



Statements and Speeches

No. 75/13

THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY -- AN ESSENTIAL SHIELD

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Geneva, May 7, 1975.

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Madame President, we are here because of the world's concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons, both the increase in those held by the existing nuclear-weapon powers and the danger that they will be acquired by additional states. Canada believes it remains vital to check these dangers, lest grave strains be placed on international stability or -- worse -- lest the risk of nuclear conflict become greater.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the best available barrier to an increase in the number of nuclear-weapon states.

We also believe adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is the best means by which those who forswear the possession of nuclear weapons can develop the non-military uses of nuclear energy while providing other nations with effective reassurances concerning their peaceful intentions. We believe that the treaty can encourage the wider sharing of nuclear resources and technology by ensuring that nuclear co-operation will serve only peaceful purposes. We see the treaty as important to international *détente* and to encouraging efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Canada ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty conscious that it had discriminatory features, that it had weaknesses, and that some states might not adhere to it. Nevertheless, we have given the treaty our strong support. We have done so out of the conviction that, on balance, the treaty clearly serves the interests of those very many countries like Canada that wish to avoid the moral burden, the dangers, the fears and the dissipation of creative energy and physical resources that would be entailed if they had to resort to nuclear arms in a world of many nuclear-armed states.

Our support for the purposes of the Non-Proliferation Treaty has not diminished, but this is not to say that we are confident of its continuing strength or fully satisfied with its implementation.

The treaty's basic purpose is to ensure that no nuclear-weapon states parties to the treaty will transfer nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear-weapon state and that no non-nuclear-weapon state party will manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices. In the five years the treaty has been in force, an impressive number of states have made these pledges and all parties have remained true to them.

However, we should not hide the fact that the treaty is not as strong an instrument as we had hoped for. Although over 90 countries are now parties, many states have neither ratified nor signed the treaty. It was hoped that the treaty's existence would discourage even non-parties from developing nuclear-explosive devices for whatever purpose, but one of these states has carried out a nuclear explosion. We had also hoped that the treaty could encourage the nuclear-weapon states to achieve not only limitations but reductions in the size of their nuclear forces and a halt to nuclear-weapons testing. These goals still evade us.

The change in world energy costs has increased the need to facilitate the transfer -- especially to the developing countries -- of nuclear technology and resources necessary for the production of electricity. The treaty, however, has not yet established a universally-applied system under which nuclear co-operation can be expanded with full assurance that, in the longer term, only the peaceful uses of nuclear energy will be served.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty needs more vigorous support by all its parties -- a more determined implementation of commitments under the treaty. The treaty needs urgently to gain the adherence of states that have signed but not yet ratified it. We must seek the adherence of all states, whether or not we agree with their policies in other areas. The treaty needs to be reinforced by complementary measures that can be supported even by states that are not prepared to accede to the treaty at this time.

The recent ratification of the treaty by five more states of the European Economic Community and by the Republic of Korea, and the early ratification by Japan and several other states, will greatly strengthen the treaty, particularly as many of these states are highly advanced in nuclear technology. There is, therefore, the prospect of a more determined international effort to promote co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under a strong non-proliferation régime. But that prospect could fade. That is why this review conference is of such importance. The conference must achieve a positive reaffirmation of the treaty's purposes and a re-dedication by the parties to meet their commitments under the treaty.

It is a basic premise of the treaty that, if the further spread of nuclear weapons is to be halted, there should also be a halt to -- and, indeed, a reversal of -- the momentum of the nuclear-arms race. Following the conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Soviet Union and the United States began their strategic-arms limitation talks. These have been of major importance in promoting a climate of strategic stability and of political *détente* between the super-powers. But that is not enough. The talks have not halted the momentum of the nuclear-arms race or achieved steps of actual nuclear disarmament. The Canadian Government is conscious of the complexity and difficulty in achieving even gradual measures of nuclear disarmament. It is essential, however, that the super-powers make a more determined effort to achieve this objective at an early date. It is our hope that the final document of this conference will contain a firm recommitment to the objective of nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon powers party to the treaty.

