

STATEMENT DISCOURS

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AN ADDRESS TO THE CANADIAN
CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR
WAR - "INCH-BY-INCH
TOWARDS PEACE" BY THE
AMBASSADOR FOR DISARMAMENT,
DOUGLAS ROCHE

VANCOUVER

OCTOBER 20, 1984

So great is my respect for the groups which have sponsored and organized this vital meeting that I immediately accepted your invitation to come here. I have come not because I have "the" solution to the threat of nuclear war but because I want to be with you as we struggle together to develop policies to guarantee the survival and integrity of human life.

All of us in this room are well aware of the immense dangers caused by the nuclear mountain the world has built. There is not a human being unaffected today by the vast ramifications of the nuclear arms race.

It is not another analysis of world conditions that I bring you. Not another catalogue of despair. Not another sweeping strategy.

I am bringing instead the determination of the Canadian government to take practical measures, at home and abroad, to make inch-by-inch progress in meeting the threat of nuclear war. We believe in sure-footed steps towards collective security and mutuality of interests in equitable development.

We cannot work alone. The problems of our time are insurmountable if any country relies on unilateral action. The fundamental problems of militarism and deprivation are so mired in the interdependent realities of our global society that solo efforts are hopeless. New multilateral efforts, led by the medium-sized countries such as Canada, can help improve the atmosphere and put specific, workable ideas on the agenda.

The ideological divisions, the mistrust, the enmities are too deep to permit any giant steps or grand designs leading to global harmony. This is not a reason for discouragement or worse, cynicism. There is much that can be done to reduce tensions, to extend economic development, to improve respect for human rights --and the United Nations system is doing this in an unheralded way.

Though patience is required, there is no time for complacency. For the turbulence the world is passing through as we learn how to use modern technology for good rather than evil has created an urgent situation. A global maturation must take place. But there is no time. There are too many people suffering, too much political frustration, too much fear of nuclear devastation to allow a mood of contemplation. Damage control to get the world safely into the next century is the highest priority.

I start my new work with a predominant thought.

As Einstein warned us, the implications of the first atomic explosion demand a change in our traditional thinking. Those who have been arguing that nuclear weapons are merely new weapons more technologically advanced have been having too easy a time in the public discourse on this subject. It needs to be emphasized that nuclear weapons are a totally new force threatening the continuation of life on earth and hence must be subject to a new kind of legal control. The further development of international law through the treaty-making process is urgent.

Some despair that anything constructive can be done in the present state of superpower tension, but the Canadian Government view is that something can be done and it must be done. I repeat: the Government recognizes that inch-by-inch progress day-by-day is the only sure way to peace and true security. I have no intention of creating a climate of rising expectations of a simple solution. But I have a relentless determination to make progress in small steps. I have no illusions about this task; rather, I am a realist. And one of the reasons that I am a realist is that I have been to Hiroshima.

Prime Minister Mulroney has placed great emphasis on reducing the threat of war and enhancing the promise of peace. At St. Francis Xavier University on September 28 he stressed that the central issue confronting our generation was the prevention of nuclear war and the need to inaugurate an era of assured peace for all the world.

"There can be no let up in our efforts to reduce the threat of war" he said. "No matter how frustrating or difficult, negotiations must be pursued....The exercise of political will is nowhere more important than on this issue on whose outcome the lives of our children and of humanity depend."

We need new policies to lead the world to the new vision of humanity outlined by Pope John Paul II during his recent visit to Canada. The Pope said: "It is necessary to protect people from death - millions of people - from nuclear death and death from starvation."

That is a challenge which growing numbers of Canadians from coast-to-coast have taken up in recent years. Indeed, one of the most encouraging developments today is the worldwide awakening of the public. This has manifested itself most dramatically in the peace movement, protesting the ceaseless layers added to the nuclear mountain.

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The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, warning the U.N. General Assembly on September 25 that the nuclear build-up threatens the existence of human society, made it clear that Canada is determined to play a leading role in the search for peace and disarmament. He promised that Canada would use its influence to reverse the nuclear build-up and reduce the danger of destruction. "That will be a constant, consistent, dominant priority of Canadian foreign policy," he said.

Mr. Clark immediately followed up this statement with very clear and straightforward guidelines to his staff around the world. In a message to all Canadian missions abroad, he told them:

"Canada must build on its traditional role as a seeker and keeper of peace. We must continue to exercise leadership wherever and whenever it will be effective in the unwavering search for peace and disarmament."

And he added:

"There can be no higher priority for us in conducting Canadian foreign policy."

At the United Nations, Mr. Clark indicated that Canada would continue to put its energies to work for the world. This declaration reinforced the assurance which Prime Minister Mulroney

gave the same day during his call on United States President Ronald Reagan that Canada would make a contribution of its own to East-West relations through a constructive dialogue with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries and that it would contribute ideas which may help yield results in the search for peace and security.

This process has already begun. Next month in Ottawa, there will be intensive consultations with the Soviets on precisely this question, on issues of arms control and international security. We are not stopping there. Other consultations are being held in Ottawa with leading international negotiators on subjects ranging from a Nuclear Test Ban to prohibition of chemical weapons. In my capacity as Disarmament Ambassador for Canada, I have begun consultations at the United Nations with our allies -- and with others -- in a common quest for peace and security.

