



Statements and Speeches

No. 80/25

ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT: CANADA COMMITTED TO EVEN GREATER EFFORTS

A Statement by Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament Arthur Menzies to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly XXXV, October 27, 1980

...Canada views its participation in disarmament and arms-control negotiations as one of the most important aspects of its foreign policy. The cause of arms control and disarmament is no less than human survival on this planet. The achievement of verifiable arms-control agreements is one of the essential foundations of international security and, as such, is a cardinal objective for Canada. To this end, the Prime Minister of Canada, at the tenth Special Session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament, put forward a number of proposals to contain the ominous growth of the world's nuclear arsenals, and in further pursuit of this objective, an Ambassador for Disarmament has been appointed for the first time.

This Committee is reviewing developments in the field of disarmament in the light of recent events. The conclusions we reach will enable us to assess prospects for the future. The Committee can equip itself to look ahead towards 1982, for at the second Special Session devoted to disarmament we will be passing judgments on both the machinery set up in the disarmament field and the over-all progress realized in implementing the Program of Action. The intervening period between now and 1982 is, therefore, critical if we are to break the present impasse and take positive steps towards the realization of measures we all agreed to in the Program of Action.

The present international atmosphere is bound to have an effect on our deliberations. An independent and non-aligned country has been invaded by its larger and more powerful neighbour. Other military conflicts have also broken out. In the arms-control context, the words of the Canadian Prime Minister — that "Declarations of good intent are no substitute for real disarmament. They need be violated only once." — take on topical significance.

The arms-control process is painfully slow under the best of circumstances. In 1979, we anticipated both the ratification of SALT II [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] and looked to the drafting of the comprehensive test ban treaty in 1980. We were disappointed. The lesson is that, in matters of international security obtained through arms-control negotiations, the process of negotiation is inextricably linked to world events. We regret that SALT II has not been ratified. In our judgment, SALT II serves the security interests of all, and sets the stage for further significant advance. We are pleased to note, however, that the Soviet Union has set aside preconditions for the commencement of bilateral talks with the U.S.A. on the limitation of long-range theatre nuclear forces in Europe. Besides the intrinsic importance of these talks, we hope that they will be a prelude to an early full resumption of the SALT process.

The continuation of this process and a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty are
