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87/29

Address by
the Honourable Jean-Guy Hudon,
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Secretary of State for
External Affairs, the
Right Honourable Joe Clark,
to the Department of External
Affairs' workshop on outer space
and arms control

MONTREAL

May 15, 1987.

I would first of all like to welcome you to Montreal and to Quebec la belle province. To those of you who are in this city, and perhaps in Canada, for the first time, I hope you enjoy your stay with us and will be able to return again to enjoy our hospitality.

I bring you greetings from the Government of Canada and particularly from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, who is travelling in the United States on official business and could not be here with us.

I am pleased that so many delegations from the Conference on Disarmament (CD), observer delegations to the CD, other official representatives of countries at the CD, and technical experts in this area, could attend our deliberations this weekend. Your positive response to the Canadian Government's invitation attests to the willingness of your Governments to consider further the critical issue of how best to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The Government of Canada welcomes your interest and shares your concerns.

As Canada's Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney has affirmed, "I approach the pursuit of peace with determination, recognizing both the enormity of the task, and the requirement for action. To those who say it can't be done, I say it must be done. To those who say Canada can't do it alone, I say we can do it together. And to those who claim it is none of our business, I say the search for peace is everyone's business".

One could say without exaggeration that the whole question of the future use of outer space is among the most difficult issues on the arms control and disarmament agenda, and is one that must be dealt with in a serious and constructive fashion by all Governments. The first Sputnik launch in 1957 created an international awareness of outer space as a theatre of exploration, research and discovery as man has sought to push out beyond the confines of his own planet. We have since witnessed many remarkable achievements in space research and exploration, such as the United States mission to the moon in 1969, which was, in the words of the U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong, a "small step for man, a giant leap for mankind," and the Soviet-led, international effort, known as the Venus-Halley or Vega project, that studied the famous Halley's Comet in 1986.

We have also seen major advances in the peaceful use of space, for telecommunications purposes, telephone and television transmission, sophisticated mapping for agricultural and other purposes linked to international development. Search and rescue operations are also a good example of East-West cooperation in space, through the COSPAS-SARSAT system.

Canada's own achievements in space are quite considerable. In September 1962, with the launch of Alouette 1, we became the third country, after the USSR and the USA, to launch a satellite in space.

In 1972, Canada became the first country to operate a domestic telecommunications satellite system using a satellite in geostationary orbit. This was the first of three "Anik A" satellites.

In August 1982, we launched our first commercial satellite built by a Canadian private contractor, Spar Aerospace of Montreal, which is of course involved in our activities this weekend. Later that same year, the Canadarm, or remote manipulator system, was declared operational after being tested successfully on several space shuttle missions.

And in October 1984, Marc Garneau became the first Canadian in space when he was a crew member aboard the space shuttle Challenger. At the present time, the Government of Canada is creating a National Space Agency.

The widely-cited Canadian thinker Marshall McLuhan spoke of technological advances having transformed the world into a global village. In this global village we live in, these peaceful uses of outer space have helped us create a sense of community that is tangible and real. This understanding that we are neighbours provides an important impetus to all our arms control and disarmament efforts.

Here in Montreal this weekend, and in the Conference on Disarmament, our particular focus is to find ways to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Your efforts at the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the outer space issue come at a critical time in the international political and strategic environment. The unrelenting forward march of the application of science and technology to military ends, along with the constantly shifting political dynamics of the international scene, are forcing the outer space issue to the forefront of the deliberations of the international community, both in the bilateral and multilateral forums. This trend is also reflected, here in Canada, in a heightening of public awareness of the outer space issue.

In light of these developments, we were particularly encouraged by the decision of the Governments of the United States and the USSR in January 1985 to make "the prevention of an arms race in space and its termination on earth" one of the agreed objectives of their bilateral negotiations in Geneva. This agreement demonstrates the recognition by the superpowers of the importance and urgency of dealing with the outer space issue, a concern that is shared equally by the Canadian

Government. In October 1985, Prime Minister Mulroney identified the prevention of an arms race in outer space as one of Canada's six specific objectives in the arms control and disarmament field.

In the same year the CD agreed to establish, for the first time, a subsidiary body to examine the outer space issue in the multilateral context.

While there is considerable multilateral experience in promoting peaceful cooperation in outer space, the multilateral approach to arms control in this environment is still at a pioneering stage. Moreover, it is an area in which technology continues to push ahead inexorably.

