



# Statements and Speeches

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## **TECHNOLOGICAL MOMENTUM THE FUEL THAT FEEDS THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE**

An Address by the Right Honourable P.E. Trudeau, Prime Minister, to the Second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament, New York, June 18, 1982

The message Canada brings to this Assembly is not one of military strength or power. It is a message of peace which I bring you, a message which all countries, whether strong or weak, rich or poor, must make heard at the present time.

Only the deaf cannot hear the clamour arising all over the world against the arms race. In some countries, people's anguish and anger are freely expressed. In some others, people's voices are muffled by repression, but can still be heard by us.

In both cases, however, the message is clear. Men and women from every country are addressing a most urgent appeal to their leaders. They are telling us to seize the opportunity of the Special Session to start building a system capable of restraining the suicidal rivalry in which we are stuck.

As we contemplate the business at hand, we must remind ourselves that disarmament is not simply a technical matter; it cannot be isolated from the world context. If we want to know why so little progress has been made in the four years that have elapsed since our first Special Session, we can do no better than to cast our minds back to some of the events that have erupted on the world scene over that period — particularly recently — and to wonder what has happened to the Charter. As Chancellor Schmidt pointed out earlier this week, the Charter is international law. In adopting it, each and every one of our countries has made it part of our national law. The Charter lays down, as a prime requisite of world order, that "all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force" in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

The plea is made, from time to time, in favour of an undertaking of non-first use of nuclear weapons. I have no quarrel with those making the plea, who are serious persons concerned about the horrendous implications of the outbreak of nuclear warfare.

However, the Charter lays down that there shall be no first use of force — any force. This law binds all of us. I can see no need to re-enact the Charter. In fact, I can see enormous pitfalls in trying to diminish the Charter in one of its central affirmations by seeking to set an order of precedence among the various manifestations of the use of force.

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**Security the key  
to disarmament**

But let us recognize that arguments about first use do not really go to the heart of the matter. The real problem before us is how to break the arms spiral. We will not do that in circumstances where any of the parties feels deficient in its security. We arm out of fear for our security and we will disarm only if we are convinced that the threat to our security has abated. Arms control, to be viable, must increase security, not reduce it.

Security, unfortunately, is an elusive concept. It is not only a matter of weaponry. It is also a matter of perception. When each side acts in ways which the other perceives to be threatening, the gulf of suspicion widens between East and West.

But the shadow that overhangs all arms-control negotiations and has led to the unravelling of some, comes mainly from the fact that we are dealing with an array of very different weapons systems in circumstances where technological innovation tends to overtake a negotiation even while it is in progress.

I believe that we must reconcile ourselves to the notion that total security is not achievable for any country in today's world. An attempt to achieve it can only result in everyone else feeling insecure. In a world where nations are interdependent in so many of their dimensions, security cannot be argued as a purely national proposition.

It has always been a useful precept of diplomatic negotiation that the outcome must take account of the legitimate interests of both sides. Arms-control negotiations are no exception. An attempt by one side to make strategic gains at the expense of the other will not, in the end, work. Only measures that increase mutual security are likely to offer a way out of the present paralysis. In particular, the two super-powers must start with the recognition that each has strategic interests and the strength to protect those interests.

**Nuclear issues**

Those then, are the premises from which my discourse on disarmament will flow. I am going to use the time available to talk primarily about nuclear issues, not because Canada does not attach great importance to the negotiation of agreements on chemical weapons and conventional armaments — it does — but because the preoccupation of our publics today justifiably centres on nuclear weapons.

The nuclear arms build-up is causing anguish to many people in many parts of the world. They are disturbed by the rehearsal of nuclear scenarios in a deteriorating political climate. They are posing their own questions about reasonable definitions of security. They are reminding political leaders that what is at stake is the crucial matter of the life or death of mankind.

As prime minister of a country that, from the outset, renounced a nuclear weapons capability of its own, I understand full well the people's anguish and confusion. The nuclear debate is difficult and seems to pursue an inverse logic. It deals with power

that, by common consent, is unusable. It argues for more nuclear weapons in order that, in the end, there may be fewer. It perceives the vulnerability of cities and of human beings as an element of stability in the nuclear balance. And worst of all, the debate goes on without much evidence of any light at the end of the tunnel.

When we met in 1978, a dialogue on strategic arms limitations had been going on between the major nuclear powers for several years. A comprehensive nuclear test ban seemed on the verge of conclusion. It never was concluded. Subsequently, another negotiation – SALT II – was concluded. It has not been ratified.

