

Notes for speech in Moncton, N.B.

February 18, 1983

Arms Control and Disarmament: What can Canada do?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I propose to speak to you tonight on an issue of vital importance to all of us, namely the related questions of arms control and disarmament. I doubt if there has been a period in Canadian history when there has been so much public interest in a subject which, in the past, has often been regarded as somewhat esoteric. I do not therefore feel the need to indulge in any rhetoric about the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war and the imperative need to prevent it. Your presence here tonight indicates that you share my own deeply felt concern.

I shall begin by referring to an important diplomatic initiative undertaken earlier this month by Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen. I propose then to refer, in a necessarily summary fashion, to the fundamental principles underlying Canadian policy on arms control and disarmament. I shall then conclude by attempting to show the relationship between the policies Canada is pursuing and the attainment of the objectives we seek, after which I shall be available for questions and for any discussion which might ensue.

Diplomatic Initiative

On February 1 Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs made an important policy statement in the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva. The Committee is the United Nations forum charged with the active negotiation of multilateral agreements on arms control and disarmament. The first part of Mr. MacEachen's statement outlined the principles applicable to such negotiations, whether bilateral or multilateral. He then went on to apply these principles to the actual bilateral negotiations now underway in Geneva on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), while referring also to the resumed bilateral negotiations on strategic nuclear arms (START).

During the second part of his policy statement Mr. MacEachen addressed issues under negotiation in the Committee on Disarmament, outlined Canadian priorities and objectives and suggested approaches directed to their attainment.

The statement was more than a policy declaration. It constituted a part of the very negotiating process now under way in Geneva, in particular the negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces. As part of that negotiating approach, Mr. MacEachen had arranged to see both the USA and the USSR INF and START negotiators prior to making his policy statement. Thus his statement reflected not only the results of the discussions with the negotiators for the two super powers and made clear the Canadian position but was directed

to bringing Canada's influence to bear to the extent possible in advancing these negotiations. While all this may seem fairly self-evident to anyone who has read the statement, I am making this explanation because of the importance of this move by Canada, and because this approach was not, in my view, adequately reported by the representatives of the media present in Geneva. To give only one example, there is ample media coverage around the world of perceptions in various quarters of an unduly rigid negotiating position on the Western side. There has been relatively little attention paid to the degree of flexibility or inflexibility in the present USSR position. We met with the Soviet INF and START negotiators and found in both cases an extremely tough, hard-nosed and inflexible position, particularly in the case of the INF negotiators, who demonstrated an air of confidence strongly suggestive of the view that there was no need for the Soviet side to make concessions, since Western European public opinion would ensure that the Soviet objectives were attained. One very direct and explicit reference was made to that effect. I was present and heard it. It was very necessary, therefore, that the Canadian government make a public reaffirmation of NATO solidarity and of continuing commitment to the NATO two-track decision. Such statements have since been made by US Vice-President Bush, as well as by the Foreign Ministers of the Federal German Republic and Norway. Rarely does such a group of high level statesmen address the Committee on Disarmament. Clearly, these policy statements constitute an important part of the

negotiating process, even on those issues discussed bilaterally outside the Committee on Disarmament.

By the same token, the meetings these statesmen have held with the negotiators on both sides, beginning with those held by Mr. MacEachen, are equally clearly an important element in the negotiating process. Thus it is by such means possible -- and even essential -- that Canada's voice be heard on questions of vital concern to Canadians. My message to you is that it is being heard -- by both sides.

Turning to the policy statement I mentioned earlier, it is important to note that it was entitled "Mutual Security: Negotiations in 1983". The whole thrust of the statement is that "an increase in mutual security is the only sound basis for effective arms control and disarmament". It was very clearly addressed to both super powers. The Minister quoted Prime Minister Trudeau's statement at the Second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in which he stressed that security in today's world cannot be achieved on a purely national basis; attempts by one side to make gains at the expense of the security of the other ultimately will not work; moreover, security is not only a matter of weaponry but also of perception and confidence. Thus action by one side which is perceived by the other to be threatening creates or widens a gulf of suspicion. Action produces reaction and in the end neither side achieves a long-term gain.

Mr. MacEachen applied these principles in very specific terms to the bilateral intermediate-range nuclear forces negotiations. He pointed out that such negotiations

can succeed only if both parties accept as their fundamental objective increased mutual security rather than unilateral advantage. He went on to explain that it was only as a result of the December 1979 "two-track" decision by NATO, taken in response to the Soviet build-up of intermediate-range missiles targeted on Western Europe, that the INF negotiations were begun at all. It will be recalled that the NATO governments proposed negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States to limit land-based intermediate-range missile systems on both sides. At the same time, as part of the same decisions, the NATO Alliance agreed to deploy Pershing II missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles beginning in late 1983 if such negotiations were unsuccessful. Mr. MacEachen reminded the Committee on Disarmament that while initially the Soviet Union was critical of the NATO decision and reluctant to engage in negotiations, eventually, in the autumn of 1980 the Soviet Union agreed to preliminary discussions, and a year later, in November 1981, formal negotiations began.

