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THE PROBLEM OF NUCLEAR CONTROL

The following are excerpts from a recent address by Prime Minister L.B. Pearson to the International Assembly on Nuclear Weapons, Scarborough, Ontario:

...There is no need for me to dwell on the frightening and fantastic development of military power since the end of the Second World War. By the early 'sixties, this development, fortunately, had resulted in a relatively stable, if uneasy, balance of nuclear strength between the United States and the Soviet Union, a balance based on the ability of each to destroy the other regardless of how or where the first attack was launched - the balance of shared capacity for mutual annihilation. The certain knowledge that rash and ill-considered action by either one which threatened the vital interests of the other might lead to a nuclear exchange fatal to both has, up to the present, deterred both sides from pushing any such actions to a showdown. The frightening realities of this power balance were revealed in the Cuban crisis of 1962.

One result of the reaction to that particular confrontation was the subsequent agreement between Washington, Moscow and London on a partial nuclear test-ban. It was agreed to install a direct-communication link between Washington and Moscow. A short time later, the great powers were able to agree on a United Nations resolution prohibiting the orbiting in outer space of weapons of mass destruction.

These measures were important in themselves, since they were the first tangible steps towards arms control after continuous debate and negotiation since 1946. But, beyond their intrinsic value, I suggest that they are also of importance because they mark a tacit understanding by the two nuclear super-powers to avoid direct confrontations which would

threaten the outbreak of nuclear war. In this way, both East and West have acknowledged the danger of disrupting the existing power balance. They have attempted to reduce conflicts of interest even if they have by no means succeeded in eliminating all potentially dangerous situations.

RE-APPRAISAL OF ARMS RACE

The existence now of a *détente* between East and West - even an uneasy one - provides us with an opportunity to re-examine afresh the need to control the arms race, to question whether we should continue to devote such a tragically large proportion of human and material resources to the improvement of weapons whose use would threaten humanity's very survival.

A thorough re-appraisal is particularly appropriate today, when both the major powers face the question of whether or not to take a significant step in the arms race - that is, whether to produce and to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system. The deployment of such a system would be an enormously costly undertaking, which, in the end, would probably lead, as the ballistic-missile race did, to ever-mounting defence budgets without any permanent increase in national security or international stability.

There are those who will argue that it is not just a question of the two major powers agreeing not to deploy ABM systems in relation to each other. They point to the need for protective measures against the looming threat of Communist China, with its potential nuclear capability. But I suggest that the day when North America or Europe should be genuinely concerned about a nuclear attack by China is still many years in the future. Moreover, it is my view that fear