-military purposes. And there are programs securing sites where nuclear material is located, and biological non-proliferation projects.

As was noted, I think they all do contribute to our own, and global, security.

● (1030)

Hon. Mark Eyking: When they are taking these weapons apart—and they have experts there, of course, who used to build the weapons, and you're putting them more to domestic use now—can they utilize the energy in them? Do they utilize the energy in these weapons back to domestic use, or do they just make them inert?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Well, it depends. It's inert for chemical weapons, for instance, and that's another area under the global partnership program, where we're contributing to the building of destruction facilities.

But with nuclear material, the global partnership program envisages the possible use of elements of nuclear material for what's called MOX fuel, where highly enriched uranium and plutonium is down-blended, and then the composite material could be used as a nuclear fuel. There are lots of challenges with some of that—technological and financial—but it's a case where you could say there's an effort to utilize the stuff of nuclear weapons in or towards civilian ends.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Meyer.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Do I have time remaining?

The Chair: Yes, but the last question goes to Mr. Dosanjh.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: I have a very brief question.

In your presentation you talked about cluster munitions, such as cluster bombs, and you referred to a couple of processes that are under way, but nowhere did you say what position Canada took during those processes. Is it just to advance the process, or do you have an actual position that those munitions should be banned—which would be my preference, and our preference, I believe, generally?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: The Canadian position is that they should be controlled and that munitions that create unacceptable humanitarian consequences should be banned. The question that will evolve in this is how you define exactly what those are. The meetings, both in Oslo and in Lima most recently, have been very useful in getting into that level of detail. But the stance we've taken is that we are looking at prohibiting cluster munitions that cause unacceptable humanitarian consequences.

Now, that's obviously something that has to be defined, but we are a very conscious of our obligations under international humanitarian law and under the CCW, the convention on certain conventional weapons, that I referred to, which clearly aims to ensure that weapons that cause excessive injury or are indiscriminate by their very nature are not used.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

You have another minute.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: I want you to be more specific. You've given me a very diplomatic answer, and that's your job.

An hon. member: Not here.

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Thank you.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: As a political party, we have called for cluster bombs to be banned—which I'm sure others support. In the formulation of a Canadian position, as you approach these processes, is that your position as our representative?

On other munitions, you may differ—

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Well, the Canadian position coming in is as I described it. Now, that does not equate with a comprehensive ban. There are some countries who advocate that now; many do not, and we are not one of them.

● (1035)

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh: You're not one of those advocating a ban?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Not a total ban, because in the Canadian view, these munitions have legitimate use if they are used in accordance with international humanitarian law and have the qualities that would make them consistent with such use.

So you get into these areas—and this is what has to be defined—of what reliability level you should insist on, because one of the difficulties was the use by some countries of cluster munitions that had a high failure rate. These are the remnants of war, if you will, which can cause unacceptable humanitarian consequences later.

You can see how a determination, for instance, that in the future.... And many military, including our own, are taking the stance that if there were to be any future use or acquisition of these munitions, the reliability level would have to be 99%, compared to current arsenals, whose reliability is much less than that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Madame Barbot, vous avez sept minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for being here today.

Regarding the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, you are saying that it is an important aspect of Canada's foreign policy and that Canada supports the implementation of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

However, is there not a contradiction when, on the one hand, Canada pretends to be taking active measures to address the humanitarian and development impact of the proliferation of these arms while, on the other hand, ensuring that the interests of firearms owners, producers, brokers and retailers are respected?

In other words, these arms are coming from somewhere. I suppose that the illicit trade is being done through traders, producers, etc. How can Canada reconcile taking action both to protect these people and to fight this illicit trade?

H.E. Paul Meyer: Indeed, the illicit trade must be fought, while allowing the legitimate trade to go on. How can we reconcile these two actions? It is one aspect of the activities in this file. The United Kingdom has proposed to develop a comprehensive treaty that would govern all aspects and all types of arms. The challenge in developing such a treaty would be to formulate guidelines regulating the trade in this type of arms. In my view, defining standards that would be applied at the international level and aimed at determining the legitimacy of the sale of such arms would be a great step forward.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I would like to make a comment. At the present time, we know who is producing the arms that are found elsewhere. Could we not take more concrete steps, particularly when Canadians are involved? These arms do not end up on the black market by themselves. Since Canada is saying that it is an extremely important part of its foreign policy, it seems to me that we should be taking more binding action and not simply rely on an eventual treaty.

Moreover, you mentioned the non-proliferation treaty and the considerable tensions that are being associated with this treaty. You are quoting countries that are attacking the treaty, namely Irak, Libya, North Korea and Pakistan. I am somewhat surprised not to find in this list India and Israel. Is it a voluntary omission or are these countries meeting other standards than those you have been referring to?

