

The Outlook for Disarmament in the Coming Decade

STATEMENT IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 2, 1970, BY THE CANADIAN
REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMITTEE, MR. GEORGE IGNATIEFF

THE statements made in the general debate and in the commemorative meetings connected with this anniversary session have underlined the fundamental importance of progress in arms control and disarmament in containing the effects of a run-away technology and in seeking to attain the high purposes of the United Nations Charter, the signing of which we celebrate this year. These statements have also, I believe, offered us the benefit of a fuller perspective as we open our annual discussions on disarmament in the First Committee.

Indeed, this first United Nations General Assembly session of the Disarmament Decade, coinciding as it does with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and with the completion of almost a decade of activity in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, offers us an occasion for a sober and heart-searching review of past accomplishments, as well as for looking ahead to future possibilities for progress in the arms-control field. This process should serve as an incentive during the remainder of the Decade to achieve greater and more even progress on effective measures of arms control and disarmament.

In reviewing the list of accomplishments in this area in the past 25 years, one is forced to admit that, during the greater part of the quarter-century since the United Nations was established, disarmament negotiations were marked by comparative sterility, with very few productive accomplishments to set against the record of the ever-expanding arms race.

Encouraging Results

However, in the last decade we have seen more encouraging results, with such agreements as the treaty on the denuclearization of Antarctica in 1959, the Partial Test-Ban Treaty of 1963, the Latin American Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty, and the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1969, and now, as the speakers who have preceded me in this debate have already called to the Committee's attention, a treaty prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons on the seabed. While none of these, by itself, has had the effect of halting the spiralling arms race, each has contributed, at least, to an expanding system of international agreement to control the proliferation of new weapons, or of old weapons into new environ-