



communiqué

N°:
No.: 162

October 31, 1985.

MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL AFFAIRS

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, today announced the convening of the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs. The Consultative Group will discuss Canada's role in the multilateral disarmament forums and ways in which Canada can make a further contribution to international peace and security. This meeting is in keeping with the question posed in the Department of External Affairs' Discussion Paper (Green Paper) entitled "Competitiveness and Security", as to whether there are "new practical ideas that Canadians believe we could bring" to discussions in this area.

The meeting will be under the Chairmanship of the Ambassador for Disarmament, Mr. Douglas Roche, whose responsibilities include representing Canada in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Canada's Ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the Stockholm Conference on Confidence-and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks in Vienna, will also participate and will lead the discussion in their respective areas of responsibility.

This meeting of the Consultative Group, which will include over 60 Canadians - representatives of non-governmental organizations, academics and concerned individuals - will take place at the Department of External Affairs from October 31 to November 2.

The Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, will provide the keynote address to the Consultative Group on October 31, the first time the Group has ever been addressed by the Prime Minister.

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The Consultative Group was created in 1979 in response to the recommendation of the first United Nations Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD I) in 1978. It meets periodically with the Ambassador for Disarmament and with officials of the Department of External Affairs and other interested Departments to exchange views on matters of mutual interest relevant to Canada's policies on disarmament and arms control.