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Statement by the Head of
the Canadian Delegation,
Douglas Roche, Ambassador
for Disarmament, in the
General Debate of the
Third Non-Proliferation
Treaty Review Conference

GENEVA

August 29, 1985.

Canada brings to this crucial conference a sense of hope and a sense of confidence that our joint efforts in the coming month will be another building block for true and lasting peace in the world. The Non-Proliferation Treaty has more adherents than any other international security treaty, and the number is continuing to expand. This Third Review provides an opportunity for us to send a strong signal throughout the world community for our renewed determination to eliminate nuclear weapons everywhere.

Not the least reason for Canada's expectation of a successful conference is the fact that the presidency is in such competent hands. Your dedication to the NPT, Ambassador Shaker, your scholarliness, your experience, and your global approach will lead us forward together. Another reason for optimism at the beginning is found in the intensity of the preparation; a combination of circumstances has enabled this conference to be better prepared than its predecessors, and here we must thank the chairmen of the three preparatory conferences, Ambassador Imai of Japan, Ambassador Vejvoda of Czechoslovakia, and Ambassador Dhanapala of Sri Lanka for their leadership. The fact that the three working committees of this conference will be chaired by those same three outstanding representatives is further indication that where sincerity and capability meet in a common cause, positive results can be obtained. Many parliamentarians, officials, scholars and non-governmental organizations have also contributed in diverse and important ways to the building of a higher level of world concern about nuclear proliferation. All informed observers want, and expect, us to turn the world away from all nuclear proliferation. And do that, we must.

Mr. President, no one under-estimates the gravity of the present situation in the world; there are too many nuclear weapons in existence, and the potential for further development, in quality and quantity, is too strong. There are inequalities among states, resentments, fears. We have to deal with all these reactions. But in the end, logic compels, history demands and the people of the world plead that governments build the process of order, not degenerate into anarchy. Any weakening of the NPT will lead to the very condition -- nuclear anarchy -- that we are pledged to prevent. The implications of nuclear proliferation are so dangerous for all that we must find a realistic way to constrain such an unacceptable threat to common security and stability. In short, the existing nuclear arms race must cease and the spread of nuclear arms blocked off to prevent nuclear anarchy.

It is with the solid reputation of a country committed to non-proliferation, as well as to nuclear cooperation, that Canada comes to the Third Review Conference of the NPT. Canada's credentials have long been established. Although Canada participated together with the United Kingdom in helping the United States develop the world's first atomic weapons during World War II, it was the first country consciously to forgo the development of nuclear weapons, despite clearly having the technology and capability to do so from the earliest days of the nuclear era. Canada declined to develop a capability to produce nuclear weapons and has adhered firmly to this principle ever since. Instead, Canada has concentrated all of its efforts to the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Canada's nuclear programme is strictly for peaceful purposes and entirely subject to safeguards. With respect to nuclear exports, Canada has a comprehensive nuclear exports policy which is based upon and fully recognizes the central value of the NPT as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation régime. Specifically, Canada will only export nuclear materials, equipment and technology to those non-nuclear weapon states which have made a comprehensive binding commitment to non-proliferation, either by ratifying the NPT or by having taken an equivalent binding step, and have thereby accepted IAEA safeguards on their entire nuclear programme, current and future.

Thus, Canada is a country which deeply respects and values the NPT as an invaluable international treaty embodying the objectives of Canada's arms control, non-proliferation and nuclear cooperation policies. These are:

-- to encourage all nuclear weapon states to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control;

-- to promote the evolution of a more effective and comprehensive international non-proliferation régime;

-- to promote and facilitate nuclear cooperation while at the same time ensuring that Canadian exports do not result in further proliferation.

Canada comes to this Conference with the intention of ensuring a complete review of all aspects of the treaty. An honest evaluation is necessary.

The experience of the previous two Review Conferences provides a guide. Although the First Review Conference in 1975 concluded successfully, it proved to be a highly political exercise, particularly in the areas of nuclear disarmament and security issues. The Neutral and Non-Aligned (NNA) countries, insisting that they had lived up to their obligations under the Treaty, accused the nuclear powers, particularly the superpowers, of not fulfilling either their commitments under Article VI, which deals with the nuclear arms race, or Article IV, which calls for the sharing of nuclear equipment, materials and technology for peaceful uses.

