

Disarmament euphoria premature—Roche

By MALCOLM DUNLOP
Staff Reporter

Canadians, like all peoples, will be "riding a wave of history" next week when the U.S. and U.S.S.R. sign their Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) disarmament agreement, Canada's ambassador for disarmament said Thursday in Halifax.

Ambassador Douglas Roche, Edmonton, said there is "historical momentum building" towards another agreement, which will cut superpower strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent and tentatively is scheduled to be signed in Moscow in the first half of 1988.

But while "disarmament used to be on the back burner, now it's the centrepiece of the world's political agenda," but "any outburst of euphoria is premature."

True disarmament and security is linked to overcoming social, economic and environmental problems, overpopulation, regional wars and other issues that will take years to solve, he said.

The ambassador, a former MP

who is in his third year as Canada's spokesman and chief negotiator for arms control, was in Halifax on a cross-country tour organized by the United Nations Association.

He is telling Canadians about the importance of the (Reagan-Gorbachev) summit and of summits to come, Canada's role in disarmament and the coming third special session of the United Nations on disarmament.

While the Dec. 8 Washington agreement will achieve "only a minor cutback" in nuclear weapons, resulting in the dismantling and destruction of about three per cent of the world's nuclear arsenal, the INF pact "is of enormous political importance."

"These bilateral negotiations are important in their own right, but what's more important is what they presage for the future."

If negotiations in the new year between the Americans and the Soviets can reduce strategic nuclear arsenals by half, "it will be one of the major events in world history, and certainly the major event of



Ambassador Douglas Roche
the post-Second World War era."

NATO's 1979 decision to deploy Pershing 2 and cruise missiles in the face of the Soviet SS-20 threat, "coupled with a new Soviet administration and a new Soviet era,"

helped bring the INF agreement to fruition, he said.

NATO, and especially the U.S. and the five European countries in which the new missiles were stationed — West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom — "stood firm... (and this) opened up more realistic negotiations."

A key element in the treaty "because of the precedent it sets for further arms control" is the agreement for "on-site inspection by foreign nationals" to ensure verification and compliance, he said.

Ambassador Roche said the two-year Stockholm confidence-building negotiations to allow NATO and Warsaw Pact officers to observe each other's military manoeuvres "was clearly a turning point" in easing concerns about letting the other side see exercises that once were kept secret.

This openness, tested 16 times already this year by the East and West blocs, "set the stage for more extensive and intrusive on-site inspections" of other facilities like

INF missile bases.

Canada pushed hard for many of the goals about to be achieved by the signing of the INF treaty. Ambassador Roche said, especially behind-the-scenes efforts to get Soviets to drop their linkage of agreement with the cessation of U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

Canada will continue to push for a nuclear test-ban treaty, clear force reductions, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, a global chemical weapons ban, stopping arms race in space and in developing more confidence-building verification measures, the ambassador said.

But true security will not be achieved if social, economic, human rights, environmental and other problems are not brought to the world system.

The Washington summit "is a first step, and a major first step, but it's only a first step. All the other problems must be addressed at a higher, more mature level for security is achieved."