



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA TIGHTENS ITS NUCLEAR CONTROLS

A Statement on Motions by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, in the House of Commons, December 22, 1976.

I wish to announce a change in Canada's nuclear-export policy, a matter of central concern to the people and Government of Canada, raising as it does fundamental issues affecting world economic growth and world peace. In this Christmas season, our thoughts naturally turn to peace and the brotherhood of man. It is easy to pay tribute to these fundamental goals with words; it is more important that we do so with our actions. It is a challenge to the Government of Canada to respond to the demand of Canadian public opinion that this country exercise its influence towards the betterment of the global society in which we and our descendants must live. In the area of nuclear policy, there is no simple answer or it would have long since been adopted. It is rather the need to balance energy requirements, the advance of technology, that, regardless of what we do, will place nuclear capability within the reach of a wider and wider group of countries, and the need to establish a sound international framework that will curb the spread of nuclear weapons and yet take into account the legitimate economic aspirations of sovereign states. I wish to make quite clear, however, that the first priority -- indeed, the overriding priority -- is to prevent the spread of instruments of destruction.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that the Canadian Government has decided upon a further strengthening of the safeguards requirements that apply to the export of Canadian reactors and uranium. Shipments to non-nuclear-weapon states under future contracts will be restricted to those that ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty or otherwise accept international safeguards on their entire nuclear programs. It follows from this policy that Canada will terminate nuclear shipments to any non-nuclear-weapon state that explodes a nuclear device.

This requirement is in addition to those outlined in December 1974. The purpose of Canadian safeguards policy is simple and straightforward. We wish to avoid contributing to the proliferation of nuclear weapons while, at the same time, satisfying the legitimate requirements for uranium and technology of countries that demonstrate the intention of restricting Canadian assistance only to peaceful non-explosive uses. Nuclear-export policy already requires binding assurances that what Canada provides will not be used for

explosive purposes. Existing policy, however, does not cover what a country receives from other suppliers or what it might do on its own. The new policy will close this gap. We shall have, therefore, assurance by treaty that Canada's nuclear customers will have been selected from amongst those countries that have made a clear and unequivocal commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The development of the CANDU reactor has been one of Canada's great technological achievements. This technology is needed to reduce the world's dependence on oil. Moreover, our industrialized trading partners look to Canada as a source of uranium to fuel the nuclear-reactor programs that they, like ourselves, have undertaken to meet a growing share of energy needs. In the absence of alternative technologies, developing countries will also look to nuclear power once they have exploited other conventional energy resources and have built up the national power-grids necessary for large existing reactors. While research into conservation and renewable-energy technologies should be intensified, energy planning in Canada and elsewhere must look to energy resources at present available.

While the Canadian Government recognizes the legitimate energy requirements of its trading partners, it is determined to do everything within its power to avoid contributing to nuclear-weapons proliferation. It is for this reason that the Government of Canada has unilaterally decided to strengthen further Canada's safeguards requirements. As in the past, we are prepared to accept the commercial consequences of being clearly ahead of other suppliers. This is the price we are prepared to pay to curb the threat to mankind of nuclear proliferation.

We recognize that, for this policy to be fully effective, we must persuade other nuclear suppliers to adopt similar export policies. In discussions amongst suppliers, we have urged that a collective decision be taken to restrict their nuclear exports to non-nuclear-weapon states to those that have ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty or otherwise accept full-scope safeguards. We regret that to date it has not been possible to reach a collective decision to this effect. Canada, however, is determined to assume responsibility where it has the power to act -- that is, with regard to Canada's own exports of nuclear equipment, technology and uranium. We are charting a course we hope will serve as a compelling example for other nuclear suppliers.

With this announcement I am calling on other nuclear exporters to review their own export policies, not in the light of commercial gain but in the interests of maintaining a safe and secure world.

S/C