



Statements and Speeches

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NUCLEAR RELATIONS WITH INDIA

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, in the House of Commons, May 18, 1976.

I should like to inform the House today that the Government has decided that further nuclear co-operation with India is not possible. The decision has been difficult. It has challenged the Government, as indeed it has challenged all thinking Canadians, to review a number of fundamental principles.

Canada's nuclear co-operation with India began in the context of the Colombo Plan. It has as its basis the belief that nuclear power could be vital to the equitable economic growth of a number of developing countries. The energy crisis, and the serious dislocations it has brought with it, have tended to reinforce this belief and the genuine success achieved by Indo-Canadian co-operation in the development of nuclear power for energy, agriculture and medicine has proved the practicality of this approach.

India's detonation of a nuclear explosive device in 1974 made it evident that Canada and India had taken profoundly differing views of what should be encompassed in the peaceful application of nuclear energy by non-nuclear-weapon states. Canada is one of the earliest and most vigorous proponents of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A basic element of the treaty, which guides Canadian policy in the field of nuclear exports and safeguards, is that it recognizes no technical distinction between nuclear explosives for peaceful and non-peaceful purposes.

Canada has foregone the possible benefits of developing so-called peaceful nuclear explosions on the basis that, pursuant to the NPT, nuclear-explosive services would be available from a nuclear-weapon state at such time as need and feasibility were demonstrated. India, however, does not accept what it views as discrimination between the nuclear powers and other states, and insists that all countries should be free to use all phases of nuclear technology for whatever they view as peaceful purposes.

Notwithstanding these differences, both countries agreed to explore together a negotiated termination of nuclear co-operation. These negotiations had, earlier this spring, reached a point where both sides decided that governmental decisions were required. The decision now taken by Cabinet takes into full account the issues that
