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CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATEMENT ON CANADIAN NUCLEAR POLICY

The time has come for Canada to formulate a coherent policy on the subject of nuclear weapons and to vote at the United Nations, in the company of the majority of the world's nations, for comprehensive negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

India's five nuclear explosions, and Pakistan's six explosions, have shown that the status quo, in which the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council keep their nuclear weapons indefinitely while all others are prohibited from acquiring them, is unsustainable.

Canada must no longer be a nuclear fence-sitter: on the one hand ardently supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty and international law, while on the other hand supporting, and hiding behind, the nuclear arsenals of the United States and NATO. The actions of India and Pakistan have demonstrated the futility of this approach.

It is appropriate to condemn the governments of India and Pakistan for their recent nuclear tests. But such gestures are not enough. Canada's proper response to the actions of India and Pakistan -- and perhaps the only means by which we can reverse the escalation of the nuclear arms race in the Indian sub-continent -- would be to join the growing global movement pressing all Nuclear Weapon States for an unequivocal commitment to commence negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons. We especially urge the Canadian government to join the "New Agenda Coalition" of middle power states working for the elimination of nuclear weapons that was announced by Ireland on 9 June 1998.

Shortly before the recent round of nuclear weapons tests, an Angus Reid poll showed that 92 percent of Canadians want Canada to play a leading role in the global effort to abolish nuclear weapons.

The overwhelming majority of Canadians believe that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to prevent the spread and ultimately the use of these weapons. Canada must commit itself unequivocally to this goal.

Signed by the following member organizations of the Canadian Network:

Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility / Regroupement pour la surveillance du nucléaire Canadian Peace Alliance / L'Alliance Canadien pour la Paix
Canadian Pugwash Committee
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
Centre de ressources sur la non-violence
End the Arms Race
Lawyers for Social Responsibility
Les Artistes pour la Paix
Peacefund Canada / Fonds Canadien pour la Paix
Physicians for Global Survival
Project Ploughshares
Science for Peace
United Nations Association / Association canadienne pour les Nations unies
Veterans Against Nuclear Arms

For more information, contact:

Douglas Roche, O.C., Canadian Pugwash Committee, at 403-466-8072 (Edmonton)
Ernie Regehr, Project Ploughshares, at 519-888-6541 (Waterloo)
Paul Klopstock, Les Artistes pour la Paix, au 512-527-2020 (Domicile)
514-284-2000 (Bureau) en français
Murray Thomson, Peacefund Canada at 613- 230-0860 (Ottawa)
Debbie Grisdale, Physicians for Global Survival, at 613-233-1982 (Ottawa)