

Canadian Participation in Australian NGO Verification Conference

In May 1988, two Australian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) combined to host a verification conference in Sydney "Checking the Arms Race: Australia's Role in International Verification." Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA) and People for Nuclear Disarmament (PNA), two of the larger and better known Australian NGOs, with financial assistance from a broad range of sponsors, designed the Conference as a means of studying the possible application of Australia's technology for verification purposes in the multilateral aspects of the international arms control and disarmament (ACD) process. More than 150 representatives from across Australia, plus a number of invited guests from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, India, Japan and Canada, undertook three days of discussion and presentations.

The Conference itself as an NGO activity was impressive both by the variety of expertise assembled and by the low-key and even-handed approach which the organizers took to the subjects at hand. The keynote address was delivered by the Australian Minister of Defence, Mr. Kim Beasley. He focussed

mainly on the Australian NGO preoccupation with the Joint Facilities issue. This refers to a number of bases operated jointly by Australia and the United States for the purpose of monitoring certain military activities of other nations. He presented a reasoned case for continuation of the present policy with a fairly convincing rationale of the importance of these facilities to reinforce international security and ACD verification. He particularly underscored the immediate relevancy of this type of facility in the verification of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) (and presumably follow-on) treaties.

Four senior representatives from the Australian Department of Defence participated actively in the Conference throughout, as well as one representative each from the ministries of foreign affairs of Australia and New Zealand. They succeeded collectively in highlighting common ground in a number of other ACD issue areas, specifically relating to chemical weapons negotiations which are reaching a final stage in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.

At the invitation of the Conference coordinators, Mr. F.R. Cleminson, Head of the Verification Research Unit of the Department of External Affairs, presented a paper focussing on the European and Canadian perception of the role of verification in international arms control and disarmament negotiations. In addition to the Canadian paper prepared for the Conference and reproduced in the main Conference document, Mr. Cleminson provided an audio-visual presentation on the PAXSAT concept, which focusses on the application of space-based remote sensing for verification purposes. A number of NGO participants made a point of complementing Canada for having undertaken this innovative type of research and for having made it readily available.

If any other particular characteristic of the Conference was notable, it was the relative youth of many of the major NGO presenters and the serious research which they had undertaken in developing their presentations. Overall, the Conference illustrated the utility of a multi-disciplinary approach to ACD issues. ■

Selected Recent Department of External Affairs Publications

General

1. **News Release No. 094**
"Appointment to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security." April 29, 1988.
2. **News Release No. 096**
"Canada Accedes to the Antarctic Treaty." May 4, 1988.
3. **Press Release No. 28**
"Statement by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada to the Third United Nations Special Session Devoted to Disarmament." New York, June 13, 1988.

4. News Release No. 169

"Appointments to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security." August 5, 1988.

5. News Release No. 171 (Government of Canada)

"Canadian Participation in the Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG)." August 9, 1988.

6. News Release No. 172

"Appointment of Executive Director of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security." August 11, 1988.

Consultative Group

7. Report on the Meeting of October 1-3, 1987, "Peace and Security in the Arctic: Decisions for Canada." Prepared by the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, November 12, 1987.
8. Report on the Meeting of April 14-16, 1988, "The Third UN Special Session on Disarmament." Prepared by the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, May 3, 1988.
9. Report of Cross-Canada Tour, December 1-16, 1987, "Beyond the Summit: The Future of Disarmament."