I doubt if there is a more classic example of the direct application of the principle of mutual security, as outlined by Canada's Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs. As was pointed out by Mr. MacEachen, there is some encouragement to be derived from the fact that the Soviet Union has clearly recognized that NATO governments have a legitimate concern about the number of SS-20's aimed at their European member states, and that a reduction is necessary, as evidenced by a recent Soviet proposal concerning possible reductions of such weapons.

As stated by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in Geneva, "This in itself is progress. However, it is not yet clear that both sides have accepted that mutual security must be the basis of the negotiations. That is why 1983 is crucial."

I will return to the INF negotiations later in the context of the possible influence of public opinion - and Canada - upon those negotiations. At this stage, however, I wish to emphasize another important policy pronouncement contained in the Geneva statement, again one clearly addressed to all parties.

After outlining the principles underlying effective arms control and disarmament negotiations, and emphasizing mutual security as the only acceptable basis for arms control and disarmament, Mr. MacEachen made the following statement:

"An attempt by any power to develop a policy which assumes that nuclear war can be winnable contributes to mutual insecurity."

He went on to describe this statement as a home truth, albeit directly relevant to the current situation. It is surprising, perhaps, that this statement was not reported by the media in light of the fears expressed in many quarters about some of the rhetoric directed to the other part of the arms control and disarmament equation, namely the necessity for sufficient arms to provide an effective deterrent.

Examples of statements questioning the long-standing concept of mutual deterrence, which, in turn, is founded on the certainty of "mutually assured destruction" are readily available.

In the light of such pronouncements, it is, I suggest, an event of some significance when Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs definitively rejects, in an important policy statement, "attempts to develop a policy which assumes that nuclear war can be winnable". Nor surprisingly, perhaps, Mr. MacEachen began his speech by quoting from Mike Pearson's 1957 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech when he said:

"The horrible instruments of destruction so terrifying in the fifties have been replaced by new and more deadly successors. The threat of a sudden, total collapse into nuclear suicide has been overlaid with an equally chilling prospect of suicide by stages, of nuclear war that could never be 'won'."

I have already indicated that Mr. MacEachen's meetings with the USSR and USA negotiators coupled with his major policy statement in the Committee on Disarmament give a clear public signal that Canada remains fully committed to the NATO two-track decision, that the negotiated solution is by far preferable to deployment, and that the only acceptable basis for the INF talks is mutual security. I should like to emphasize at this point that the policy

statement I have just quoted similarly provides an unambiguous public signal to all concerned that the only acceptable basis for the START negotiations is also mutual security and not an attempt to develop a policy of a winnable nuclear war. This is a message which will be reiterated as often as necessary, and certainly one that I will be making in public statements across the country and in meetings with the media.

It is important, I think to show how firmly and deeply the Geneva statements I have referred to are founded upon Canada's basic security policy. An important public statement on Canada's security policy was made by the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence in Ottawa on February 25, 1982. Mr. MacGuigan pointed out that Canada's security policy has three complementary thrusts. "The are (1) deterrence of war through the collective security arrangements of NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and NORAD (the North American Aerospace Defence Command); (2) active cooperation in efforts to achieve equitable and verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements; (3) support for peaceful settlement of disputes and the collective effort for peaceful settlement of disputes and the collective effort to resolve the underlying economic and social causes of international tensions."

He went on to underline that "Canada recognizes the need for collective efforts to deter aggression against the North American and European regions of the North Atlantic alliance. It supports and contributes to this

defence effort. We are members of an alliance which relies on a deterrent strategy in which nuclear weapons play an important part. This is unavoidable in the world as we know it.

The NATO strategy of flexible response and forward defence depends on our being ready and able to respond to aggression at whatever level is necessary to counter it. The nuclear weapons of the United States and other NATO allies make an essential contribution to the security of Canada and of the alliance as a whole."

On another extremely significant and topical issue, Mr. MacGuigan went on to indicate the Canadian perception on the balance of nuclear forces between the two super powers in the following words:

"We now face approximate parity at the strategic nuclear level between the Soviet Union and the United States, Soviet superiority in intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe and the numerical superiority of the Warsaw Pact in conventional land forces."

