



June 9, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

The ravages of COVID-19 are teaching us, with dramatic clarity and urgency, the extent to which current spending priorities, along with the prevailing understanding of security, are tragically failing humanity. While Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pleads for a global ceasefire and for governments to spend an extra \$2 billion to help fragile countries deal with the pandemic, we learn that worldwide military expenditures have risen to \$1.9 trillion.

We are now facing the stark reality that those costly armies and weapons cannot protect us from COVID-19 — or its successors. The old ways of trying to build security — through bigger and better weapons — continue to rob us of the focus, human ingenuity, and resources needed to advance the security of the most vulnerable. The perversion of global priorities through the prevailing militarized understanding of security is best illustrated by the ongoing failure to properly fund the 17 areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It becomes clearer with each day of the present crisis that going forward it will be through full attention to human security — building sustainable health systems, ensuring access to clean water, building affordable housing, pursuing environmentally responsible food production, and finally facing the climate change crisis — that we will find the path to durable peace and security.

Yet, while funding for the SDGs and human security languishes, we are reminded by Joseph Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund of Washington, D.C. and a guest of CNWC at meetings with the Government of Canada in 2018, that those steadily expanding military expenditures are also driving a “new nuclear buildup” that is set to reach the “staggering” cost of more than \$1 trillion in this decade.

CNWC last wrote to you on January 23, 2020, suggesting a number of practical measures aimed at reversing this destructive trajectory of misplaced public spending, at reducing the risks of nuclear war, and at building a political climate more conducive to disarmament. In that letter, signed by 89 prominent Canadians, all recipients of the Order of Canada, we called on Canada, *inter alia*, to urge the United States to accept

Russia's recent offer to immediately extend the new START Treaty, and to support the recommendations put forward last year by the Chairman of the preparatory process for the forthcoming Review Conference of the NPT. We look forward to your early and detailed response.

We note that this country played a leadership role in the creation of the Open Skies Treaty, and thus we also urge your Government to join 10 European Union countries in emphasizing the importance of the treaty and in committing to its continued implementation. We expect Canada to call on the United States to continue to honour the treaty and on Russia to lift flight restrictions, notably over its Kaliningrad region.

The postponement of the NPT Review Conference to early 2021 affords governments additional time and opportunity to reflect on the true basis of human security and how it can be more effectively pursued within the NPT context. The need for such rethinking was emphasized by the UN High Representative for Disarmament, Izumi Nakamitsu, when she visited Ottawa as the guest of CNWC earlier this year and called on Canada to "take a leading role" in helping states build a spirit of cooperation and flexibility to save the NPT. We thank the Government of Canada for cooperating with us on this timely visit.

High Representative Nakamitsu warned that in this present bleak political environment, the danger of "the use of nuclear weapons — either deliberately, by accident, or through miscalculation — is higher than it has been in decades." Today, nuclear weapons states are rushing to modernize their arsenals, and the disarmament architecture so carefully constructed over many years is near collapse. There can be no doubt that the renewed nuclear arms race between the major nuclear powers is the greatest threat to peace since the depths of the Cold War.

While a gridlocked U.N. Security Council, charged with maintaining peace and security in the world, is almost impotent, we note that on February 26, 2020 it did call on all States parties to the NPT "to cooperate in facilitating progress in non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and nuclear disarmament." All current members of the Security Council reaffirmed "joint responsibility for the future of the Treaty."

With Canada currently running for a seat on the Security Council, this "joint responsibility" affirmation must be taken extremely seriously. For this reason, CNWC was very disappointed, in reading the comprehensive speech on foreign policy given by Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne to the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations February 21, 2020 not to see even one reference to the nuclear weapons problem let alone Canada's responsibilities as an active member of the NPT.

Downplaying nuclear disarmament in public fora and inter-governmental arenas will result in less public support for forward-minded policies. We are aware that your Government does engage regularly with many countries, including the U.S. and Russia, on non-proliferation and disarmament issues in an effort to find common ground, particularly in the lead-up to the NPT Review Conference. We urge you as Prime Minister to also bring the nuclear danger and the need for clear action to the attention of the Canadian people in order to strengthen public awareness and support for bold Canadian action.

CNWC's continued call for the start of comprehensive negotiations toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons as a prerequisite for peace is not a lonely cry but a vital part of the new fabric of human security.

Yours sincerely,

The CNWC Steering Committee

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Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Rassemblement canadien pour une convention sur les armes nucléaires

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