



## Urgent Need for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

The following are excerpts from an intervention made by the Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament, Mr. Douglas Roche, at the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on November 4, 1987, in New York.

"The realization of a negotiated and verifiable comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) has long been, and remains, a fundamental Canadian arms control and disarmament objective.

I believe there are new grounds for hope that genuine progress towards this important objective can be made. The most significant is the decision announced on September 18 by the United States and the Soviet Union to begin full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing by the end of this year. This is welcome news for all of us. This body should offer strong encouragement and support. A first step is provided in the draft resolution contained in document L.77 which welcomes the US-Soviet joint statement. I am pleased to announce today that Canada will co-sponsor this resolution, which is entitled 'Urgent Need for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.'

In pursuing the objective of a halt to all nuclear testing by all countries in all environments for all time, the superpowers have a special responsibility. As the producers and guardians of the overwhelming proportion of the world's nuclear explosive potential, they have a key role to play in showing others the lead. Canada fervently hopes that they will exercise fully and creatively that lead both in their bilateral negotiations and within the appropriate multilateral forums.

A comprehensive test ban treaty can never be achieved, however, without the full support and cooperation of *all* the nuclear weapon states. Therefore, while negotiations between the superpowers are of crucial importance, the importance of efforts at the multilateral level must not be underestimated.



Mr. Douglas Roche, Ambassador for Disarmament

This is why this resolution, which Canada considers one of the most important on the agenda before us, focuses particularly on the role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The resolution urges the CD to 'initiate substantive work on all aspects of a nuclear test ban treaty at the beginning of its 1988 session.' In Canada's view, this appeal stands at the heart of the resolution. It is time for the members of the CD to rise above differences over how a mandate for the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee in the CD should be defined so that discussions on the substance of the nuclear test ban question can finally get underway. Attempts to impose an approach to this issue which remains unacceptable to key nuclear weapon states will obviously not bear results. However, when the price is a continuing failure even to begin to address the subject, one is tempted to question the tactics of the advocates of this approach.

...It remains Canada's view that progress towards a more secure, less heavily armed world can only be achieved through measured and balanced steps which are mutually satisfactory to the parties concerned. This approach applies just as much to

the process of negotiating reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals as it does to the cessation of all nuclear testing. Experience has shown that declarations and rhetoric cannot hasten the arms control and disarmament process and may indeed retard it.

Based upon this rationale, Canada supports a step-by-step approach to the realization of an eventual comprehensive test ban treaty. A meaningful start within the Conference on Disarmament would be the consideration of the questions of scope, compliance and verification. We should not lose sight of the fact that a comprehensive nuclear test ban is not an end in itself, but is rather a means to the ultimate goal which is the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. I would submit that the primary purpose of the reduction and cessation of nuclear testing should be to enhance confidence in the global arms control and disarmament process. Engaging in prolonged disputes concerning how this process could best begin will not enhance the process of confidence-building.

Mr. Chairman, the draft resolution contained in L.77 also refers to the progress made by the CD *Ad Hoc* Group of Scientific Experts towards the development of an international seismic monitoring network. An operational network of this kind will be required to verify an eventual CTBT.

Canada is very pleased at the steady progress which has been made by this important group whose work can truly be characterized as the most positive continuing contribution to the quest for a halt to nuclear testing in recent years. As I noted in my statement to this Committee on October 13, we welcome the selection of Dr. Peter Basham of Canada as coordinator for a major global text as part of the development of an International Seismic Data Exchange.

...We urge a very strong vote for this resolution which is a realistic step to the goal of a safer, more secure world. The time has come for us to move, as a world community, towards the cessation of all nuclear tests."