I would like to give an example. High on the Canadian list of priorities is a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Reaching agreement on such a ban has proved elusive in the past, and will no doubt be enormously difficult. Yet I am convinced that such a ban is a practical, viable objective which all Canadians support and which must be pursued with vigour. Discussions on establishing a suitable mechanism to pursue this objective have taken place this year in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We have contributed -- and will contribute more. At the United Nations, Canada is deeply engaged in the process of constructing a resolution calling for a Test Ban, which we hope will command the broadest possible support in the General Assmebly.

We are taking these steps because they are worth undertaking in their own right, but also because of Canada's concern about the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is to be reviewed in 1985. For many adherents of the treaty, progress towards a Test Ban is a litmus test of the efficacy of the Treaty: we must show to these countries that the Treaty is worthwhile, and our efforts on the Test Ban must accordingly be directed to this end.

Both Prime Minister Mulroney and Mr. Clark have made it clear that in the search for peace and disarmament, the Canadian people have an important role to play. The Government is committed to a thorough review of Canadian foreign policy with substantial input from the Canadian public and Parliament. The aim, as Mr. Clark has stated in his United Nations speech, will be "the creative renewal of a moderate and constructive Canadian role in the world." Arms control and disarmament will be central issues in that review.

The new Government wants input from the Canadian public. This is not simply a gesture. The Government is concerned about what people think. It believes that individuals as well as non-governmental organizations have a constructive role to play.

I know from my own experience that growing numbers of non-governmental organizations are informed, concerned, and realistic in their representations on the issues of arms control and peace. I want these concerned citizens as an ally of government, not an adversary. This does not mean co-optation; it does mean co-operation in the search for policies that are correct, viable and supportable in the common responsibility to ensure security with peace and freedom. Naturally, the government must retain its

responsibility for making policy. But the government is strongly committed to upgrading the public's input into the decisions that are made on questions relating to arms control and disarmament.

For this reason, I can announce today that I have reconstituted the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs and invited a number of interested Canadians to attend a two-day meeting in Ottawa November 9 and 10. This meeting will discuss ways in which Canada can use its influence in the nuclear age to help reverse the dangerous trends that threaten human existence. It is my hope that this meeting in Ottawa will be followed up by a number of regional consultative meetings in 1985.

The Consultative Group will thus be an important channel for the Government to learn the thinking of Canadians and, in turn, for Canadians to learn the thinking of their Government.

As part of the effort to develop a broader understanding and balanced discussion of arms control and disarmament issues among the Canadian public, the Government will encourage that objective through the Disarmament Fund. That Fund - standing at \$700,000 in 1984 - was created as Canada's response to the United Nations' call for greater activity by all nations in the field of research, education and information dissemination on disarmament and arms control. The Fund helps interested non-governmental organizations, academic and public interest groups and individuals in preparing conferences, seminars and meetings. It also helps them produce newspapers and other publications on disarmament and to establish information centres all in the cause of promoting a better understanding of the issues.

The Government expects that the new Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security will also have a vital role in increasing knowledge and understanding of these issues. The Institute was created this summer following a consensus of all parties in Parliament. Fourteen distinguished Canadians have been appointed to the 17-member Board and they held their first meeting on October 1. A Chairman, William Barton, and a Vice-Chairman, Margaret Fulton, have been selected and the Institute has begun operating. Through statutory allocations, it will have funds which will increase from \$1.5 million this year to \$5 million in five years.

The Institute, which will be independent of government, will foster, fund and conduct research. It will promote scholarship and will study and propose ideas and policies. It will also collect and disseminate information on international peace and security. Its library and computer bank will help overcome the problems created by confusing statistics and thus will be able to make an important contribution in promoting fresh ideas and developing new and better solutions to the problems we face today.

The Government believes the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament in Ottawa, which was created as a result of private initiative, can complement the efforts of the Institute to develop a body of knowledge and expertise from which Canadians can draw in their discussion of these issues. It has, therefore, provided the Centre with an annual grant of \$100,000 to assist in its public information and research activities in order to encourage strong public involvement in the Canadian debate on arms control and disarmament.

There are still more ways in which the Government can help and it will be giving consideration to them.

Within the United Nations context, the World Disarmament Campaign has important potential in developing an informed public. The World Disarmament Campaign was launched in 1982 at the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament. The primary aim of the Campaign is to mobilize public opinion throughout the world on behalf of disarmament. It aims at informing, educating and generating public understanding and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of arms control and disarmament. The Campaign is intended to be carried out in all regions of the world in a balanced, factual and objective manner by the United Nations and its agencies, Member States, non-governmental organizations and research institutes. Canada, which played an important part in developing guidelines for the Campaign, will play an even greater role in the days ahead.

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My message to this wonderful meeting of concerned Canadians is a simple one: No rhetoric, no grand designs, no easy solutions. Rather, deep thinking, detailed work, hard slogging.

The days ahead will not be easy -- for me or for you.

But I am encouraged because we have each other in this long struggle for peace with security and freedom and justice.

Nor are we alone in this room. We are joined by Canadians across this land who care just as much as we do. We in Canada are joined by millions more throughout the world who want nothing more, and will accept nothing less, than the assurance of life.

All of us who have this new vision of humanity must work together. So give me your hand. Give me your help. Give me your work. Together we will provide that ray of hope the world longs for.