H.E. Paul Meyer: No, madam. In fact, the goal is to promote the universal implementation of this treaty, including by the three countries that are not parties to the treaty for the time being, namely Israel, India and Pakistan. The reference to Pakistan is due to the black market that has been developed by a Pakistani individual, which represents another challenge for the treaty. As I said in my remarks, some countries that are parties to the treaty, for example Libya, Irak, Iran and North Korea, have violated their obligations under the treaty.

● (1040)

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Ambassador, I wanted to know what the $150 million would be used for.

A couple of years ago, I took part, together with a Canadian delegation, in a meeting in Strasburg dealing with old weaponry material that are dangerous for the environment. I learned on that occasion that Russia was continuing to develop modern nuclear weapons, but was leaving the international community to deal with these obsolete equipments.

I would like to have your comments on this issue.

H.E. Paul Meyer: Russia is not the Soviet Union. It is a country that is undergoing a deep transformation. In my view, what is important is that Russia is now contributing to this global partnership. In fact, it is ranked second among donor countries. The Moscow government has indicated its real contribution to this project that was inherited from the former soviet regime.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Madame Lalonde, very quickly.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: At the end of the paragraph on the NPT, which is quite interesting, you are saying this: "...much more work will be needed to bridge the gaps existing amongst the NPT members and to restore the sense of common purpose...".

Could you conclude with this?

[*English*]

The Chair: *Merci*, Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

H.E. Paul Meyer: Ms. Lalonde, we must have common goals and we must bridge the gap that exist between various perceptions. We must convince all parties that it is more important to reach common security goals than to focus on narrow national interests. The challenge will be to establish a persuasive diplomacy in order to reach that goal.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

We'll go to Mr. Obhrai for seven minutes.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you for coming, Ambassador. It's good to have you here.

I can't resist telling my Liberal colleagues that if they have a government policy question, they could ask it in question period. I'd be delighted to tell them.

Let me ask you this question. I'd like to hear a brief idea on this. Before you came here, we had two witnesses who very eloquently talked about what was happening on the world stage. You have the India-U.S. nuclear deal, the Iranian issue, the Korean issue, and a lot of other non-proliferation challenges coming up. I would be interested in knowing what's happening in Geneva among the opinion makers, not the official policy but the mood. Is there optimism out there? Do people think it's moving towards what we want to achieve with NPT?

What is the mood out there in Geneva? Could you give us your brief observations?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Indeed—and it was noted by the earlier witnesses—there has been some significant progress in the Conference on Disarmament, a 65-nation body in which all the states that are considered to have nuclear weapons are represented, but it has not been able to officially agree on a work plan with these four areas that were enumerated: the fissile material cut-off treaty, which is just a treaty to stop the production of the stuff with which one makes nuclear weapons; the nuclear disarmament theme; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and so-called negative security assurances, which are simply the assurances given to non-nuclear-weapons states by nuclear weapons states that they will not be subject to the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Through skilful diplomacy, I think a package has been developed that enjoys widespread support, but—and this is the big "but"—this is a body of 65 nations that does everything on consensus, so you need every representative there to be in accord. On this package that's currently before the conference, China, Pakistan, and Iran have indicated that they have some problems. Though they aren't actually coming out and saying they're opposing it, we're in a situation right now where they've raised some concerns and are saying that they really would like these concerns addressed. It is unfortunately looking as if some of the very positive momentum that was building up may be lost.

I think it is crucial that we keep the public scrutiny and the political scrutiny on these three states in particular. There is a very fair compromise deal on the table. It should be accepted, and if we want to see multilateral work in the realm of non-proliferation and disarmament move ahead, we need that basic kind of cooperation.

I would hope that all of you, in your contacts, could also be promotive of this. This is the best hope in many years to get this machinery back into gear, and we shouldn't lose it because of reservations by two or three of these states.

● (1045)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. Khan.

Mr. Wajid Khan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Your Excellency, I have a very quick question.

I'm really encouraged that the state arsenals will be without WMD. If that is the case, I think it needs to be celebrated. But there is another challenge, and it is a significant one: how do we deal with the transnationals who now have the ability to access the same science, no matter how crude it is?

My second question is, sir, can you shed some light on the process of redirecting WMD scientists?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Absolutely, the transnational or non-state actors are one of the current challenges.

I think what we need to do there is complement the existing regime, which is based on a state-centric approach, and we have to keep in mind that it's not like there are no problematic states any longer in the world. We need to ensure that remains valid but, at the same time, work again through cooperation to ensure that we're not giving openings for terrorist groups or other non-state actors to get their hands on WMD, for example. That's why the A.Q. Khan network has to be resolutely countered and investigated, and we need a strengthening of export control measures.

