



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 58/17 CANADIAN STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION

Text of a statement made in the Security Council April 29, 1958, by Mr. Charles Ritchie, Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the United States proposal for a system of inspection in northern areas.

Slightly more than a week ago...I referred to the world-wide anxiety about the possibility of an outbreak of nuclear warfare...The Canadian Delegation sought to emphasize the grave concern with which peoples everywhere viewed the prospect that through some accidental spark the highly explosive tinder of today's armed preparedness might be fired. Thus each advance in the science of rockets and nuclear energy is looked upon not only as a great step forward into the future but alternatively as a step toward the destruction of mankind, because of the great potential for war involved.

Of course, the fear and anxiety derive not from the scientific developments themselves but from the doubt and suspicion which characterize the relations between the states mainly concerned. This condition of suspicion and fear, this wariness about the intentions of the opposite side, this lack of confidence in international dealings has led the world along the path of armed preparedness.

Moreover, as was amply explained at our last meeting, as long as the nations of the West consider that their security is threatened, they will insist that defence preparations continue and improve in accordance with scientific discovery. I have no doubt that this attitude finds corresponding expression on the Soviet side.

During the past few years, however, there has been some sifting of this problem through international study in the General Assembly, in the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee, and elsewhere. We believe that this process has made it more possible for us to define a principal cause of doubt and anxiety in international relations.

We have seen that a high degree of armed preparedness has emerged as the product of a military appreciation that with the modern weapons at its disposal one side could strike a crippling blow at the other and quickly render the adversary helpless. Clearly this result could most easily be achieved through a surprise attack and those responsible for national defence have devoted much energy and ingenuity to devise means of meeting that threat.

As we and others have frequently emphasized, the removal of that risk does not lie either in unilateral action or in meaningless declarations. If for example the West were to lower its guard, such action, we believe, would increase rather than reduce the risk of nuclear war through mistake or miscalculation. The solution lies in dealing with the causes which have led to armed preparedness and one of the main causes in our view is the danger of surprise attack. It is what produces the gnawing fear that if one side should halt or reduce its defence preparedness the other would strike a death blow.

It is just because we recognize surprise attack as perhaps the most ominous of the dangers facing the world that the Canadian Government welcomes warmly the initiative which the United States has taken in the Council today. In our view the proposal for the prompt establishment of a system of inspection in northern areas, to provide safeguards against the danger of surprise attack, represents a practicable attempt to deal with this most deeply rooted cause of anxiety and tension.

Before I enter further into the substance of the proposal now before us, I should like to call attention to the somewhat novel situation in which the Council finds itself. I think I am right in saying that this is one of the few if not the first occasion on which a member has requested the Council to convene to consider not a complaint, nor the action consequent on a General Assembly resolution, nor the report of a subsidiary organ or of some agent of the UN, but a positive and constructive proposal which is designed to assist the Council in maintaining international peace and security. It is the hope of the Canadian Government that these proceedings will show that the Council can act constructively through the adoption of preventive as well as remedial measures.

The Canadian Government has already expressed its readiness to open the whole of Canada under a general system of inspection. Moreover, the positive Canadian attitude towards measures to provide against surprise attack is one which we have maintained for several years. I might, however, give some precision to Canada's attitude towards partial plans for international inspection. We are prepared to have a part of Canada included in any initial scheme of inspection which would involve a zone containing a North American portion and a Soviet portion of relatively equal importance. My point is that we are not wedded to any specific proposal and the essence of the Canadian position is that the areas of both sides should be of comparable importance, so that the arrangements would be equitable.

We recognize that the establishment of a system of safeguards which included Canadian territory would mean that there might be international teams of observers, equipped with electronic devices and the necessary communications, stationed in Canada with certain rights of inspection and freedom of movement. We further recognize that foreign aircraft for international inspection purposes might be authorized to overfly Canada and that logistic support elements for such aircraft would probably be stationed in Canada. We also recognize that Canada might well be called upon to provide personnel, aircraft and other kinds of support as a contribution to the system. These various obligations are considered acceptable in principle, subject to the negotiation of the details on a equitable basis. In other words, just as Canada has previously endorsed the more general concept of an Arctic Zone of international inspection as part of a wider system, we are prepared to accept such a zone in itself.

We would like to think that the proposal now before us is only a first step, to be followed both by disarmament measures relating to nuclear and conventional weapons and forces and by a further extension of safeguards against surprise attack. It is our hope that co-operation in the development of security in the Arctic can provide a basis for larger agreements relating to disarmament and other questions, which could be examined jointly with the U.S.S.R. Among these other measures which might be discussed, for example, are those which would be necessary to verify compliance with an agreement to suspend nuclear tests.

I must say that the reception given to the United States proposal by the Soviet Representative this morning was depressing indeed. It was more than depressing--in our view the position taken by the Soviet Representative was in some ways incomprehensible. If the Soviet Government is seriously worried about developments in the Arctic, why do they reject a proposal designed to set up inspection in the area? They may estimate that such inspection can serve no useful purpose and cannot diminish insecurity, but how can they know this in advance?

The United States draft resolution calls on the states mentioned "to designate representatives to participate in immediate discussions with a view to agreeing on the technical arrangements required." Surely it is in such discussions that the scope of inspection required and its objectives could be examined. Does the Soviet Government refuse even to discuss these problems and, if I may ask, what harm could it do to the interests of the Soviet Government to participate in such discussions? They would at least have demonstrated their willingness to examine all possibilities of decreasing international tension. We for our part believe that the plan for a northern zone of inspection is practicable and important and

Canada pledges itself to give all support to the proposal. We hope that the Soviet Government will on second thoughts reconsider the negative response which the Soviet Representative has indicated today.

I am aware, Mr. President, that I have not commented on the Soviet draft resolution and the Swedish draft amendment to the United States draft resolution. As I may have occasion to intervene again at a later stage of the debate, I shall reserve my remarks on those proposals for the time being.

S/C