

# STATEMENT DISCOURS

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Notes for an intervention  
by Douglas Roche,  
Canadian Ambassador for  
Disarmament, to the  
United Nations Disarmament  
Commission

NEW YORK, May 5, 1987

OTTAWA

May 11, 1987.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the United Nations Disarmament Commission of 1986, prospects for real, substantial progress in the field of arms control and disarmament agreements have brightened considerably.

The leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland last autumn achieved results that were recognized as having set the stage for future progress -- by governments in their national statements and by our delegations during meetings of the UNGA 41 First Committee. President Reagan and General-Secretary Gorbachev revealed their determination to lessen the chances of a world war, particularly a nuclear war. The two superpower leaders established a firm base for the bilateral negotiations ongoing in Geneva.

It is the firm hope of the government and people of Canada that the two superpowers will soon reach an agreement to eliminate or limit severely certain types of nuclear weapons and that they will then move to considering actively reductions in other nuclear and conventional forces. The two superpowers have clearly made progress and the time for an agreement is now. Differences still remaining in the ongoing negotiations and discussions should be quickly resolved in the interests of transforming the spirit of Reykjavik into action.

As noted by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs in a statement to the House of Commons on 21 October 1986, "At Reykjavik three lessons were reinforced. The first two are: both sides are serious; and arms control is possible. But the third lesson is that arms control will not come easily. It is a deliberate and difficult process."

Our task here at UNDC 87 is to advance that deliberate and difficult process.

On 22 September 1986, the Stockholm Conference came to an end and presented to the world a remarkable document on confidence and security-building in Europe.

These two positive events, Reykjavik and Stockholm, were followed by a fruitful session of the UNGA 41 First Committee which exhibited a tendency toward consensus, compromise and accommodation.

Further, over the past months, the Conference on Disarmament has been making such progress as to lead one to hope that the 40 countries there engaged in multilateral arms control and disarmament negotiations may reach agreement soon on a chemical weapons treaty.

Together with these developments came the UN financial crisis, the report of the Group of 18 and the realization that we must make the best possible use of our meeting time.

Already this year our timetable has been a busy one. The CD continues to negotiate, the superpower talks continue, we have just completed a successful final session of the preparatory committee for the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, we are now assembled for what could be a very productive UNDC session, and soon we shall meet in preparatory committee to plan for the third Special Session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament.

Opportunities abound for action and we must be vigilant and diligent in our efforts to capitalize on them.

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What can we do during this session of the Disarmament Commission to increase the positiveness of the atmosphere, to play our part in speeding the world toward a more peaceful, more stable, a more secure environment. Let me put forward a few ideas by which we might guide our deliberations here for the next few weeks.

1. We must continue to treat seriously and with dispatch the agenda items referred to us by the General Assembly.
2. We should take inspiration from these encouraging international developments including the success we achieved last year when the UNDC succeeded in finalizing the CBM item on its agenda. We should work toward completing more agenda items thereby building confidence through consensus and making room on our agenda for other important matters.
3. We must continue to work on the basis of consensus, but consensus defined as positive cooperation, as understanding of the reasonable positions -- not defined as an unreasonable imposition of views of one on all others.
4. We should establish quickly our working groups and other necessary organizations so as to commence our work with a minimum of administrative delay.

My delegation would like to outline its views on our agenda which, in the opinion of Canada, contains a sufficient number of items to challenge, but not to overwhelm, our intellectual and physical abilities. We look forward to hearing the co-operative and frank views of other delegations, here in plenary and in other fora. Further we look forward to working with them in achieving useful and relevant results, including the finalization of one or more items.

We are encouraged by the progress made last year on the question of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. The paper presented by the Chairman of the Working Group will, together with papers submitted by other delegations, provide a very useful point of departure for the session this year. It is rapidly becoming evident that this item has great portent for the functioning of the United Nations and it may well be that the results of the working group deliberations could be considered by UNSSOD III. Canada attaches particular importance to the role which the United Nations can play in promoting and encouraging meaningful arms control measures. This role can be strengthened, in our view, through realistic and much-needed reforms which should produce not only greater efficiency and effectiveness but some financial savings as well.

The continued appearance of the item dealing with the nuclear capability of South Africa reflects a legitimate and widespread international concern. Canada's consistent, firm, openly-stated opposition to the apartheid policies of the South African government is well known. South Africa's failure to reassure the international community of its peaceful nuclear intentions by full adherence to the international non-proliferation regime continues to be cause for anxiety and must be remedied.

Canada strongly supports an increased focus of international attention on the subject of conventional disarmament. This item should remain on the agenda of the UN General Assembly and be considered at the third Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament. UNDC discussions on this important issue are particularly relevant at this time. At least 80% of global spending on arms is directed to conventional armaments. More than 20 million people have died in conflicts fought with conventional weapons since 1945. We believe it must be borne in mind, that as progress is made in achieving nuclear arms limitations, questions concerning levels of conventional weapons will become increasingly important.

Last year's session of the UNDC saw considerable progress on the items concerning Reduction of Military Budgets. Important but not insolvable questions remain concerning comparability, transparency and data exchange which are essential to successful efforts to agree on reducing military budgets. We hope that agreement can be reached on the only outstanding paragraph so that a consensus document can be reported to the General Assembly. Canada has regularly completed the standardized reporting instrument on military spending, an action which reflects the seriousness of our intent. We regret that this seriousness is not shared by more UN states, but do note that certain countries have, for the first time, submitted the required data. This standardized reporting instrument must become a universally accepted practice before real progress on this item can occur. We urge all states that have not yet done so to complete this reporting instrument and submit it to the United Nations.

