



# Statements and Speeches

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## ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES

Statement by J. Alan Beesley, Canadian Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, before that Conference, Geneva, February 4, 1986.

Mr. President . . . As we began our deliberations here just a year ago, there was a note of cautious expectation in the air. The governments of the USSR and the US had only recently agreed to resume negotiations on the central arms control and disarmament issues of our time. Moreover, in taking this step, which entailed considerable statesmanship on each side, the two governments set themselves agreed negotiating objectives which are impressive in their scope and comprehensiveness, namely, "The prevention of an arms race in space and its termination on earth; the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms; and the strengthening of strategic stability." They stated as an ultimate goal "the complete elimination of nuclear weapons." We, and the watching world, saw a glimmer of hope.

Now, little more than a year later, that flame of hope not only remains alive, but burns a little brighter. Negotiators for the two governments completed three rounds of negotiations in Geneva during 1985. President Reagan and Secretary-General Gorbachev met in Geneva in November and issued an important Joint Statement, affirming *inter alia* the intent to accelerate the work of their negotiations. The fourth round of negotiations is already underway.

Happily, this process has produced more than rhetoric. Detailed and substantive proposals and counter-proposals have been made, reflecting a readiness on both sides to agree to major reductions in their respective nuclear arsenals as a first step toward implementing the agreed negotiating objectives in their entirety. Thus, in the Canadian view, the good faith and serious intent of each of the parties to these negotiations have been persuasively demonstrated. We applaud the constructive beginning which has been made in this all-important negotiation. We recognize that the negotiation is likely to be long and arduous and that to expect quick, comprehensive solutions on the many outstanding issues would be unrealistic. We urge the two parties to continue their negotiating efforts with all the determination, skill and patience that the importance of the subject matter demands, as they have pledged to do. Canada, for its part, pledges that in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and all other relevant international fora, we will support, facilitate and attempt to reinforce these crucial bilateral negotiations.

It is a reality of our time that the US and USSR, by their separate and joint decisions, will determine central aspects of any international framework for preserving global security. But of course, the establishment of a stable basis for enduring international peace and security must not and cannot be a proprietary monopoly of the two superpowers. Their negotiations are of vital concern to all peoples; as Canada's Prime Minister has recently affirmed, peace and security is everybody's business. It is for every responsible government, through its national policies and by constructive participation in international fora such as the Conference on Disarmament where such issues are addressed, to make its own contribution to the collective international effort to come to grips with the complex and seemingly

intractable issues involved in creating conditions for stable, enduring international peace and security. The Canadian government reaffirms its determination to do just that.

In this forum, the seriousness of Canada's commitment to the pursuit of realizable arms control and disarmament measures is well known. Canada's long-standing approach to arms control and disarmament, sometimes criticized as idealistic, is not starry-eyed but directed to the pursuit of practical and achievable goals. We see arms control not as separate from, but intimately bound up with the legitimate concern of all states for their national security. The essence of our approach has been expressed succinctly by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in the following words, "The world at large should recognize that arms control is a component of, not a substitute for, a healthy national security policy. A wise and correct approach to security cannot ignore the virtues of arms control, just as arms control cannot ignore the requirements of national security. The search for either at the expense of the other is fruitless. And the search for both is imperative."

The Canadian government has set for itself six arms control priority objectives. These have been publicly stated by Canada's Prime Minister and were spelled out by our Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Joe Clark, in the Canadian parliament on January 23. These six priority objectives are:

- 1) negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability;
- 2) maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime;
- 3) negotiation of a global chemical weapons ban;
- 4) support for a comprehensive test ban treaty;
- 5) prevention of an arms race in outer space; and
- 6) the building of confidence sufficient to facilitate the reduction of military forces in Europe and elsewhere.

We intend to pursue these objectives actively and by all means at our disposal. We will be pressing our views and policy objectives in bilateral talks with our allies, with governments of the socialist bloc and with the Peoples Republic of China and with the governments of neutral and non-aligned countries. We will play an active and constructive role in various multilateral fora, here in the Conference on Disarmament, in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), at the UN Disarmament Commission, in the Mutual Balanced Force Reductions talks in Vienna and at the Stockholm Conference and other Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe meetings which address broad security-related issues.

