

— political, practical and philosophical — to overcome. With your help and ideas, we want to promote the kind of realistic but progressive approach that a new global security environment demands. I look forward to hearing your suggestions tonight and in the months to come.

(Annex B)

GROUP OF 78 CONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT

September 20-22, 1996, Cantley, Quebec

“ARMS AND THE MAN”; THREATS TO PEACE AT THE END OF THE CENTURY”

The Group of 78 held its annual conference on the general theme noted above from four perspectives: nuclear issues, the arms trade, civil wars and the abuse of human rights.

The Group reached the following conclusions and policy recommendations.

The choice of “nuclear issues” as the first conference theme was fortuitous, in light of the agreement on the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995, the endorsement this year by the General Assembly of the United Nations of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the recent judgement of the International Court of Justice concerning the legality of the use of nuclear weapons. Since it was concern over nuclear issues which was a primary reason for the formation of the Group of 78 in 1980, strong support was shown for the efforts of the government to bring these treaties into effect. The Group noted that the Court had reaffirmed the obligation of the nuclear weapon states to proceed towards total nuclear disarmament and that our government intends to pursue an active role with regard to nuclear issues.

But, concern was also expressed about the firmness of intention on the part of the nuclear powers in proceeding towards nuclear disarmament, about the lack of deadlines and specific programs, and about ambiguities with respect to the implications of the judgement of the International Court for the current policies of those powers and of others. The points made by representatives of our government about balanced and realistic approaches, and prudence with regard to the pace of movement and to political contexts, are valid. They indicate difficulties in complex situations but they do not provide an argument against commitment to specific steps towards such disarmament. The government is inviting comments from Canadians. Participants in the conference have approved a recommendation about Canadian policies, the text of which follows.

There are closely related issues about Canadian defence and foreign policy which should be the subject of consultation between representatives of the government and interested and informed members of the public. The particular example noted was that of the rewritten NORAD Agreement signed by Canada and the U.S.A. in March of this year. The reasons for such consultations are indicated in a statement brought to the attention of the con-

ference, a copy of which follows this report.

With respect to conventional arms, the Group supports Canadian initiatives towards a ban on anti-personnel land mines, including the holding of an international conference on this subject, and efforts to encourage consideration in regional organizations of a need for control, reduction or elimination. The Group will also support any Canadian initiative to strengthen the UN Register of Conventional Arms, including extension of its scope. In Canada, it is important to extend public awareness of, and opportunities to comment upon, policies concerning arms transfers, particularly where there are doubts about end use or dual purpose of exports. Questions were raised about the lack of information about arms export to the U.S.A. under changed international circumstances.

The questions posed to panellists about civil war situations, “who intervenes and how?”, did not produce a tidy set of answers about principles, norms, responsibilities and procedures. Detailed information provided about events in Rwanda pointed to the many hazards, disappointments and operational difficulties which can occur in such situations, even when it is clear that an international presence is essential and that humanitarian motives are unquestioned. It is clear that integrated policies in this field among the governmental agencies concerned, both in Canada and in other potential participating and troop supplying nations, constitute one very important requirement for effective intervention. Reorganization with regard to U.N. capabilities and procedures (initiated, we understand) has similar importance. The Group of 78 supports the Canadian initiative for a Rapid Deployment Force.

The following points were made in discussion about intervention: (1) the Rapid Deployment initiative should incorporate, in preparatory and in ongoing phases, the perspectives, expertise and skills of Canadian civilian and humanitarian organizations; (2) in the light of recent experience in refugee camps, every effort should be made to assist the peaceful victims of a civil war, protect peace-keepers and prevent control from passing into the hands of those guilty of human rights abuses; (3) the importance of a cooperative exchange of information through U.N. and other multilateral channels about situations possibly leading to intervention was noted: for example, the initiative reported to the conference on the formation of the Forum on Early Warning and Emergency Response. A Canadian group has been asked to assume the responsibilities of an early warning/emergency response analysis and is in touch with government agencies on this subject; (4) the importance of the participation of American troops under U.N. command in peace-keeping e.g., Macedonia, should be stressed to Americans who are inclined to think first of unilateral action.

With regard to human rights, the conclusions were as follows. Our relations with governments which are the greatest violators of human rights lack consistency. There are limits to the influence which Canada can exert; near neighbours to the violators, as well as