

Opening Remarks

**The Simons Foundation Canada
and
Global Affairs Canada**

GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS SEMINAR

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Good Morning,

It is a pleasure to be here, participating again, in the annual Graduate Research Awards seminar, a programme in which the Department of Global Affairs and The Simons Foundation have partnered for twenty years.

I would like to thank Vanessa Wiley of the Global Affairs, and particularly, Elaine Hynes, from The Simons Foundation Canada for their excellent organization and management of, what I believe is, a unique partnership programme.

Disarmament education is an essential requirement in the modern world. Yet 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 - essential education to counter one of the most lucrative of all businesses.

Weapon development has gone far beyond the needs of national and international security. Each new development is followed by its counter – spiralling upward to a catastrophic destruction potential.

So, I welcome, and congratulate you - the recipients of the Graduate Research Awards; and I commend you for your specialization in the issues of nuclear disarmament, space security, Russia-NATO relations and biological weapons. I hope that you will continue to focus on these and pursue career paths in *academia*, the foreign service, politics or the NGO world in civil society.

These presentations with suggestions on how Canada can move forward come at a pivotal moment for nuclear disarmament, NATO-Russia relations - and with the Covid pandemic - biological weapons.

One distressing outcome of Russia's invasion – as well as the immense destruction of a country and its peoples - is increasing acceptance of nuclear weapons for global security and the heightened risk of nuclear use and nuclear war. Finland and Sweden have abandoned their neutral status and hastened to shelter under NATO's nuclear umbrella – expanding nuclear-sharing arrangements – and a potential violation of Article 1 and Article 2 of the NPT.

Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons if hindered in its invasion of Ukraine - a non-nuclear-weapon state - also undermines the NPT and bolsters the legitimate security concerns of non-nuclear weapons states which conclude that nuclear weapons are necessary for their security. South Korea is now seeking US nuclear weapons based on its soil, and considering acquisition of its own nuclear weapons. North Korea - perhaps in response to South Korea, - formally announced its status as a nuclear weapon state. Japan, because of its support for Ukraine, is now threatened by Russia and is reconsidering its military policies including *nuclear* security.

And the Nuclear Weapons States are placing greater reliance on nuclear weapons in their national security policies and, as well, are upgrading and adding to their arsenals of both nuclear and conventional weapons. The invasion of the Ukraine is creating a boon for the weapons industry and, as well, could drive nuclear escalation and nuclear proliferation which poses greater challenges for nuclear disarmament.

With the nuclear weapons states vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and the new nuclear-sharing, with North Korea and very possible Iran, nuclear weapons are becoming ubiquitous.

This situation is an extremely negative environment for nuclear disarmament. On the other hand - and I am always the optimist - while Russia's war on the Ukraine is a potential setback, it *could be* a catalytic moment to advance nuclear disarmament – a wake-up call to the fallacy of nuclear deterrence policy and practice, and *could* spur action on nuclear disarmament.

The failure of the 2022 NPT Review Conference - though blamed on Russia - was already determined in the extremely weak Final Document because of the refusal by the Nuclear Weapons States and their allies - of which Canada is one- to support any movement on Article VI, the third pillar upholding the NPT.

The TPNW - the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons' - Entry-into-Force and First Meeting of the Treaty's States Parties received an acknowledgement *only* that these had taken place. The complementarity of the TPNW was rejected; as was its legitimate claim to be a crucial component of Article VI.

In light of the failure of the NPT, **Rahim Ali's** research on nuclear disarmament and his suggestion for a path forward for Canada to focus on India and Pakistan - non-NPT nuclear weapons states and adversaries, - is compelling as a relevant component of Canada's new Indo-Pacific strategy. This avenue could provide Canada with an opportunity in peace-making and peace-building with the goal of lowering the threshold of war and a potential nuclear exchange between Pakistan and India.

Marie-Christine Pare's— analysis of the pros and cons of Draft Article 5 Agreement between NATO and Russia is a welcome contribution to the NATO-Russia relations issue. And hopefully, with a positive outcome of Russia's war on Ukraine, further negotiations between NATO and Russia will take place.

As Jean-Samuel Houle points out, in relation to the SALT and START Treaties, dialogue between Russia and the US continued during major crises and the “agreed reduction of the New START were completed amid rising international tensions.” According to the latest information discussions are to resume between Russia and the US on resumption of inspections under START that were suspended in August. ¹ The Russia -NATO Agreement though - because Russia argues that it is fighting a war against NATO – may be further down the line and on hold until peace is restored.

Jean-Samuel Houle's suggestion that Canada work with like-minded countries on preserving space for peaceful use is a welcome contribution because in the past Canada was active in outer space issues and a strong proponent for the prevention of an arms race in space but Canada seems to have dropped away ² . So Jean-Samuel Houle's recommendation that Canada invest in space situational awareness knowledge and participate in the “creation of a world-wide ecosystem of situational awareness capability is opportune; and Canada should be encouraged to return to its more active approach in preventing an arms race in outer space.

The issue of the weakness of the Biological Weapons Convention – lack of transparency and verification and lack of Universality - is an important contribution to the weapons of mass destruction disarmament agenda and certainly germane.

¹ And on November 10, the Biden administration announced that it will restart nuclear arms control talks with Russia, even as tensions spike over the latter's war in Ukraine, coupled with the threat of Moscow using nuclear weapons.

The talks are expected to take place in Cairo in the near future, current and former U.S. officials said, and represent the first move by both sides to revive their mutual arms control agenda since U.S. President Joe Biden first [halted](#) dialogue after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February.

² [Paul Meyer (2019)]*In an earlier era, Canada was noted for its constructive diplomacy on outer space and was a vocal champion of the goal of the non-weaponization of outer space.*

Mohammad Rezaul Karim's research on the emerging threat of Biological Weapons – the lack of transparency and verification - and suggestions for strengthening the Treaty in order to combat the Biological Weapons threat is timely. The Corona Virus epidemic, as of last week, has claimed the lives of six million, six hundred and twenty-six thousand and four hundred and eighty-one deaths and currently, some six hundred and forty-three million two hundred and twenty-thousand confirmed cases.³ Though it is now accepted that the virus originated in a wet market there was much concern that it escaped from perhaps, a weapons research laboratory - bringing into focus the dangers of biological weapons and warfare.

As far as disarmament goes, progress on biological weapons prevention appears the most likely to progress at this time. Nuclear disarmament, rapport between NATO and Russia, and prevention of the weaponization of space seem, for the moment, entirely out of the picture. However, it is essential that this forward-thinking research continues as we move from the brink of incredible destruction of the world order to restoration of the mechanisms for global peace which have served us well since the birth of the United Nations.

My hope is that relations between Russia and the West are not destroyed, that discussions will continue at military and diplomatic level but as it now stands the war will not end until Russia withdraws completely from Ukraine. When this occurs it is difficult to know what the world political situation will be. We will have to retain our hope for disarmament initiatives – particularly nuclear because we are on the cusp of apocalyptic warfare.

I congratulate you again and wish you every success in your contributions to a better, peaceful world.

Thank you.

END

³ Coronavirus Death Toll

6,626,481 deaths

6,626,481 people have died so far from the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak as of November 21, 2022, 18:44 GMT. There are currently [643,219,101 confirmed cases](#) in [228 countries and territories](#). The [fatality rate is still being assessed](#).