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STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.



STATEMENT BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
FLORA MACDONALD,
ON THE OCCASION OF
DISARMAMENT WEEK,
OCTOBER 24 - 31, 1979

The question of disarmament continues to occupy a large part of the UN's attention, much as it has since the organization's inception 34 years ago. October 24-30, 1979 has been officially designated Disarmament Week by the United Nations. Disarmament and arms control is a long and painful process. Nevertheless, progress has been made in some areas over the years to limit weapons of war, and I remain optimistic that more progress will be made in the future.

The United States and the Soviet Union have, as a result of the SALT negotiations, taken a first step to placing equal numerical ceilings on the numbers of strategic nuclear weapons possessed by both of these states. Discussions between the UK, USSR and USA concerning a comprehensive test ban have succeeded in defining the major elements of a treaty. At Canada's initiative the General Assembly has called for negotiations to ban the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. Nevertheless, the nuclear arms race continues, and the danger of the spread of these weapons remains.

Last year about \$400 billion was spent for military purposes, of which some eighty per cent was allocated to non-nuclear weapons. Thirty-two countries spend more than 20 per cent of their annual central government expenditures on defence. The control of the sales of conventional weaponry is therefore a growing concern. Canada is particularly interested in such UN initiatives as proposals for reductions in military spending and the establishment of public records of arms sales and transfers. We have supported efforts by regional groups, especially in Latin America, to limit levels of arms spending and participate in the talks to reduce forces in Europe.

A significant event in the history of disarmament was the UN Tenth Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. An important aspect of the resulting final document was the call for more research and education on disarmament, and greater contact with interested Non-governmental Organizations. As a result, the UN is carrying out eight major research projects, of which the study of disarmament and development is the most extensive. Canada participates in this study and a Canadian is also taking part in the UN study of the implications of nuclear weapons. The Department of External Affairs is fostering research in other aspects of arms control, such as verification, and has formed a consultative group of Non-governmental Organizations to exchange views on these and other matters of common concern. It is also hoped to publish a newsletter.

There will be a second special session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament in 1982. Before that, there will be meetings on the operation of the Biological Weapons Convention and of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) will meet again in 1980, and there will be further UN negotiations on limiting the use of certain conventional weapons that are considered especially inhumane. So there will be no lack of activity. Our hope must continue to be that the nations of the world can reach agreement, step by step, on real measures of détente and security that enable human energies to be diverted from preparations for war to peaceful cooperation.