



communiqué

N°: 103
No.:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 29, 1982

CANADIAN REACTION TO SOVIET STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GENEVA TALKS ON INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, today welcomed Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov's recent clarification of Soviet proposals concerning the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Talks as a "step in the right direction."

Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov has stated that any medium-range Soviet missiles, including SS-20 missiles, removed from Europe as a result of an Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States will be destroyed and not redeployed further east. This is a welcome clarification of the Soviet position in these negotiations, and constitutes a step in the right direction. This has been one of the Western requirements since the beginning of the talks.

Despite this positive step, an agreement will not occur until the principle of equality in the number of nuclear warheads on ground-launched intermediate-range nuclear missiles deployed by the United States and the Soviet Union is accepted. This is the main point of the interim proposal which was tabled in Geneva by the United States earlier this year after consultations with Canada and other allies. NATO's eventual goal remains the abolition of all intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

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