



threat and diminishes our ability to avoid it. We sit between the superpowers only in the geographic sense.

The threat to Canada is what gives us the right to be concerned about arms control, but it is a right we share with all mankind and the harsh fact of political life is that, by itself, it does not buy us a very significant role in the arms control process. For, however vividly we may understand that in major nuclear war Canada will be a battlefield, this is not a concept that is well understood outside of Canada.

Other nations, including our European allies, tend, for the most part, to regard us as living basically out of harm's way, far away from the front line which they see as being in Europe. The superpowers, who worry about escalation arising from confrontation in Central Europe, from instability in the Middle East or problems in Central America, also have problems seeing Canada in this manner.

In today's nuclear terms the concept of living out of harm's way is not real. It is however a political perception we must live with, and one which we must overcome, if we are to play an effective role in international politics and arms control.

This perceptual problem exists to an even greater degree when we consider conventional war. Few nations in the world can be said to have as few direct threats to their national security as Canada. But because the danger is that conventional war very quickly will lead to nuclear war which threatens us, we have a real stake in resolving conventional arms control problems and insist on being at the table when these issues are discussed.

But mistaken perceptions are only one of the impediments to the role we can play. There are other factors that limit our voice. The most direct is that our military power is not what needs to be controlled. We have no nuclear weapons and our conventional forces are very small. This is not a situation we can do very much about; we are not about to undertake a massive rearmament campaign just so we can participate better in arms control.

Canada goes into arms control negotiations with another disadvantage. We are as I said earlier a principal power. Located elsewhere we would be known as a regional power. But we are a regional power without a region. Thus, despite our economic power and size we do not go to international forums carrying with us the weight of several clients or able to express the views of our region.

Canada has found over the years that it must consciously work hard to overcome these limitations. We have done it in a number of ways. The most important are:

- activist bilateral diplomacy;
- through multilateralism in alliances and organizations, NATO primarily, but also the UN and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); and
- finally through competence, pragmatism and responsibility.

We do carry out a large part of our arms control activity through and in the course of our bilateral foreign policy relations. We have found that lots of relations with the US or even good relations with the US do not always give us the voice we believe we should have in security affairs. But we work at it. We have learned that it is not simply a question of telling the US what we want, but also of being able to tell them how we think we should get there.

History, geography and our shared values with the USA have brought us certain advantages, but changing governments and the surprisingly personalized nature of policymaking in these areas mean that our involvement in arms control must be an ongoing process. It is therefore a constant focus of Canadian policy and of Canada's relations with the USA and its other major allies.

In bilateral terms our dialogue with the Soviet Union is far less intense; it does not approach the daily dialogue with countries such as the USA and UK. It nevertheless is real and growing. But we do not focus only on the superpowers.

We are aware for example that there is a limit to how far the superpowers would cut their arsenals without the French and Chinese cutting theirs. Our bilateral relations with potential new nuclear powers are of vital importance too if we are to prevent the proliferation that could damage the already fragile arms control process.

While bilateralism is one approach it is not enough. Canadian bilateral diplomacy alone brings us no seats at the negotiating table; we must therefore make creative use of our participation in alliances and multilateral organizations. In these organizations, by building alliances and coalitions and by working with like-minded nations we help build a stronger voice for Canada....

In seeking to develop our expertise Canada has had to choose where to focus its attention. We have chosen to develop our expertise on verification as a practical contribution to resolving arms control negotiation problems. Verification has often been dismissed as a political smokescreen, a problem which doesn't exist, or as an issue that has already been resolved by modern technology. I wish that were true. Verification continues to pose a series of technical problems. These technical problems are getting larger rather than smaller, as the numbers of weapons proliferate, as the types of weapons change, and as they are made smaller, faster and more and more to resemble conventional weapons.

Canadian work on verification cannot solve the problem of political will. It can however help resolve the technological problems that continue to exist. And this will help build confidence and in turn generate political will.

If I may then be allowed a few comments in summary, I would stress three points. We are committed to arms control, we are actively pursuing it and finally it is a difficult process. This is not, and must not be seen as, a call to pessimism. What we need is patience and perseverance: strength in our efforts, and a true commitment to our freedom and our values."