

Canada considers proposal

Canada will give serious consideration to a proposal in the Prague Declaration which is directed to member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen told Czechoslovakian Ambassador Vincent Buzek on January 21.

Mr. Buzek, on behalf of all Warsaw Pact countries, had officially presented the text of the declaration to Mr. MacEachen in Ottawa. The declaration contains a proposal directed to NATO member countries by Warsaw Treaty member states to conclude an agreement on "the mutual non-use of military force and on the maintenance of relations of peace".

Canada has already accepted the commitment not to be the first to use force under the United Nations Charter as a member of that organization. Moreover, as Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau pointed out in his speech at the Second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament last June, "The Charter lays down that there shall be no first use of force, any force." In signing the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Canada, the United States and all European states except Albania made a similar commitment where Europe is concerned.

Mr. MacEachen said it may be useful from time to time to reaffirm obligations which have been assumed in the past, provided such statements are not treated as a substitute for balanced verifiable agreements on arms control and disarmament, including current efforts to reach agreement on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. Canada will therefore consider this proposal seriously, he said, and discuss it with its NATO allies. The reference in the proposal to the renunciation of the first use of conventional weapons appears to be a step in the right direction. It is important because NATO is concerned over Soviet and Eastern European superiority in conventional strength.

The proposal also includes components related to arms control and confidence building measures which will receive careful and serious study. Mr. MacEachen gave the assurance that any aspect of these proposals which would lead to progress toward concrete and verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements would receive full Canadian support.

Further aid for North Yemen earthquake victims

Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan J. MacEachen has announced that Canada is providing \$400 000 in response to an appeal by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) for the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen).

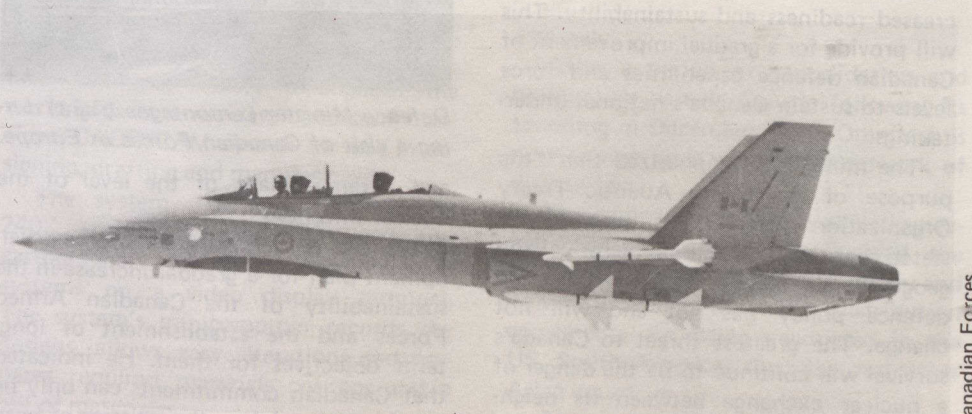
The funds, which will be channelled through UNICEF, will be provided through the Canadian International Development Agency.

Reports received from United Nations

and North Yemen sources indicate that damage, resulting from the recent earthquake in the Dhamar area, is more extensive than originally estimated. It is reported that some 400 000 people have been left homeless by the destruction of 300 villages and the need for shelter remains acute. The funds provided through UNICEF will be used to provide 2 800 tents for the affected families.

Canada provided \$175 000 for a Red Cross relief program at the time of the earthquake in December.

New fighter aircraft exceeds forces' expectations



Canadian Forces

In tests the CF-18 fighter plane has been performing exceptionally well.

The Department of National Defence is "extremely enthusiastic and happy" with its new fighter aircraft, the *CF-18*, said Major-General Paul D. Manson, chief of air doctrine and operations at National Defence Headquarters.

"In the short time that we have been operating the *CF-18* our new fighter is already exceeding our very high expectations.... It is a superb fighter," said Major-General Manson. He also said that the pilots and maintenance crews were pleased with the aircraft's performance.

For ten weeks, instructor pilots of 410 Squadron put the first two *CF-18*s delivered to Canada through their paces at CFB Cold Lake, Alberta. Operational squadron training is scheduled to commence this month. During operations conducted in cold weather down to minus 30 degrees Celsius and under light to moderate icing conditions, the *CF-18* performed exceptionally well. All avionic systems, including the radar, proved very reliable and easy to operate. The squadron has experienced aircraft availability rates approaching 100 per cent.

No less than 115 missions for a total of 147.5 hours have been flown.

Major-General Manson said he was equally enthusiastic with the training of *CF-18* support personnel. "One-hundred-and-sixty technicians are currently being converted to the new aircraft. Our servicing load will be reduced tremendously with the *CF-18*. Fifteen minute turn-arounds have been accomplished. Tires have to be changed only every 100 landings or so — compared to less than 25 landings for the *CF-101*s and *CF-104*s. On the first try, our people have changed a complete engine in four hours. With more training we'll cut that in half," he said.

The pace of training has now increased with the delivery of the third *CF-18* in December.

The new fighter plane was built in Canada by McDonnell Douglas. The contract signed with the company in 1980 was for delivery of 138 *CF-18* fighter aircraft to the Canadian Armed Forces between 1982 and 1988 (see *Canada Weekly* dated November 24, 1982).