

Introduction:

Concrete Steps

This booklet, a condensation of 36 addresses I have given across Canada, provides a backdrop for the observance of 1986 as International Year of Peace.

It has three purposes: to state what Canada is doing to further the global work of disarmament; to show how increasing numbers of Canadians are becoming involved in the pursuit of peace; to reflect the widening perspective necessary to build the conditions for true human security.

The facts of the global arms build-up, as outlined in U.N. documentation, need to be continually highlighted:

- There are more than 50,000 nuclear weapons in the world with a total explosive power equal to 1.5 million Hiroshima bombs.
- World-wide annual military expenditures now amount to more than \$800 billion (more than \$1.5 per minute). Four-fifths of this amount is devoted to conventional weapons.
- It takes just 15 days and 15 hours for world military expenditures to reach \$34.3 billion – which was the total amount spent in the whole of 1983 for official development assistance for all developing countries.
- The international arms trade doubled in volume between 1976 and 1982 and now exceeds \$34 billion per year, with three-quarters of these weapons going to developing countries.

These statistics are just the tip of a huge iceberg that has devastating consequences for every human being. The world is at a transition moment in the human journey. We must learn how to live together – not merely survive – in the interdependent age.

As I travel around Canada, one question, above all others, is asked with increasing frequency: "Why don't we stop the nuclear arms race?" On one day alone, the question was put to me in three different ways by a doctor, a class in a junior high school, and a group of professors at a university.