

Address by the Prime Minister to the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs, Ottawa, October 31, 1985

We often think of the pursuit of peace in terms of meetings and summits, negotiations and agreements. Yet these are instruments, not goals, means not ends. The desired object of our quest is the careful construction of a framework for enduring security — security for tomorrow, as well as today. And security for all, not simply for some.

Canada is not and shall not be neutral in the struggle between freedom and totalitarianism. We are a member of the Western alliance and we are members out of choice, not circumstance. It is an alliance which requires military commitment and political solidarity. Yet it is also an alliance which relies on consultation and consensus. A healthy allied military effort would not survive in the absence of such consensus. But the right to be heard must constantly be earned. Canada earns that right.

The pursuit of arms control and disarmament has its place beside the defence effort, peacekeeping and conflict resolution. All are essential components of Canada's approach to international peace and security. We must vigorously pursue each of these if we are to maintain Canada's sovereignty and independence. And the world at large should recognize that arms control is a component of, not a substitute for, a healthy national security policy.

A wise and correct approach to security cannot ignore the virtues of arms control, just as arms control cannot ignore the requirements of national security. The search for either at the expense of the other is fruitless. And the search for both is imperative.

The decisions our government have taken are all directed to the over-arching goal of promoting international peace and security and, through these initiatives, Canada's own peace and security. These decisions have not been easy ones. They involved making some hard choices. We have decided, for instance, that Canada should have the capability to keep our Arctic waters for the development of that region so that we can effectively patrol all of our Canadian territory all of the time.

We have decided to strengthen our military presence in Europe as a further contribution to the alliance's collective defence and deterrence of military aggression. And as we build up NATO's conventional deterrent, we reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons, a goal I am sure we all share.

We also signed an agreement earlier this year with the United States to modernize the early warning radars in Canada, this as part of our commitment to honour our North American defence obligations.

We have decided to participate in the Sinai peacekeeping force to help maintain peace between Egypt and Israel, to create a climate in which the divisions of that part of the world may have some chance of healing.

Finally, as each of you is aware, in January of this year our government expressed the strong view that the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) research program was prudent, given similar research already being conducted by the USSR. We continue to be of that view. That being said, we decided in September that we would not participate on a government-to-government basis in the SDI research program. The government's research priorities were judged to lie more in the investigation of outer space verification technology than in feasibility studies of space-based weapon systems.

Underlying all these decisions is our unyielding commitment to a strong, independent Canada working in concert with other countries, in the interest of common global security. Within the field of arms control and disarmament, our government has six specific objectives:

- negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability;
- maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime;
- negotiation of a global chemical weapons ban;
- support for a comprehensive test ban treaty;