Perhaps the achievement of no other measure would so help to support the non-proliferation objective as the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban. Canada will welcome any interim steps to facilitate the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban, but we strongly believe that, to meet the objective of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a comprehensive ban must be achieved at the earliest possible date.

A second premise of the treaty is that it should encourage international co-operation in the exchange of nuclear technology and materials for peaceful uses, especially between advanced and developing countries. It is important that ways of fulfilling this objective be considered at this conference.

Canada will continue to play its full part in contributing to the International Atomic Energy Agency's General Fund for Technical Assistance and to the United Nations Development Program, which also finances projects implemented by the Agency. But it is Canada's intention to provide, within its overall aid criteria and priorities, increased amounts of technical assistance in the nuclear area, bilaterally or through appropriate multilateral channels such as the IAEA, to developing countries party to the NPT. Moreover, future Canadian bilateral official development-assistance commitments for the financing of nuclear projects will be undertaken solely to NPT party states. Furthermore, a country's adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty will be an important factor in reaching decisions on the provision of Canadian Government export financing in the nuclear field.

Let me add here that, whether or not Canada extends financial assistance in the nuclear field, it will provide nuclear material, equip-

ment and technology to other countries only on the basis of binding commitments that Canadian supplies will not serve the development of any nuclear-explosive device for whatever purpose. This policy will apply equally to all countries. Canada is determined that its nuclear assistance must not contribute to the manufacture of nuclear-explosive devices.

The promotion of an effective international safeguards system is a prerequisite to a greater exchange of nuclear technology and materials, including exchanges between advanced and developing countries. Thus, both exporters and importers of nuclear technology and materials, whether or not parties to the treaty, have a strong interest in the application of effective safeguards by the IAEA. An exporter of nuclear materials and technology such as Canada is anxious to promote international commerce and co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but only with assurance that such co-operation will be fully compatible with international security. The most satisfactory way for states to give that assurance to the international community is by participating in this treaty and by accepting its safeguards provisions.

As more and more non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the treaty develop nuclear-energy capacities, the more important will be the role of IAEA safeguards applied in these states. These safeguards serve as a reassurance to neighbours and co-operating states alike that nuclear energy is not being diverted to the manufacture of nuclear-explosive devices.

Perhaps the most successful aspect of the treaty has been the IAEA's verification of the safeguards commitments of the non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the treaty. Canada was the first country with a large nuclear industry to accept NPT safeguards inspection of all its nuclear facilities. Any initial uneasiness we may have had about their possible intrusiveness or economic burden has disappeared. There is no evidence that their application has in any appreciable way hindered the development of nuclear technology or the operation of nuclear power facilities within Canada. Nor have they proved in any way incompatible with Canadian sovereignty.

It is important that the depositary powers also place their civil nuclear facilities under international safeguards as a demonstration of their support for the purposes of this treaty. The United States and the United Kingdom have already made offers to place their peaceful nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards and are negotiating agreements to this end. We welcome their willingness to do so. We urge the Soviet Union to take the same step. We hope that the acceptance of safeguards on their civil facilities by the depositary

powers will eventually be followed by a halt in the production of fissile material for military purposes.

The careful accounting of nuclear material required by NPT safeguards can help to meet another growing problem. The increase in the production of fissile nuclear materials originating in nuclear-power reactors throughout the world and of transport of such materials has raised concerns about the possible theft of nuclear materials and of their use to threaten governments and societies. Although this danger is not dealt with in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is desirable that the conference encourage further international action to establish appropriate standards of physical security of fissile materials.

A controversial aspect of the international sharing of nuclear technology has been the question of the peaceful application of nuclear explosions. When the Non-Proliferation Treaty was negotiated, Canada was one of those countries that, while ready to give up the right to develop nuclear explosive devices, were anxious that non-nuclear-weapon states have full opportunity to share in any potential benefits from the peaceful application of nuclear explosions demonstrated by the experimentation of the nuclear-weapon states.

