



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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PEACE KEEPING AND DISARMAMENT

An Address by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
to the Special Session of the Eleventh
General Assembly of the World Veterans
Federation, Geneva, May 3, 1965.

* Paragraphs so marked delivered in French.

* I am honoured to have been asked to address this special session to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. I am particularly honoured to be sharing this platform with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who has rendered such distinguished and devoted service to the world community.

* This is a solemn anniversary for all of us. It is an anniversary of the hopes and aspirations which repose in this great organization. It is, above all, an anniversary of our collective determination to build a better world order.

* The first condition of such a world order is peace. And it is no coincidence that the first pledge to which we subscribed in the Charter of the United Nations is a pledge of peace -- a pledge "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". I have no need to dwell on the undiminished urgency of that pledge in a gathering of world veterans.

* We have come a reasonable way along the course we charted 20 years ago. But a long and arduous road stretches before us. The end of that road is still far from being in sight. It is important, therefore, to be clear where our next steps should be directed.

* I have spoken of reasonable progress on the road to peace. In the very difficult situation which is confronting us in Vietnam today, this may seem like an excessively optimistic statement. But, if we cast our glance back over the past two decades, I think that the record will bear me out. In that period, we have faced a large number of situations of conflict or potential conflict. Many of these situations could have led to war. In the event, they did not lead to war. They did not lead to war because the

international community did not permit them to lead to war -- and because there were mechanisms by which the international community was able to insulate such situations against the hazards of escalation and to bring them within the ambit of peaceful resolution.

* That, as I see it, is the essence of the conception of peace keeping as it has evolved within the framework of the United Nations. I do not think there can be any doubt about the immense importance of that idea in a world in which instability and insecurity are still prevalent. Nevertheless the future of peace keeping is now at issue. Only a few months ago, the United Nations narrowly avoided a confrontation over that issue. I am glad to say that saner counsel prevailed. A special committee is now looking into all aspects of peace keeping with the object of arriving at a sound and broadly acceptable basis for the future.

* I am hopeful that at least the basic elements of a consensus will emerge from the work of the committee. Such a consensus, as I see it, might be reached on some or all of the following propositions:

* First, the United Nations must be restored to financial health. This is a matter of liquidating past debts. I should hope that it is also a matter of not permitting a recurrence of the present situation in the future.

* Second, the United Nations must be enabled to maintain the capacity to act in emergencies. The primary responsibility in this regard is acknowledged to rest with the Security Council. But if the Security Council is unable, for any reason, to act in such a situation, the General Assembly should not be prevented from recommending appropriate action to safeguard the peace. For all governments have, in the last resort, a common interest in taking measures to halt the spread of local conflicts before the major powers are confronted with the alternatives of retreat or world chaos.

* Third, there should be an acceptance of the principle of shared responsibility in financing peace-keeping operations in all cases where the permanent members of the Security Council agree to their being undertaken. In those cases, the General Assembly would apportion the expenses, taking due account of the principle of capacity to pay. If a permanent member were to object to an operation, some modification of the principle of shared responsibility might have to be accepted.

* Fourth, there is a need for continuing efforts to improve the technical capacity of the United Nations to act in situations of emergency. This has its counterpart in suitable arrangements being made by member states to co-operate with the United Nations before such situations arise.

* Canada, for its part, will continue to do all it can to strengthen the peace-keeping capacities of the United Nations. We shall do so by working towards a settlement of the wider political issues in the Special Committee. We shall also do so by improving, where possible, the practical arrangements which must be made in any event if the United Nations is to continue to respond to requests for the provision of international forces to preserve or restore peace around the world.

* We can be sure that some mechanism, whether it be nation states acting on their own, regional groupings or alliances, or the United Nations itself, will continue in the years ahead to be required to do this job. If it is to be well done, we need the broadest possible consensus of world opinion and the United Nations is the best place for us to find that consensus.

Peace keeping is one dimension of the problem of maintaining peace and security in the world today. Disarmament is another.

For the first time in human history, we have achieved something close to absolute military power. We have come to assume that the destructive power we wield will deter us from ever using it. That, at any rate, is the assumption that lies at the root of the conception of "nuclear deterrence". But this is not a state of things we can look upon with any degree of complacency.

In the first place, we are faced with the prospect of a diffusion of nuclear capability. Secondly, it is surely paradoxical that, in a century which has seen man achieve greater control over his environment than any preceding century, we should not be able to build a better and more peaceful world order except under the compulsion of the law of fear. These considerations underline the need for early progress in the field of disarmament.

