



THE SENATE OF CANADA
The Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C.

LE SÉNAT DU CANADA
L'Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C.

Ottawa, K1A 0A4
CANADA

No More Nagasakis!

No More Hiroshimas!

By Senator Douglas Roche, O.C.

Chairman, Middle Powers Initiative

Keynote Address to

2nd Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly

for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Nagasaki, Japan, November 22, 2003

Tel. (613) 943-9559

Fax (613) 943-9561 Website: <http://sen.parl.gc.ca/droche>

No more Nagasakis!

No more Hiroshimas!

I say again: Let Nagasaki be the last nuclear weapons explosion!

We have assembled at this great conference to send a message to the world. That message is: abolish nuclear weapons.

There is no excuse, no reason, no rationale that can justify the retention of nuclear weapons today. They are immoral and they are illegal.

We must say to the nuclear powers: stop lying to us. Stop saying that nuclear weapons are necessary for your security. Stop saying that nuclear weapons can be eliminated only when there is general and complete disarmament.

The nuclear powers must listen to us when we say that any use of nuclear weapons today would constitute a criminal act – a crime against humanity.

There are millions of people around the world who do not want war, who do not want nuclear weapons, who do not want to be lied to anymore. The voice of the people who want the culture of war to be replaced with the culture of peace must be heard. That is the message we must send out from Nagasaki today.

* * *

I call today for a new campaign to mobilize international public opinion on the need for urgent measures to deal with the threat posed by nuclear weapons. This campaign must be focused on the year 2005, which is the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is also the year when the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the only legal instrument we have for the elimination of nuclear weapons, will be reviewed. We must save the NPT in 2005.

We must bring to this immediate work three characteristics: vision, a practical approach, renewed vigour.

1. Vision. We must recognize the progress that has been made through the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT, the 1996 ruling of the International Court of Justice, which called for the conclusion of negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons, and the 2000 agreement of all states parties to the NPT to make an “unequivocal undertaking” to the total elimination of nuclear weapons through a program of 13 Practical Steps.

Unfortunately, the positive direction of these events has been interrupted. We are now experiencing a regression with nuclear weapons being incorporated into a war-fighting strategy. New nuclear weapons are being developed. The old “taboo” or “stigma” attached to nuclear weapons has been replaced by a new idea that new, so-called “low yield” nuclear

weapons can be used without killing huge numbers of people. The proponents of these arguments are trying to tell us that nuclear weapons can be “normal.”

This is wrong. This is one more in the series of lies by nuclear weapons advocates. These lies are bringing the non-proliferation regime to collapse. For if the powerful are to retain their nuclear weapons in the name of their security, why will not the less powerful also acquire nuclear weapons? The nuclear powers are saying to other nations: you may not acquire nuclear weapons, but it is all right for us to have them. This posture will never be accepted by the non-nuclear states. This two-class system is unacceptable: a few states with nuclear weapons, the rest without.

That is why the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be adhered to. The NPT does not permit such discrimination. The NPT calls for “good faith” negotiations for comprehensive negotiations for the total elimination. And so, in 2005, the call must be heard around the world: “Negotiate now. No more delay. No more lies.”

This is our vision. It is a compelling vision. It is a vision the public will understand. It is a vision the public will embrace. We must lead the way.

2. Practical Approach. We do not need to wonder what to do to eliminate nuclear weapons. We have a road map provided by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) countries of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden. The NAC constitutes a political centre in the current nuclear weapons debate. It is calling for action in ways that are politically viable. It will be the strongest political force to negotiate with the Nuclear Weapons States at the 2005 NPT Review. It offers our best hope for making political progress in 2005.

Each year at the United Nations General Assembly, the NAC presents a principal resolution, calling for action to implement the 13 Practical Steps that the international community has already agreed on. At the 2003 meeting of the First Committee at the General Assembly, the NAC stated again: “The only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of [nuclear] weapons is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be used or produced again.”

The NAC resolution went on to call on all States “to pursue, with determination, the full and effective implementation of the agreements reached at the 2000 [NPT] Review Conference”; it called for the “seamless integration of all five Nuclear Weapons States into a process leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons”; it called for India, Pakistan and Israel,

which now possess nuclear weapons, to join the NPT as non-nuclear states; it called for North Korea to maintain compliance with the NPT and for a nuclear weapons-free Korean peninsula; it called for nuclear weapons-free zones in the Middle East and South Asia; it called for the entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; it called for the United States and Russia to make the Moscow Treaty “verifiable, irreversible and transparent”; and it called for action on eliminating tactical nuclear weapons.

