



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 67/28

ENDING THE ARMS RACE

Speech by the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Amherstburg Rotary Club, Bob-lo Island, Ontario, August 31, 1967.

Just a week ago a draft non-proliferation treaty, designed to halt the further spread of nuclear weapons, was tabled in the Geneva disarmament talks. This long-awaited event is significant not only because we hope it will soon lead to the signing of a formal and universal agreement but also because it crystallizes so many of the central issues in the quest for disarmament.

Tonight I should like to discuss some of these issues with you:

The first, and most important, are the necessity and urgency of disarmament. The possible further spread of nuclear weapons and the measures which have been proposed for their control highlight the threat which modern armaments pose for humanity. It is true that we have achieved a precarious "balance of nuclear terror" in the world. The deterrent power of the West, and principally of the United States, has had the effect of restraining the Soviet Union from exerting political or military pressures arising from a large nuclear arsenal. But who is to say that the balance will not be upset? Or that an accident or miscalculation on either side will not cause a finger to be put on the nuclear trigger? Despite the so-called nuclear balance, we cannot afford to relax our efforts to control, and subsequently to eliminate, nuclear weapons as part of a comprehensive disarmament settlement.

The second important point illustrated by the tabling of the non-proliferation treaty is that we have made progress on the road to the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament. Important advances have been made since the Second World War. For example, a treaty signed in 1959 made Antarctica a demilitarized zone. 1963 saw the conclusion of the partial test-ban treaty prohibiting nuclear explosions in outer space, under water or in the atmosphere. In recent years, the practice of applying safeguards on peaceful nuclear activities to ensure that they are not secretly being used for military purposes has been widely accepted. This year, the Outer Space Treaty barred nuclear weapons from that environment. Also in 1967, the independent states of Latin America and the Caribbean signed a treaty which is intended to create a nuclear-free zone in the area. And now the non-proliferation treaty. So we can say that we have succeeded in making some progress in controlling the weapons of war.