Your Federation has demonstrated a deep understanding of the realities of disarmament. It will come as no surprise to you, therefore, if I suggest that the principal problem in the field of disarmament before us today is how to limit the further spread of nuclear weapons. And, when I speak of the spread of nuclear weapons, I mean an increase in the number of states possessing independent military nuclear capabilities.

So far, we have pursued this objective in two main directions. First, we have acted to safeguard the transfer of nuclear materials and equipment from one country to another in order to ensure that they are used only for peaceful purposes. The atom, of course, is capable of a wide range of peaceful uses, of which the supply of energy is only one. We must anticipate that, as time goes by, the atom will become an increasingly important agent in the scientific and technological revolution we are witnessing all around us. There is no sense in inhibiting that development. Indeed, there is every reason for encouraging it.

But we cannot ignore the fact that the atom can be used for war as well as for peace. As the peaceful uses of the atom become more widely diffused, more and more nations are inevitably being placed in a position of having the potential capacity to produce nuclear weapons of their own. This situation is coming about without these countries necessarily wishing to acquire a military nuclear capacity. It is coming about without any conscious determination on their part.

It is, nevertheless, a situation of which we have had to take account. And we have taken account of it by attaching safeguards, wherever possible, to transactions in nuclear materials and equipment. Such safeguards are now a feature of most bilateral agreements covering peaceful co-operation in nuclear matters. At the same time, a system of international safeguards has been evolved by the International Atomic Energy Agency to apply to transactions conducted through it, as well as to transactions specifically placed under its supervision for safeguards purposes by member states.

I am convinced that the use of safeguards -- whether bilaterally or in the wider context of the International Atomic Energy Agency -- has played a direct part in delaying the development and spread of nuclear weapons. It has also, indirectly, helped governments to resist pressures on them to embark on military nuclear programmes.

But the use of safeguards is not universal in application. It seems to me, therefore, that we must direct our efforts toward closing this gap by making safeguards applicable on as comprehensive a basis as possible to nuclear materials and equipment entering into international commerce. To the extent that this can be done through the International Atomic Energy Agency, I am sure that international confidence in the system will be enhanced.

The partial test-ban treaty concluded two years ago is another step we have taken towards halting the spread of nuclear weapons. Its extension, accompanied by acceptable arrangements for verification, to include underground testing would help to consolidate progress in that direction. Recent advances in the technique of seismic recording and analysis encourage me to believe that the technical capability to distinguish at long distance between earthquake signals and those of an underground explosion will shortly prove to have been significantly improved. I am hopeful that on that basis, and provided the need for at least some "on-site" inspection can once again be accepted in principle by all concerned it may be possible to arrive at a comprehensive test-ban agreement which would command general support.

The more comprehensive application of safeguards to transactions in nuclear materials and equipment and the extension of the partial test-ban treaty to cover underground tests would each represent an important advance along the path of containing the spread of nuclear weapons. Even taken together, however, they would be unlikely to prove adequate to the task of effectively dissuading additional states from manufacturing or otherwise endeavouring to acquire control of nuclear weapons.

It is true that, with the passage of time, it has become clear that the nuclear powers themselves have no intention of allowing their nuclear weapons to contribute to the creation of further independent nuclear capabilities. From their point of view such a development would, at best, serve only to complicate the strategic picture. At worst, it could upset the nuclear balance.

Of course, those powers have as yet done nothing to reduce their own vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Steps have, however, lately been taken by two of them to reduce the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and by a third to decrease its planned rate of increase in the output of such material. Those are welcome indications of restraint.

In the foreseeable circumstances of the next ten years, there may be as many as a score of states which could, if they were to make the necessary political decision to do it, acquire an independent military nuclear capability by manufacturing their own nuclear weapons. It seems axiomatic to me that, if these nations are to be expected to continue their voluntary abstention, if they are expected to go even further and make a formal international commitment to refrain from producing them in future, then the military nuclear powers must accept responsibilities of their own. They must not only demonstrate increasing restraint in the nuclear field. They must also make renewed efforts to achieve early progress in the direction of general disarmament, including the reduction and, eventually, the elimination of all national stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

Canada is one of the countries that have the resources and the technical and industrial capability to manufacture nuclear weapons. I should like to believe that our abstention from the pursuit of a military nuclear programme may have served to encourage other non-nuclear states in following a similar policy. In the event, no middle or smaller powers have embarked on a programme of that nature and the expensive investment it would involve in nuclear-weapons carriers of one sort or another. The world cannot, on the other hand, be certain how long that state of affairs will continue.

