

Canada endorses Obama nuclear security goals

More must be done to support total nuclear disarmament, says Roche

By CINDY CHAN
Epoch Times Staff

While Canada made two commitments at this week's nuclear summit and joined other countries in endorsing U.S. President Barack Obama's call to secure nuclear materials against terrorism, a prominent Canadian advocate for nuclear disarmament says Canada needs to do more.

"We need to begin to try to implement President Obama's vision for a nuclear-weapons-free world. We need to get onboard what Obama is trying to do," said Douglas Roche.

"He needs support, strong support from countries like Canada, and I think Canada's support for the Obama agenda so far is too weak," added Mr. Roche, who has served as an MP for Edmonton, United Nations Ambassador for Disarmament representing Canada, and a senator from 1998 to 2004.

The nuclear security summit on Monday and Tuesday convened by Mr. Obama in Washington, D.C., brought agreement from 47 world leaders on actions over the next four years toward stemming the threat of terrorists obtaining fissile material—plutonium or HEU—to build nuclear weapons or devices.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that Canada will return spent inventories of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Ontario's Chalk River Laboratories to the U.S., where it will be made unusable for nuclear weapons.

Canada will also help fund the return of all HEU from Mexico to the U.S. and convert Mexico's single reactor to use non-weapons-grade low-enriched uranium fuel in a joint project with Mexico, the U.S., and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

This project further strengthens the G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, launched in Canada in 2002.

Canada was among 25 countries at the summit that announced specific actions. In the closing summit communiqué, nations pledged to secure all nuclear materials and facilities they possess by 2014.

They committed to preventing non-state actors from obtaining information or technology required to build nuclear weapons.

They also stressed the need for laws, regulations and new technology to strengthen nuclear security and voiced support for better international cooperation to deal with illicit nuclear trafficking.

SUMMIT ONLY THE BEGINNING
The summit has "only begun to scratch the surface of the problem," Mr. Roche said.

As a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), he said Canada should work with "likeminded countries" like Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden that have formed a coalition calling for greater progress on nuclear disarmament as set out in the NPT.

But Canada has been reluctant to join, he noted, because it is a member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) which subscribes to the doctrine that nuclear weapons are essential.

"The position that Canada holds in supporting, on the one hand, the NPT which has called for an unequivocal undertaking, total elimination of nuclear weapons, and on the other hand, supporting NATO, which is nuclear weapons essential—it's an incoherent position," said Mr. Roche.

At the same time, the NPT has its own challenges.

Mr. Roche said India, Pakistan, and Israel, which have nuclear weapons, aren't members because they say the NPT is discriminatory in allowing major states to retain their nuclear weapons while proscribing acquisition by the other states. North Korea, another nuclear weapon state, dropped out of the NPT in 2003.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper is greeted by U.S. President Barack Obama as he arrives at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., on April 12, 2010. PMO PHOTO BY JASON RANSOM

India, Pakistan, and Israel were invited to the summit, while North Korea, along with NPT members Iran and Syria, were not invited. The international

community views Iran and North Korea as violators of the NPT, and, according to the Associated Press, the U.S. believes Syria also has nuclear ambitions.

The U.S. and Russia signed an

arms reduction treaty on April 8 in Prague, but Mr. Roche said "it still leaves them each with 1,500 strategic weapons deployed plus countless reserve weapons and tactical nuclear weapon, so there

will still be roughly 22,000 nuclear weapons left in the world, 95 percent of them owned by the U.S. and Russia."

"The NPT, while it's very, very important, is subject to erosion right now," he said, attributing it to "the major powers not fulfilling their Article VI obligations [on disarmament]."

An NPT review conference is held every five years, and the next conference will take place in May in New York. Meanwhile, South Korea will host the next nuclear security summit in 2012.

SEEKING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION
Mr. Roche is calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention that would prohibit the development and production of all nuclear weapons by all countries. Adherence would be verified and enforced by international law.

On behalf of over 500 Order of Canada recipients, last Friday Mr. Roche, Nobel laureate John Polanyi, and Pearson Peace Medal recipient Murray Thomson presented Mr. Harper with a cosigned statement in support of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Their petition joins a growing global movement working toward such an agreement.

"Someday there will be such a treaty or there will be nuclear war. It's pretty easy to foresee one or the other would happen," Mr. Roche said.

