



Statements and Speeches

No. 85/20

IN PURSUIT OF PEACE

Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister, to the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control, Ottawa, October 31, 1985.

We often think of the pursuit of peace in terms of meetings and summits, negotiations and agreements. Yet these are instruments, not goals, means not ends. The desired object of our quest is the careful construction of a framework for enduring security — security for tomorrow, as well as today. And security for all, not simply for some.

In the absence of a stable and secure international environment, all our domestic achievements and pursuits, as well as our aspirations for the future, are put in jeopardy. Just as peace cannot endure without justice and prosperity, so too prosperity is meaningless in the absence of peace. The shadows of our nuclear age are deep and terrible, but we must not allow ourselves to become overwhelmed by them; numbed into fatalistic indifference. For the spectres that man creates, man can also dispel. The pursuit of peace leaves little time for counsels of despair.

Unfortunately, we know that the spectre of war will continue to haunt us until a just peace is secured for all time, not just our time. Yet fear of the future must not be permitted to take root in the youth of today, who deserve nothing less than the opportunity to live and grow in an atmosphere of hope and security.

So I approach the pursuit of peace with determination, recognizing both the enormity of the task, and the requirement for action. To those who say it can't be done, I say it must be done. To those who say Canada can't do it alone, I say we can do it together. And to those who claim it is none of our business, I say the search for peace is everyone's business.

Shortly after assuming office, I said that Canada would work relentlessly to reduce tensions, to alleviate conflict, and to create the conditions for a general and lasting peace. I added then, and I repeat: "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".

At this juncture, with the world hoping that the coming weeks will see a triumph of just such political will, it is appropriate to elaborate on this theme. I would be remiss, however, if I did not first congratulate the members of the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs for the interest, expertise and responsibility each of you brings to this complex agenda. Certainly the revitalization of the Consultative Group has enriched the quality of opinion and advice available to the government in considering these critical issues.

I think it is appropriate that the Consultative Group's current meeting is devoted to the multilateral

arms control forums where Canada has 'a seat at the table' and thus can have a direct impact on the course of events. In your discussions here I hope you will identify and put forward practical suggestions as to how Canada can contribute to progress in these areas.

Canada is not and shall not be neutral in the struggle between freedom and totalitarianism. We are a member of the Western alliance and we are members out of choice, not circumstance. It is an alliance which requires military commitment and political solidarity. Yet it is also an alliance which relies on consultation and consensus. A healthy allied military effort would not survive in the absence of such consensus. But the right to be heard must constantly be earned. Canada earns that right.

The pursuit of arms control and disarmament has its place beside the defence effort, peacekeeping and conflict resolution. All are essential components of Canada's approach to international peace and security. We must vigorously pursue each of these if we are to maintain Canada's sovereignty and independence. And the world at large should recognize that arms control is a component of, not a substitute for, a healthy national security policy.

A wise and correct approach to security cannot ignore the virtues of arms control, just as arms control cannot ignore the requirements of national security. The search for either at the expense of the other is fruitless. And the search for both is imperative.

Let us recall that the Nobel Prize awarded to Lester Pearson for his superb diplomatic efforts in ending the Suez Crisis was also an award to the dedicated Canadian troops who helped make up the United Nations peacekeeping force. Without the forces trained and equipped to provide a buffer between Israeli and Egyptian armies, the United Nations resolution would have been only so much paper.

We must realize that our sovereignty and territorial integrity cannot be safeguarded by mere proclamation or protest. In addition to a firm legal position with respect to our sovereignty in the Arctic, we require a military capacity to respond to the threats posed by clandestine incursions into our waters, or probes of our air space. This is not a question of political expedience or choice. It is a question of responsible national policy. At the same time we should remember that, for over 35 years, the defence of Canada has been not only a national but an alliance obligation.

I am reminded, in this connection, of a great Canadian who personally embodied the four facets of Canada's security policy. As a soldier, a peacekeeper, an arms controller and a diplomat, the late General E.L.M. Burns personified the basic coherence and compatibility of each one of these roles in the conduct of Canada's security policy. In establishing arms control policies, Tommy Burns perhaps summarized it best when he said there had to be a dialogue between the proponents of security through armament, and the proponents of security through disarmament.

No one component can provide all of the answers. The decisions our government have taken are all directed to the over-arching goal of promoting international peace and security and, through these initiatives, Canada's own peace and security. These decisions have not been easy ones. They involved making some hard choices. We have decided, for instance, that Canada should have the capability to

keep open our Arctic waters for the development of that region so that we can effectively patrol all of our Canadian territory all of the time.