Under the circumstances, it is encouraging to observe that some non-nuclear states have come forward with proposals for agreement on the non-acquisition of nuclear weapons, either generally or on a regional basis. Proposals on these lines have been developed in Africa and Latin America, two vast continents where there has so far been no domestic production, or national possession, of nuclear weapons but where nuclear science may be expected to contribute significantly to economic development and social progress.

These proposals are to be welcomed as offering a fresh prospect of limiting the further spread of independent military nuclear capability. The idea of non-acquisition is not, however, free of difficulty. In particular, I think there has been a growing awareness that it may not be practical to try to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons through the agency of a non-acquisition agreement in those areas of the world where non-nuclear states are apprehensive of the aims of a neighbouring nuclear -- or potential nuclear -- power.

Accordingly, it may be necessary first -- or simultaneously -- to guarantee the security of such non-nuclear states, at least against nuclear attack by the nuclear state concerned, if they are to be expected to forego the option of becoming nuclear powers of their own at some future date.

Collective security arrangements have in large measure already provided a guarantee of this nature for the allies of the great nuclear powers. The non-aligned and neutral nations do not enjoy similar guarantees, and it is within their ranks that the spread of nuclear weapons is more likely to take place within the next decade.

For that reason alone, it seems to me probable that there will be an increasing tendency to correlate a guarantee of that nature with proposals which take as their point of departure the terms of the Irish resolution. That resolution, adopted at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, constitutes the only norm of non-dissemination which up to now has been generally accepted. It calls on all states to use their best endeavours to secure the conclusion of an international agreement containing a reciprocal set of undertakings: an undertaking by the nuclear states not to relinquish control of nuclear weapons, or to transmit the information necessary for their manufacture to states not possessing such weapons; and an undertaking by states not possessing nuclear weapons to refrain from manufacturing or otherwise acquiring control of such weapons. There is a pressing need, in my judgement, for the elaboration of an international agreement or agreements on that basis.

This would mean starting with a notion of how to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons that is well known and whose limitations are fully understood. The adoption of the reciprocal pledges contained in the Irish resolution would not result in any nation being deprived of such provisions for its security -- nuclear or otherwise -- as it may currently enjoy. And the nuclear powers would only be giving formal recognition to a tacit understanding which has governed their relations for the last few years -- namely, that they will not hand over the undivided or independent control of nuclear weapons to states which do not already possess them.

Upon that minimum reciprocal undertaking a system of viable measures might over the course of time be constructed which would make full use and depend for its effectiveness upon the operation of existing bodies within the United Nations system.

I have in mind for example, as part of such an overall system, an extension of the present safeguards procedures. As these procedures stand, they apply essentially to assistance derived by one country from another in the peaceful uses of the atom. They do not, on the whole, apply to a country's peaceful nuclear programmes to the extent that they are carried out without outside assistance. That may be one direction, therefore, in which we could move forward, looking to the day when nuclear and non-nuclear states alike might be prepared to put all their non-military nuclear programmes under the safeguards procedures of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

There is another direction in which progress may be possible. The present safeguards procedures are designed to prevent the manufacture of nuclear weapons. They do not relate to the transfer of control of such weapons. That suggests that the time has come when it might be useful to consider some supplementary mechanism which would deal with situations where:

there has been an alleged or suspected transfer of control of nuclear weapons by one state to another. I can envisage a role being played by the Security Council or regional organizations, as the case may be, in the operation of such a mechanism.

In recognition of the acceptance of those constraints and their contribution to the building of international confidence, it should, surely, not be beyond the collective genius of the nuclear powers to provide those non-nuclear states, which are either non-aligned or neutral and which evidently regard the option of being able to become nuclear powers at some future time as a factor contributing to their national security, with a credible guarantee against nuclear attack. This would not, of course, alter in any way their non-aligned or neutral status.

These are some of the directions in which I see the possibilities of progress in the field of disarmament. In the final analysis, however, disarmament is only one avenue towards peace. It cannot by itself vouchsafe peace to the world. In particular, we must not let our preoccupation with disarmament diminish our efforts to strengthen "the sense of community and commonwealth of interest in the world in which lies the real hope of making weapons less relevant".

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