The debate in the closing days and hours of the Conference was marked by acrimony, and it was only at the last moment that the Conference succeeded in adopting by consensus a final document. Nevertheless, this Final Declaration of the Conference reflected the frustration felt by many states, particularly the NNA countries, over the lack of implementation of the basic bargains of the Treaty during the previous five years.

The concerns of the NNA remained outstanding at the time of the Second Review Conference in 1980. However, the atmosphere and disarmament climate were relatively hopeful. The SALT II treaty had been recently signed and promising trilateral (UK, USA, USSR) negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were still officially taking place.

Despite marathon sessions of informal negotiations, the Conference ended without a consensus final document because of lack of agreement on issues relating to nuclear disarmament, particularly on a Comprehensive Test Ban. Although provisional agreement had been reached in Committee II on language dealing with non-proliferation and nuclear cooperation, there was no agreement on a final document. This was a major setback.

A rapid review of the international situation during the past five years regrettably shows a number of opportunities lost. The trilateral talks on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty have ceased; the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree to a practical mandate for a nuclear test ban ad hoc committee. The United Nations second Special Session on Disarmament was not able to produce a consensus final document. The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces negotiations were broken off and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks were suspended. The Stockholm Conference is well into its second year with few signs that East and West are any closer in their approach to confidence-building measures. The Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks in Vienna are still not able to resolve basic issues after more than eleven years of negotiations.

On the other hand, there have been a few encouraging signs and these should not be discounted. The SALT II agreement continues to be the basic strategic working document of the United States and the Soviet Union. Contrary to all dire predictions, the number of nuclear weapon states remains at five and no state has demonstrated a nuclear explosive capability since 1974. The IAEA continues to make a major contribution to the non-proliferation régime through its system of safeguards. NATO's decision to reduce the nuclear stockpile in Europe to the lowest level in more than twenty years is another positive step.

And most significantly, bilateral negotiations have been resumed between the United States and the Soviet Union. Canada fully supports the high goals which the U.S. and the USSR have set for themselves at the Geneva negotiations: 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, leading ultimately to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Although the objectives have been agreed on, the views of the two sides on how to arrive at their shared goals differ dramatically. The road ahead will be a long and arduous one, but a very necessary one. The decision to hold a summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in November is a very important development that should not be lost on this Conference. Dialogue at the highest levels is critically important to set the tone and firm guidelines for all those who must carry them out in detailed technical negotiations. The forthcoming summit has the potential for breaking the disarmament impasse. All nations have a stake in the summit's success.

Mr. President, as we go through our complete review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it will be important to be conscious of the successes and failures of not only the past five years but those since the beginning of the nuclear age. Keeping in mind the problems of the present international security situation, Canada will strive to achieve two basic objectives at this Review Conference:

-- the maintenance of the NPT as the basic element of an effective international non-proliferation régime;

-- the reaffirmation by the Review Conference of the purpose and provisions of the NPT.

These objectives, which may appear modest at first glance, are truly critical ones in the long run. They mean that we must ensure that the debate on Article VI issues contributes in a positive manner to the overall objectives of the NPT and does not degenerate into an acrimonious debate which will only hold hostage progress in other areas of the NPT. They mean a reconfirmation of the need for nuclear weapon states, and particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, to negotiate in good faith toward the adoption of effective measures to achieve a cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and a significant reduction in nuclear arms.

Progress towards a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has been traditionally associated with compliance on Article VI. For Canada, the achievement of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty continues to be a fundamental and abiding Canadian objective. We believe that a CTB is a concrete, realistic measure which would constitute a major step in curbing the development of new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons. It is regarded as an extremely important step towards halting both the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. As the UN Secretary-General stated earlier this year, "It is of direct importance to the future of humanity to end all nuclear explosions. No other means would be as effective in limiting the further development of nuclear weapons."

The world community would be relieved to see progress toward a verifiable, multilateral CTBT. Canada continues to work to overcome the significant political and technical obstacles, not least of which involves the verification of an eventual treaty. Canada has been an active participant in the Conference on Disarmament's Seismic Experts Group, strengthening the capability for seismic verification of a CTB.

