

The Canadian Position at the PTBT Amendment Conference

This *Bulletin* went to press just as states parties to the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) were gathering at United Nations headquarters in New York to consider an amendment to convert the PTBT into a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty (CTBT). Canada was represented at the Amendment Conference — which was scheduled to last from January 7 to 18 — by a delegation headed by Ms. Peggy Mason, Ambassador for Disarmament.

The next issue of the *Bulletin* will feature a full report on the PTBT Amendment Conference. In the meantime, we offer the following summary of the Canadian position as the Conference began.

Canada initially opposed the convening of the Amendment Conference because it did not regard this procedure as an appropriate or realistic way to achieve a CTBT, which remains a fundamental Canadian arms control objective. Nonetheless, after the required number of states parties to the PTBT requested the convening of the Conference (according to the terms of the PTBT, a conference must be held if requested by one-third of the parties), Canada announced that it would attend and participate constructively.

The Canadian delegation goes to the Amendment Conference optimistic that the Conference has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to ongoing efforts towards the conclusion of a CTBT that could attract universal adherence. Canada looks forward to participating in a thorough exchange of views among PTBT parties regarding their different perspectives on this important issue. A focused debate on issues related to a CTBT could help define where areas of agreement exist and identify where differences remain to be overcome.

Canada believes that the Amendment Conference also offers an opportunity for detailed consideration of the verification regime that would be necessary for any CTBT to be effective. Having considerable expertise in the verification of arms control and disarmament agreements, Canada welcomes the opportunity to participate in discussions on verification issues. The Canadian delegation includes an expert on seismic verification and Canada hopes to circulate at the Conference a document outlining the Canadian experience in research applicable to CTBT verification.

Canada will work for a Conference outcome that contributes to the ultimate achievement of the CTBT goal. Such an outcome would entail the Conference giving detailed consideration to all aspects of a CTBT and channelling its findings to the Conference on Disarmament, which is the most appropriate multi-lateral forum to address this issue. Canada believes that a constructive approach to the Amendment Conference by all participants can give significant impetus to the ongoing work of the CD towards the conclusion of a verifiable and effective CTBT.

We were particularly pleased that the Group succeeded in reaching a consensus final report that included a number of specific recommendations for further action. Again, as indicated by the Right Honourable Joe Clark in his plenary statement, Canada plans to introduce a draft resolution on verification into this Committee that would lay the basis for appropriate follow-up action on the consensus recommendations of the Group.

In particular, the resolution will call on the UN to take appropriate action on the recommendations of the Group, including the establishment of a consolidated data bank of verification research material and the promotion of increased dialogue between experts and diplomats on verification issues.

Jointly with Poland, the Canadian delegation will introduce to this Com-

mittee a draft resolution designed to give impetus to the Geneva negotiations on the conclusion of a comprehensive and verifiable ban on chemical weapons. As we are all aware, that negotiation is currently proceeding through a critical stage and we hope to see the General Assembly adopt a strong and unequivocal statement in support of the Conference on Disarmament's early conclusion of a convention by providing, as in previous years, consensus approval of this resolution.

Canada continues to attach importance to the negotiation of a verifiable agreement on the cessation and prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, at an appropriate stage, in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation will again introduce a draft resolution calling for such a ban.

Another issue that Canada will be following very closely in this Committee's work is that of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. As the conclusion of an effective and verifiable comprehensive test ban treaty is a fundamental Canadian arms control objective, my delegation will join others in co-sponsoring a resolution urging steps and recommending measures that would contribute to the early conclusion of a CTBT.

When Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs addressed the 45th UNGA, he spoke of cooperation as the new realism and pragmatism as the only path to progress. The weeks ahead offer us the opportunity to seize the spirit of cooperation and compromise that has allowed parties in other arms control and disarmament fora and in various negotiations to make impressive strides forward.

Canada firmly believes that the First Committee has a unique and vitally important role to play in finding common ground and in providing direction to the international community, in both the global and regional contexts, in our collective efforts to achieve meaningful disarmament and to strengthen the security of all. We look forward to a serious consideration of the agenda at hand with a view to further advancing towards these goals. ■