



15 March 2004

The Right Honourable Paul Martin
Prime Minister of Canada
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Our help is in the name of the Lord... who made heaven and earth...
Psalm 124:8

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

We write to urge you to guide Canada toward an intensified commitment to nuclear disarmament and binding controls over ballistic missiles as the most effective and practical means of working for the safety and protection of Canadians. Strategic ballistic missile defence systems, we believe, can never satisfy the deep human yearning for immunity from nuclear terror.

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons promise destruction so complete that only the language of human annihilation hints at the potential catastrophe that lurks in the 30,000 nuclear weapons still threatening this world. Tragically and ironically, having committed the folly of building these weapons in the name of *security*, humankind now scours technology and science for ways to avoid the devastating insecurity that the splitting atom promises. Proposed Security solutions like ballistic missile defence fail to counter the nuclear threat and precipitate further insecurities. This is illustrated by current United States BMD initiatives: Expenditure of US\$200

billion over the past 50 years has led to a meagre result -- a proposed system that is designed to address only a handful of the 1000-plus nuclear tipped strategic missiles capable of striking North America. Even this minimal system lacks operationally tested capability. Russia and China are moving to counter any defensive capabilities that the proposed system might one day deliver, and the United States continues to develop new nuclear weapon designs and threatens to resume nuclear testing. This sets the stage for a dangerous and cyclical defence-versus-offence dynamic in the strategic environment. We deplore the ongoing militarization of relationships and continuing nuclear arms competition this entails.

In this context, we repeat our declaration that “inasmuch as we are called to share in God’s redemptive purpose and to restore the covenant of love and blessing between God and His creation, we are called also to pursue national policies which seek to reduce, and ultimately to eliminate, our reliance on the destructive power of nuclear weapons for advancing the national interest.” (Canadian church leaders letter presented to the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister on December 14, 1982.)

Weaponization of Space

The Pentagon itself lacks confidence that the ground-based, mid-course interception system that Canada is considering supporting can ever be made to work, and so it pursues a space-based element that violates an overwhelming global consensus against the weaponization of space. In its current budget request the Pentagon pledges to begin development of a space-based weapons test bed in 2005 and plans deployment and space-based testing beginning in 2012. We note with dismay that in the face of this explicit US intention to make space-based weapons an integral part of ballistic missile defence, Defence Minister David Pratt's 15 January 2004 letter to the US Defence Secretary makes no reference to Canada's commitment to preventing the weaponization of space.

The weaponization of space and related BMD developments are hollow attempts at technical solutions that only intensify the nuclear threat. Prime Minister, the responsibility to protect Canadians and all humankind from the threat of nuclear terror is a grave and urgent imperative, and we urge you to re-emphasize the historic position of successive Canadian Governments that "the only sustainable strategy for the future is the elimination of nuclear weapons entirely. The only realistic objective for the international community is progressive reduction of the existing number of nuclear weapons leading to their elimination." (*Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation: Advancing Canadian Objectives*,

Government Statement. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, April 19, 1999.)

Verifiable Compliance

It is only through a redoubled commitment to reduce existing nuclear arsenals and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and strategic range ballistic missiles that our safety can be enhanced. Recent promising developments related to Iranian and Libyan willingness to eschew nuclear weapons development and to commit their nuclear facilities to international inspections point the way forward. Diplomacy to bring North Korea back into verified compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty must be part of the "sustainable strategy" that, as referred to above, the Government of Canada promotes.

A World Free from Fear and Free from Want

It has been the witness of Canadian churches to successive Prime Ministers that the possession, use, or threat to use nuclear weapons can never be understood to be within God's plan for creation. The extraordinary squandering of resources in the vain pursuit of technological immunity from nuclear weapons, especially while new weapons and new nuclear use strategies are still being introduced, is itself an offence against the will of the Creator. There are urgent worldwide human security crises in health care and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in small arms proliferation and spreading violence, in entrenched poverty, in human rights violations. As a workable alternative to wasting resources on unworkable strategic missile defence schemes, we call on the Canadian government to fulfil its public promise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and so halve absolute global poverty by 2015. We are called then to a vision of a world free from fear and free from want – a world where people live in peace, confident their basic needs will be met. Canada should pursue security according to this vision.

What We Must Do

We call on you to make it clear to Canadians that this country has never advocated BMD or space weapons as a credible means of dealing with a strategic missile borne nuclear threat. Furthermore we urge your government to unequivocally reject the expensive futility of ballistic missile defence. We call on you to focus on the more realistic pursuit of diplomacy and verification technology to mitigate the missile threat, and further, to encourage the United States to do the same. The reallocation of the billions now squandered on strategic ballistic missile defence

could achieve works of wonder to the benefit and sustainable security of all humanity.

We praise our Creator for the abundant life which [is] granted to us in this land, we pledge ourselves to support the pursuit of justice and equity in all lands and we commit ourselves to work toward the removal of the arsenals of destruction which frustrate the search for justice and which threaten life itself, in our land and throughout the world. (Canadian church leaders letter presented to the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister on December 14, 1982.)

Please be assured of our prayers and support as you undertake to fulfill your important responsibilities. May God's own Spirit light your path.

You must put my laws and customs into practice; you must keep them, practice them; and so you shall be secure in your possession of the land. The land will give its fruit, you will eat your fill and live in security.

Leviticus 25:18-19

Signed,

The Most. Rev. David Crawley
Acting Primate
The Anglican Church of Canada

His Grace Bishop Baghrat Galstanyan
Primate
Armenian Holy Apostolic Church, Canadian Diocese

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Bellous
Executive Minister
Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec

The Right Rev. Maurice Hicks
General Superintendent
British Methodist Episcopal Church

+ Brendan M. O'Brien

Archbishop of St. John's
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Presiding Clerk
Richard McCutcheon
Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

The Rev. Rick Myer
Moderator
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada

The Rev. William F. Veenstra
Canadian Ministries Director
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Fr. Marcos Marcos
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The Rev. Fr. Messale Engeda
Presiding Priest
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Canada

The Rev. Raymond Schultz
National Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Metropolitan Sotirios
Archbishop
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)

Henry Krause
Moderator
Mennonite Church Canada

The Right Rev. Seraphim
Bishop of Ottawa and Canada
Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church in America

The Very Rev. Anthony Nikolic
Polish National Catholic Church of Canada

The Rev. P. Alex McDonald
Moderator, 129th General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Rev. Siebrand Wilts
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M. Christine MacMillan
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The Right Rev. Peter Short
Moderator
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