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# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

Statement by Mr. Douglas Roche,  
Ambassador for Disarmament  
to the First Committee  
at the 41st General Assembly  
of the United Nations

Canada

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Last weekend the United States and the Soviet Union brought an historic disarmament agreement tantalizingly close to achievement. Since then, both superpowers have informed the world that they will persist in this effort and build on the progress achieved at Reykjavik. The negotiators have already resumed their meetings in Geneva.

These are the highly significant developments that have produced a renewed atmosphere of hope as the First Committee begins its deliberations. For, as Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told the Canadian Parliament, the elements are in place for an ongoing civilized dialogue at Geneva and, hopefully, one which will result in General Secretary Gorbachev coming to the United States as agreed upon. The Prime Minister added:

"There are stumbling blocks on both sides. That is what negotiations are all about, sitting down with open minds, knowing the objections on both sides and trying to effect an honorable compromise."

The Canadian government hopes that people of goodwill will achieve a substantive accord, which could be signed at an early summit. Arms control, however, is a fragile process. Its environment must be protected. It is therefore doubly important that all actions be resisted which might be seen as weakening or unravelling the existing international framework on which East-West relations and arms control are built. Compliance with existing agreements is essential.

It is a reality of our time that the USA and the USSR will determine the major aspects of any international framework for global security. But security is everyone's business.--All of us have a stake in international security and all of us have a responsibility to play a constructive role in the arms control process.

Canada will press on with constructive work in every multilateral forum that, one day, must achieve the basis for a world community freed from the weapons of mass destruction.

Iceland showed that the complete elimination of ballistic missiles in 10 years is now seriously discussed at the highest levels. The full implementation of this historic opportunity is our task. Iceland was a moment on the journey, but the journey goes on.

When President Reagan addressed the General Assembly before the Reykjavik meeting, he spoke of hope, of a future without weapons of mass destruction. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to peace, to a more stable superpower relationship, and to substantial progress on arms control and disarmament. The President expressed his Government's willingness to ratify the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Treaty on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions once agreement is reached on improved verification procedures. He offered to consider other limits on nuclear testing in parallel with arms reductions. It is our hope that the Soviet Union might find it possible to build on this realistic and welcome approach as a firm foundation for real progress.

When Foreign Minister Shevardnadze came to New York earlier in this Session, he too, gave us reason for optimism. He spoke of relations with the United States as holding promise -- of encouraging outlines of meaningful agreements between his country and The United States of America. When we later welcomed him in Ottawa, Mr. Shevardnadze once again repeated his country's commitment to more stable East-West ties, and to progress on arms control.

But in this atmosphere of expectation, two notes of caution are in order: first, any sense of new momentum can only lead to lasting, effective results if it is backed up by patience, quiet negotiation, and due attention to adequate verification, which over the long term will assure confidence in compliance.

And second, our hopes and expectations surrounding the superpower talks and the bilateral nuclear and space negotiations in Geneva as important as they are, should not be allowed to distract attention from the necessity for complementary progress in conventional and multilateral arms control forums.

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In this context, we are all much encouraged by the successful conclusion of the Stockholm Conference on Security

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and Confidence-Building Measures in Europe. The results of this Conference bring new openness and predictability to the conduct of military affairs in Europe. The establishment of agreed procedures for air and ground on-site inspections is a landmark achievement, -- one which will provide an effective basis for other arms control negotiations.

More broadly still, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has had a relatively productive session. The guidelines for confidence-building measures which the UNDC will report to the General Assembly, like the Stockholm Conference Document, should provide a useful basis for future negotiators. They could be drawn on to ensure those elements of confidence, compliance and verification which will be essential components of all effective arms control agreements.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has also had a more productive session: if it has still not reached agreement on a Global Chemical Weapons ban, detailed negotiations are intensifying and there have been welcome signs that the Soviet Union is prepared to move forward on verification. We have particularly noted the proposal of the United Kingdom on challenge inspection, which we hope will provide a basis for practical progress on one of the most difficult issues associated with a Global Chemical Weapons ban.