We see the Conference on Disarmament, however, as pre-eminent among the multilateral fora dealing with arms control and disarmament. A heavy responsibility weighs on its 40 members. We are, in a very

real sense, negotiating on behalf of the international community as a whole. It therefore behoves us to approach our tasks with as much energy, patience, skill and wisdom as is at our command. Our governments must be prepared to seek out common ground which can become a basis for practical, operable measures.

Our collective record in recent years is not something of which we can boast. In the decade since the conclusion of the Environmental Modification treaty, we have failed to reach agreement on a single arms control measure. The reasons for this are of course multiple. It cannot be attributed entirely to the parlous state of East-West relations, though this has at times been an important factor. On occasion, agreements which have seemed within reach have eluded our grasp sometimes because some of us have pressed to expand the scope of an agreement beyond what has been effectively negotiable in this forum. The objectives sought were legitimate, but there may have been too much readiness to pursue the ideal at the expense of the achievable.

However, not all of our difficulties are due to divergent purposes or failures of political will. There is an increasingly pressing need to re-examine our procedures and processes with a view to ensuring the optimal use of the limited time, resources and energy at our disposal. I shall not dwell on the matter at this time, having intervened more than once during our 1985 session to make this very point. Suffice it to say that there are several procedural habits and routines which have evolved in this forum which could usefully be re-assessed in order to make our work more efficient and, just as important, less contentious.

I would urge again that you as our conference president, as you have already pledged to do with the support and co-operation of all delegations, give priority attention during this session to exploring and examining ways by which we might, by agreement, improve and streamline our processes and procedures so that we might better serve our governments and the peoples whom they represent.

Whatever our concerns about procedural matters, however, it is our primary task to deal with the substantive items on our agenda. I have alluded already to the Canadian government's generally positive appreciation of the course of the negotiations thus far between the US and the USSR. While this should be a source of encouragement to us here, it should not prompt us to slacken our efforts but rather to intensify them. It should entitle us to a heightened expectation that in this forum, where our first obligation is to seek out common ground and expand areas of agreement, we will be able to avoid political polemics, invective and recriminatory exchanges, which are out of place in any serious negotiating forum.

As in recent years, the negotiation of a verifiable, comprehensive ban on chemical weapons is a priority item on our agenda. Modest but detectable progress was made on this item during the 1985 session, but there is still cause for disappointment in spite of the strenuous efforts of Ambassador Turbanski of Poland, the chairman of the chemical weapons *ad hoc* committee. Known instances of recent chemical weapons use should add to our collective sense of urgency to attain the earliest possible conclusion of such a ban. We note with particular attention the affirmation by President Reagan and Secretary-General Gorbachev in their joint statement of their intent to "accelerate their efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable international convention" as well as their intention to "initiate a dialogue on

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preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons." It is our understanding that this latter initiative is not intended in any way to divert efforts from the priority need to conclude a comprehensive chemical weapons ban; so too with respect to the statement contained in the proposals most recently made by Secretary-General Gorbachev raising the possibility of "certain interim steps," possibly involving multilateral agreement on matters relating to the non-transfer of chemical weapons. As others have pointed out, and indeed my delegation has in the past, it will be of limited utility if we get an effective bilateral convention which is not a comprehensive convention in both senses in extending to all the main issues under negotiation and in comprising a genuine non-proliferation convention.

Despite the considerable progress which has been made, there remain several difficult issues to be resolved if a chemical weapons ban is to be concluded. Among these, the verification provisions of the treaty will require especially serious and dispassionate effort if agreement is to be achieved. It will be recalled that, in April 1984, almost two years ago, the Vice-President of the United States of America tabled in this forum a draft treaty text which is the most comprehensive proposal yet before us setting out in detail the kind of verification regime his government prefers and would regard as adequate. Canada has indicated its readiness in principle to accept and apply the kinds of verification provisions contained in the US text. However, while there has been much criticism of these proposals, no delegation has thus far come forward with concrete, substantive alternative comprehensive proposals which would delineate with clarity the area of common ground and the areas of disagreement, thus providing a basis for serious negotiation with a view to arriving at verification provisions which would be acceptable to all.

