

**Towards an Arctic Nuclear Weapon Free Zone**  
**Closed Meeting and Dinner**  
**Christiansborg Palace, April 3, 2013**

On April 3, 2013, at Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen, representatives from the embassies of Russia, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland met with Danish parliamentarians, expert speakers, and NGO's. The meeting's purpose was to discuss progress towards an Arctic nuclear weapon free zone. It was organized by the Danish National Group of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. (In 1995 the Pugwash organization received the Nobel Peace Prize for their half-century-long efforts to abolish nuclear weapons). Another NGO with representatives at the meeting was the Danish branch of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW also received a Nobel Peace Prize, in 1985, for its work towards nuclear abolition). A third NGO, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, was represented by its Global Coordinator, Mr. Alyn Ware of New Zealand.

The Christiansborg meeting was a follow-up to a similar meeting on March 28, 2012. Both meetings built on the policy paper of the present Danish government, which states that "...In dialogue with Denmark's partners, the government will pursue the policy of making the Arctic a nuclear weapon free zone". The first part of the meeting was chaired by Jens-Christian Navarro Poulsen of the Danish Pugwash Group.

The opening address was given by The Honorable Marian Hobbs, Former Disarmament Minister of New Zealand. Her lecture was entitled, "Establishment of Sustainable Nuclear Weapon Free Zones". In it she reviewed New Zealand's experience as a member of an NWFZ, with special emphasis on the role of public involvement. She said that popular opinion in New Zealand was, and is, so strongly opposed to nuclear weapons that no government would dare to withdraw from the treaty, and in this sense, the NWFZ is sustainable. She strongly endorsed the establishment of an Arctic NWFZ, and she hoped that a similarly deep public involvement could be achieved in the circumpolar region.

The second address was presented by His Excellency Klavs A. Holm, Danish Ambassador to the Arctic, and Undersecretary for Arctic Affairs in the

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Holm's title was "Working Towards an Arctic Nuclear Weapon Free Zone as an Element of Danish Foreign Policy". He reviewed the general situation in the present-day Arctic, where climate change is opening waterways connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific, both on the Canadian side of the Pole and on the Russian side. Besides offering new sea routes, global warming has opened up vast possibilities for resource extraction, and together with these, occasions for competition and perhaps military confrontation between the circumpolar nations. Ambassador Holm said that an Arctic NWFZ would be highly desirable but that there are many difficulties which might cause its adoption to be delayed.

The final speaker was Mr. Franz Kolar, Chief of the Vienna Office of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. The title of his presentation was "Nuclear Weapon Free Zones: A United Nations Perspective". A full copy of his statement is attached. Mr. Kolar said, among other things, "The difference between the nuclear hazards of today and the promise of a nuclear- weapons-free tomorrow will depend primarily upon the readiness of possessor states to relinquish their nuclear weapons. Yet the success and future establishment of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones will help enormously in creating a political environment in which this great goal can be achieved. The difficulties in establishing such zones should not deter states, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens from pursuing enlightened initiatives."

A General Discussion session followed, which was chaired by MP Zenia Stampe of the Danish Parliament, a co-organizer of the meeting. In the discussion, it was pointed out that the most important goal of all who work for the abolition of nuclear weapons must always be the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, similar to the conventions against chemical and biological weapons and against land mines. However, it was agreed that nuclear weapon free zones have great value because they represent concrete progress, thus helping to combat discouragement and apathy, and helping to focus public attention on nuclear abolition. The possibility of a Nordic NWFZ as a first step towards an Arctic NWFZ was discussed, and it was concluded that this would be a very helpful and achievable first step, as would the denuclearization of the Canadian Arctic.

It was pointed out that a nuclear war would be a global ecological disaster,

producing widespread famine through the nuclear darkness effect, and making large regions of the world permanently uninhabitable through long-lasting radioactive contamination. Such a disaster would affect all nations equally, and therefore NWFZ's do not offer any real protection. However they are a joint statement on behalf of the member states that they consider the threat of nuclear omnicide to be unacceptable and unworthy of a civilized society. Attention was called to the recent meeting in Oslo on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. It was agreed that humanitarian organizations, such as the International Red Cross, ought to play an important role in work for nuclear abolition.

The discussions continued at a dinner, which took place in the MP's dining room at Christiansborg Palace.

John Scales Avery, Rapporteur