

Tanaka, which have led to the generally accepted position that we should move quickly to establish two working groups: one on legal and institutional issues and the other on verification and compliance.

Mr. Chairman, while the comprehensive test ban treaty should remain the focus of our work in this session, we also have an opportunity to expand the global non-proliferation effort in yet another fashion and to enhance global security. The UN General Assembly also produced a consensus resolution on the "Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices." That text welcomed the substantive bilateral agreements between the Russian Federation and the United States of America regarding the disposition of their fissile material.

The effect of that resolution, however, is to express the wish of the community of nations for a non-discriminatory, multilateral

and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Despite having been proposed in one form or another for many years, this is a relatively new issue for the CD to consider. A period of reflection and consultation is therefore required to ascertain the best way to move ahead.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that Canada will shortly be tabling a compendium of CD documentation on the nuclear test ban issue, as well as a separate volume compiling treaty and draft treaty texts relating to nuclear test bans. Many of you will be familiar with similar compendiums we provided for the chemical weapons negotiations and on which I have received many favourable comments. It is our hope that this compendium will prove a useful reference tool for delegations in the coming months as we turn our attention to the negotiation of a CTBT. ■

CD to Negotiate Fissionable Material Cut-off

The Conference on Disarmament established in January an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The treaty is to be non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable. The decision to negotiate a treaty is the result of a Canadian-initiated resolution adopted by consensus at last fall's UN General Assembly. The resolution also requests the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide assistance for examination of verification arrangements for a treaty.

Consideration of a ban or "cut-off" of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes has been before the CD and its predecessors since it was first raised in embryonic form by US President Eisenhower in his 1953 "Atoms for Peace" proposal. In 1978, at the First UN Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD I), then Prime Minister Trudeau proposed such a ban, in his strategy of suffocation, as a disarmament measure. Since then, there have been various proposals for a cut-off, none of which had the real prospect of leading to negotiations until this past September, when US President Bill Clinton announced his administration's commitment to a ban as part of the US nuclear non-proliferation program.

Fissionable (the US tends to use the term "fissile") material generally refers to highly enriched uranium (HEU), i.e., uranium enriched to more than 20 percent in the isotope U-235, and to plutonium. A modern warhead carries approximately 3-4 kilograms of plutonium and about 15 kilograms of HEU. Cruder devices require slightly more. The US stopped producing HEU for weapons purposes in 1964. In July 1992, Washington announced that it had permanently ended production of fissionable material for weapons, having determined that existing stocks are necessary to meet any conceivable need. The US is estimated to currently possess about 550 tons of HEU and 110 tons of plutonium. Russia continues to produce weapons-grade plutonium in three dual-purpose reactors, but has stated that it will stop completely by the year 2000. The dismantlement of warheads under START I and II will add about 750 tons of HEU and 150 tons of plutonium to the stockpiles of the US and Russia over the next decade.

The arguments in favour of a cut-off are that it would cap the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon states, halt the build-up of stockpiles of unsafeguarded fissionable materials by threshold states (assuming they signed the treaty) and, by universalizing safeguards commitments, strengthen non-proliferation efforts. However, a cut-off would not touch existing fissionable material stockpiles. In the nuclear-weapon states, these are large enough to make additional production unnecessary, regardless of a treaty. In the threshold states, stockpiles will continue to be the cause of great concern.

In Canada's view, a cut-off treaty should be open to signature by all states and all of its provisions should apply to all states. This would mean applying NPT-type safeguards to all of the fissionable material in the nuclear-weapon states parties. As the nuclear-weapon states will undoubtedly retain significant reserves of fissionable material for nuclear-weapon purposes, their tendency to violate the treaty is likely to be minimal. Verification — in the form of application of IAEA safeguards — should focus on

Proposed ban would stop the production of fissionable materials but leave existing stockpiles — being bolstered by nuclear disarmament — untouched.

the most sensitive facilities, namely those used for enrichment and reprocessing.

As all non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty have already made a "cut-off" commitment and accepted fullscope safeguards, no additional verification would be required for them. All non-NPT parties that sign a cut-off convention should be required to accept IAEA safeguards on all existing fissionable material and on all nuclear facilities, including explicit arrangements to deal with possible clandestine facilities. In other words, they should have to accept NPT-type fullscope safeguards. ■