

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Canadian Statement by Ambassador Meyer

CD 23 June 2005

Mr. President,

Canada appreciates your invitation to CD members to participate in an exchange of views in the plenary, which we hope will bring us all forward towards a consensus Program of Work, so that discussion and negotiation can begin in earnest.

In the interim, we welcome this occasion to focus on the important issue, for all of us, of nuclear disarmament. This is an issue clearly deserving of multilateral discussion - and more. In the aftermath of the NPT Review Conference, Canada believes that the re-activation of multilateral activity in this area is a key priority.

The CD potentially has a major role to play. We must use the opportunity this forum offers, ideally in an Ad Hoc Committee, to consider pressing issues in nuclear disarmament. The proposed mandate for this Committee, contained in the A5 proposal and the Food for Thought Non-Paper, calls for it to exchange information and views on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to attain the objective of nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the arms race. We think discussions under this broad mandate could benefit from a more focussed approach that would take up specific topics and measures relevant to the nuclear disarmament efforts.

We would welcome, for example, explanations of nuclear doctrine and policy - including from the non NPT states. These would help dispel confusion and misunderstanding that is much in evidence in this area, and would contribute to building the confidence and trust that is so vitally needed. Also of wide interest would be sharing information about plans for implementing nuclear disarmament, challenges and impediments encountered, measures undertaken or being considered.

Other issues for our attention could be consideration of compliance, how best to implement principles of irreversibility and transparency and addressing the verification dimension, considering further the interesting work undertaken by the UK in this field. Confidence-building measures like de-alerting and de-mating could also be examined. Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons is another issue of wide interest, for both nuclear disarmament, as well as regional and international security perspectives, that would benefit from a focussed exchange.

We can thus make good use of an Ad Hoc Committee, and of any discussion in plenary prior to the finalization of a Program of Work. All states can participate in such an exchange, explaining actions and measures undertaken, bringing forward ideas for discussion, including some of those proposed during the NPT Review Conference.

While not a substitute for more disarmament, at the very least, such dialogue would sustain ongoing attention to nuclear disarmament, encourage transparency, and enable substantive discussion of specific issues and approaches. We all need to be cognizant of the disappointment of so many, inside and outside governments, at the lack of a substantive

outcome from the Review Conference. While the CD is not an NPT subsidiary body, it is nevertheless a primary multilateral instance seized with issues of nuclear disarmament. We owe it to ourselves and to our publics to make best use of our forum in addressing the very real problems and possibilities associated with the nuclear disarmament enterprise.

Thank you.