He noted a warning last November from former IAEA director-general Mohamed ElBaradei, who said more than 200 incidents of illicit trafficking were reported to the agency over the past year and that this figure might well be only "the tip of the iceberg."

Mr. Roche added that former U.N. secretary-general Kofi Annan has said the world is "sleepwalking" toward a nuclear disaster.

"Sufficient political will" already led to two global treaties banning chemical and biological weapons, Mr. Roche said.

"Countries seemed to understand the damage that [those weapons] were doing, and they've forgotten that nuclear weapons would have a global catastrophic effect."

More church sex scandals likely in Canada, says victims' advocate

SCANDAL CONTINUED FROM P1
Although by then the priest had died, in 2005 Bérubé filed a suit against the diocese and received an undisclosed settlement.

France Bedard, 62, who heads an organization that assists victims of sexually abusive priests in Quebec, also predicts that many who have been abused by Catholic clergy will speak out in the coming months.

"More revelations will be made because many victims now have the strength to come forward,"

Bedard told the Montreal Gazette.

"I'm telling you, and I know what I'm talking about, colleges and boarding schools will soon be exposed because people are finding the courage to talk," she said, adding some have already pressed charges.

Bedard said she was raped and impregnated by Father Armand Therrien in the 1960s. She pressed charges in 2005 after the Quebec City Roman Catholic archdiocese said Therrien denied being the father of her child.

After a DNA test proving Therrien was indeed the father, he was charged with rape and gross indecency in 2006, but died before his trial. Bedard has since filed a \$325,000 lawsuit against Therrien's estate and the Archdiocese of Quebec.

Since going public with her story, Bedard, like Bérubé, has become the confidante of hundreds of other victims.

"I get calls every day from victims," said Bedard, who runs the Association des victimes de

pretres.

An Ipsos Reid poll released Tuesday found that one in ten Canadians aged 18 or older, representing roughly 2 million adults, indicate that they are personally aware of someone among their family, friends, or acquaintances who has been sexually assaulted by a Roman Catholic priest.

GOOD PRIESTS TAINTED BY SCANDALS

In the most recent scandal to hit the Catholic Church, news emerged last week that Georg Mueller, a bishop in Norway who resigned quietly in June 2009, did so after admitting that he



Raymond Lahey arrives at a police station in Ottawa on October 1, 2009. Lahey, a former Canadian bishop who is already facing child pornography charges, was this week accused in a civil lawsuit of sexual abuse brought against the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, Nfld. REUTERS/CHRIS WATTIE

a statement that the case was kept quiet at the request of the victim.

The revelation follows scandals in Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and the United States that have emerged in recent months.

In Canada, as a result of cases of widespread sexual and physical abuse at the Mount Cashel boys home in St. John's, Nfld. in the 1980s, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1992 produced guidelines called From Pain to Hope, on how to deal with abuse of minors.

"Together with all other responsible citizens, the Bishops respect the civil laws and fully collaborate with civil authorities in sexual abuse inquiries," the church's website stated at the time.

However, although changes have been made, cases of abuse by clergy have continued to emerge, and critics within the church as well as victims are calling for the systemic issues behind the problem to be addressed.

"The Church continues to look at this as if it were only about the sins and failings of individual men. The systemic reasons for

why it has happened . . . are still in need of attention," Sister Nuala Kenny, Ethics and Health Policy Advisor for the Catholic Health Association of Canada, said in an interview with the Canadian Catholic News.

Sister Kenny lamented how every good priest and bishop is tainted by the scandals caused by a few. A good priest or teacher, she said, can no longer give a hug to a child who has fallen down.

SNAP's Bérubé says several changes are needed to the church's canon law, including the excommunication of clergy who abuse children. There must also be an end to the "code of silence" often resorted to in order to protect the reputation of the church.

"I would like to state that there are good priests, and these good priests should, and pretty fast, identify the bad priests and do something about it," he says.

"I'm aware of priests who are in communities and they are presently abusing, and I'm talking throughout the world. They are presently abusing, and that's what we have to stop—we have to prevent other children from being abused."

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—Robert Bérubé

had molested an altar boy about 20 years earlier, when he was a priest.

The announcement came after a Norwegian newspaper probed why Mueller had stepped down unexpectedly. Mueller's successor, Bishop Bernt Eidsvig, said in