

“Reflections on Disarmament Proposals Presented by Warsaw Pact Delegations at Belgrade.”

December 2, 1977.

The Soviet proposal entitled “Program of Action with a View to the Consolidation of Military *Détente* in Europe” calls for the preparation of a treaty on the non-first use of nuclear weapons. Such a treaty would clearly be a major step of fundamental importance in the context of the military realities in Europe today. When one considers, by contrast, the comparative simplicity of the proposal to strengthen our commitment to notify manoeuvres and to start the notification of movements, and when one considers the apparent reluctance of certain states to go along with these comparatively simple proposals, it becomes strange indeed to contemplate the far more fundamental question of undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, the clear imbalance in conventional forces in Europe makes it necessary for Canada, together with other states, to support a policy of flexible response to deter possible aggression. Thus it is our strategy to maintain peace by retaining the option of using nuclear weapons in defence in the event that conventional forces were unable to prevent any possible aggressor from overrunning Europe. This policy remains necessary for my country, unless we are to seriously diminish our national security.

We do, however, firmly subscribe to the Charter of the United Nations and the Second Principle of the Final Act in our commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force. We shall not use any weapon, be it conventional or nuclear, in contravention of those undertakings. Moreover, we would think it unwise to weaken this overriding principle by entering into any agreement to refrain from the use of one particular weapon system.

The next paragraph of the Soviet proposal concerns a restriction on the addition of new members to alliances. Once again, this proposal must be considered in light of the realities of the situation in Europe and contrasted again with the difficulty in agreeing to even much more modest proposals in our working body. In this light, I need not belabour the point as to why my delegation could not agree to an undertaking as proposed by the Soviet