Considering Canada's vast size and resources, it might be thought that Canada is among the countries most likely to be able to benefit from peaceful nuclear explosions. Canadian Government experts have reviewed the economic and environmental acceptability of applying peaceful nuclear explosions in Canada. They have concluded that, generally, the experimentation so far undertaken in the United States and the U.S.S.R. holds out little promise for the practical application of nuclear explosions to resource extraction or engineering projects in Canada, at least during the next decade.

While circumstances vary from country to country, it is our view that, if there were to be a halt in the experimentation or application of peaceful nuclear explosions at this time, it is unlikely that any country would suffer significant economic disadvantage. We should think it in the interest of the non-proliferation régime and of achieving a comprehensive test-ban to halt experimentation in this area, at least until a thorough re-evaluation of the world's resource and energy needs presents a more compelling case for the use of peaceful nuclear explosions.

Some governments may have more optimistic views about the balance of potential benefits and risks of peaceful nuclear explosions. A thorough international examination of the value of continuing experimentation in the application of peaceful nuclear explosions is

needed. Should it be the widely-shared view that the international community's interest would, on balance, be better served by continuing experimentation, it will be necessary to assess the need for a more formal international régime for peaceful nuclear explosions. That possibility was, of course, envisaged in Article V of the treaty. Consistent with the treaty, it would have to ensure that any benefits identified would be available to all non-nuclear-weapon states by way of services provided by the nuclear-weapon powers. To ensure that all states are informed of the results of experimentation and receive non-discriminatory treatment, such a régime should call upon the nuclear-weapon powers to give notice of, and to report on, peaceful applications of nuclear explosions in their own territories. Such a régime, however, could only be acceptable if it did not contribute to the development of nuclear weapons by either the non-nuclear-weapon states or by the nuclear-weapon powers.

This conference cannot be expected to resolve this complex issue. It involves many aspects. However, the conference should call upon the appropriate international bodies, particularly the IAEA, to see that this important question is fully explored.

I have referred to some aspects of the treaty that should be reviewed at this conference in the interest of engendering greater support for the treaty's objectives. The treaty's purposes will also be served -- and perhaps be best served -- by more vigorous efforts to lessen the tensions that exist between states in so many areas of the world today. The general effort of states to improve the international climate is paramount to discouraging the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Obviously, for those states in areas of current strife, the objective of greater regional stability and peace is vital. Article VII of the treaty points to the positive contribution that can be made to regional stability and non-proliferation by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such arrangements could find their basis simply in co-ordinated ratifications of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by states of a region. An incentive to such efforts would be an offer by the nuclear-weapon states of specific security assurances in respect of parties to such regional undertakings.

Canada's objectives at this conference can be summarized thus: First, we seek to obtain a clear recognition by the nuclear-weapon states of the urgency and necessity of reversing the momentum of the nuclear-arms race and an affirmation by them of greater determination to reduce their nuclear-destructive capabilities. Second, we wish to see a recognition by all non-nuclear-weapon states that their security interests are best served by preventing a further proliferation of

nuclear-weapon states and by reaffirming their determination to pursue only the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Third, we seek greater recognition of the need for all countries, and particularly the developing countries, to have access to nuclear technology and materials where this can serve their social and economic well-being, but with the understanding that such nuclear co-operation will take place only in a way to ensure the world's security.

Madame President, I have not attempted to hide the fact that the Non-Proliferation Treaty is not a perfect instrument and that its implementation has not fully met our hopes. I have pointed to the increased dangers of nuclear proliferation. I have stressed the urgent need for stronger support of the treaty as the basic international instrument to prevent further proliferation and to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This conference must respond to this need. This conference must arrive at a firm and vigorous declaration of mankind's need for a saner charting of its future nuclear course.

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