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NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY  
DOUGLAS ROCHE, AMBASSADOR FOR  
DISARMAMENT, TO THE YORK  
UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ON THE  
THIRD REVIEW OF THE  
NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

CANADA AND THE NPT:  
THE ENDURING RELATIONSHIP

TORONTO

MAY 16, 1985

The Non-Proliferation Treaty will be reviewed for the third time this summer in Geneva. What is the meaning of this event? And why is the NPT important to Canada?

Although Canada participated together with the United Kingdom in helping the United States develop the world's first atomic weapons during World War II, it was the first country to consciously forgo the development of nuclear weapons despite clearly having the technology and capability to do so from the earliest days of the nuclear era. This was a deliberate policy decision taken at a time when the nuclear club was in its infancy. Canada declined to develop a nuclear weapons capability and has adhered firmly to that decision.

Of course, Canada participates in the NATO alliance, and at one time permitted nuclear weapons to be deployed on its territory. The last of these weapons were removed from Canada in 1984. It is the clearly stated policy of the Canadian Government not to accept any nuclear weapons or permit them to be deployed in Canada. Any contingency plans that might be developed in the event of a crisis or an emergency could take effect only with the concurrence of Canada.

Canada has served, and has been well served, by the international non-proliferation and safeguards régime, which had its origins in the 1946 resolution creating the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission, later developed into the IAEA and culminated in the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Canada's record in its efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons is indeed unique. Canada has a set of non-proliferation credentials which is shared by few other countries in the world. In non-proliferation -- horizontal and vertical -- Canada has led, and continues to lead, by example.

Moreover, the NPT has been of distinct commercial value to our country:

-- Canada is the world's largest supplier of uranium, all of which is subject to a "peaceful uses" provision.

-- We are the world's largest supplier of bulk radio-isotopes -- for agricultural, medical and scientific applications.

-- We are the fifth largest vendor of power reactors with our world-renowned CANDU.

-- We are the sixth largest generator of nuclear power -- with an operating capacity of over 8,000 MW(E).

-- Approximately 100,000 Canadians work directly or indirectly in our nuclear power programme; our entire nuclear programme is worth \$1 billion to the Canadian economy.

Canada's nuclear programme is strictly for peaceful purposes and entirely subject to safeguards. In its nuclear exports Canada imposes a rigorous set of requirements on its potential customers -- both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons

The Preamble also recalled the commitment in the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty to continue negotiations to end all nuclear tests for all time.

Although the First Review Conference in 1975 concluded successfully from the perspective of Canada and other supporters of the Treaty, it proved to be a highly political exercise, particularly in the areas of nuclear disarmament and security issues. The neutral and non-aligned (NNA) countries, insisting that they had lived up to their obligations under the Treaty, accused the nuclear powers (particularly the super powers) of not fulfilling either their commitments under Article VI (dealing with the nuclear arms race) or Article IV (calling for the sharing of nuclear equipment, materials and technology for peaceful uses).

The debate in the closing days and hours of the Conference was marked by acrimony and accusations. It was only at the last moment -- after great efforts by Sweden's Inga Thorsson and Canada's William Barton -- that the conference succeeded in adopting by consensus a final document. Nevertheless, this Final Declaration of the Conference reflected the frustration felt by many states, particularly the NNA countries, over the lack of implementation of the basic bargains of the Treaty during the previous five years.

The demands of the NNA remained outstanding at the time of the Second Review Conference in 1980. However, the

atmosphere and disarmament climate were relatively hopeful. The SALT II treaty had been recently signed, and promising trilateral (UK, USA, USSR) negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were still officially taking place.

Despite marathon sessions of informal negotiations, the conference ended without a consensus final document because of lack of agreement on issues relating to nuclear disarmament, particularly on a Comprehensive Test Ban. While consensus was reached on texts dealing with international safeguards, the sharing of the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the posing of fullscope safeguards as a condition for nuclear cooperation (a goal that had been strongly pursued by Canada and other like-minded countries), there was no agreement on a final document. This was a major setback and has been interpreted by some as meaning that the Second Review Conference was a failure.

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As we begin the final approach to the Third Review, opening August 27, the outlook is uncertain. We can be sure that once again there will be vigorous debate on the perceived failure of the nuclear powers to implement their obligations under Article VI. As in 1980, there is a very real danger that a lack of tangible progress relating to Article VI will hold hostage any agreement on other matters relating to safeguards and international nuclear cooperation.

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As a major focus of the Third Review Conference, it is worthwhile examining the current Article VI debate. In the past five years, since the last review, there has been no substantial progress on any nuclear arms control and disarmament issue. In fact, the nuclear arms race is proceeding at an ever-increasing pace in both its qualitative and quantitative aspects. In addition, the trilateral comprehensive test ban talks have been abandoned.

Although the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva has been a welcome development, the road ahead is likely to be a long and arduous one. The U.S. and the USSR have set themselves high goals for the Geneva negotiations: the prevention of an arms race in space and its termination on earth; the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms; and the strengthening of strategic stability, leading ultimately to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Although the objectives have been agreed on, the views of the two sides on how to arrive at their shared goals differ dramatically.

In the multilateral arms control fora, forward movement is halting and prospects for real progress or agreements seem remote.

-- The Conference on Disarmament, which recently finished its Spring session, offers some opportunities for progress on arms control, but not, unfortunately, in areas related to nuclear matters.



-- The Stockholm Conference began its second year with East and West still far apart in their approach to Confidence-Building Measures.

-- At the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks (MBFR) in Vienna which resumed in January, East and West are still unable to resolve troop data questions after more than eleven years of negotiations.