There are a number of international conventions—I won't go into them now—that have been prompted by this concern. The convention against nuclear terrorism was recently concluded. We've strengthened the convention on the protection of radioactive material to deny possibilities.

A lot of the work under the auspices of global partnership speaks to exactly these kinds of concerns. For instance, in the former Soviet Union, they used to power remote lighthouses with highly radioactive power sources. There is now a project under way to replace those with solar panels and other things, not that the material could actually be used in a nuclear explosive device, but it could be used in a so-called dirty bomb that could cause great consternation and casualties.

That's a very practical way in which you're just trying to keep a step ahead of those who might want to use this material for very nasty purposes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

We'll go to Mr. Dewar, for seven minutes, please.

● (1050)

Mr. Paul Dewar: Thank you.

Thank you, Ambassador, for your presentation today. It was most helpful. I appreciate the challenge you had in trying to compact all the work you've been doing into a short period of time. You did a terrific job of that.

I want to touch on the previous witnesses' idea of co-sponsoring a motion at the UN. I know you are an ambassador; you're not a minister. In terms of the ability to co-sponsor a motion that could create ad hoc committees on the four areas of concern—the cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in space, the negative security assurances, and the new approaches to nuclear disarmament—I just want to have your comment on that approach. There is this quagmire that seems to exist, and the fact that we are in a new phase, as was mentioned by our previous witnesses. We are not dealing with two monolithic blocs. And there is the success of the SALT treaties and some of the other follow-up to that, which some would say was a little easier to do because we were dealing with two blocs. Now things are much more fractured and decentralized.

His Excellency Paul Meyer: The focus at the moment is on this CD decision. We've always felt that if it could agree, the Conference on Disarmament, sanctioned by the broader UN committee for these negotiations or discussions, represented the preferred forum. That remains our principal focus now. We are encouraging other states to do what they can to persuade that handful of states that haven't yet endorsed this proposal. That's going to be our priority.

We will have to make our own assessment later this year when the CD concludes its formal session in mid-September. On the basis of that analysis, there may be further reflections about alternative approaches to take.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I would encourage reflection on that. The CD has had many challenges. Sometimes when things aren't working, it's important to look at another way of doing things. Again, I appreciate your position and where you're at. I'm simply providing that for the record and for you.

With respect to my other question, Canada proposed a certain course of action at the first committee and it didn't work out. What were the challenges? Maybe it goes back to the gap analysis you were referring to. Why do you think it failed? In your opinion and from your position, what could Canada do differently to seek success?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: The key thing on matters relating to nuclear weapons and fissile material is that those states that possess these arms and material are all willing to participate in a negotiation toward some restriction. You can understand the lack of attraction if you had countries saying it would be fine if the rest agree to stop production but they would not participate in that negotiation. It's getting that formula whereby those countries are going to feel they have a stake in it and will participate. That is the challenge. In some cases it is very hard to read all the factors that may determine why a given state has taken the diplomatic posture it has. China is a case in point.

Mr. Paul Dewar: In terms of Canada's role in technology transfer, maybe it's not the term you use, but on the idea of dual use and the fact that we have significant technology that we transfer to countries, do we have enough tools in our tool kit to track that? I mean that in terms of the technology of tracking, but also in terms of the governance model. I'm thinking, for instance, of arrangements with India and our looking at transferring our nuclear technology.

I'm not doing this in the political sense at all; it's a very straightforward question. Do we have enough in our governance and technological tool kits to actually track materials to ensure they are not going to be used for something else?

● (1055)

His Excellency Paul Meyer: Broadly we do, but there's obviously room for improvement. I think it's happening at the two levels. It's what we do nationally in terms of export controls and ensuring that they continue to be comprehensive.

A few years back some changes were made that allowed catch-all provisions to enable us to be more effective in enforcing controls. But we're in a very interdependent world and we have to cooperate in the multilateral area. Canada has been a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group there, and that group is mostly about ensuring that there are guidelines to prevent transfer of nuclear technology to states that haven't submitted themselves to the IAEA safeguards regime. That cooperation continues to be perfected—the exchange of information, etc.

I think we have a pretty satisfactory approach, while recognizing that you have to be constantly vigilant and searching for improvements.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Would you say there's more to be done in that area?

His Excellency Paul Meyer: There's always room for improvement, but the basis is very solid.

The Chair: Thank you to our witness, Ambassador Meyer, for being with us today.

To the committee, we are going to move across the hall because our witness is not here yet. We're going to do some committee business first and then we will do the Haiti study with the individual who is coming before our committee.

Thank you again, Mr. Meyer.

Thank you to all.

We are adjourned.

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