Given the complexity of the issues and the need to ensure that any actions taken on agreements concluded do indeed contribute to strengthening international security in the long term, Canada hopes the CD will pursue its task with energy and with deliberation. The existing mandate would seem to provide ample scope for much additional useful work.

I would also like to reiterate the Canadian Government's, view, recently made to the CD by our Ambassador to that body, Mr. J. Alan Beesley, that the bilateral efforts by the USA and USSR to prevent an arms race in outer space are not and must not be at cross-purposes with the multilateral efforts of the CD. The mandate of the CD's Ad Hoc Committee both complements and accurately reflects the realities concerning the bilateral USA-USSR negotiations in Geneva. We urge the USA and USSR to continue to seek agreed ways to use outer space for national security purposes in a manner consistent with international security and stability for all peoples. At the same time, arms control in relation to outer space has always had an important multilateral dimension, and we believe this dimension is gaining in importance.

Indeed, we believe this "two track" approach to the issue to be a complementary one, of crucial importance to the international consideration of an issue vital to all mankind.

I think it is fair to say that Canada has been second to none in making substantive contributions to the deliberations of the CD on this subject. We have sought to expand the existing pool of knowledge in this area through the preparation of three working papers on the outer space issue that have been tabled in the CD. These deal with the stabilizing and destabilizing characteristics of arms control agreements in outer space; with international law relevant to arms control in outer space; and with technology relevant to outer space. These papers are not meant to reflect a particularly Canadian Government viewpoint but rather to build upon the pool of information in this area and to outline the issues in a comprehensive fashion.

As our Prime Minister has stated, Canada's priorities in the area of outer space as in other areas of arms control and disarmament were judged to lie in the investigation of outer space verification technology. It is in this area that we in Canada have devoted considerable resources through the efforts of the Verification Research Unit of the Department of External Affairs.

One example of this, which you have already discussed during the course of this workshop, is the Paxsat concept, which explores the feasibility of the application of space-based civilian remote sensing techniques to verifying potential arms control agreements covering outer space or conventional forces in Europe. Our concern here is to explore the technical requirements that might exist for verifying multilateral agreements from space and thereby make a distinctive Canadian contribution to international consideration of the outer space issue.

Canada's contribution in this area forms part of our practical contribution to the international arms control process. This practical contribution was outlined by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in January 1986 and focuses on three areas:

- 1) encouraging compliance with existing treaties;
- 2) developing verification mechanisms; and
- 3) building confidence between east and west.

In our practical work we have sought to make our contribution to arms control and disarmament where we can be most effective, bearing in mind that we are a middle power, we are not a nuclear weapons state, and that it is a reality of our time that the USA and the USSR will unavoidably have a lead role in determining key elements of any international framework to preserve global security.

But these issues are too fundamental to be the exclusive domain of the superpowers. Canada is geographically situated between the two most powerful countries in the world.

The potentially catastrophic consequences for our nation of a nuclear exchange between these countries has an over-riding influence on our thinking in dealing with these issues.

Of course, all of us here this evening recognize that we are not discussing these issues in a vacuum. We are examining the question of preventing an arms race in outer space at a critical time for the international community.

Much has happened since the watershed events at Reykjavik, events that have opened up entirely new vistas for the international security environment.

For the first time since the Second World War we are talking about real disarmament - substantial reductions (50% within five years in the main components of the superpowers' strategic nuclear arsenals) and an agreement to negotiate the elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons - those of intermediate-range (INF) in Europe.

We may well be approaching what is a point of historical significance in the arms control and disarmament process, a process that has seen few victories over the last decade but that now holds out real prospects for concrete achievements.

However, simply to reduce nuclear arsenals for the sake of reductions alone is not necessarily stabilizing, particularly if that allows us to return to warfare by other means. After all, none of us wants to repeat the European experience of this century, which has witnessed two devastating World Wars that combined led to the death of millions of human beings.

But the Canadian Government believes that an important first step at this juncture would be an early INF agreement and a resumption of the USA-USSR Summit process.

That, we believe, would be a significant step toward a more secure and stable international environment and one that the Canadian Government would welcome.

Your deliberations this weekend, while confined to the narrower outer space issue, are nonetheless a critical part of the larger international security equation.

It is our hope that your attendance here has been an invigorating experience and that you and your Governments will come away with a better appreciation of Canada's efforts to work towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space.