But the sense of positive accomplishment does not extend to other issues on the Conference on Disarmament agenda. We are frankly disappointed that progress on a comprehensive nuclear test ban has been so slow. We were particularly discouraged at the failure to agree on a practical mandate for a subsidiary body to work constructively towards an agreed test ban. We note and welcome that the Soviet Union has taken a more forthcoming approach on technical matters relating to the establishment of a global seismic monitoring network. The Australian proposal for an International Seismic Network is both consistent with Canada's concern for a reliably verifiable test ban, and an encouraging step towards the objective of a comprehensive test ban. Expert-level talks between Soviet and US scientists on nuclear testing are a welcome development -- one which all of us hope can provide yet another step towards our common goal.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a high priority for Canada. It was thus disappointing that the mandate for the subsidiary body on outer space was agreed so late in the last CD session. Once the mandate was agreed, discussion was both sober and thoughtful. The existing mandate is clearly demonstrating its usefulness.

Canada played an active part in the Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons . We are heartened by the Conference Final Declaration -- by its strong reaffirmation of the principles of the Convention and its restatement of the common interest all share in strengthening the Convention's authority and effectiveness through promoting confidence and co-operation.

This activity shows that the world community is not indifferent or impotent in building a safer world. There is still much to do in the international arena and Canada, pledges, once again, to do everything in our power to strengthen the international machinery of peace. This world-wide activity must reinforce the efforts of the superpowers to find bilateral agreements. Although 86 per cent of the people of the world do not live in the United States or the Soviet Union, we are all caught up in the fall-out from this relationship of the two great superpowers who together possess 95 per cent of the more than 50,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Their relationship, as is obvious, affects everyone. It is in the interests of everyone to help improve the entire East-West relationship and, as the U.N. Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, said in his acceptance speech last Friday, to "demand of the Governments of States which possess nuclear weapons that they reflect upon their responsibility to their peoples and to the planet itself and pursue policies that will lead to the elimination of these weapons." It used to be said that history will be the judge of one's actions. But, in what we are discussing here, there will be no history to write in a non-future for human life if the means to destroy the human race, now in the possession of the two superpowers, should ever be unleashed.

The role of the United Nations in disarmament is to construct a viable framework of multilateral progress so as to enhance the prospect of major bilateral agreements. More attention should be paid in this Committee to consensus resolutions with as much substance as possible, rather than merely increasing the number of resolutions. At the 1976 session, there were 23 resolutions, eight of them consensus. Ten years later, in 1985, there were 66 resolutions, 20 by consensus. The growth of non-consensus resolutions, many of which cancel one another and split apart the Committee, is a dubious achievement and a complete puzzlement to the outside world. Let us not forget that the Final Document of the First

Special Session on Disarmament, which remains the yardstick by which we measure progress, was a consensus agreement. Important advice has been offered by last year's Chairman, Ambassador Alatas of Indonesia, to form a small working group to attempt rationalization of the Committee's work.

What is needed to reinvigorate the concept of collective security, including arms control, is not a new structure or set of principles: we have a perfectly adequate framework for peace already in place in the form of the UN and its Charter. What needs to be done is to use it effectively.

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It is a source of pride to Canada that one of last year's resolutions adopted by consensus was the substantive Canadian resolution, "Verification in All Its Aspects," which highlights the importance of verification as a key element in the arms control negotiating process. Underlying every arms control issue is the question of confidence -- of assurance of compliance; and thus of verification. We in Canada are certain that verification cannot be left aside as a subsidiary element of arms control. To the contrary, though the concept of verification must never be seen as an obstacle to be thrown up against serious arms control negotiation, it must be an integral and essential part of all arms control agreements.

Canada intends to take the lead again this year in putting forward a similar resolution. Our aim will be to reaffirm the importance of effective arrangements for verification; arrangements based on sound technical competence and principles, and which can be carefully tailored to fit specific agreements. Canada wants the General Assembly to have the Disarmament Commission consider verification at the earliest possible opportunity. We hope as last year that all member states will join in supporting this important undertaking.

A year ago the Canadian Government developed a Programme of Action for the remaining half of the Second Disarmament Decade. This programme continues to focus on practical solutions to arms control problems -- on laying an essential ground-work for the creation of confidence and trust vital to arms control agreements.

As part of this Programme of Action, the Canadian Government continues to provide some one million Canadian

dollars a year to the Verification Research Unit in our Department of External Affairs. This unit has continued its work on key issues relating to a limitation of nuclear testing leading to a comprehensive test ban, a global chemical weapons convention, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. To assist in laying the foundations for a CTB, the Canadian Government is upgrading its seismic array in our own Northern territory. We have just hosted a successful, technical workshop in Ottawa at which 16 countries (including the United States and the Soviet Union) were represented. Our commitment to the International Seismic Data Exchange remains firm. Verification has now become an international concern and Canada welcomes the statement issued by the six nations of the Five-Continent Peace Initiative at their recent summit meeting in Mexico that they seek cooperation with non-nuclear states "in international verification arrangements related to future nuclear disarmament." We in Canada are certain that, in putting our efforts into a Programme of Action which concentrates on practical solutions and co-operating with other nations, we are on the right track.