I do not believe it would be productive at this time for the Assembly to try to apportion blame for those failures. I remain convinced that both the major nuclear powers are intent on dissipating the threat of nuclear confrontation.

Positive develop-  
ments

In this regard there are some positive developments. Negotiations to reduce intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) began, as we know, late last year and, following President Reagan's "Eureka" initiative the long-awaited talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms will resume in a few days. All of us have an enormous stake in these negotiations; failure to reach an early satisfactory conclusion could have dramatic consequences. Let me illustrate this assertion.

Since the first Special Session, a new generation of intermediate-range missiles has been deployed by the Soviet Union. Three hundred SS-20s now pose a threat to Western Europe. The alliance to which Canada belongs has decided to counter the Soviet threat by deploying new *Pershing II* and ground-launched cruise missiles; and at the same time to engage the U.S.S.R. in negotiations aimed at setting limits on the systems of both sides at the lowest possible level.

It follows that unless the negotiations accomplish their objective by late next year, new weapons of terror will be added to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) arsenal. Having attended the NATO summit meeting last week in Bonn, I can testify that we passionately want these negotiations to succeed in removing the current threat and thereby obviating the need to deploy new missiles of our own. But what will be the position of the Warsaw Pact countries? I must assume that they too will negotiate in good faith. I would add, however, that they would be ill-advised to assume that public demonstrations in the West will weaken our negotiating position.

Massive  
demonstrations  
in protest

True, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in Western Europe, in Canada, and here in New York last week have taken pains to express the extent to which a renewed arms race is fundamentally repugnant to their values. In many ways, I suppose most of us in this Assembly agree with them. That similar demonstrations have not taken place in Eastern Europe does not, I think, suggest that the people of the member countries of the Warsaw Pact are any more comfortable with the prospect of mutual incineration; rather, it may be due to the fact that they are denied not only

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the right to express publicly their views but, indeed, to acquire the knowledge and understanding on which such views might be founded. It would be a grave miscalculation were the Soviets to misinterpret the very strength of our democratic system as a demonstration of weakness of our resolve.

It is with considerable conviction, therefore, that I call on the INF negotiators to achieve real progress within the limited time remaining so that in this instance the armaments spiral will not be allowed to proceed a twist (*sic*).

In seeking to arrest the arms race, the problem that continues to preoccupy me is the technological momentum that lies at its root. We must come to grips with that problem, which was the central point of my presentation to this Assembly four years ago. Let me return to it briefly.

I start with the proposition that all new weapons systems are potentially destabilizing. That is because such systems will heighten concerns about a disarming first-strike capability, or will tend to blur the difference between nuclear and conventional warfare, or will increase the problems of verification.

**Suffocation  
strategy**

Instability is the fuel that feeds the nuclear arms race. That is why, four years ago, I put before this Assembly a "strategy of suffocation" designed to deprive the nuclear arms race of the oxygen on which it feeds, from the laboratories to the testing sites.

The main elements of the strategy had long been familiar features of the arms-control dialogue: a comprehensive test ban; a halt to the flight-testing of all new strategic delivery vehicles; a cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes; and a limitation, and eventual reduction, of military spending for new strategic weapons systems. It was in the combination of these elements that I saw a more coherent, a more efficient and a more promising instrument for curbing the nuclear arms race.

But the strategy was never meant to be applied unilaterally. It always envisaged negotiated agreements between the nuclear powers. All elements of the strategy would probably not fall into place at once. But all were essential if the strategy were to have its full effect: the halt of the technological momentum of the arms race by freezing at the initial or testing stage the development of new weapons systems.

While I continue to believe that such a technological freeze is fundamental to controlling the arms race, I would now propose, however, that it be enfolded into a more general policy of stabilization. I do not consider the strategy of suffocation to be in competition with current negotiations or with negotiations shortly to commence. Indeed, I believe that the more successful these negotiations are, the more likely will they need to be entrenched in agreements along the lines I have proposed.

The impact of the current and proposed negotiations, if they succeed, will be to produce a stable balance at a much lower level of armament. It will involve not only important quantitative reductions, but a qualitative change, in that destabilizing systems will have been reduced. We will be dealing not only with a balance at lower levels but with a different kind of balance, in that it will be more stable.

Thus a policy of stabilization has two complementary components: the suffocation strategy which seeks to inhibit the development of new weapons systems, and our current negotiating approach aimed at qualitative and quantitative reductions in nuclear arsenals designed to achieve a stable nuclear balance at lower levels.

Outer space  
weapons

Before I leave the subject of suffocation, I must underscore the urgency of coming to grips with the development of new weaponry for use in outer space. Twenty-five years ago, the first man-made satellite was launched. That event marked a leap in man's mastery of the earth's environment. Fifteen years ago, it did not seem premature to close off the possibility that space might be used for other than peaceful purposes. But today, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space is patently inadequate. That is how quickly, in today's world, science fiction becomes reality.

The treaty lays down that nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction are not to be placed in orbit, around the earth or stationed in space. In retrospect, that leaves loopholes which risk being highly destabilizing. I am thinking particularly of anti-satellite weapons or anti-missile laser systems. I believe that we cannot wait much longer if we are to be successful in foreclosing the prospect of space wars. I propose, therefore, that an early start be made on a treaty to prohibit the development, testing and deployment of all weapons for use in outer space.

Process of  
verification

Of course, the whole edifice rests on key assumptions about verification, and it is to the theory and practice of verification that we must increasingly give attention.

Openness is central to the process of verification. But here, too, technology has taken us well beyond the notions about openness that were prevalent only 25 years ago. When we speak of verification by "national technical means", we have in mind the vast range of activity that is detectable by the magic eye of highly sophisticated satellites plying their intrusive orbits around the globe. I sometimes wonder whether we realize the immensity of the leap we have made; and whether a certain reluctance in accepting the rigours of verification is not an insufferable anachronism.

Verification is not only a matter of access. Verification entails a technology of its own that differs from weapons system to weapons system. Therefore, ideally, the work on verification should prepare the way for arms-control agreements that still lie ahead; otherwise, problems of verification will inevitably prevent the conclusion of even well advanced arms-control negotiations. In this context I am encouraged by the

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positive approach to verification procedures contained in the remarks of the Soviet foreign minister earlier this week.

However, given the complexity and characteristics of many modern weapons systems, so-called national technical means may not be adequate for verifying arms-control or disarmament agreements. Consequently, the international community should address itself to verification as one of the most significant factors in disarmament negotiations in the 1980s.

**Canada commits more funds**

In Canada we are allocating increased funds for arms-control and disarmament initiatives. This decision will allow us to take two important steps. First, we are committing resources to enable Canada to become a full participant in the international seismic data exchange, the international verification mechanism which will form part of the provisions of a comprehensive test ban treaty. We believe that the exchange should be fully operational at an early date and in advance of the treaty. Secondly, we will substantially increase research in verification. To develop effective verification procedures, Canada will be devoting more attention to utilizing expertise available inside and outside government.

In the course of this Session, many good proposals will have been put before us, including those in the Report of the Palme Commission, which has made a significant contribution to public awareness and understanding of the issues. I have tried, from a Canadian perspective, to make a number of precise proposals of my own, in the context of a policy of stabilization. These are designed to ensure stability in the arms balance at the lowest possible level by removing destabilizing weapons systems, reducing those systems allowed to remain, and preventing the introduction of new destabilizing systems.

In the process of sifting the proposals before us, I hope that the Special Session will concentrate on what, with goodwill, is achievable. This Assembly has a right to expect sincerity of purpose and a determination to achieve concrete results on the part of all participants. A particularly heavy responsibility rests with the two super-powers. They must give their undivided attention to negotiations to reduce their arsenals of nuclear weapons and should not deviate from that central objective by imposing political preconditions.

This implies that the super-powers agree to communicate, to talk to each other, and to recognize the unquestionable common interest which unites them in a fundamental way; that is, the need to avoid a catastrophe which would destroy them both.

When the security of the world and the fate of the human race are at stake, all governments have a duty to raise their voices on behalf of the societies they represent. Above all, they have a duty to bring to an end our collective impotence in the face of nuclear peril.

"The highest form of hope," said Bernanos, "is the overcoming of despair." That is what is demanded of us by the millions of men and women who are alarmed by the arms race and the prospect of a nuclear holocaust.

The most unpardonable failure of this Assembly would be to kill, by inaction, the hope in people's hearts. For, in the face of the demented threat of a resumption of the nuclear arms race, to kill hope in the possibility of disarmament is, in a very real sense, to risk killing life itself.