

Opening Remarks

**The Simons Foundation and
Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada**

GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS DEBATES

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Good Morning,

It is a pleasure to be here, participating with the new Director of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Division, Ms. Heidi Hulan - an associate from the past - and with her colleagues in the annual Graduate Research Awards seminar, a programme which The Simons Foundation partners with the International Security Research and Outreach Programme of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.

This year The Simons Foundation celebrates 30 years of active, national and international, service to the peace and disarmament community.

And this is the 13th year of what we believe is – and I am sure I can speak for both Foreign Affairs and The Simons Foundation - a successful arrangement and worthwhile contribution to the development of specialist expertise on Canadian Foreign policy in disarmament in Canadian universities. We are pleased to provide students, in this field, with the opportunity to contribute to Canada's foreign policy, to benefit financially, and to a possible path for future career choice.

I would like to thank Jasmin Cheung-Gertler, of the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, and Elaine Hynes from The Simons Foundation for their continuing excellent organization and management of this programme.

I would like to welcome and congratulate the recipients of this year's Awards and am looking forward to the first class debates that we have come to expect.

The debate topics are extremely relevant to today's world which – in the last few years - has become a more dangerous place and with two dominant issues threatening the peace and security of the world.

The first is the rise of extremist, fundamentalist, barbaric Islamists - Boko Haram in Africa, Al Qaeda and ISIS in the Middle East – in danger of drawing the US, Canada and other Western nations into another war – into a new complex type of warfare with non-state actors engaging in savagery alien to the modern civilized conventions of International Law, of Human Rights; yet utterly modern in their utilization of the internet as a recruitment tool; as a tool to spur Muslims to wage war in their home countries; and for dissemination of fear and terror.

The second – and most important for nuclear disarmament -is the annexation of the Crimea and the destabilisation of the Ukraine by Russia, which has turned the clock back to East-West divisions reminiscent of the Cold War.

At the recent Munich Security Conference Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reiterated Russia's continual denial of military intervention in Ukraine; of its invasion and annexation of Crimea and insisted – among hoots and jeers from the high level participants - that Russia respects sovereignty and is committed to states' rights to self-determination.

Since the annexation of Crimea, Russia has engaged in deliberately aggressive and dangerous behaviour provoking tensions between the United States and NATO countries; accusing the United States of destroying Russia's relations with Europe; its military bomber flights committing numerous violations of nation's airspace, near collisions and aggressive actions at sea in the Baltic Sea, the Arctic, the Black Sea and close to the US and Canadian borders; and its nuclear-capable submarines conducting daring undersea patrols.

Well over 60 dangerous incidents have been reported; including two potential collisions of Russian military aircraft, with transponders turned off, with civilian planes taking off from Copenhagen¹ and Stockholm². Apparently it was only thanks to good visibility and alertness of the civilian pilots that collision was avoided. Less than a month ago, a Russian bomber, reportedly carrying a nuclear missile, and with its transponders turned off, was intercepted over the English Channel. All civilian air traffic had to be diverted because unlike military aircraft they do not have the capability of sighting the Russian aircraft on their radar.³

President Putin is flaunting his nuclear option. Regardless of whether or not it is merely nuclear gamesmanship or serious threat, this provocative behaviour has raised the level of the discord between the US and Russia; threatens current arms control regimes; and creates the very real danger of nuclear accident which could lead to nuclear war.

Russia is building new generations of attack stealth submarines possibly armed with submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) and has recently resumed its Cold War practice of arming its military aircraft with nuclear weapons.⁴

The testing by Russia of a medium-range nuclear cruise missile - which Russia has denied - in contravention to the 1987 INF treaty, has been condemned by the United States⁵; with Russia responding with counter-allegations about the US infringing the treaty.

The US-Russian bilateral nuclear security agreement, which replaced the 1991 Nunn-Lugar Nuclear Cooperation Treaty, and which Russia refused to extend, has fallen apart because of the Ukraine war, undermining nuclear security and adding to a more dangerous world.

Nuclear weapons are now part of the Ukraine crisis. They may or may not be in the Crimea. President Putin has approved basing dual-capable weapons systems there. And even if not, this possibility is feeding the growing enmity between the United States and Russia.

