

Priorities

Our first priority is to encourage the continuation of the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) process. The ratification of SALT II by the U.S. Senate will serve to encourage the resumption of the dialogue between the superpowers through SALT III which we hope for, with a view to agreeing on further limitations on strategic nuclear armaments and strengthening the stability of the nuclear balance. But of course we all know that SALT II is now stalled in the U.S. Senate, like the Canadian fisheries treaty, although for different reasons. It is stalled there as a result of Afghanistan; the American Senate is understandably unwilling to ratify in the official terms of the Constitution to advise and consent — on the ratification of that agreement. And it is very hard to say when the atmosphere in the U.S. Senate will change. I can't say that the Senate is wrong in taking that position, and it is a understandable reaction when the other superpower is engaged in this military exercise. But it will be unfortunate if, as a result of the invasion, we do not in the relatively near future see the ratification of SALT II. I think it will be hard to see any progress at all in the realm of disarmament unless we are able to come to that step. Our second priority is to promote the realization of a comprehensive, multilateral treaty banning nuclear weapons tests.

Third, we will assist in preparing a convention to completely prohibit chemical weapons.

Fourth, we will promote the evolution of an effective non-proliferation regime based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Fifth, we will participate actively in negotiations to limit and reduce conventional forces.

Finally, we will be striving, step-by-step, to ultimately achieve general and complete disarmament, consistent with the legitimate security needs of states.

We do have legitimate interests in these talks. We don't always have direct involvement because we don't ourselves have nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, because of our general interest, we are certainly very much involved in the general discussion involving all of these issues. Certainly a nuclear war will involve Canada very directly.

Nuclear safeguards

I want to talk briefly about a number of areas of policies. One of these is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are among the most active countries in attempting to reconcile the two objectives of the non-proliferation regime which are: first, to ensure access to peaceful use of atomic energy, especially to developing countries, basically to the whole world; secondly, to apply a system of safeguards which minimizes the spread of nuclear weapons and reduces the risk of nuclear war. Of course, there are dangers even in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The risk is that the use of peaceful nuclear energy can in some circumstances be turned to a weapon use and this is a situation which has concerned us and some other countries very directly. Now there has been some suggestion recently that Canada has softened its position with respect to non-proliferation. That was based on some reports with respect to Argentina where we had taken a strong line against making atomic energy available, because of their attitude with respect to non-proliferation. We had made a