



Statements and Speeches

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DISARMAMENT A MEANS TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY

A Statement by Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament Arthur Menzies to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly XXXVI, New York, October 28, 1981

Many of us here have just completed a fortnight's work on the agenda for the second Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Some of the deliberations of the First Committee at the present session can make an important substantive contribution to the preparations for that Special Session, which is to be held next June and July.

The Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, in his address to the General Assembly on September 21, emphasized that "international peace and security, as well as development, freedom and life itself, will ultimately depend on whether we can successfully work towards arms control and disarmament". The second Special Session therefore must point the way to more concrete progress in this field.

Disarmament is not an end in itself, but a means to an end — that of international security and stability. Present international conditions do not suggest that we can take international stability and security for granted. In its turn, prospects for stability and security at the regional level, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and in Central America — or in other areas of this troubled planet — have effects far beyond the regions themselves. Conversely, and at the same time, successful efforts to create stability in one region positively affect other regions outside it. Prime Minister Trudeau recently pointed out that economic problems and international disputes have increased in both number and severity. While the super powers have grown stronger, they often seem to have lost control over events. Though political and economic instability may be most visible in the Third World, they are also painfully evident across the entire spectrum of international relations. The problems of East-West and North-South relations, energy, nuclear proliferation, the environment, refugees and sporadic outbursts of violence and war all form a complex of cause and effect.

**Committee
work of "crucial
importance"**

Within this context, in the words of the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, our work leading up to the second Special Session on Disarmament could be of "crucial importance". We should build on the remarkable consensus reached in 1978. We should be governed by the considerations that led to that consensus and should strive to achieve the highest level of agreement on ways to move ahead on disarmament. Here, I refer to the Commonwealth heads of government declaration, issued in Melbourne early this month. These heads of government saw as a particularly serious matter mounting tension and lack of confidence among states. They saw that practical measures directed towards nuclear disarmament and the avoidance of all armed conflict, particularly nuclear conflict, must have the highest priority on the international agenda. Such goals can only be sought through restraint and a
