



PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

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STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR TESTS

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CONCERNED BY THE INTENSITY OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING PROGRAMME OF THE SOVIET UNION DURING RECENT WEEKS. THAT PROGRAMME HAS INVOLVED NUMEROUS EXPLOSIONS IN RAPID SUCCESSION INCLUDING SOME OF THE LARGEST SIZE AND HAS LED TO AN OBSERVABLE SHARP RISE IN THE BACKGROUND RADIATION IN THE LATITUDES IN WHICH CANADA IS SITUATED. THE GOVERNMENT IS DISPOSED TO REGARD WITH FAVOUR ANY SOVIET ACTION WHICH WOULD MODIFY THEIR POLICY OF INTENSIFYING THE RATE OF TESTING. TO THE EXTENT THAT IT MAY RESULT IN A HALT IN THE RISE IN RADIATION WHICH HAS BEEN CAUSED BY THE SPEED-UP IN SOVIET WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT, THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT WELCOMES THE REPORT THAT THE SOVIET UNION INTENDS TO CEASE CARRYING OUT TESTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. AT THE SAME TIME, IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT UNCERTAINTY OVER THE VERIFICATION OF TESTS, THE REST OF THE WORLD CANNOT BE ASSURED, IN THE ABSENCE OF SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION, THAT IN FACT NO FURTHER TESTS ARE BEING PREPARED AND CONDUCTED BY THE SOVIET UNION.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT IN THIS MATTER IS CONSISTENT WITH ITS PREVIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARDS NUCLEAR TESTS AS WELL AS TOWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS OF UNILATERAL ACTION IN THE DISARMAMENT FIELD ON THE PART OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS. THE CANADIAN VIEW, WHICH WAS EMPHASIZED AT THE LAST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HAS BEEN THAT WHILE THE CESSATION OR SUSPENSION OF NUCLEAR TESTS WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE, IT WOULD NOT ALONE HALT, MUCH LESS REVERSE, THE NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS RACE AND THAT SOME MORE FUNDAMENTAL ACTION MUST ALSO BE AGREED UPON. THE GOVERNMENT HAS WELCOMED UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT ACTIONS

WHILE INDICATING THAT THEY WOULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED MORE EFFECTIVELY TO THE RESTORATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE AND THE REMOVAL OF CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR HAD THEY BEEN FEATURES OF A DISARMAMENT AGREEMENT WHICH INCLUDED SUITABLE MEASURES OF VERIFICATION. IN THE PRESENT CASE THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT THE RESOLUTION OF THE SUPREME SOVIET WOULD HAVE MERITED A WARMER WELCOME HAD IT BEEN PRESENTED LESS AS A CHALLENGE TO OTHER MAJOR POWERS AND MORE AS A FOUNDATION OF A WIDER AGREEMENT.

CANADA HAS CONSTANTLY SOUGHT IN THE UNITED NATIONS FOR AN ACCEPTABLE WAY OF MAKING A FIRST APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF NUCLEAR TESTS, APART FROM OTHER DISARMAMENT MEASURES, BY PRIOR REGISTRATION OR BY AN AGREEMENT TO LIMIT THE VOLUME OF RADIATION PRODUCED. IN A MORE FAR-REACHING PLAN, CANADA IN AUGUST 1957 CO-SPONSORED WITH FRANCE, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS WHICH INCLUDED AS ONE OF THE INITIAL STEPS, SUBJECT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SATISFACTORY SYSTEM OF VERIFICATION, A TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF NUCLEAR TESTS WHICH WOULD BE CONTINUED PROVIDED THAT THERE WERE ADVANCES IN OTHER ASPECTS OF DISARMAMENT. THE SOVIET UNION SHOWED NO INTEREST IN DISCUSSING ANY OF THESE PROPOSALS DESPITE ASSURANCES THAT THEY WERE NOT INFLEXIBLE. IT IS THE SINCERE HOPE OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT THAT THE PRESENT SOVIET ACTION IS INTENDED TO ASSIST IN THE PROMOTION OF AGREED ARRANGEMENTS AND WILL NOT BE USED AS A DEVICE FOR AVOIDING A SYSTEM IN WHICH ALL CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE. ABOVE ALL IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS UNILATERAL ACTION IS THE PRELUDE TO RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS ON DISARMAMENT AND DOES NOT IMPLY CONTINUING SOVIET REJECTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS AS THE FORUM FOR NEGOTIATIONS.