

Opening Remarks

**The Simons Foundation
and Global Affairs Canada**

**GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS
SEMINAR**

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Good Morning,

Martin, it is a pleasure to see you again, and I add my welcome to yours. I would like to thank James McNee, of Global Affairs Canada, and Elaine Hynes from The Simons Foundation for their excellent organization and management of this programme.

It is a pleasure to be here participating again in the annual Graduate Research Awards seminar, a programme which the International Security Research and Outreach Programme of Global Affairs Canada and The Simons Foundation have partnered for fourteen years.

The joint programme was forged in 2003, during the Liberal era – liberal in every sense, with the Cold War over and a time of hope for global peace and disarmament – a time when Canada's Foreign Policy was grounded in Human Security, and civil society partnerships and civil society contributions were welcomed by government.

The year before this programme began, The Simons Foundation initiated, funded and partnered with Global Affairs Canada (then Foreign Affairs) in another programme - a conference at the United Nations in Geneva on Space Security. The Simons Foundation has continued to sponsor these annual conferences. And Paul Meyer, former colleague of many of you, who is now Senior Fellow at The Simons Foundation and responsible for the Foundation's Space Security Programme, participates in the agenda development of these events.

Following the first conference, the Department initiated and funded a Space Security Index Project, headquartered at Project Ploughshares. Unfortunately, the Canadian government withdrew its funding and my hope is that – because of the growing importance of security in space, and the potential for cyber warfare, that the Government will return to this important project.

During the past few years, I have noted the lengths to which the department has gone to maintain the Graduate Research Awards programme – despite the financial hollowing out of the department. And I commend the members of the Department for their efforts to retain it. Because of these constraints, the programme has undergone continual financially downward-driven modifications and it is my hope that we can restore it to its earlier health and provide awards to more students in order to continue to develop a Canadian community of disarmament scholars, and to disseminate the understanding of the contribution that disarmament would make to a peaceful and economically healthy world.

There are few educational initiatives in schools and universities for research and education on the negative effects of weapons – from handguns to nuclear weapons to 21st century weaponry - necessary to counter one of the most lucrative of all businesses, benefiting corporations and government who profit from the sale of these purveyors of death.

Disarmament education is an essential requirement in the modern world but remains a lacuna in educational institutions – a gap I been attempting to fill in Canada for the last 15 years; and am pleased that there will be a new Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security at the Liu Institute at the University of British Columbia - the only Disarmament Chair in Canada.

I am very happy that there are students pursuing with this subject. And I congratulate the recipients of the Graduate Research Awards, and commend you for your choice of study - for your specialization in Space and Cyber Security and 21st century's weapons and warfare.

Cyber warfare and the utilization of autonomous weapons raise the level of the likelihood of a nuclear catastrophe - a horrifying prospect given the possibilities of hacking into the nuclear command and control systems, and of autonomous weapons tracking previously invisible nuclear submarines. This type of warfare and these weapons bring closer the possibility of a nuclear detonation through accident, miscalculation or malicious intent which could trigger a nuclear war.

The political and security environment has changed radically since the early 2000s. The atmosphere at the recent Munich Security Conference was one of depressing awareness of the myriad of crises with which the world is faced. Moreover the negative Russia-NATO rhetoric was alarming. It is imperative in the interests of global security that the channels for dialogue between Russia and the West are kept open - especially so because, as Russia's newly grim-faced, Prime Minister Medvedev in Munich said the world has "slipped into the era of a new Cold War" and he laid the blame – as did all the Russians present - on NATO!

It is extremely important to make some headway on stalled nuclear disarmament process - thus essential that we remain in dialogue with Russia before the situation spirals out of control. All the nuclear weapons states are engaged in expensive modernizations of their arsenals with Russia determined - despite its poor economic status - to keep even with the United States. 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. And given

the tension between the U.S. and Russia, and NATO and Russia, it is quite likely that there could be an inadvertent nuclear exchange.

The possibilities for nuclear disarmament at this time *seem* questionable. Yet is not a lost cause, and creative thinking is required in order to further positive change in the disarmament area.

In the Liberal years at the end of the 1990s Canada introduced language on “nuclear disarmament” to the NATO documents. In fact, The Simons Foundation bestowed its Award for Distinguished Global Leadership on Lloyd Axworthy for initiating this action. Given Russia’s current aggression and the flaunting of its nuclear option, it seems that the political and security environment is not right for any further action to change NATO’s circular argument that *as long as nuclear weapons exist, it will remain a nuclear alliance*. However, there are steps that can be taken.

Mr. Dion has stated his intention to re-engage with Russia. Canada building on its 1990s success could encourage the United States and NATO to adopt Global Zero’s plan – which Dr. Blair may have time to talk about - to eliminate the United States tactical weapons from Europe with an agreement from Russia to remove its NATO-border tactical nuclear weapons to storage facilities in Russia. High-level US military leaders consider these weapons redundant and serve no purpose. NATO would remain a nuclear alliance because of the nuclear United Kingdom and France, as well as the United States strategic nuclear weapons based on land and in submarines.

Canada’s commitment to nuclear disarmament is grounded in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to a series of steps – the step-by-step approach - to disarmament. But one must ask how long are Canada and other like-minded states prepared to wait for the United States and China to ratify the CTBT and for others to follow? And how long are Canada and other like-minded states prepared to wait for Pakistan to decide that it has enough nuclear weapons and to agree to remove its opposition to the FissBan Treaty? And how long are Canada and other like-minded states prepared to wait for the nuclear weapons states outside the NPT to join as non-nuclear weapon states? This step-by-step approach is in a state of paralysis with no resolution in sight.

The NPT has been praised as a successful curb to proliferation of nuclear weapons but this is not enough! North Korea has demonstrated the weakness of the NPT.

There are avenues for Canada to pursue initiatives within the NPT which will further the goal of a nuclear free world.

Canada is one of the 193 United Nations member-states participating in the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons meetings but has, to date, not signed the Austrian- initiated Humanitarian Pledge. This is disappointing because Austria has made quite clear the separation of their initiative from the Nuclear Weapons ban approach – a ban which would become a continuation of the same old story as with the NPT - the non-nuclear weapons states held hostage by the nuclear weapons states

It is my hope that Canada will sign the Humanitarian Pledge, become more active and forward-thinking and exert its influence to encourage the P-5 states to join in these discussions and participate in the Open-Ended Working Group because until the nuclear weapons states do, not much can be achieved.

Mr. Dion has signalled that Canada also intends to re-engage with Iran. There is an opportunity for Canada within its NPT commitment to further disarmament and as well to rebuild relations with Iran – to undo some of the damage caused by the previous government.

Last year at the NPT Review Conference, and again at the UN General Assembly Canada, voted *against* the Resolutions on steps towards establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East which, since 1995, in essence, is the fourth pillar of the NPT.

On July 31st of last year Iran Foreign Minister Zarif made a call in The Guardian newspaper for the “joint comprehensive plan of action” concluded by Iran and the P-5 + 1 which “cements Iran’s status as a zone free of nuclear weapons” to be expanded “to encompass the entire Middle East.”

Members of the Princeton Program on Science and Global Security - of which Dr. Blair is a member - have developed a step-by-step concrete plan to fulfil this objective. For Canada to approach Iran in support of this resuscitation of the establishment of an “effectively verifiable Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction” would be a non-tendentious act of supportive diplomacy.

It is of utmost importance to keep the dialogue going with Russia and Iran and now that *Canada is back*, the country can return to its forward-looking, hopefully pro-active, diplomatic multilateral policy.

Thank you very much!

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