We are bound, Mr. Chairman, to reflect that discussion of various aspects of this item during the recent preparatory committee for the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development suggests that we still have a long way to go.

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Mr. Chairman,

We live in a time when it is universally recognized that the subject of verification of compliance with obligations undertaken pursuant to arms limitation and disarmament agreements is particularly important. Adequate verification measures are the primary means whereby compliance with such undertaking is ascertained and demonstrated. Moreover, there is universal recognition of the central importance that verification provisions play in the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of arms control agreements. It is further acknowledged that faith in good intentions alone is not a healthy basis for concluding agreements dealing with vital national security matters; verification supplants the need for faith in the good intentions of other parties by providing an objective means of determining compliance.

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As is well known, Canada has taken a great interest in the subject of verification and has speeded its acceptance as a legitimate subject. We regard verification as a critical issue that must be satisfactorily addressed before there can be any hope of achieving progress in reaching meaningful agreements on important arms limitation and disarmament matters.

We are gratified that both resolutions 40/152 0 and 41/86 Q entitled: "Verification in all its aspects" initiated by Canada were adopted without a vote. In the case of the latter there were over 20 co-sponsors representing all groups. The broad co-sponsorship underlines the growing recognition within the world community that adequate measures of verification are essential for effective arms control and disarmament measures. Thirty governments have so far replied to the Secretary-General with their views on verification which illustrates the seriousness with which these governments view this question. We look forward to hearing from others.

Resolution 41/86 Q refers to the UNDC for consideration, the "subject of verification in all its aspects, including principles, provisions and techniques to promote the inclusion of adequate verification in arms limitation and disarmament agreements and the role of the United Nations and its Member States in the field of verification."

It is Canada's hope that the UNDC will succeed in drawing up a set of principles relating to verification as well as outlining a catalogue of provisions and techniques which will serve to guide negotiators in their efforts to conclude arms limitation and disarmament agreements. We realize that it may take more than one session of the UNDC to cover adequately all the ground on this subject. For its part, Canada is prepared to participate actively throughout the UNDC's discussions on this topic and will seek to facilitate the completion of its final report to the General Assembly. We do not look upon these discussions concerning verification as merely a rhetorical exercise. Rather, we look forward to a businesslike, frank exchange of views which, through a spirit of cooperation, will achieve a shared consensus that expands upon the basic principles concerning verification found in the Final Document of UNSSOD I. The UNDC is presented with an opportunity to draw-up some important guidelines on the issue of verification. Let us work together to meet this challenge.

Some states have suggested the need for a general international verification organization (IVO) with responsibility for monitoring compliance with multilateral agreements. Such proposals have sometimes taken the form of an international body responsible for a particular type of verification technology such as satellites. Other states have proposed an international verification body in the context of monitoring a specific agreement such as a chemical weapons convention. Proposals for international bodies to verify specific agreements often look to the International Atomic Energy Agency as a working model of such an arrangement. Such specific treaty oriented bodies could provide a practical solution to verification questions and perform very useful work in the monitoring of certain agreements. Canada favours moving steadily towards the eventual creation of a general IVO, once the international community agrees on the desirability of establishing such an institution.

Let me now note briefly some of our recent activities relating to verification research:

- 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 non-compliance with existing agreements relating to chemical weapons. It has been made available to the UN teams dispatched in recent years to investigate CW use. Canada will very soon be making available to the Secretary-General and to the international community further results from its on-going research into the verification of chemical weapons use.
  
- 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). In October, 1985, a two-year research grant was awarded to the University of Toronto to examine the effectiveness

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of using regional seismic data, to discriminate between earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions, including those conducted in decoupled situations. And in October of 1986, Canada hosted a technical workshop for seismic and data communications specialists from 17 countries to discuss the exchange of seismic waveform data. This work has been 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.

Moreover, Canada will be hosting an Outer Space Workshop in Montreal May 14-16 for delegations to the Conference on Disarmament. This workshop will address, in part, the question of verification. We hope to make some preliminary results of our PAXSAT research available to the UNDC.

- Generic Research: The Canadian government has undertaken a number of research projects to examine general verification principles and techniques. A major element in this generic research has been to amass and review what has been said and reported on this issue by governments, international bodies and academics. As a result, I think it is fair to say that we have developed a unique database on the subject of verification. To underline Canada's commitment to realizing progress in the deliberations of the UNDC and to emphasize our belief that these deliberations can only achieve success through a shared spirit of cooperative exchange, Canada will soon make available to all members of the UNDC through the secretariat, a three-volume document compiling almost 700 summaries of research reports, government statements and academic papers on the subject of arms limitation and disarmament verification. This reference tool will, we hope, assist members of the UNDC in their consideration of this topic.

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Mr. Chairman,

Over the past few years, a wealth of studies and reports on the global situation has been produced and to this treasury is now added, "Our Common Future", the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Report). Canada has hailed this report as "a landmark event". Though dealing primarily with environmental questions, the Commissioners also turned their attention to peace and security issues related to development and the environment. They urged governments to consider that a more satisfactory basis for managing the interrelationship between security and sustainable development is to broaden our vision. Conflicts may arise not only because of political and military threats to national sovereignty but also from environmental degradation and the pre-emption of development options. The Commission added:

"Nations must turn away from the destructive logic of an 'arms culture' and focus instead on their common future."

This is a renewed challenge to all of us who work in the disarmament field. Let us move forward at UNDC 87 in that spirit, knowing that our work here in its painstaking detail can contribute to our common future.