

Canadian statements in the working groups and the Committee of the Whole underlined Canada's flexibility and desire to search for consensus language on such agenda items as a comprehensive program of disarmament, enhancement of the effectiveness of disarmament machinery, and a world disarmament campaign. It was a Canadian informal paper which formed the basis of deliberations on a world disarmament campaign, and sustained Canadian efforts played no small part in the consensus achieved on the conduct of the campaign. Canada was also active in its traditional role of chairman of the Barton Group, the informal consultative body of twenty like-minded Western countries. Attached to the Delegation were nineteen parliamentary observers and fifteen consultants drawn from non-governmental organizations and universities. In addition, the Canadian Delegation provided regular briefings for members of Canadian non-governmental organizations attending the Special Session.

Although the second Special Session on Disarmament did not achieve all that many people and governments hoped for, it did serve to focus attention on the crucial and often complex arms control and disarmament issues of our time. It also served, I believe, to underline the extent to which an exceedingly heavy responsibility rests with those countries which have embarked on serious arms control negotiations.

While the picture may not appear as bright as many would like, I am nevertheless hopeful about the future. I believe that the superpowers themselves want to avoid moving in the direction of nuclear confrontation and that each can see national interests being served by agreements.

Why, you may ask skeptically, am I so persuaded?

First, the existence of nuclear weapons and the incalculable consequences of their use, even on a limited scale, have proved to be an effective deterrent for over 30 years. The fact that either side can now absorb a first strike and still respond with devastating effect has caused each side to proceed with caution and to avoid confrontation in times of crisis.