We have decided to strengthen our military presence in Europe as a further contribution to the alliance's collective defence and deterrence of military aggression. And as we build up NATO's conventional deterrent, we reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons, a goal I am sure we all share.

We also signed an agreement earlier this year with the United States to modernize the early warning radars in Canada, this as part of our commitment to honour our North American defence obligations.

We have decided to participate in the Sinai peacekeeping force to help maintain peace between Egypt and Israel, to create a climate in which the divisions of that part of the world may have some chance of healing.

Finally, as each of you is aware, in January of this year our government expressed the strong view that the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) research program was prudent, given similar research already being conducted by the USSR. We continue to be of that view. That being said, we decided in September that we would not participate on a government-to-government basis in the SDI research program. The government's research priorities were judged to lie more in the investigation of outer space verification technology than in feasibility studies of space-based weapon systems.

Underlying all these decisions is our unyielding commitment to a strong, independent Canada working in concert with other countries, in the interest of common global security. Within the field of arms control and disarmament, our government has six specific objectives:

- negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability;
- maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime;
- negotiation of a global chemical weapons ban;
- support for a comprehensive test ban treaty;
- prevention of an arms race in outer space; and
- the building of confidence sufficient to facilitate the reduction of military forces in Europe and elsewhere.

The resumption of the Geneva negotiations and the successful review of the non-proliferation treaty which concluded last month, have advanced the first two objectives. It is imperative that these negotiations lead to deep cuts in nuclear arsenals and that a firm cap be placed on any initial reduction to ensure that future movement will be in a steadily downward direction. In my view, this would be a nuclear "freeze" that works.

The other four aims are being pursued in related forums: the conference on disarmament in Geneva, the Stockholm conference and the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna. The Canadian delegations at these conferences are seeking, in concert with our allies, practical and equitable measures to reduce armaments and increase confidence.

I am pleased that our ambassadors who are engaged in the various disarmament negotiations are with us tonight and I am confident their contributions will both enliven and add considerably to your discussions. By way of illustration of this practical approach, Canada will provide to the UN Secretary-General, a manual of procedures for investigating allegations of chemical weapons use. We have carried out a series of discussions with non-signatories of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to urge them to accede to this vital agreement.

At the Stockholm conference we have explored with our NATO allies new ideas on how the attainment of a substantial result can be facilitated.

Recent progress during the discussions at Stockholm portends concrete results from this important forum. At the conference on disarmament, Canada has tabled a study on the existing legal régime pertaining to outer space. This represents the first substantive contribution of any country to the work of the conference.

It is exactly through the cumulative effect of such practical measures, that progress in arms control is most surely achieved. This basic stance underlies the program of action Canada will advance throughout the last half of the second disarmament decade. One of the predominant themes in that program will be Canada's decision to focus on the vital issue of the verification of compliance with arms control agreements.

Without the knowledge that one's partners in an arms control agreement are actually honouring their obligations, the whole purpose of the agreement and, by extension, the arms control process itself, is called into disrepute. Verification is not end in itself. Verification enhances the confidence of the parties.

In so doing, it creates a sense of predictability. And predictability is one of the most important outcomes of effective arms control.

For my own part, I have concentrated on developing channels of communication with leaders from both East and West, to facilitate an exchange of ideas and to convey Canadian concerns and practical suggestions. Last month, I wrote to General Secretary Gorbachev outlining Canadian views and priorities with respect to arms control and disarmament. I have, of course, been in frequent contact with President Reagan on a range of international issues. I was pleased to participate at the meeting which he hosted last week in New York of summit heads of government to discuss the forthcoming Geneva summit.

It has been six years since the leaders of the USA and USSR have met. That is far too long in a world where superpower tensions cannot be left unattended. It would be preferable to regularize East-West summitry, to have the leaders of the USA and USSR meet, perhaps annually, to discuss problems and areas of common concern.

You can do much to promote the concept — and the reality — of Canada as a state with a vital role to play in building the political, economic and social structures of peace in a world of great change.

Postscript:

Earlier this afternoon I received a message from President Reagan outlining a new American proposal designed to achieve real reductions in nuclear arms. This development is indeed a positive and welcome step.

While it would be clearly inappropriate for me to discuss any of the details of the President's new proposals, I am pleased that this new USA initiative builds upon common ground and thus should provide a basis for serious and substantive negotiations.

S/C