



Statements and Speeches

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PROBLEMS OF PRESERVING PEACE AND SECURITY

Notes for a Statement by the Honourable Senator Michael Pitfield, Canadian Representative, Before the First Committee of the Thirty-Eighth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, November 1, 1983.

In his report, the Secretary-General has rightly pointed to the central importance today of the question of disarmament and arms limitation, and particularly the prevention of nuclear war. Despite the considerable efforts that have been made over the years towards this crucially important objective — and there have been some notable achievements — there is a shared concern on the part of the international community about security. Anxiety over the threat of war has not been diminished — and for good reason. The accumulation of weapons of mass destruction has not stopped and we are witness to the development of more and more sophisticated nuclear and conventional arms.

Over the years, the focus has been on arms control and disarmament — on controlling and eliminating the technical means of making war. Arms control and disarmament have a simple but seductive appeal: reduce or destroy the tools of war and you will eliminate war. The problems of preserving peace and security, however, are extremely complex.

We have, of course, to continue the pursuit of ways and means of harnessing the technology that feeds arms competition as energetically as we can. In this forum our discussions take place in the context of certain given factors, particularly the established policies of our governments. We are, in a sense, captives of our histories. This is often an inhibiting element in our search for consensus. What, in essence, we are dealing with here and in other fora relates to the capabilities of nations to wage war in present circumstances. Our immediate goal is a lower level of arms and armaments at an equal or enhanced level of security.

What has been left largely to one side in our discussions is the more fundamental question of intentions which govern the use of arms. The issue of intermediate-range nuclear forces [INF] in Europe, which has taken a new turn with the Soviet Union's announcement of planned additional deployments of missiles in the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, illustrates how important this question is. While understanding intentions does not automatically guarantee peace and security, we should be concerned that intentions in this crucial area of policy are not misunderstood.

In the end, successful arms control and disarmament measures depend on a real intention to keep the arms lid on. This is hardly a revelation, but it is a truth we should constantly remind ourselves of as we, in fora of this kind, debate the issues of arms control and disarmament. As Prime Minister Trudeau pointed out in a speech in Guelph, Ontario on October 27, "We may at some point be able to freeze the nuclear capability in the world at greatly reduced levels. But how do we freeze the menacing intentions which might control those weapons which remain? Therein lies the inadequacy of the nuclear freeze argument."

Here we get to the core of the current debate: the unsteady relations that have divided East and West over the years and the absence of real political dialogue that could ease tensions. There had been a time in the Seventies when *détente* brought the promise of such dialogue. Regular consultations at the most senior levels of political leadership appeared to offer the way to developing understanding, mutual respect and a willingness to search for ways of avoiding crises. As *détente* became divisible and subject to doubt, the prospect it offered of building confidence in the intentions of each side faded.

In today's atmosphere of suspicion and distrust, how can we help in restoring the confidence which might move things forward? At Guelph, Prime Minister Trudeau referred to a "strategy of political confidence-building" which would involve "steps that reduce tensions caused by uncertainty about objectives, or caused by fear of the consequences of failure; steps that mitigate hostility and promote a modicum of mutual respect; steps that build an authentic confidence in man's ability to survive on this planet". He particularly had in mind regular high-level dialogue based on openness regarding intentions, mutual respect, reciprocal acknowledgement of legitimate security needs, a determined approach to crisis management and incentives for flexibility. The objective would be to establish a better communications network between the two superpowers and the East and West generally.

The burden of this strategy rests with the political leadership in each country who alone, perhaps, can show the flexibility needed to explore new policy directions. Prime Minister Trudeau has already begun the high-level consultations he has advocated and will soon be personally meeting other leaders.

It is our hope that political leaders will take up the challenge and that their efforts can be translated quickly into practical terms in the various negotiating fora. If there is to be genuine dialogue in these negotiations, it has to be based on a viable international security policy. The foundation of such a policy must include the principles of reciprocity, transparency, balance and confidence.

We find the lack of confidence particularly disturbing in the superpower negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces in Geneva, which have reached a critical state. In no other forum is a true dialogue as urgently needed as in the INF talks. If they are to have a chance at success, the parties must accept as their fundamental objective increased mutual security rather than unilateral advantage. It is of the utmost importance that the two sides persevere in the bargaining process and come to grips with central issues. We strongly support a negotiated solution that will make deployment of any intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe unnecessary. At the same time, in the absence of concrete results in the INF negotiations, we are convinced that there is no alternative to deployment of the West's intermediate-range missiles. The urgency lies in making this alternative unnecessary.

