



Statements and Speeches

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NUCLEAR RELATIONS WITH INDIA

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, in the House of Commons, May 18, 1976.

I should like to inform the House today that the Government has decided that further nuclear co-operation with India is not possible. The decision has been difficult. It has challenged the Government, as indeed it has challenged all thinking Canadians, to review a number of fundamental principles.

Canada's nuclear co-operation with India began in the context of the Colombo Plan. It has as its basis the belief that nuclear power could be vital to the equitable economic growth of a number of developing countries. The energy crisis, and the serious dislocations it has brought with it, have tended to reinforce this belief and the genuine success achieved by Indo-Canadian co-operation in the development of nuclear power for energy, agriculture and medicine has proved the practicality of this approach.

India's detonation of a nuclear explosive device in 1974 made it evident that Canada and India had taken profoundly differing views of what should be encompassed in the peaceful application of nuclear energy by non-nuclear-weapon states. Canada is one of the earliest and most vigorous proponents of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A basic element of the treaty, which guides Canadian policy in the field of nuclear exports and safeguards, is that it recognizes no technical distinction between nuclear explosives for peaceful and non-peaceful purposes.

Canada has foregone the possible benefits of developing so-called peaceful nuclear explosions on the basis that, pursuant to the NPT, nuclear-explosive services would be available from a nuclear-weapon state at such time as need and feasibility were demonstrated. India, however, does not accept what it views as discrimination between the nuclear powers and other states, and insists that all countries should be free to use all phases of nuclear technology for whatever they view as peaceful purposes.

Notwithstanding these differences, both countries agreed to explore together a negotiated termination of nuclear co-operation. These negotiations had, earlier this spring, reached a point where both sides decided that governmental decisions were required. The decision now taken by Cabinet takes into full account the issues that

I raised when I spoke in the House on March 23. Canada has insisted that any co-operation in the nuclear field be fully covered by safeguards that satisfy the Canadian people that Canadian assistance will not be diverted to nuclear explosive purposes. This Canadian objective could not be achieved in these negotiations.

Both sides have made a concerted effort in good faith to reach a basis for agreement. However, the Canadian Government has decided that it could agree to make new nuclear shipments only on an undertaking by India that Canadian supplies, whether of technology, nuclear equipment or materials, whether past or future, should not be used for the manufacture of any nuclear-explosive device. In the present case, this undertaking would require that all nuclear facilities, involving Canadian technology, in India be safeguarded. We should be prepared to reach agreement with India on this basis only. In view of earlier discussions, however, we have concluded that the Indian Government would not be prepared to accept safeguards on other than the RAPP reactors, which are already under international safeguards.

In making this statement regarding our nuclear co-operation with India, I should like also to refer briefly to the other aspects of our relationship. There is no question but that our nuclear differences are profound; nevertheless, nuclear affairs form only one part of what has been a broad and important relationship. The decisions reached by the Government concerning one aspect of our relations are not intended to preclude the pursuit of other elements of mutual interest in our overall links with India. The Canadian Government remains prepared to review these elements and to pursue our common objectives in both bilateral and multilateral fields because we believe that our ties with this important developing Commonwealth nation must not be allowed to lapse through any lack of will on our part.