He then explained the consequences of this situation for Canada:

"In these circumstances, members of the alliance have felt it necessary to take steps to prevent their capacity to deter aggression and to defend themselves from being further eroded. These efforts must be seen against the background of the qualitative and quantitative growth in the military power of the Soviet Union in recent years and in its disposition to project that power in support of its political goals. Canada supports the NATO decision on intermediate range nuclear forces. We are convinced that failure to make adjustments in these areas could dangerously weaken the collective security of the alliance, of which we are a part, and seriously undermine the prospects for productive negotiations with the USSR on limitations on such forces. For this reason we do not accept proposals for a moratorium or freeze which would perpetuate the present imbalance of these forces."

Later in his statement Mr. MacGuigan emphasized that Canada's support for the maintenance of forces sufficient to deter aggression and defend the NATO area is entirely consistent with Canada's commitment to a vigorous arms control and disarmament policy. He pointed out that the two policies are more than consistent; they complement and support one another, and together constitute a single coherent policy serving the same goal of enhancing security and preserving peace. Mr. MacGuigan emphasized also that only on a basis of undiminished security can nations be expected to accept limitations on the numbers and quality of their weapons. ... 11

It was this concept of mutual security that was later emphasized by the Prime Minister at UNSSOD II and developed by the Deputy Prime Minister at the Geneva Committee on Disarmament policy statement this month.

Canada's longstanding active pursuit of arms control and disarmament has never stopped short at ^{new} policy pronouncements. Canada has actively proposed and is today pursuing action on a series of concrete proposals on fundamental arms control and disarmament problems. In the time available I can do little more than list them, but I shall at least ^{try to} do so, ^{in order to} give some indication of the scope, ^{concrete} and intensity of Canada's efforts.

Chemical Weapons

Canada has taken a very active role in the United Nations in supporting resolutions which initially led to the establishment of a group of experts to investigate reports of use ^{of chemical weapons} and have now led to agreement to set up the beginning of a verification and enforcement mechanism. Canada is ^{also} pressing for the establishment of a working group on chemical weapons in the Disarmament Committee in Geneva, and it is possible that a Canadian will be chosen to chair that group.

Conventional Forces

Conventional forces account for 80% of global military expenditures. This figure alone indicates the importance of the third element in Canada's basic security policy -- support for peaceful settlement of disputes and attempts to resolve the underlying economic and social causes of international tensions. Canada is therefore actively participating in the negotiations in Vienna aimed at mutual

and balanced reductions in the conventional forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Central Europe. We have also supported within the United Nations a series of efforts directed to limiting the transfer of conventional weapons, reducing military budgets and providing greater openness concerning military budgets. The lack of any breakthrough on any of these issues has not lessened our sense of commitment nor diminished our efforts to achieve concrete results.

Verification

It has been a long-standing Canadian position since the outset of disarmament negotiations after the Second World War that verification mechanisms are not only the key to the implementation of arms control and disarmament agreements, but in some cases a virtual precondition to their conclusion. It is encouraging that both super powers are now directing their attention to various aspects of the problems of verification which go to the heart of every arms control and disarmament problem. Canada will continue to pursue most vigorously its efforts to push forward verification studies through the use of experts, technological means, including satellites and seismic data exchange, and on-site inspections.

This is an appropriate stage at which to turn to the second part of the policy statement made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in Geneva on February 1, namely, Canada's priorities in the arms control work of the Geneva Committee on Disarmament. It is worth noting that the statement was made in the full knowledge that with respect to some of these priority issues, Canada's proposals present difficulties for one or both of the Great Powers.

Nevertheless, while recognizing the limits upon Canada's ability to influence events, we have not hesitated to press vigorously for action where we are convinced that it is needed.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban

Mr. MacEachen emphasized that the pursuit of a comprehensive nuclear test ban is a fundamental -- perhaps the fundamental -- nuclear issue before the Committee on Disarmament. He urged that the new working group begin to discharge its mandate on that subject as a matter of urgency in 1983. He argued for a step-by-step approach that could assure that the key elements of a treaty are in place even before the final political commitment to a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty on the part of the nuclear weapons states. You may be certain that we will continue to press for concrete results by every means open to us.

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Mr. MacEachen then emphasized the importance Canada has always attached to the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons. He pointed out that the non-proliferation treaty emphasized the non-discriminatory transfer of peaceful nuclear technology but provides also for the de-escalation of the arms race by nuclear weapons states. He reminded the Committee that while more nuclear weapons states have adhered to the non-proliferation treaty, such voluntary renunciation has not been matched by corresponding action by the nuclear weapons states. He suggested that those of us with nuclear technology and those without must seek to persuade the nuclear weapons states to live up to their bargain to which they are committed by the non-proliferation treaty.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. MacEachen cited chemical weapons as an area in which the time is ripe for progress towards a treaty on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on the distribution of existing stock. He referred to the allocation of funds to enable Canadian technical experts to participate in the studies of the working group to be established and made clear that Canada considers this a priority issue for 1983.

Outer Space

Mr. MacEachen then turned to the sensitive question of weapons for use in outer space. He urged the Committee to begin as soon as possible its essential task of defining the legal and other issues necessary to build upon the outer space legal regime and made clear Canada's intention to participate actively in this work. He concluded by urging the establishment of a working group on this subject.

Summary

In the time available I have been able to make only a partial survey of the range of activities in which Canada is actively engaged in the pursuit of effective verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements. I have tried to explain the significance and importance as part of the negotiating process of the policy pronouncements and the meetings by Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs in Geneva earlier this month. The policy statement summarized Canada's position in the following terms:

"Canada has a large stake in the INF negotiations. We intend to press vigorously the following basic approach:

-- Canada places its full weight behind the negotiations. We strongly support a negotiated solution that will make deployment of the missiles in Europe unnecessary,

-- In the absence of concrete results in the negotiations, Canada considers that there is no viable alternative to deployment of the missiles.

-- Every serious proposal must be seriously examined. By the same token, propaganda ploys must not be permitted to undermine serious negotiations,

-- statements aimed at public opinion cannot be a substitute for genuine willingness to reach an agreement,

-- increased mutual security must be accepted as the fundamental consideration in the negotiating process.

Despite the obstacles, the Canadian Government is convinced that these negotiations can demonstrate in 1983 that the arms control and disarmament process can be made to work."

With respect to the four important areas of multi-lateral negotiation, Canada's four priorities for 1983 were summarized as follows:

" -- Canada will press for progress towards the objective of a comprehensive nuclear test ban;
-- Canada will press for a more effective non-proliferation regime;
-- Canada will press for a convention to prohibit chemical weapons;
-- Canada will press for progress towards the objective of prohibiting all weapons for use in outer space."

The Role of Public Opinion

It is abundantly clear that public opinion is having an important impact in the whole field of arms control and disarmament, at least insofar as western countries are concerned. It goes without saying that this is a highly desirable development. Those committed to the pursuit of arms control and disarmament both in and out of government have long sought to awaken public opinion to the crucial nature of the issues involved. Finally, at long last, but by no means too late, public opinion is engaged on these issues. Equally encouraging is the clear evidence that there is a very broad spectrum of interest groups and individuals from all walks of life who are taking serious and sustained interest. Regularly one is asked what can an individual do. Indeed, what can Canada do? It is necessary to be realistic and recognize the constraints within which a country which is not a great power can influence events on such questions. It is equally necessary to ensure that every ounce of pressure that countries such as Canada can

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bring to bear should be exerted. The same, I suggest, applies to members of the public such as those of you who are here today. As to what kinds of pressures, they will presumably in the normal course be directed towards ~~their~~^{you} own government but need not be ^{so} restricted. There are many ways of bringing pressure to bear on other governments, including even those of Eastern Europe. Indeed, if I were to offer unsolicited advice, it would be to reiterate what I said recently at ~~the~~ breakfast meeting with a group of parliamentarians committed to the attainment of effective verifiable arms control and disarmament! I would suggest that you attempt to ensure that your pressure is even-handed and directed at all parties, both East and West.

To illustrate my point, I am going to quote briefly from an article by James Reston in the February 13 issue of the New York Times. He wrote as follows:

"There are two emerging dangers in the present nuclear arms debate: first, that the militarists will want too many nuclear weapons, and second, that the pacifists will want too few, or none at all.

"Yet, if either side should prevail, the Western alliance that has avoided a third world war for two generations would probably be shattered. This, of course, has been the one clear objective of Soviet policy for the last 37 years.

"On the one hand, if Washington pushes the arms race beyond the tolerance of public opinion in Europe, it will surely lose the support of the allied governments it needs....

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"On the other hand, if the peace movement manages to persuade allied governments to reject Washington's efforts to maintain a nuclear balance on the ground in Europe, it will undoubtedly lose the support of the United States."

In the foregoing comments, Mr. Reston was clearly referring to the INF talks in Geneva and not the wider strategic START talks.

These comments raise very difficult issues for all of us. None of us wishes to be involved or to have Canada involved in any action which would escalate the arms race. On the other hand, none of us would wish to be involved or have Canada involved in any action which might actually increase the likelihood of a nuclear war by accepting a position of unilateral advantage on the part of the USSR. That is why we must found our approach on the concept of mutual security. That is why we must continue *also* to reject ~~the~~ arguments supporting a policy which assumes that nuclear war can be winnable. Such a policy can only contribute to mutual insecurity.

It is wrong to think that events have passed beyond our control. We can and must attempt to bring a constructive influence to bear, and all of us here tonight must share this common commitment and join in this common endeavour.