As evidence of the West's determination to see a reduction in the level of nuclear weapons in Europe, I would draw the Committee's attention to the decision of the Western alliance's defence ministers last week at Montebello, Quebec, to withdraw, unilaterally, 1 400 tactical nuclear warheads from the number in Western Europe during the next several years. This will bring to 2 400 the total number of warheads which will have been unilaterally removed by the West since 1979.

A great deal of hope is riding on the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and

Disarmament in Europe which will be starting its work in Stockholm in January. Our hope is that the development of confidence through a régime of confidence- and security-building measures covering Europe may result in transparency and predictability in military affairs which, in turn, could induce a degree of security among participating states that would make a balanced reduction of armaments a viable option.

For our part, we here in this Committee have our own contribution to make to the creation of a stable environment of increased security.

In this forum, our objective is surely to reinforce the multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament. What we do must contribute to multilateralism and not detract from it. Our efforts, essentially, must be directed to establishing consensus and to working out practical frameworks for negotiations which will result in tangible arms control and disarmament measures. We must continue with the necessary preliminary work for the time when an improved atmosphere permits the successful conclusion of these negotiations. It is our responsibility to resist the tendency in these times of deteriorating international climate to take up the "politics of the megaphone" where confrontation is valued over consensus and where debate serves not the purposes of dialogue but rather to divide and disunite. The challenge for multilateralism is to reverse these trends.

There is another challenge before us in the arms control and disarmament process and that is to recognize the contiguity of interests in moving toward common agreement among developed and developing countries on international security issues. Nowhere is this truer than in the case of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the strengthening of which poses one of the most urgent challenges to multilateralism.

Each of us has a responsibility to maintain and support the arms control and disarmament process. The degree to which that responsibility is exercised is reflected in the voting patterns of the General Assembly. Unfortunately our agenda has become overcrowded over the years and there is a tendency towards duplication of effort in the race for resolutions. Priorities have to be set if we are not to dilute and divide our efforts.

We, of course, have our views on this subject. Our priorities are: (1) to support strongly negotiations to limit and reduce nuclear arms; (2) to promote early progress towards the realization of a multilateral comprehensive test ban treaty; (3) to assist in preparing a convention which would completely prohibit chemical weapons; (4) to promote the evolution of an effective non-proliferation régime based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty; (5) to work towards the objective of prohibiting the development, testing and deployment of all weapons for use in outer space; and (6) to participate actively in negotiations to limit and reduce conventional forces.

On the urgent nuclear issues, our objective is twofold: the inhibition of the development of new weapons systems and the reduction of nuclear arsenals designed to achieve a stable balance at lower levels. We are also considering making proposals for other international agreements which could help to restrict destabilizing qualitative developments in strategic technology.

We prefer to see concrete agreements rather than declaratory resolutions which promise restraint but, in effect, do not provide for the means to ensure that promises are kept. Verification is a commonly-agreed necessity if we are to make real progress in disarmament and arms control negotiations. Agreement for the establishment of international verification mechanisms is one of the clearest indications of real intentions. We have, therefore, assigned a high priority to research in this area.

On October 20, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan MacEachen, announced the establishment of an arms control and disarmament verification research program based in the Department of External Affairs. Additional personnel resources will be focussed in this area. An initial amount of \$500 000 has been allocated for this program. This amount will increase to \$1 million by next April.

This initiative has been undertaken in order to help in the creation of an atmosphere conducive to progress in disarmament. The verification program will focus primarily on technical aspects and will build upon the greatly increased attention we have been devoting to verification recently. The Compendium of Arms Control Verification Proposals, which we submitted to the Committee on Disarmament in 1980 and which was updated in 1982, and the resultant quantification and conceptual studies, are examples of our approach to the issues on a very practical and basic level. Canada has as well technical expertise — both in the private and public sectors — which can be applied in a number of areas including seismology, remote sensing, toxicology, communication satellites and chemical-weapons detection, destruction and defence. We intend to marshal this expertise more fully as our special contribution in support of the negotiation of agreements on nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons systems.

We shall be sharing the results of our work with the international community. We hope in this way to make a contribution to the technical needs of the arms control and disarmament process. But I would stress that the times demand that we also look beyond technicalities and focus on the need to develop confidence and dialogue; that those who would really make a contribution to arms control and disarmament should talk with each other and not past each other.

To return to a point I made at the outset of my remarks, there are few other issues on which so many in the West — and indeed elsewhere — have been so engaged as this matter. Given the implications of nuclear warfare, this preoccupation is entirely understandable and justified. We all want to see progress in arms controls and disarmament. The key lies in increasing mutual security. That will not be possible as long as *mutual suspicions about intentions remain*. The challenge facing us in trying to overcome this hurdle — and this is a point Prime Minister Trudeau made at Guelph — is in applying a political effort to points along the East-West trend-line in order to reverse it from its dangerous downward path.

S/C