

STATEMENT DISCOURS

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STATEMENT BY THE
HONOURABLE ALLAN J. MacEACHEN,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
ON THE OCCASION OF
DISARMAMENT WEEK,
OCTOBER 24-30, 1982

Disarmament Week is observed in many ways throughout the world. I am pleased that in Canada activities coast-to-coast, organized by community groups, non-governmental organizations and individuals, will not only reflect the growing concern of many Canadians about the arms race but also help to underline the vital role which arms control and disarmament negotiations play in promoting the more secure world we all desire.

A year ago there were no negotiations on nuclear weapons. Since then the United States and the Soviet Union have begun negotiations on intermediate range nuclear forces and have resumed the process of talks on strategic arms. The emphasis not just on limitations but on reductions is one Canada welcomes, recognizing the complexities involved in arriving at balanced and verifiable agreements. In the case of another category of weapons of special interest to Canada - chemical weapons - the prospects for progress toward a ban in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva are greater today than a year ago. Also, recent proposals at the nine-year old talks in Vienna on reducing conventional forces in Europe hold out the possibility of progress toward agreement.

The past year has seen greatly increased activity in the deliberative bodies at the United Nations, particularly in the First Committee of the General Assembly and the second Special Session on Disarmament. Canada could not but share the disappointment of other countries that its ambitious agenda could not be realized. Yet the Special Session did focus the attention of many world leaders on arms control and disarmament issues. Equally important, it led to greater public discussion and understanding of the issues involved, of what has been accomplished in the past and of how much remains to be done. Prior to and during the Special Session, Canada devoted particular efforts to the promotion of public awareness. For example, the extensive hearings on security and disarmament in the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence led to a report which will be a valuable continuing reference, a record of a wide spectrum of Canadian views.

To expand research and public information activities, the Disarmament Fund of the Department of External Affairs has been increased specifically to assist research and teaching facilities in Canada. In addition, funds have been allocated to enable Canada to become a member of the international seismic data exchange which will form part of the international verification provisions of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. Canada will also substantially increase research in verification utilizing expertise available inside and outside of government.

Disarmament Week, initiated in 1978 by the United Nations, underlines the challenge facing governments and non-governmental organizations; the promotion of greater public awareness and understanding of the importance of negotiating verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements.