



Statements and Speeches

No. 86/4

ON MAKING A SAFER WORLD

Statement by J. Alan Beesley, Canadian Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, before that Conference, Geneva, 11 March 1986.

Mr. President, I wish to comment very briefly today on three of our most important agenda items:

- Item 4: chemical weapons;
- Item 5: prevention of an arms race in outer space; and
- Item 1: nuclear test ban.

It will be recalled that I presented the Canadian position on substantive aspects of each of these items in my plenary statement of February 4, 1986. Today I wish to address the kind of concrete action which the Conference on Disarmament (CD) could, and in our view should, take on each of these items, taking into account that on each subject the conference is at a different stage of consideration, deliberation or negotiation.

Item 4: Chemical Weapons

It is quite clear that the conference is more advanced in its work on the comprehensive convention on chemical weapons than on any other item on its agenda. Thus, it is encouraging, albeit not surprising, that we have been able to re-establish the *ad hoc* committee on chemical weapons on which the conference had agreed at the end of our last session. This should, nevertheless, not be grounds for special satisfaction on our part. When we began this session over a month ago there was a heightened sense of expectation about the prospects for progress in these negotiations. Recent reports of renewed chemical weapons use, which have led the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General to initiate an investigation, should have reinforced our concern to make early and urgent progress.

In my statement of February 4, we gave notice of our intention to submit documents intended to advance the negotiation of a comprehensive chemical weapons treaty. I wish now to inform the conference that the Canadian document entitled *Handbook for the Investigation of Allegations of the Use of Chemical or Biological Weapons* has been submitted today to the secretariat for distribution to delegations. As I pointed out earlier, this working document identifies procedures, equipment and standard formats to help ensure that the findings of an investigation of alleged chemical weapons use would be as conclusive, convincing, objective and impartial as possible. It reflects Canadian experience and expertise, but also recognizes and benefits from important contributions by several other countries involved in extensive research in this area, particularly Sweden, Norway and Finland.

As stated in the introduction to the document, "such a handbook is both useful today in the context of the existing authority of the Secretary-General under resolution 37/98D or under the Charter of the United Nations; and it should also be of use in the future in the context of a verification regime that would be part of a future chemical weapons convention as it is currently being negotiated in the Con-

ference on Disarmament." The *Handbook*, as some delegations are aware, has already been submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York.

It should be noted that this handbook does not deal with the procedures and criteria leading up to the initiation of an investigation. This issue is still very much a subject for negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament. The focus of this study is on what investigators should know and do when called upon to implement a decision to conduct an investigation, including the procedures that might be followed and the equipment that might be needed.

A technical working paper dealing with the identification of chemical substances will also soon be tabled in the appropriate Working Group by the Canadian delegation. That paper proposes a method for identifying chemical substances based on Chemical Abstracts Service registry numbers, which could be of considerable utility in reducing ambiguity in the identification process and in helping to simplify and standardize eventual data flows relating to the implementation of the convention, taking full advantage of computerized methods now available to search chemical literature.

In addition, as mentioned in my earlier statement, we will also be distributing an indexed compendium of all chemical weapons documentation for the period 1983 to 1985 to assist delegations in their work.

In this context I would like to commend the delegation of Pakistan for the serious efforts it has made in addressing in a recent working paper, the first one tabled in the chemical weapons *ad hoc* committee this year, some of the central issues in a future chemical weapons convention. We have noted in particular the statement in the paper that chemical weapons use should be treated as a most serious breach of a future convention. The Canadian government shares this view.

Item 5: Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

Turning now to a question on which we have not yet advanced our work nearly as far as we have in the chemical weapons negotiations, namely the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we have already made known our views in our February 4 statement that we should reach agreement quickly on the renewal of last year's mandate. I do not propose to reiterate our views on that issue. I wish merely to announce that the Canadian delegation has given to the secretariat, for distribution to all delegations, a compendium of the 1985 CD documentation on this subject. It is our view that an analysis of that documentation will make clear not only that we have already done considerable useful work in the conference in elucidating the complexities raised by that question, but that considerable work remains to be done in analysing the legal regime and identifying any existing lacunae. Delegations need to address the issues embodied in the compendium. If some delegations disagree with some aspects of the Canadian or British working papers on the legal regime tabled during our last session, then let us hear from them, preferably in the form of working papers. This only underlines the importance as we see it of earliest possible agreement on a renewed mandate so that we can devote our full efforts to concrete, substantive work. In the meantime, all of us should be preparing for such work.

Item 1: Nuclear Test Ban

The third, and perhaps the most important issue I wish to address is that of a comprehensive nuclear

test ban. The extensive number of statements during recent weeks has shown that most delegations share our view as to the importance of this issue. Yet, it has not been possible to establish a subsidiary body which would allow concrete work to be done, particularly on such issues as scope, verification and compliance. Several substantive papers have been tabled on various aspects of a Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB), but we have not yet even begun to discuss them thoroughly. One of the most important aspects raised in statements and working papers on this question relates to seismic verification. Much common ground exists in this area, developed through the intensive work of the group of scientific experts over the years. I wish now to announce that the Canadian delegation is today making available directly to other delegations a brochure recently published by the Department of External Affairs of Canada on seismic verification. Although produced mainly with the Canadian public in mind, this document is the product of extensive research, is based entirely on scientific advice, and is intended to provide useful clarification of some of the issues relating to seismic verification.

Our purpose in distributing this brochure is a simple one. The achievement of a CTB is a fundamental Canadian objective. Canada has played a particularly prominent role on verification, a central issue in which seismic technology is a key. Since 1976, Canadian scientists have participated in the work of the international group of seismic experts (GSE) in the CD studying technical aspects of a world-wide exchange of seismic data. Indeed the Canadian participants will again be tabling a working paper during the current session of the GSE.

The most recent activity of the GSE was the conduct and evaluation of a large-scale technical test involving 31 states. This work is the object of an extensive report being prepared for the Conference on Disarmament. The test has indicated that a number of technical issues require further consideration by the GSE. Canada strongly supports the continuation of this work. The brochure gives some indication of the value and importance of this work, and the need to continue it.

In this context I should also like to make known to the Conference on Disarmament that the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced on February 7 that the Government of Canada has agreed to provide \$3.2 million during the period 1986-1989 to upgrade the Canadian Yellowknife seismic array as a major Canadian contribution to monitoring an eventual comprehensive nuclear test ban. Yellowknife is recognized as a unique and sensitive location to monitor global seismic events including underground nuclear tests. Updating and modernization of the Yellowknife seismic array, which consists of a series of short-period and long-period seismometers, will enable Canada to contribute to an international system which would constitute an essential monitoring element of a negotiated CTB, utilizing the best technology available. Canada will be using the Yellowknife development to assist the GSE in coming to standards and specifications of seismograph stations that will contribute to seismic verification of a CTB.

We are attempting to show by action rather than rhetoric that we mean what we say on verification — and regard it not as an obstacle, but as part of the solution.

We hope that an analysis of the three papers I have referred to – each of which differs considerably from the others – will provide concrete evidence of some of the possibilities of making progress in the conference, whatever the stage of our deliberations or of our negotiations.

It is our hope that delegations could usefully take the opportunity to review the documents which we and others have submitted. However, we continue to strongly support our collective continuing efforts to reach agreement on the mandates for outer space and a nuclear test ban. . . .