This sweeping program of action, proposed by the NAC, was, one might say, overwhelmingly adopted by the international community, since the vote was 121 states in favour, 6 opposed, and 38 abstentions. But in reality, the resolution is unworkable because the very states called to action oppose it. The no votes were cast by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan and Israel. Of the declared nuclear powers, only China voted yes; Russia abstained.

The long list of abstentions comprises virtually all the key countries, the middle power countries, that are capable of influencing the nuclear powers. The abstainers included all of non-nuclear NATO, with one prominent exception: Canada, which voted in favour. But Japan abstained as did Australia. We must ask those countries that abstained: Why did you do so? Why did you not support a moderate resolution that called for the

implementation of the 13 Practical Steps? Are you sincere in pledging an “unequivocal undertaking...” and then abstaining on implementation?

Here in Japan, we must direct precise questions to the Government of Japan: You have high-minded goals, but why can you not support the New Agenda? Is it because of your military relationship and friendship with the United States? If so, how do you respond to the fact that Canada, also a military ally and friend of the United States, has, two years in a row, voted in support of the NAC resolution without weakening its friendship with the U.S?

We must encourage Japan to repudiate all attempts to base national or international security on nuclear weapons, including Japan’s current reliance on the U.S. nuclear umbrella. We must encourage Japan to take a leadership role in pursuing a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone as an alternative to deploying missile defences. We must encourage Japan to change its vote from abstention to support of the NAC resolution next year.

The Middle Powers Initiative, which I represent at this conference, pledges that it will go on encouraging the middle power countries to press the Nuclear Weapons States to fulfil their legal obligations to the NPT. We are focusing our strategy consultations, delegations, parliamentary work and publications on the urgent theme: “Save the NPT in 2005!” We will

continue to give wholehearted support to the New Agenda Coalition. This is a practical approach to implement our vision of a nuclear weapons free world.

3. Vigour. The time is urgent. The hour is late. The work is imperative. We who have assembled here know this. But the public at large is not sufficiently aware of the new dangers. They do not understand that we stand on the brink of the third use of nuclear weapons. The public has been lulled into complacency by reductions in the number of nuclear weapons from the extremely high numbers held during the Cold War. Some think the nuclear weapons problem has gone away. We must wake up the public. A new campaign of public awareness is essential. Disarmament NGOs must work more closely with NGOs in the development, environment, and human rights fields. For what nuclear disarmament is about is saving the planet from total destruction.

Nuclear proponents must now be challenged, for, in clinging to spurious, self-serving rationales, they are deliberately deceiving the world. Humanity faces the gravest of futures if the world is to be ruled by militarism and the culture of war rather than by law. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence can no longer claim the slightest shred of moral acceptance: it is morally bankrupt. The dangers of proliferation make it essential to tell

policy-makers that nuclear weapons are immoral. Military doctrines justifying the maintenance of nuclear deterrence must be forthrightly condemned. Nuclear planners would then be deprived of any further claim to moral legitimacy.

Similarly, in the legal realm, the time has come for governments to formally declare that the use of nuclear weapons is unlawful based upon the rules of international humanitarian law. A world ruled by law is the only hope for a peace with security and stability.

Nuclear weapons cannot, of course, be abolished in a vacuum. An architecture for security must be built: verification procedures, mechanisms to combat cheating, and an enforceable rule of law. The nuclear proponents say they cannot divest as long as there are regional conflicts that hold back the development of an architecture that can guarantee security without nuclear weapons. This argument, too, must be turned on its head. The determined maintenance of nuclear weapons by the powerful few is the factor that inhibits the process of building the conditions for peace in regions of conflict.

The possibility of the third use of nuclear weapons ought to galvanize the public to demand a total ban on nuclear weapons, and it ought to

energize governments to negotiate and implement a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The very idea that a small group of wealthy and powerful individuals should have the power over government policies that spend billions of dollars on military overkill while so many people live in life-threatening poverty is intolerable. This corrupt power continues to drive nuclear systems and it will only be broken when enough people stand up to demand that this Armageddon be removed from our heads.

We here today represent the increasing numbers of people who are trying to push forward new ideas to counteract the twisted logic of nuclear weapons. This work is starting to build a culture of peace to replace the scourge of the culture of war. We must stand firm and send out a powerful message.

No more Nagasakis!

No more Hiroshimas!

Let Nagasaki be the last nuclear weapons explosion!