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TOWARD A NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

The following statement of Mr. Paul Martin, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was read in Geneva on January 18, by the Canadian representative on the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, Lieutenant-General E.L.M. Burns:

A little less than a year ago, I sent a short statement to this Committee welcoming earlier bilateral discussions between the United States and Soviet Union on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which appeared to have brought those countries close to agreement. Unfortunately that measure of agreement, while productive, as the identical draft treaty texts tabled on August 24 last year bear witness, was not complete as the ENDC resumed in mid-December.

Now we are informed by the Co-chairmen that they have reached agreement on revised draft texts of a non-proliferation treaty for the consideration of the ENDC. I wish to say, on behalf of the Canadian Government, how much we appreciate the conciliatory spirit which has produced this long-awaited result, marking an important step forward in the negotiations. We recognize the long and demanding labours which have been required of the principal negotiators and their staffs, for which we express our thanks.

We are happy to learn that, as well as containing an agreed text of an article on treaty safeguards, which has presented so many difficulties, the new text includes new articles, or amended language, stemming from some of the constructive suggestions made by the other members of the Committee, and especially the non-aligned, after the tabling of the August 24 texts.

We think the merits of a non-proliferation treaty are self-evident and do not need repetition here. This Committee has now somewhat less than two months to decide on the precise terms of the draft

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treaty, before we are to report to the United Nations General Assembly. Every member has already registered its general position on the treaty, and we are all familiar with these positions. They have revealed differences of both substance and emphasis. Let us not now waste time reiterating our positions. Rather let our aim be to concentrate on narrowing and reconciling these differences in the light of the texts we have before us. The end result will be a treaty which will not completely satisfy any one member of this Committee. We cannot, of course, expect a perfect and ideal document. However, it must reflect the highest common factor of mutual interest and agreement among us if two and a half years of intensive negotiation are not to be wasted.

REDOUBLED EFFORTS

Our task is clear, and I think we are equal to it. It will require a lot of give and take and a lot of solid hard work. Let us redouble our efforts with the aim of making 1968 the year the Non-Proliferation Treaty was successfully negotiated. I feel confident that, together with the not inconsiderable accomplishments in the sphere of arms control in recent years, the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty will put us in an excellent position to attack the more substantive problem of the control and reduction of existing nuclear arsenals.