

a confidence-building measure intended as a stepping-stone to measures of actual control of international arms transfers.⁴

Towards the end of the Gulf War, on 8 February 1991, Prime Minister Mulroney and then Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark announced a major Canadian arms control initiative. Speaking in Quebec City, Clark reviewed the events of the Gulf War and the importance of enhancing security in the area after its conclusion. He concluded:

In this belief, Canada plans to promote a world summit on instruments of war and weapons of mass destruction in the coming months. This summit would become a showcase for a new political consultation. It would aim to develop a strict plan of action that would result in the adoption by 1995 of an integrated framework of systems of non-proliferation and control of weapons, including conventional weapons.⁵

As subsequently elaborated, this ambitious proposal dealt with nuclear proliferation, the strengthening of the Missile Technology Control Regime, biological and chemical weapons and conventional arms. In respect to conventional arms, the "Programme of Action" declared:

We will urge a meeting of the major arms exporters to encourage a formal commitment to greater sensitivity to the export of conventional arms (i.e., greater transparency; constraint; consultations in situations where unusual build-ups seem to be developing).

We will advocate early action on an information exchange system regarding arms transfers, including serious examination by all states of the recommendations of the United Nations Experts Group now studying the question of transparency in arms transfers.

We will propose a commitment by the 22 signatories of the CFE Treaty to ensure that arms affected by the accord are not exported to regions of tension.⁶

The response to the Canadian proposal did not at first appear encouraging. The choice of 1995, for example, attracted negative comment since there were fears that this would entangle the renewal of the NPT in a broader and more complex set of arms control objectives. Specifically, there appeared to be little enthusiasm in Washington for the Canadian proposal. This was still the case when President Bush visited Ottawa. Asked at a joint press conference whether he supported the Canadian proposal for a world summit, Bush responded: "I'm not sure exactly what the proper structure is, but clearly

⁴Ernie Regehr. "Canada Prods United States on Arms Sales," *Arms Control Today*, June 1991: 16.

⁵Secretary of State for External Affairs. "Canada and the Challenges of the Post-War Period in the Gulf," *Statement*, 91/10, 8 February 1991: 7.

⁶External Affairs and International Trade Canada. "Proposal for a World Summit on the Instruments of War and Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Backgrounder*, 8 February 1991.