

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR J. ALAN BEESLEY

BEFORE THE

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 1985

Thank you Mr. President.

Speaking as I am for the first time under your presidency, it gives me very great pleasure, as it does those of my colleagues who have spoken, to be congratulating you in having contributed so much to the success of our efforts going back for such a long time.

I think that I should explain also that I am speaking at this time on this unusual occasion because of the importance that my Government attaches to this issue, and I would like to make the following points concerning the mandate:

Firstly, we consider that it is a realistic mandate and that it is, as expressed so elegantly by the distinguished representative of Mexico, an exploratory mandate, but, nonetheless, one that permits concrete work.

My second comment therefore is that it is not a narrow or restrictive mandate, but one that should enable us to begin some action, some concrete work, almost immediately.

My third comment is that it refers quite correctly to the relevance of existing agreements and existing proposals, and future initiatives, and this in itself is extremely important in terms of the kind of initial approach we take. We have to begin there without stopping there.

My next comment is that the mandate does take into account, and as we see it, - both complements and accurately reflects - the realities concerning the bilateral negotiations already under way between the USA and the USSR, but does not undermine or undercut or prejudice or in any way interfere with those negotiations, and that we consider to be absolutely central.

The next point I should like to make is that it does reflect, as we see it, the many expressions of hope and expectation that we have heard in this room that the bilateral negotiations would augment, accelerate, reinforce and contribute to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. That is what we all hoped would prove to be the case and this is evidence that it is having exactly that effect, and this is a message of great importance to all of us, to our Governments and to the peoples that our Governments represent.

The next comment I would make is that it reflects very great credit on all of the members of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly, if I may say so, the two major space powers, but also the coordinators who have worked so hard and so skillfully to achieve this objective and, as I mentioned earlier, it reflects great credit on you Mr. President and also, I know, the Secretary-General and his staff, and in this instance on the Conference on Disarmament as a whole.

I have one or two other comments that I should like to make; I think that, without opening a discussion, I would merely express the hope that this mandate will not expire at the end of 1985 if we haven't completed the kind of preliminary work that we want to see started immediately. I mention this almost en passant because I would hate to see us go through another long waiting time before we move into whatever may be the next phase of our work.

I have another comment, and it is this; quite clearly under anyone's interpretation of the mandate it is directly related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the very agenda item under which it appears, and I can assure you, Mr. President, even in your absence, that the Canadian delegation will be very actively participating in the work of the Conference on this matter.

My final comment is one that sums up nearly all I have said already. It is our view that it is hard to visualise a decision that would be possible for the Conference on Disarmament to make at this stage - certainly a procedural decision - which would have greater impact on our own work and on public opinion. It is like a breath of fresh air. It is, indeed, as suggested by the distinguished representative of China, a breakthrough.

Thank you Mr. President.