Canada's commitment to verifiable and balanced arms control and disarmament remains absolutely firm. The Canadian Prime Minister has set out six policy areas:

- negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability;
- maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime;
- support for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as a fundamental and abiding objective of Canadian Foreign Policy;
- negotiation of a Chemical Weapons ban;
- prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- confidence-building measures to facilitate the reduction of military forces in Europe and elsewhere.

Again at this United Nations session -- and in the Conference on Disarmament -- Canada will be looking for early progress in these areas of crucial concern to all of us. Among these, perhaps the closest to realization is a Global Chemical

Weapons ban. This is a vital issue, one where constructive proposals have been made, and where there should be no insurmountable obstacle to early agreement. We will continue to participate in the search for effective means of ensuring that outer space is used only for peaceful purposes. Canada actively continues to seek a comprehensive nuclear test ban as a fundamental arms control objective. The Secretary of State for External Affairs told the General Assembly September 24 that a nuclear test ban is an objective toward which concrete steps can and should be taken now. We believe that what is needed for effective results is to begin work immediately, working step by step, without preconditions toward a lasting, mutually acceptable and verifiable CTB. Progress toward the limiting and ending of all testing is essential.

High on Canada's list of priorities is the need to strengthen still further the nuclear non-proliferation regime: to guard against the spread of nuclear weapons technology -- and to limit in every way possible the chance of accidental nuclear weapons disaster. Encouraged as we were by the reaffirmation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty at the 1985 review conference, we are conscious of the need for nuclear weapon states to implement Article VI on the cessation of the arms race.

In the long and complex struggle for peace, two issues, above all others, stand out: disarmament and development. While it is true that these two great goals require a peaceful atmosphere for their achievement, progress must be made in each to establish the conditions for peace. That is why the forthcoming United Nations International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development is so important. The participating nations in the preparatory process have already agreed that disarmament and development, which are distinct processes in themselves, should be vigorously pursued because they both strengthen peace and security and promote prosperity. An international "Panel of Eminent Personalities" have advised the conference that the current levels and trends in global military expenditures "stand in sombre contrast to the state of the world economy." Canada is heartened by the substantive progress made at the Third Preparatory Meeting last June and believes the main conference should be held in July of 1987 in New York.

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Mr. Chairman, on my travels across Canada this year, I have found a high interest in, and concern for, disarmament. I also found an unprecedented response to the Declaration of the International Year of Peace. Canada's International Year of Peace programme has been substantive. Two weeks ago, as all around the world, we marked the International Day of Peace; bells rang in communities from coast to coast in Canada in an eloquent peal for peace. And under the bells of the Peace Tower in Ottawa, people gathered to mark the International Day of Peace. A commemorative postage stamp and a fine gold coin were issued as part of the Government's International Year of Peace programme to commemorate what should be a milestone in man's search for peace and security. Two days later under the same Peace Tower, I accepted the peace torch from the athletes participating in the First Earth Run, which is sponsored by UNICEF. And in an act of moving symbolism, I handed it on, much in the way that what we have done this year will be handed on into the future. The IYP thus will be an inspiration to people and Governments everywhere to make their own contribution to peace.

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I have spoken in these remarks of new hope and commitment. I have talked of a new sense of expectation surrounding the superpower relationship, an expectation only heightened by the meeting at Reykjavik. If as we earnestly desire, this leads to substantive agreement on crucial nuclear questions, we must see the success as an impulse to greater effort and concrete results in multilateral arms control issues. And even if agreement on nuclear weapons reductions continues to elude the superpowers -- all the more will it be important to press on. Wherever and whenever we can, in the UN First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission -- we must redouble our effort toward agreement on those important arms control issues where all of us can realistically expect to play an immediate and direct role. The portents are more encouraging now than they have been for many years. Results won't come without effort, and the stakes are high. But the task -- the reward for success and the penalty of failure -- are for everyone. Canada for one will continue to work in every way possible toward our common goal of a world of confidence, security, trust and peace.