¹ 3 March 2014

² December 14, 2014

³ *Irish Examiner*, Feb. 12, 2015; *International Business Times* Feb. 2, 2015, *Daily Express*, Feb. 1st 2015

⁴ reported in *Daily Express*, "Intercepted Russian bomber was carrying a nuclear missile over the Channel", Feb. 1 2015

⁵ www.fas.org, *FAS Roundup* March 5, 2015, "Defense Secretary Ashton Carter appears to confirm that the GLCM Russia allegedly test-launched in violation of the INF Treaty is a nuclear missile and threatened further escalation if it is deployed."

In June of last year, President Obama proposed to engage in negotiations with Russia to reduce the nuclear arsenals to 1000 and to “seek bold reductions in U.S. and Russian tactical weapons in Europe,” but President Putin has ignored this proposal.⁶

About the only good news is that the New START Treaty remains on track. Though one negative feature of the New Start Treaty - which could affect the current situation - is that the data exchange on cruise missiles “was allowed to expire” – a situation, which increases the level of uncertainty.

We will be coming into the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference with a new situation of hostile relations between Russia and the United States; with war rhetoric; with less interest in fulfilling Article VI obligations; and with commitments from the 2010 NPT Action Plan unfulfilled.

It is to be hoped that the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons; the Austrian Government Pledge⁷; and perhaps even the Marshall Islands suits, will move disarmament obligations forward. Though the United States and the United Kingdom were formally present- and China informally present - at the Vienna Conference, it may have no positive consequences, especially as I heard that the US participated as an action against Russia!

It is extremely important that we make some headway on stalled nuclear disarmament process. All the nuclear weapons states are conducting extremely expensive modernizations of their arsenals with Russia determined - despite its poor economic status - to keep even with the United States. So, in effect, Russia and the United States are engaged in a new arms race. Both countries have increased the number of deployed warheads; and have an estimated 1,800 nuclear weapons on high alert status. Possession of nuclear weapons is considered to be more dangerous now than during the Cold War.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has moved the Doomsday Clock forward - two minutes ahead of 2014 - to three minutes to midnight. It is their considered opinion that “that global nuclear weapons modernizations, and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals pose extraordinary and undeniable threats to the continued existence of humanity.”⁸

One disarmament measure that holds promise, as we await the hoped-for return to nuclear weapons reductions, is the Swiss Government-funded Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction, with its emphasis on de-alerting nuclear weapons.

The Commission is examining existing nuclear alert status in all nuclear weapons countries; identifying, assessing and prioritizing potential practical measures for increasing warning and decision time, and otherwise reducing launch readiness, thereby reducing the risks associated with high alert status; and helping to establish an international norm against hair trigger launch readiness.

⁶ www.whitehouse.gov, *Remarks by President Obama at the Brandenburg Gate* -- Berlin, Germany, June 19th 2013

⁷ Austria “pledges to present the fact-based discussion, findings and compelling evidence of the Vienna Conference, which builds upon the previous conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, to all relevant for a, in particular the NPT Review Conference 2015 and in the UN framework.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Austria. 8-9 December, 2014

⁸ <http://thebulletin.org/three-minutes-and-counting7938>

The Commission is chaired by General James Cartwright, former U.S. Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and members are former senior military officers, defence ministers, and national security experts from key countries and from all nuclear weapons states except North Korea.

The Swiss Government hosted a preliminary meeting at the United Nations last October, in which Dr. Bruce Blair, Global Zero Co-Founder presented a concept for a treaty on De-alerting Nuclear Weapons. Potential sponsoring governments for this treaty are Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland and China. Possible diplomatic approaches are under discussion.

The Commission Report will be released at the 2015 NPT Review Conference – I think on April 30th.

At a meeting of the Global Zero Commission at the Munich Security Conference, one Russian General spoke of this de-alerting project as a way for President Putin to re-engage with the West, suggesting that the Russians are looking for ways to “climb down”.

I know that this particular information may not be the specific focus of today’s debates, but I do urge you to reflect upon this dangerous situation. And perhaps when you return to your research, take up your positions in academia or in the foreign service, that you consider this an area in which you may be of great service.

So now, I am looking forward to the debates and I wish you every success.

Thank you!

February 20th, 2015