

MR. CHAIRMAN,

AS I SPEAK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS VITAL COMMITTEE, I WANT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO YOU AND YOUR PREDECESSORS WHO HAVE GUIDED THE IMMENSELY DIFFICULT WORK OF MAKING PROGRESS IN ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT MEASURES. I ALSO REMEMBER WITH RESPECT MY PREDECESSORS WHO HAVE REPRESENTED CANADA. THIS COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ENRICHED BY MANY REPRESENTATIVES FROM MANY COUNTRIES WHO HAVE DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE ELUSIVE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS TO THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SECURITY.

BUT, DESPITE THESE VALUED EFFORTS, THE FACTS AND FIGURES RECOUNT IN TELLING DETAIL THE ARMED WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE, THEY BEAR WITNESS TO THE MODEST NATURE OF WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

AS I BEGIN MY WORK HERE, I ASK MYSELF: WILL ONE MORE SPEECH, ONE MORE ANALYSIS, ONE MORE RESOLUTION CHANGE THIS SITUATION? DO THE GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED IN THE COMMITTEE NEED MORE IDEAS, MORE COMMITMENT, MORE PASSION FOR A SOLUTION? SHOULD WE DEVOTE MORE TIME, MORE ENERGY, MORE MONEY TO THE PROBLEM?

I HAVE CONCLUDED THAT NONE OF THESE ARE REALLY NEEDED. WHAT IS NEEDED IS THE POLITICAL WILL OF NATIONS TO START IMPLEMENTING THE 129-PARAGRAPH FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT. THIS DOCUMENT WAS AGREED TO BY A HISTORIC CONSENSUS: WE MUST SEEK TO REDISCOVER THAT CONSENSUS THROUGH THE EXERCISE OF POLITICAL WILL. THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE PROBLEM WE FACE TODAY.

THEREFORE, MY FIRST TASK IS TO REPORT TO THIS COMMITTEE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INTENDS TO EXERCISE THAT POLITICAL WILL TO WORK WITH OTHER NATIONS TOWARDS THE PREVENTION OF WAR IN THE NUCLEAR AGE AND THE INAUGURATION OF AN ERA OF ASSURED PEACE FOR ALL THE WORLD. THESE ARE THE CENTRAL ISSUES CONFRONTING OUR GENERATION AS CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BRIAN MULRONEY, POINTED OUT RECENTLY. IN DOING SO, HE SAID:

"THERE CAN BE NO LET UP IN OUR EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT OF WAR. NO MATTER HOW FRUSTRATING OR DIFFICULT, NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE PURSUED...THE EXERCISE OF POLITICAL WILL IS NOWHERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ON THIS ISSUE ON WHOSE OUTCOME THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN AND OF HUMANITY DEPEND."

THESE WORDS WERE ARTICULATED BY THE CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER, BUT THE SENTIMENT COMES EQUALLY FROM THE CANADIAN PEOPLE. INTERNATIONAL TENSION AND THE ACCUMULATION OF WEAPONS, THESE LINKS IN A DEADLY CHAIN, ARE DEEPLY TROUBLING TO ALL CANADIANS -- AND AS RECENT STUDIES HAVE SHOWN, EVEN TO OUR CHILDREN.

* * *