Progress towards a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has been traditionally associated with compliance on Article VI. For Canada, the achievement of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty remains a fundamental and abiding Canadian objective. We believe that a CTB is a concrete, realistic measure which would constitute a major step in curbing the development of new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons. It is regarded as an extremely important step towards halting both the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. As the U.N. Secretary-General stated earlier this year, "It is of direct importance to the future of humanity to end all nuclear explosions. No other means would be as effective in limiting the further development of nuclear weapons."

The world community is now asking why it has been necessary for the nuclear weapon states to have conducted a total of 1,522 nuclear explosions between 1945 and 1984. The question intensifies as one recognizes that 53 nuclear explosions were carried out in 1984. How does continued

testing demonstrate a commitment to Article VI of the NPT? Growing numbers of governments and expert bodies have recently been calling attention to this dilemma.

It is Canada's firm view that, with a willingness to accept sensible accommodations of interests, it should be possible for the Conference on Disarmament, which is grappling with this problem, to agree to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban with a realistic and practical mandate. We are, in fact, greatly disappointed that the sensible and sustained efforts of many in the CD, who have been working towards this modest goal, have led to so little. We believe that the CD should examine the issue of scope as well as that of verification and compliance, with a view to negotiation of a treaty.

With respect to the many complex policy decisions that must be made in the field of disarmament and arms control, the Canadian Government, in its Green Paper on Foreign Policy published two days ago, has stated clearly:

"...the imperative of ensuring security at lower levels of nuclear weapons requires that no proposal or line of thinking on a possible solution be dismissed without careful examination."

Keeping in mind the problems of the present international security situation, Canada will strive to achieve

two basic objectives at the forthcoming Review Conference:

- a) the maintenance of the NPT as the basic element of an effective international non-proliferation régime and,
- b) the reaffirmation by the Review Conference of the purpose and provision of the NPT.

Specifically, Canadian goals on the disarmament side will be:

- (i) to ensure that the debate on Article VI issues contributes in a positive manner to the overall objectives of the NPT and does not degenerate into an acrimonious debate between the NNA and the nuclear weapon states;
- (ii) to reconfirm the need for nuclear weapons states, and particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, to negotiate in good faith toward the adoption of effective measures to achieve a cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and a reduction in nuclear arms;
- (iii) to emphasize the importance of the NPT as a major contribution to international security;
- (iv) to reiterate Canada's strong sympathy for the concept of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ) as specified in the NPT where these are feasible and seem likely to contribute to stability; and,

(v) to continue to explore, in close consultation with Canada's NATO allies and other like-minded countries, the possibility of other measures, both in nuclear and non-nuclear arms control fields, which would help to contribute to general progress in arms control and an amelioration of the East-West political climate.

As another practical step in maintaining and strengthening the NPT, Canada, and a number of like-minded countries, have undertaken to approach non-signatory states in an effort to have more countries sign what is already the most widely adhered to international security treaty.

In reaching out to hard-core critics and non-signatories of the NPT, we are making these points:

-- To those countries which remain critics of the NPT, and argue that the Treaty is discriminatory, we point out that the same discrimination exists in the United Nations Security Council.

-- To those nations that call for an end to the nuclear arms race while refusing themselves to sign the NPT, we suggest that their appeal would be more credible were they a party to the Treaty.

-- To those states which retain the nuclear option for perceived regional security considerations, we ask them to consider the tragic and devastating consequences of a limited regional nuclear war.

-- Finally, to those nuclear weapons states which insist on remaining outside the Treaty, we strongly suggest that they follow the example already set by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union and to note that the security and sovereignty of these nations has in no way been compromised -- on the contrary, it has been enhanced.

The efforts of Canada and other nations in attracting new adherents to the Treaty has already had some success -- there are now 128 signatories with every indication of other nations signing in the near future. Whatever the numerical success of this exercise, it has the additional benefit of demonstrating to non-signatories that Parties to the NPT believe in the intrinsic merits and value of the non-proliferation régime offered by the Treaty.

Some criticisms of the NPT are not unfounded. Any agreement that brings together so many diverse nations will be subject to certain strains and problems of compliance. In the international community it is difficult to legislate security -- that is what certain articles of the NPT are attempting to do. The NPT, for all its strengths, is still a fragile international instrument whose credibility and applicability must be constantly monitored and nurtured. The NPT cannot be taken for granted.

To those who continue to criticise the Treaty, either from within or without, I would simply reiterate Canada's view. The NPT has weaknesses and flaws, certainly. However, it remains of fundamental importance to the international community and has, in general, served its members well.

What would happen if the non-proliferation régime implemented and protected by the NPT were to collapse? Would the world be better off? I think not. I believe strongly that the world would be much worse off without the NPT -- more uncertain, more unstable, more dangerous; it would also be less equitable in the sharing of technological resources and expertise.

The NPT is a rare international instrument, having at once both practical and moral dimensions. The fact that countries are continuing to sign the NPT, and continuing to feel that they should sign the NPT, is a tribute to both the moral force and practical utility of the Treaty. It reflects a basic belief within the international community that proliferation is a bad thing.

The Treaty has survived its first 15 years -- not untarnished and not without criticism. An honest review at the Third Review Conference, assessing how the treaty has worked so far, where it has succeeded and where it may have failed, can only serve to strengthen it.

It is the responsibility of Canada, and all nations of the world, to work to strengthen the NPT. Adherence to the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would result in a powerful non-proliferation régime guaranteeing the reduction, and eventual elimination, of nuclear weapons. That is a goal that commands our highest priority.