



November 15, 2017

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, ON

Dear Prime Minister,

Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (CNWC) writes respectfully to urge you to reconsider your present opposition to the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on July 7, 2017. We have taken note of various statements by Governmental representatives and particularly the arguments advanced in the October 5 letter to CNWC from the Foreign Minister, the Hon. Chrystia Freeland.

We recognize this Treaty as a milestone on the long quest for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and thus take strong exception to your characterization of the Treaty as “useless.” We deeply regret your Government’s failure to recognize the validity and importance of the Treaty, agreed to by a majority of the world’s states, which creates a legally binding instrument to prohibit the possession and use of nuclear weapons – paralleling the treaties prohibiting chemical and biological weapons. The elimination of all nuclear weapons, and an end to the military doctrine of nuclear deterrence, is an objective that Canada has long shared with the international community, knowing that the use of even one of the 15,000 nuclear weapons still in existence would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The tenacity with which nuclear weapon states seek to retain and even “modernize” weapons whose use would be in direct violation of international humanitarian law, makes a mockery of the solemn commitments they made and legal obligations they assumed under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Canada must take extreme care not to aid them in their abdication of responsibility.

CNWC represents more than 1,000 distinguished Canadians, honoured by appointment to the Order of Canada, who have called for Canadian leadership in nuclear disarmament efforts, specifically encouraging the launch of negotiations toward a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention that will set out both the vision and the practical time-bound actions required for verifiable, irreversible nuclear disarmament – that is, the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. The Treaty is a step towards

www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca

such a Convention. Indeed, the Treaty's historic significance has been dramatically reinforced by the award of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the civil society coalition, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, most clearly associated with promoting the Treaty. Rather than disparaging the Treaty because states with nuclear weapons refuse to support it, Canada should be faulting the obstructionist tactics of the nuclear weapon states, for it is they who are now doubling down on their refusal to meet their disarmament obligations; they are refusing to implement their own collective "unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals."

We wish, in this letter, to respond to the Government of Canada's statements on this matter.

***Your Government continues to argue** that today's precarious global security environment precludes negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Actually, it is precisely the current security environment – notably the US-North Korea conflict and the breakdown in relations between US/NATO and Russia – that makes heightened nuclear disarmament diplomacy an urgent necessity – as it was in the Cuban Missile Crisis. There is no perfect time to seek nuclear disarmament – there is only now. The 186 non-nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT have never made the fulfilment of their non-proliferation obligations contingent upon an ideal security environment. They make their bold commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons in the interests of public well-being and of making the world more secure. It is now the responsibility of states with nuclear weapons to also serve public well-being and make the world more secure by taking decisive action to further reduce and then eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

***Your Government continues to argue** that the Treaty is ineffective because the nuclear weapons states are not participating. Actually, not only are they refusing to respect the Treaty, but in October 2016 the U.S. went further to instruct its NATO partners to reject the U.N. resolution mandating negotiations for the Treaty. That is not leadership, and it is an instruction that Canada, as a country that has traditionally fostered multilateralism and supported the United Nations, should have rejected. We should have taken our customary place at the negotiating table. To argue now that the Treaty is "divisive" is to suggest that the rest of the world is to abandon its pursuit of a nuclear weapons-free world, so as not to disturb that minority of states whose arsenals hold the world hostage. The source of division is not disarmament, but is the refusal of the nuclear weapon states to meet their obligations under Article VI of the NPT. The time has come for real progress in implementing the promise made by the nuclear weapons states in the context of the 2010 NPT Plan of Action – that is, "the nuclear weapon States commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures."

www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca

***Your Government continues to argue** that, since the new Treaty counters NATO's Strategic Concept, which still names nuclear weapons the "supreme guarantee" of security, Canada cannot participate in the Treaty in good faith. Actually, as the Canadian Pugwash Group argues, Canada should sign the Treaty and state that it will, through dialogue and changes to its own policies and practices, persist in its efforts to bring NATO into conformity with the Treaty. It is wrong for Canada to give a higher priority to the outdated political policies of NATO than its legal obligations to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, obligations upheld by the International Court of Justice.

***Your Government continues to argue** that the Treaty fails to include credible transparency and verification provisions, or measures to deter non-compliance. Actually, the Treaty adopts the tried and tested verification arrangements under the NPT, requiring each state party to maintain its safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, or to enter such an agreement if it has not yet done so (Article 3). It also includes a provision for the establishment of an additional competent international authority for the purpose of verifying the irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons of the nuclear weapon states (Article 4). Were Canada a participant in the Treaty, it would then, at further meetings, be able to seek improvements, such as making the International Atomic Energy Agency Additional Protocol a requirement.

***Your government continues to argue that** its work toward a treaty to control fissile materials is of far greater importance than the new Treaty. Actually, the twenty years' discussion of a prospective fissile materials treaty has produced not a single negotiation. Such a treaty would have value and credibility only if it went beyond the current focus on halting new production to also address the huge stocks of fissile materials already possessed by the nuclear states – enough material to make many thousands more nuclear weapons. Your government should urge states to move this process out of the moribund Conference on Disarmament, where a single state can veto progress, into the U.N. General Assembly, where the majority can take decisions.

In urging your Government to join the new Treaty, we also encourage Canadian action on other steps – notably to encourage, as a matter of great urgency, the nuclear weapons states to de-alert their arsenals, and to support calls for the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from the territories of NATO non-nuclear weapons states in Europe.

We wish you and your colleagues well in carrying out your responsibilities in these extraordinary times. We would welcome an opportunity for representatives of CNWC to meet with you to further explore ways in which Canada can redouble its efforts in support of a world without nuclear weapons.

www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca

This letter is signed by a representative group from the more than 1,000 honorees of the Order of Canada who are calling for stronger government action for nuclear disarmament.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Acker, OC

Bruce Aikenhead, OC

Gerry Barr, CM

Michel Bastarache, CC

Anthony Belcourt, OC

Monique Bégin, OC

Ed Broadbent, CC

Margaret Hilson, OC

Laurent Isabelle, CM

Bonnie Klein, OC

Joy Kogawa, OC

Barbara Sherwood Lollar, CC

Bruce Kidd, OC

Margaret MacMillan, CC

Marilou McPhedran, CM

T. Jock Murray, OC

Alex Neve, OC

Peter Newbery, CM

James Orbinski, OC

Landon Pearson, OC

John Polanyi, CC

Ernie Regehr, OC

Douglas Roche, OC

David Silcox, CM

Jennifer Allen Simons, CM

Gérard Snow, CM

Veronica Tennant, CC

Murray Thomson, OC

Setsuko Thurlow, CM

Lois Wilson, CC

www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca