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FACT SHEET

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

What is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty?

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force in 1970 and has since been signed by 189 countries. The treaty emerged as a response to the fragile Cold War security environment, the increasing proliferation of nuclear weapons and the dangers inherent in strategies of nuclear deterrence.

What are the Three Pillars?

The treaty is focused on three aspects of nuclear proliferation:

1. **Non-proliferation:** Nuclear weapon states (NWS) promise to refrain from transferring nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapon technology to non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). In turn, these states promise to refrain from receiving, manufacturing or acquiring nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapon technology.
2. **Disarmament:** Nuclear weapon states promise to disarm their nuclear weapons.
3. **Nuclear energy:** All states are permitted to trade and acquire nuclear technology for the peaceful production of nuclear energy. All states agree to establish certain safeguards and submit to the oversight of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

How can we achieve a world with zero nuclear weapons?

Steps towards a world with zero nuclear weapons, as outlined in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference:

To achieve a world with zero nuclear weapons, states must

1. Sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)
2. Respect a moratorium on nuclear weapons tests
3. Negotiate a fissile missile cut-off treaty

4. Create a body within the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament
5. Acknowledge the importance of irreversibility in nuclear disarmament
6. Eliminate nuclear arsenals
7. Implement START II (a reductions agreement between the United States and Russia)
8. Complete and implement the Trilateral Initiative (an agreement between the United States, Russia and the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA])
9. Reduce nuclear arsenals and the operational status of nuclear weapons systems, increase transparency and reverse the role of nuclear weapons in security policies
10. Place fissile material under IAEA safeguards to ensure its peaceful use
11. Reaffirm the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament
12. Submit regular reports
13. Develop an effective verification system

Spotlight on Canada

Though Canada has been a historic supporter of nuclear disarmament, its current policy is marked by indifference and—some might argue—indirect support.

- As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Canada agrees to a security policy that supports nuclear deterrence
- Canada exists under but fails to criticise the U.S. nuclear umbrella
- The Canadian Atomic Energy Agency produces one of the world's most efficient and cost-effective nuclear reactors. The CANDU reactor has been sold to both India and Pakistan—neither of which are members of the NPT. It is not inconceivable that the nuclear weapon programs of these countries have been made possible because of the Canadian-made reactor.
- Canada's current nuclear policy, while promoting non-proliferation through a global partnership program, continues to avoid acknowledging the importance of complete nuclear disarmament