The Canadian government noted, and welcomed, the reaffirmation by the US spokesman in the first committee of the UN General Assembly on October 31, 1985 that "No imbalance in inspection obligations is either desired, intended or contained in any provisions of the United States draft convention banning chemical weapons." The Canadian government has also noted with particular care and interest the recent statement by Secretary-General Gorbachev that, with reference to declarations of the location of chemical weapons production facilities, the cessation of production, the destruction of production facilities and the destruction of chemical weapons stocks, "All these measures would be carried out under strict control including international on-site inspections." We are greatly encouraged by this statement. We hope that during the present session of this conference the delegation of the USSR will be in a position to further elaborate on its precise meaning. The task of seriously negotiating effective, operable and politically acceptable verification provisions for a chemical weapons treaty will be difficult and time-consuming. However, it should not be postponed any longer.

During this session, the Canadian delegation intends to continue to make substantive inputs to the negotiation of a chemical weapons ban. We will be submitting a *Handbook for the Investigation of Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons*. The *Handbook* identifies procedures, equipment and standard formats which would go a long way toward ensuring that the findings of an investigation of alleged chemical weapons use would be as conclusive, convincing and impartial as possible. It reflects Canadian experience and expertise and our longstanding interest in various aspects of verification. It should be of particular value in relation to the provisions of a chemical weapons treaty dealing with a verifiable ban on chemical weapons use, as is being negotiated in this forum. We will also be submitting a technical working paper dealing with identification of chemical substances. We will be making

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available to all delegations through the secretariat a compendium of all chemical weapons documentation of this conference during the period 1983-1985 inclusive.

Another important item on our agenda is the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a subject on which there is widespread and legitimate public anxiety. Last year, an important step forward was taken when we were able to agree on a mandate for an *ad hoc* committee on this item. I pointed out at the time that it was a realistic mandate which takes into account and both complements and accurately reflects the realities concerning the bilateral negotiations already then under way between the US and the USSR, but does not undermine or undercut or prejudice or in any way interfere with those negotiations. At the same time, I expressed the hope that this mandate would not expire at the end of 1985 bearing in mind the wishes of some delegations who would like something more and something better. The view I then expressed continues to be the view of the Canadian government. The mandate has enabled us to make a beginning, but it has by no means been exhausted. It was attained only with great difficulty, skill and perseverance. Any attempt to negotiate it or re-negotiate it would almost certainly involve further lengthy discussion at the expense of substantive deliberation, with little prospect of agreement on a new mandate. Moreover, the political and negotiating context in which the mandate was agreed has not appreciably changed. Indeed, to the extent that the US and USSR are seriously coming to grips with the negotiating objectives they have set for themselves, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space, our need to ensure that our deliberations are complementary to, and not disruptive of, those negotiations is enhanced. Finally, I would note that, due to regrettable procedural delays, our substantive discussions on this item last year were seriously curtailed and as some delegations have pointed out we were able to have only nine meetings. Nevertheless, those discussions, in the Canadian judgement, got off to a reasonably good start. They were substantive. They were for the most part objective. They went some way toward elucidating the complexities and intricacies — technical, legal and political, and we have heard some of them today — involved in this process. However, they remain incomplete. The importance and difficulty of the subject demand that we discharge our last year's mandate with determination and dispatch before we embark on a new one. The reputation of the conference would not be enhanced by procedural wrangles on this item. As was the case last year when we submitted a broad survey on the existing international legal regime in outer space, the Canadian delegation intends to make concrete contributions to substantive discussions. In the process, we will be making available to all delegations, through the Secretariat, a compendium of the 1985 CD documentation on the subject.

The question of a comprehensive nuclear test ban remains an especially important item on our agenda. It has, unfortunately, become one of the more contentious issues. The intensity of feeling it generates reflects both the inherent importance of nuclear weaponry as a core element of the strategic policies of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, and the profound public anxieties arising from an awareness of the massive and relatively indiscriminate destructive power of such weapons. Because the use of such weapons on any significant scale would have serious repercussions not only for combatant states but, almost certainly, for all others as well, the active interest in this item shown by all delegations of this conference is legitimate and understandable. In these circumstances, there may be a consequential need to take care that the strength of our views and concerns, and the vehemency with which they may be expressed, do not become a hindrance to rational discussion of the central issues involved. Here or elsewhere, polemics will not lead the way to better understanding.

