

PRESS RELEASE



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OUTER SPACE TREATY

The Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, announced today that on January 27 the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, will be open for signature in Washington, London and Moscow. Following the procedure adopted in August 1963 in signing the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Canadian diplomatic representatives will sign the outer space treaty in all three capitals.

This treaty is an important step towards peace and it is particularly gratifying that it was negotiated and adopted unanimously within the framework of the United Nations. As an active member of the 28-state Committee on Outer Space and of its legal sub-committee, Canada was directly involved in the negotiation of this major treaty and one of its co-sponsors in the General Assembly. It is also gratifying that despite the many problems that continue to divide the world, the two major space powers, Russia and America, were able to agree that outer space, the moon and other celestial bodies be explored and used only for peaceful purposes, and that certain legal principles, including international law itself, should have extra-terrestrial application.

Of particular significance are the provisions of the treaty which state that there be no national appropriations of celestial bodies, that no military bases or fortification be placed there, and that there be no testing of any type of weapons on celestial bodies; nor the placing in orbit of any nuclear bombs. The treaty emphasizes freedom of scientific investigation in outer space, including celestial bodies and that states must co-operate in avoiding contamination of outer space and must report on conditions which could cause harm to the health and safety of astronauts, who are to be regarded as envoys of mankind.

The outer space treaty which Canada is signing represents a significant advance in the control of arms. As such it is considered a most encouraging factor in the quest for universal peace.