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hree Chances for Canada

We must recognize that humanity shares this planet and that it must learn to live together despite the ideological divisions and mistrust that often divide it. This vision of the unity of humanity lay behind the founding of the United Nations in 1945 and the creation of the network of UN agencies that have done so much constructive work.

— Douglas Roche,
Canada's Ambassador
for Disarmament

Douglas Roche has been Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament since 1984. In his area of arms control and disarmament, there are at least three major occasions in the second half of 1988 when Canada will be able to show its vigour and concern. In this interview Douglas Roche talks with *Canada Reports* about his hopes for these three occasions: the Third Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD-III) from May 31 to June 25, 1988; the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly which meets in the fall to deal with disarmament and international security; and the election of non-permanent members to the Security Council in October.

Canada Reports: Why are these three occasions particularly important to Canada?

Roche: For a start, it is six years since the Second Special Session on Disarmament, when very little was accomplished. A good deal has happened since. The atmosphere

has improved between the Soviet Union and the United States, and UNSSOD-III follows immediately after the Gorbachev-Reagan summit in Moscow.

Then in September I am due to be elected chairman of the First Committee, and this is the first time Canada has chaired this committee since Lester Pearson did 40 years ago. The post rotates in strict order between the five geographical groups, and Canada is the unanimous nominee of the Western European and Others Group; so the election in September will be a formality. That is not the case with the Security Council, because three countries — Canada, Finland and Greece — are in contention for two seats on the council for the two-year period 1989-90.

Canada Reports: All right then, let's take the three in turn. What do you hope will be the main area of advance at the Third Special Session?

Roche: I hope it will be a consolidation of ongoing efforts. There is a certain historical momentum building up. We have seen results already in the treaty signed for the removal of intermediate-range nuclear forces. That's bilateral, but multilaterally [in the 40-nation Conference on Disarmament in Geneva] we have made considerable progress towards a chemical weapons treaty.

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We have also seen progress in Vienna in the formulation of an entirely new set of negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. So we want the Third Special Session to consolidate all these. It is a political event, and not a negotiating event. In that sense it can reinforce what is going on and give an added jolt of energy, and be a confidence-building measure. I think the Third Special Session can be very helpful in those terms.

Canada Reports: Canada has concentrated a lot of effort on the verification process. How does that fit in here?

Roche: What we have done is to establish the legitimacy and necessity of verification. Canada has been a leader in developing an internationally agreed set of verification principles and practices, and at the UNDC [United Nations Disarmament Commission] this year we are going to extend the list and then roll it over into UNSSOD-III for the purpose of strengthening the international community's acceptance and practice of verification as a basis for extending arms control and disarmament agreements up to conventional force reductions in Europe.

If we didn't have verification built in as strongly as it is to the INF [Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces] treaty, there wouldn't be a hope of getting it ratified by the U.S. Congress this summer.

It is a very important point. We are putting a paper on this subject into the Third Special Session.