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RATIFICATION OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced that the Canadian Ambassadors in Washington and Moscow and the Canadian High Commissioner in London are today depositing in these three capitals, Instruments of Ratification effecting Canadian accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was endorsed by the great majority of United Nations member states at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly last May, was opened for signature in Washington, London and Moscow on July 1. Canada signed the treaty in Washington and London on July 23 and in Moscow on July 27. More than 80 nations have now signed the Treaty. Before it comes into effect, 43 States, including the three nuclear powers which have signed it, must deposit ratifications.

In announcing in the House of Commons on December 19, the Canadian intention to ratify the Treaty, Mr. Sharp expressed the hope that "all nations of the world will recognize the importance of the Treaty and accede to it".

As a member of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee Canadian representatives played an important role in the negotiations which culminated in agreement on the Treaty ratified today by Canada. The Canadian Government has supported the principles embodied in the Treaty as essential to progress in reducing international tensions and in curtailing the nuclear arms race. The Canadian decision to ratify the NPT was based in part on the belief of the Canadian Government that there is little prospect of progress toward controlling the dissemination of nuclear weapons or towards general disarmament unless this Treaty comes into force.

The Treaty prohibits nuclear parties from transferring nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, or control over them, to non-nuclear parties and binds non-nuclear parties

not to produce or otherwise acquire control of such weapons and devices. It will result in the application of international safeguards to the peaceful nuclear activities of non-nuclear parties to ensure that source or special fissionable materials intended for peaceful purposes are not diverted clandestinely to military purposes. The right of non-nuclear powers to exploit nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is reaffirmed and the principle that the benefits of peaceful nuclear explosions should be made available to non-nuclear parties is acknowledged.

Canada is satisfied that these are the optimum provisions available at present and that on this basis the Non-Proliferation Treaty should be brought into force at the earliest possible date.