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Why Canada Stresses Verification

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KIEV, USSR

December 11, 1986

WHY CANADA STRESSES VERIFICATION

Canada believes that verification is the single most important element in international arms control and disarmament negotiations.

Why is that so? What is Canada doing to advance the techniques of verification? How can the United Nations strengthen a verification system? These are the questions I want to focus on in this second address in the Soviet Union as I discuss Canada's role in the International Year of Peace.

At the outset we must recognize that it is unfortunately true that arms control agreements cannot be negotiated on the basis of trust alone. The highly sophisticated nature of today's weapons means that, in order to be meaningful and durable, arms control and disarmament agreements must have provisions that ensure compliance and build confidence in the validity and integrity of a treaty. Because arms control agreements are directly related to the security of signatory nations, effective verification measures are vital.

Any arms control agreement, or confidence-building agreement, such as was recently negotiated at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, essentially represents a compromise between contracting parties. Each side bases at least part of its national security on the promises of the other side, that all parties will live up to their obligations, rather than entirely on the strength of its own weaponry. Since the benefit to each signatory is derived from the compliance of the other with the terms of the agreement, there is a natural desire for some form of external assurance that all participants are fulfilling their obligations.

Simply put, then, verification is the means by which assurance is gained. Consequently, the reliability and adequacy of the verification provisions included in an arms control agreement is usually of vital importance to the successful negotiation of the agreement and the successful operation of the agreement once it enters into force. At the same time, by confirming that activities prohibited by agreements are not taking place and that parties are fulfilling their obligations, verification can help to generate a climate of international confidence that is indispensable for progress in arms control.

In its approach to verification, Canada is guided by the recommendations of the First and Second United Nations Special Sessions on Disarmament, where all governments were urged to examine the problem of verification and consider adequate measures and provisions.

In 1979, following a review of the past 25 years of the arms control and disarmament process, Canadian experts concluded that verification had become the most significant factor in international arms control and disarmament discussions. It was clear to Canada that a) verification was an area where much misunderstanding existed; b) verification was an area where relatively little research was being undertaken and c) verification was discussed in a very ad hoc fashion and was being developed to meet criteria within specific negotiations.

At UNSSOD II, former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau identified the arms control and disarmament issues which Canada considered to be priority matters, and focussed on the process of verification. The following year, in 1983, in response to the principles expressed at UNSSOD I and II, the Government of Canada announced the establishment of a Verification Research Programme with a budget that has now reached \$1 million annually.

The programme focusses on certain Canadian arms control and disarmament priorities. Projects include: (i) research studies for application to problems in international negotiations; (ii) specialized technical training programs; (iii) hosting of international symposia of experts on specific subjects; (iv) liason with national and international bodies outside of Canada engaged in verification issues; and (v) public presentation of verification issues.

In sharing the results of our work with the international community, we hope to contribute to easing the political and security concerns and overcoming the lack of confidence that have kept nations divided. For that reason, Canada welcomed the statement issued by the Five-Continent Peace Initiative at their summit meeting in Mexico that they seek cooperation with non-nuclear states "in international verification arrangements related to future nuclear disarmament."

Canadian Government priorities in the verification field are:

- The achievement of a comprehensive convention to ban chemical weapons.
- The negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.
- The prevention of arms race in outer space.
- The pursuit of arms control and military confidence-building in Europe.

Among the most recent projects and studies conducted by the Verification Programme to support those priorities are the following:

- Chemical Weapons: On December 4, 1985 Canada presented to the United Nations Secretary-General a "Handbook for the Investigation of Allegations of the Use of Chemical or Biological Weapons". The Handbook is a result of a study by Canadian scientists and officials and represents a practical contribution to the investigation of allegations of noncompliance with existing agreements relating to chemical weapons.

- Comprehensive Test Ban: On February 7, 1986 the Canadian government announced its decision to spend \$3.2 million over three years to upgrade the Yellowknife Seismic Array as a major Canadian contribution to research into monitoring an eventual comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT). Yellowknife, in the Canadian Northwest Territories, is recognized as a unique and sensitive location to monitoring global seismic events including underground nuclear tests. The programme to update and modernize the Yellowknife Seismic Array will enable Canada, using the best technology available,

to contribute to an international system which one day may constitute an essential monitoring element of a negotiated CTBT. In October, 1985, a two-year research grant was awarded to the University of Toronto to examine the effectiveness of using regional seismic data, and in particular high-frequency seismic waves, to discriminate between earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions, including those conducted in decoupled situations. And in October of this year, Canada hosted a technical workshop for seismic and data communications specialists from 16 countries, including the USSR, to discuss the exchange of seismic waveform data, i.e., the original digital data from seismic events detected at participating seismograph stations. This work will be made available to the Conference on Disarmament.