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I wish to emphasize that a negotiated, verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban remains a fundamental objective of the Canadian government. Canada continues to favour a careful, step-by-step approach to a nuclear test ban, both on procedure and substance although we respect the views of those who differ. The Canadian government is clearly on record as favouring the re-establishment in the conference of a subsidiary body to address this subject, and I now reiterate that position. Such a body must have a concrete and realistic mandate which would enable the immediate resumption of substantive work, with a view to negotiation of a treaty. We suggest that priority attention be given to reaching agreement on a program of work, which might address the issues of scope, as well as verification and compliance, with appropriately structured working groups. We sense among the countries represented in this room a growing recognition of the potential value of a focussed approach along these lines. The Canadian delegation would be ready to take an active and constructive part in implementing an agreed work program. We hope too that, in support of such efforts, there could be general agreement to press ahead with our important work on seismic exchanges.

Finally, although it is not a separate agenda item, I would like to speak briefly on the broad issue of verification. As is well known here, this is a subject of longstanding priority for Canada, going well beyond mere rhetoric. Significant amounts of the scarce financial and personnel resources available to the Canadian government are being devoted to the serious and methodical examination of the problems and issues connected with verification. Within Canada's Department of External Affairs, for example, a special verification research unit has been established, with an annual budget of a million dollars. As one concrete step, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs announced at UNGA 40 that the Canadian government has decided to upgrade in a substantial way its seismic facility in our Northwest Territories. By this and other means, we intend to accumulate a store of experience and add to our expertise which can increase Canada's ability to contribute in practical and constructive ways to the international negotiation of effective, verifiable arms control measures.

This Canadian approach reflects our firm belief that the verification aspects of arms control and disarmament agreements are in no way subsidiary or secondary elements but are integral and essential parts of such agreements, in some cases amounting to preconditions to final agreement, but not obstacles to be utilized to obfuscate or postpone serious negotiations. This approach reflects our view that questions of confidence are central to all arms control negotiations. The re-configurations of national arsenals which arise from arms control agreements both reflect and reinforce a certain level of reciprocal confidence in the intentions and capabilities of the parties. When it is appreciated that states are being asked to give up security based on weaponry in return for security based on arms control agreements, the importance of this element of trust and confidence is readily apparent. If the necessary levels of confidence are to be sustained and increased, all parties to such agreements must be able to assure effective compliance through adequate verification. Conversely, the inability adequately to assure compliance can lead to reduced levels of confidence, an increase of mistrust and, through a kind of vicious spiral, could bring the whole arms control and disarmament process to a halt. We, of course, recognize that the legitimate need for adequate verification can be abused. For our part, we are convinced that a rational but imaginative approach to verification, far from being a smoke-screen, is a prerequisite in every serious arms control negotiation. In circumstances when all parties are negotiating in good faith, meticulous attention to verification provisions will not be a hindrance to the negotiating progress. On the contrary, it should facilitate such negotiations.

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From this perspective, the Canadian government was especially gratified at the adoption by consensus at UNGA 40 of a resolution reaffirming resoundingly the importance of verification as an essential element of the arms control negotiating process. This confirms to us the high importance of effective verification in disarmament and arms control agreements — not as a partisan issue but as a matter on which there is international consensus. This consensus may be fragile, yet it is a foundation on which we can build. It is in this context that the Canadian delegation will shortly be making available to all delegations a comprehensive, cross-indexed compendium of verbatim statements on verification which have been made in this conference and its predecessors during the period 1962-1983. These records, the sheer size of which some of you may find intimidating, are in fact instructive in indicating the extent to which there is common ground on which we can expand. I trust that this compendium will prove to be a valuable tool for our collective work. . . may I conclude with the hope that 1986, the international year of peace, will prove to be a year of concrete achievement by this conference, a year which we will one day look back upon as a turning point in the history of arms control and disarmament.

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