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FOR RELEASE AT 9.30 a.m. EDT  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 1963

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, issued the following statement today on the occasion of Canada's signature of the nuclear test ban treaty:

The opening today for signature by all states of the Treaty signed in Moscow on August 5 by the United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater represents a significant milestone in the prolonged international effort to bring about agreement on the cessation of nuclear testing. The event represents a triumph for patience and sanity in a world which has grown accustomed to the harsh overtones of the cold war. We in Canada are convinced that with time and further persistent negotiation it will be possible to extend the area of agreement to cover testing in all the environments. In the meantime, it is desirable that all states adhere to the Treaty in its present form as quickly as possible since its provisions can become fully effective only if they command world wide support. It is for this reason that Canada has moved promptly to accept the obligations of the partial test ban treaty which all nations now have the opportunity to assume.

It is important that we see this Treaty in its proper perspective -- both for the benefits it will immediately bring and the limitations from which it suffers. First and foremost it will, when it comes

into force, have the effect of removing the most serious source of radioactive contamination of the atmosphere and the oceans, which constitutes such a hazard to human health and future generations. This in itself is a gain which every Canadian can fully appreciate and I am sure will heartily welcome. Secondly, as I have already indicated, this treaty does not constitute a comprehensive test ban but it should have the effect of creating an improved climate of confidence in which the total prohibition of testing may become negotiable. Thirdly, it is not a disarmament measure but it will go a long way towards restricting the further development of nuclear weapons, both qualitatively and quantitatively. One can hope that, building upon this present accomplishment, real measures of disarmament may also become more readily negotiable. Finally, the fact that it has been possible for the major powers to reach agreement is evidence of significant changes which may be taking place in the thinking of the Soviet leadership. It would be both premature and rash to assume that the cold war will cease as a result of the signature of this limited instrument. On the other hand it has now been demonstrated that agreement can be achieved by patient exploration of areas of common interest. The Canadian Government pledges itself to exert its influence towards a continuation of negotiations aimed at broader international understanding.