

Board of Canada, with assistance from other agencies. Valuable assistance was also rendered by technical experts and equipment provided by the U.S. Government. The search, which still continues, has located a number of satellite fragments, some by radiation detection and some visually. A number of these fragments have been confirmed beyond doubt to be parts of the space vehicle. Up to the present, there have been no reports of injury to persons, but any assessments at this stage would be clearly premature. Several pieces of debris were found to be radioactive and one piece in particular contained a high level of radioactivity and required very special handling techniques. This piece registered 200 Roentgens per hour on contact. This level of radiation would have significant somatic effects for any person closely exposed to it for one hour, or could become lethal if the exposure were prolonged over three hours. This piece has been removed in a specially constructed lead container. Within a total current search area of 50,000 square kilometers debris has so far been located along the projected orbit track of Cosmos 954 over a distance of approximately 750 Kms. The search and recovery operations have been hampered by severe winter weather conditions. The search by air and on the ground will be continued through the coming weeks and is expected to be extended after the spring thaw into the summer months.

It is not yet known whether any parts of the irradiated fuel core survived re-entry. Extensive environmental monitoring of flora and fauna may be necessary to ensure against exposure of inhabitants in the area and to determine the extent of the contamination of the environment. Even small particles of such fuel containing fission products could result in contamination with long-term effects, taking into account the fact that some of these fission products have half-lives of many thousands of years.

On the basis of the information available and in accordance with Article V, paragraph 1, of the 1968 Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, Canada formally notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Government of the Soviet Union on February 8, 1978 of the discovery on Canadian territory of component parts of the space object. The text of the notification has, at our request, been circulated to member states as documents A/AC.105/214 and 214/Corr.1.