



Statements and Speeches

No. 76/26

ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

Statement in the First Committee of the Thirty-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 5, 1976, by Mr. R. Harry Jay, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva and to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

My predecessors in this committee have repeatedly spoken of the growing impatience, frustration and deep disappointment felt by most countries -- and certainly by Canada -- at the continuing failure of the international community to face up more concretely and rapidly to the awesome problems that confront us in the field of disarmament. Despite some modest steps, the record of achievement in the past 12 months has provided no cause for comfort.

Shall we have to voice the same harsh judgment at the end of the Disarmament Decade as we do at its mid-point? Shall we be forced to admit in five years that the declaration of the 1970s as the Disarmament Decade was a half-hearted gesture? I fear that international security will be in even greater peril if, in those next five years, we do not come to grips with the tasks set out for the Decade. We must reach early agreement on the most pressing arms-control problems and follow through with the most vigorous possible action to resolve them. All states of military significance must share in this important task, but the primary responsibility to ensure that the Disarmament Decade is not a failure rests with the nuclear-weapon states.

Of all the problems we face in the arms-control and disarmament field, none is greater or deserves higher priority than the need for limitations and reductions in nuclear arms, for an effective ban on all nuclear-weapons testing and for further strengthening of the nuclear-non-proliferation system.

As valuable as they have been, the strategic arms limitation talks between the United States and the Soviet Union have not yet slowed the nuclear arms race, much less led to any reduction in nuclear arms. Canada welcomed the SALT I agreement and the establishment at Vladivostok in 1974 of the principle of numerical equality in central strategic systems. Four years have passed since the SALT I agreement and the Vladivostok principles still remain to be confirmed in a definitive SALT II agreement. Over those years, new developments in strategic weaponry have further complicated the