While a review of events in the field of international security provides a checkered image of progress achieved, the situation is quite different if one turns to Articles III and IV of the Treaty. In the area of nuclear non-proliferation/nuclear cooperation, the Treaty has served the world well. Proliferation risks have largely been contained and enhanced cooperation has taken place.

The comprehensive legally binding commitment to non-proliferation which the NPT offers and the verification of that commitment through IAEA safeguards together provide fundamental elements for the framework for nuclear cooperation. Canada believes that both elements -- commitment and verification of that commitment -- are essential to ensure that nuclear cooperation activities do

not result in proliferation. This concept, and therefore the NPT itself, forms the base upon which Canada's non-proliferation and nuclear cooperation policy is built; this is a policy of major political and economic significance.

Consequently, Canada will work towards securing from the Conference a broad recognition of the crucial role the NPT plays in reducing the risks of proliferation while at the same time providing the necessary framework for nuclear cooperation to take place. Canada will actively promote the endorsement by the Conference of the principle of a comprehensive, binding non-proliferation commitment and NPT-type full-scope safeguards as an essential condition of nuclear supply.

Regarding Article VII, and consistent with Canada's policy of promoting an effective non-proliferation régime based on the NPT, Canada has been strongly supportive of the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ) where they command the support of the countries in the area and promote regional and international stability. Such zones are not a fully satisfactory alternative to the ratification of the NPT by some of the countries of the areas concerned; nonetheless, in the absence of universal or near-universal adherence to the NPT, the creation of such zones can make a significant contribution to the objective of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Canada has supported United Nations resolutions calling for such zones in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia and has welcomed the very important recent declaration of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. Canada has also backed measures which would consolidate the establishment of a NWFZ in Latin America in accordance with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in spite of Canadian opposition to a provision in the Treaty which allows for the explosion of nuclear devices for so-called peaceful purposes.

In this regard, under Article V, we reiterate Canada's view that the economic value of the peaceful applications of nuclear explosions remains in doubt. We believe that the independent possession of peaceful nuclear explosive devices by non-nuclear weapon states would pose a threat to regional and international security.

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Mr. President, any agreement that brings together so many diverse nations will be subject to certain strains and problems of compliance. In the international community, it is difficult to legislate security -- that is what certain articles of the NPT are attempting to do. The NPT, for all its strengths and weaknesses, is still an international instrument whose credibility and applicability must be constantly monitored and nurtured. The NPT cannot be taken for granted. It is a valuable international instrument, having at once both practical and moral dimensions. The fact that countries are continuing to sign the NPT, and continuing to feel that they should sign the NPT, is a tribute to both the moral force and practical utility of the Treaty. It reflects a basic belief within the international community that proliferation is a bad thing and the absence of the NPT would have disastrous results.

The goals which I have enunciated reflect Canada's expectation and desire to have a thorough review of all of the aspects of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is also Canada's expectation that the final consensus document, no matter what its ultimate format will be, will reflect the thoroughness with which we have reviewed the Treaty and reaffirm its fundamental value in today's world. As in 1975, let us formally reaffirm our "strong common interest in averting the further proliferation of nuclear weapons" by strong support for the Treaty.

In reaching out to critics and non-signatories of the NPT, the Conference can make these points:

-- To those countries which remain critics of the NPT, and argue that the Treaty is discriminatory, we point out that the same discrimination exists in the United Nations Security Council;

-- To those nations that call for an end to the nuclear arms race while refusing themselves to sign the NPT, we suggest that their appeal would be more credible were they a Party to the Treaty;

-- To those states which retain the nuclear option for perceived regional considerations, we ask them to consider the tragic and devastating consequences of a regional nuclear war;

-- Finally, to those nuclear weapon states which insist on remaining outside the Treaty, we strongly suggest that they follow the example already set by the United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union and to note that the security and sovereignty of these nations has in no way been compromised -- on the contrary, it has been enhanced.

The Treaty has survived its first 15 years -- not untarnished and not without criticism. An assessment of how the Treaty has worked so far, where it has succeeded and where it may have failed, can only serve to strengthen it.

It is the responsibility of the Third Review Conference to demonstrate that adherence to the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would result in a powerful non-proliferation régime guaranteeing the reduction, and eventual elimination, of nuclear weapons. That is a goal that commands our highest priority. Canada hopes, expects, and will work to achieve that goal.