

Ambassador Marchand Addresses CD on Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum" of the international community. Constituted in its present form in 1978, it meets in Geneva and has a unique relationship with the United Nations. It is not a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and defines its own rules of procedure and develops its own agenda, taking into account the recommendations made by the General Assembly.

In accordance with the agreement reached at the 1978 Special Session on Disarmament, the Conference works on the basis of consensus. It reports to the General Assembly annually or more often, as may be appropriate. The Secretary-General of the Conference is appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, following consultation with the Conference, and also acts as his personal representative. The budget of the Conference is included in that of the United Nations, and the Conference holds its meetings on United Nations premises and is serviced by United Nations personnel. The work of the Conference is conducted in plenary meetings or under any arrangement agreed upon by its members.

Non-members may submit written proposals or working documents and may, upon invitation, participate in the discussions on substantive items on the agenda. The chairmanship rotates among all members on a monthly basis. The Conference meets annually in Geneva for approximately six months, usually when the Assembly is not in session.

*(The above description of the CD was amended from *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. Volume 12: 1987, p. 10).*

The following are excerpts of the text of a July 26, 1988 speech to

the Conference on Disarmament by Ambassador de Montigny Marchand.

"In my statement today, I will address Item 5 on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space....

Speaking for the first time in plenary since the Third Special Session on Disarmament, I will not hide my disappointment that the session ended without agreement on a substantive final document. However, like many of you who spoke before me on this subject, rather than pin blame for this situation on one participant or the other, I believe we must, in this forum, build on the common ground which emerged during the deliberations at that session and continue the dialogue in those areas where divergences continue to exist.

The emerging consensus at the Third Special Session on Disarmament confirmed the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and participants urged the CD to intensify its efforts in this area. The draft document also referred to the significant contribution that a successful outcome to the ongoing negotiations between the USSR and the USA would make to the common objective of preventing such an arms race. The Government of Canada concurs fully with this analysis which recognizes the significance of the task before us and gives proper weight to the importance of the bilateral dimension.

Notwithstanding this latter point, it is clear that the multilateral dimension of arms control in outer space is gaining increasing importance and will continue to do so. This is as it should be, a point that is implicitly recognized in the draft document of the Special Session where it calls upon all states to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space, given 1) the potential for an arms race in outer space; 2) the increase in the number of countries with significant interests and capabilities

in space; and 3) the continuing growth in space activities. The Canadian Government believes that it is appropriate that this dimension should take on and, indeed, that it must take on increasing significance.

Having made this very general point, it is clear that if the multilateral dimension is to take on greater importance, the CD will have to carve out a more substantive role in preventing the development of an arms race in outer space. Our efforts to assume such a role must start from four important considerations:

- 1) we must take very great care to enhance stability and not detract from it;
 - 2) our negotiations must complement, in the strictest sense of the word, the negotiations between the two major space powers;
 - 3) we must recognize that a very considerable measure of prohibition and protection already exists in outer space and base our efforts on that foundation; and,
 - 4) we must not confuse or lose sight of the very useful and practical division of labour that we have established between the CD and UNCOPUOS (United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space).
- Establishing our starting point is relatively easy. What comes next is a lot harder. Prevention of an arms race in outer space clearly involves a significant effort in both dealing with space weapons and defining legitimate space activities. Everyone here recognizes the bewildering complexity of the problems regarding both the emplacement of weapons in space and the deployment on earth of weapons capable of attacking objects in space. We are also aware of the difficulty of defining the kinds of military activities that might or might not be legitimately conducted in space.