-- Outer Space: Canada has investigated some aspects of the technical requirements that might exist for verifying a multilateral agreement to control space weapons. Under the "PAXSAT A" study as it is called, the feasibility of the practical application of space-based civilian remote sensing techniques to verify an outer space treaty has been examined.

I would like to now turn to Canada's efforts to deal with the verification question in the context of the multilateral arms control and disarmament forums.

At the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Canada has submitted working papers on the legal regime and technology relating to arms control and outer space. We work closely with the Group of Scientific Experts at the CD. We have investigated some aspects of the technical requirements that might exist for verifying a multilateral agreement to control space weapons. We have compiled and cross-indexed several useful reference volumes of speeches and working papers in the CD and its predecessor bodies which have been prepared and distributed to delegations in the Conference on Disarmament. These volumes are valuable tools which will facilitate research and discussions on particular issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the United Nations General Assembly this year, Canada again initiated a resolution, entitled "Verification in All its Aspects," that recognized the importance of verification of compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements. This is the second successive year that Canada has initiated this resolution, which this year attracted twice the number of co-sponsors as last year, including representatives from the Western states, Eastern Europe, and the neutral and

non-aligned nations. The broad co-sponsorship for this resolution and the fact that it was again passed by consensus in the First Committee reflects the growing recognition of UN Member States that, for arms control and disarmament measures to be effective, they must provide for adequate measures of verification.

The Canadian-initiated resolution will give further impetus to the consideration of verification by the United Nations, by referring the subject to the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), a deliberative body that meets annually at the United Nations to consider a limited number of arms control and disarmament items. -The UNDC is expected to draw up principles, provisions and techniques to encourage the inclusion of adequate verification provisions in arms control and disarmament agreements, and to consider ways in which United Nations member states may play a larger role in the field.

In response to the first UN resolution on verification that was passed last year, more than 25 governments replied to the UN Secretary-General with their views on the question. In its response, the Canadian Government stated that it believes verification to be "the single most important element in international arms control and disarmament negotiations." As part of its report, Canada delineated six specific ways in

which the UN might acquire strengthened role in the verification process.

- It could give further consideration in the General Assembly or the Disarmament Commission to the essential role that verification plays in the arms limitation process, and therefore, in international security. This first goal was in fact achieved through provisions in this year's resolution asking for verification to be discussed in the UNDC.

- The United Nations could examine the possibility that individual nations or groups of nations possessing verification expertise could offer such capabilities to the international community for use in the verification of multilateral agreements.

- The United Nations could undertake research and examination of the organizational structures, procedures and techniques which might be devised and further developed for use by International Verification Organization (IVO) type organizations, utilizing the rich body of documentation generated over the years in the CD.

- The United Nations could provide greater assistance, advice and technical expertise to negotiators in the regional arms control and disarmament process with a view to combining international mechanisms with regional measures for verification (e.g., the control system of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which utilizes safeguards from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as the control measures provided by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL)).

- On a responsive basis, the United Nations might involve itself in the formulation and execution of verification provisions within agreements. Where a need exists, the United Nations should be prepared to help bring together verification expertise and encourage states to develop procedures through which this expertise can be applied in actual agreements.

- Given the appropriate flexibility, the United Nations could secure a stronger role in future regional arms limitation agreements. Should one or more arms limitation agreements be developed in any one region for which a space-based remote sensing

system could be an appropriate verification technology, it would be both reasonable and cost-effective for this space-based verification capability to be generated by a group of capable nations and provided for use under the auspices of the United Nations or a regionally-based IVO in the context of the agreement(s).

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that in a very imperfect world where suspicion, uncertainty and lack of trust all too frequently characterize international relations, we must seek to ensure compliance with arms control agreements through adequate verification. Perhaps one day, in a better world, we may not need such requirements; but for the present time, to achieve and maintain the trust essential for sound and effective arms control and disarmament agreements and thereby build international peace and security, we must have effective verification.

As Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, said recently in the Canadian House of Commons:

"Many of the persisting obstacles to negotiating progress arise directly from a lack of trust. The priority attention Canada has given to verification issues ... attacks this question directly. Arms control agreements alone do not produce security; confidence in compliance produces security. Verification justifies that confidence."