

THRONE SPEECH

(The following is the foreign affairs portions of the Throne Speech delivered in the Canadian Parliament on December 7, 1983, presented as an editorial service of International Perspectives.)

Canada's role in seeking world peace

Thirty-five million people have been killed in wars since 1945, and the possibility of major conflict is a danger no nation can ignore. In the four decades since the Second World War, Canada and its allies have sought to preserve peace through substantial contributions to Western collective defence and sustained efforts to resolve differences with our adversaries. Yet the current international situation is cause for considerable concern, even anguish.

The Government, in close consultation with our allies, intends to devote its full resources to exploration of every possible means to restore confidence and trust to the international scene. It will continue to advance proposals to slow the steady spiral of the arms race, halt the spread of nuclear weapons and create the conditions for greater security at lower levels of armament.

Canada will continue to make a responsible contribution to collective defence, in fulfillment of its obligations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the North American Air Defence Command. The Government will maintain its commitment to 3 percent real growth annually in defence expenditure, thus ensuring that our forces are equipped with modern conventional weapons. Canadian forces will not be armed with nuclear weapons. Announcements will be made regarding conventional weapons procurement programs.

Renewed attention, too, will be given to the contribution Canada can make to peace and stability through peacekeeping operations under the control of the United Nations, particularly where local crises risk escalation into wider conflict.

Improving the climate among nations requires knowledge, creativity and a determination to find solutions. Reflecting Canada's concern about current international tensions, the Government will create a publicly funded centre to gather, collate and digest the enormous volume of information now available on defence and arms control issues. Fresh ideas and new proposals, regardless of source, will be studied and promoted.

Canadians want more than ever to become personally involved in the quest for peace. The Government will increase its funding for voluntary associations and private research groups interested in security, arms control and disarmament issues. Resources for research and development of verification procedures, the basis of successful arms control agreements, will be expanded substantially.

Economic progress is a crucial contributor to peace and stability. Recognizing the urgent needs of developing countries, the Government will maintain its commitment to overseas development aid. Canada will achieve aid goals of 0.5 percent of the Gross National Product by 1985, and 0.7 percent of the GNP by the end of this decade. Increased involvement of voluntary organizations and the cooperative movement will be sought in the delivery of this aid. Particular attention will continue to be given to the growing world food crisis, through existing programs, and the new International Centre for Ocean Development.