



CANADA

The Permanent Mission of Canada
to the United Nations
at Geneva

La Mission Permanente du Canada
auprès des Nations Unies
à Genève

Statement by

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Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Canada

to the Conference on Disarmament

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Thank you Mr. President,

As you know, I had been inscribed initially as a speaker and I had asked that my name be removed because of continuing informal discussions of which we are all aware, but I now wish to go ahead with my statement and in so doing I must apologise for the fact that it will be, to some extent, extemporaneous but that will not be the first time that you have borne with me in this respect.

May I begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you on your assumption of office and indicating to you my personal knowledge that you have already begun your task with the kind of vigour I would have expected of a representative of a country who plays hockey so well, produces so many superb tennis stars, and in many other respect shows the kind of perseverance, talent and vigour that we expect to see in this coming month. May I also take the opportunity of congratulating your immediate predecessor, Ambassador Lechuga of Cuba, for the efforts he made in laying the groundwork for what I hope to see forthcoming during the remainder of our spring session and, of course, our summer session. I hope I will not be committing a breach of protocol if I go back one step further and reiterate the many expressions of appreciation to my colleague Ambassador Fan, who did such a superb job in the

first month of this spring session. But on a more sombre note I would like to say since this is the first time I am speaking in plenary, what so many others have said perhaps more eloquently than I, how much we regret the death of our esteemed and valued friend and colleague, Don Lowitz. Having already expressed personally my condolences to his widow, Shana and to his delegation, I did wish to say in the Conference on Disarmament that my delegation and my government shares the view of all that we are all the poorer for having had this loss.

Mr. President, I was proposing to intervene primarily to announce the holding of a Workshop on Outer Space by the Government of Canada in the month of May and to take this opportunity to express personal invitations to the heads of delegations, - all delegations - to the Conference on Disarmament, to that Workshop or to their nominee for those who are unable to participate. I will come back to that in a few moments and spell out the nature of the invitation. Before doing so, however, I wish to provide some background which is certainly known to some of those present but perhaps not at all, concerning Canada's approach to the question of prevention of an arms race in outer space, because that is our object and purpose and it is quite evidently a widespread and widely-shared object and purpose.

If I could be permitted just a moment to recall some earlier developments, on August 26, 1982 Canada submitted its first substantive working paper to the Conference on Disarmament, which was then operating under another name, on the outer space issue. I would remind delegations that that document entitled "Arms control in outer space" (CD/320) undertook to discuss generally the subject of arms control and outer space in terms of stabilizing and destabilizing characteristics - a topic that is current still. I would recall also that for a number of years prior to 1985 the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor organization, had clearly recognized the importance of the outer space issue. It was only, however, on 29 March 1985 that the CD succeeded in reaching agreement on a mandate for an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This development was warmly welcomed by Canada and other members of the CD, as the first of the crucial steps to organize examination of the subject; this process was, of course, in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution relevant at that stage, which was adopted without dissent during its 39th session on 12 December 1984 and which called upon the CD to consider the question of preventing arms race in outer space as a matter of priority. I would like to re-emphasize that phrase "as a matter of priority".

The mandate since adopted and amended remains, of course, in the view of the Canadian delegation a realistic one, as I recall stating at the time; we regarded the mandate as neither too narrow or restrictive, nor too wide-ranging, but rather one permitting the CD to begin concrete action and undertake substantive work immediately. It's worth recalling, that the mandate was to examine as a first step, at that stage of substantive and general consideration, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is worth noting that the mandate that we are now working on continues to permit us to make specific examination of existing treaties, bilateral and multilateral, with a view to determining the content of the existing legal regime and in the process, of course, determining whether there are lacunae which ought to be filled in order to prevent an arms race in outer space. I think this is common ground, there is no doubt on that, but in any event Canada has pursued that objective.

I mentioned the first working paper that we had tabled, and I in so doing wish to emphasize that while Canada is not the only country tabling working papers, there are far too few in this field, and in others, and I believe as I have said on many occasions, that the way to concretize our work is to put our views in the form of working papers that go beyond the kind of statements which we all make in plenary and must make as part of

the negotiating process. May I recall that we tabled a second working paper which we considered to be directly on point; entitled "Survey of International Law Relevant to Arms Control in Outer Space" (CD/618), dated 23 June 1985. In addition, we tabled a third working paper (CD/716) which we continue to believe to be relevant and indeed some of the statements this morning indicated its continued relevance, on "Terminology relevant to arms control and Outer Space"; that is a document dated July 1986.

In tabling these working papers we had hoped to be of assistance to the Conference, and perhaps to the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, in that we did not attempt to present a Canadian point of view - a specifically governmental point of view - but rather to outline the issues which in our view have to be addressed.

We are conscious, of course, of the statement by the President for March, Ambassador Fan, in making clear as he did that there is no obstacle to discussing measures. For my part, I have good reason to recall as CD President in August, that our report has, as I recall, some 11 paragraphs which refer to the question of measures, and so do not consider that as a controversial issue. We have discussed measures: we undoubtedly will discuss measures. But I would like to emphasize that in an exercise of this complexity and importance, if we want to be

serious let's examine the existing regime; determine what lacunae, if any, exist and then consider what remains to be done. I don't think we should put the cart before the horse; neither do I suggest that we spend years engaging ourselves in the kinds of arguments that lawyers can sometimes be very skilled at in disagreeing on the legal regime. There is a good deal of scope for immediate work, concrete work, and substantive work to be done, I hope, at this spring session and certainly in the summer session.

In the light of this background information that I have provided, I would like to say that it is obvious that not only our delegation and the Canadian government but all governments and all delegations understand that one of the most important and difficult arms control and disarmament issue with which the international community must come to grips concerns the kinds of military activity which can legitimately be carried out in outer space and those which cannot. Technological advances combining with international political dynamics force these questions to the fore with increasing urgency. It is extremely encouraging that the USA and the USSR agreed in early 1985 to make the prevention of an arms race in outer space an agreed bilateral objective. This agreement attests to the importance and indeed the urgency of the subject, and as I just mentioned, in that same year this Conference agreed to establish for the first time a subsidiary

body to address the same ultimate objective, but in a multilateral context and certainly without detriment to the bilateral efforts. If I may be permitted I should like to quote from one of our own working papers that expresses in this case our own view as well as we are able to do on the relationship between the bilateral and multilateral negotiating processes, which we have never considered to be mutually exclusive. From the Canadian perspective, "the creation of the ad hoc committee on the outer space issue was fully in accord with Canada's express policy and constitutes a significant step forward in coming to grips with the subject." That remains true Mr. President. "The mandate of the ad hoc committee both complements and accurately reflects the reality concerning the bilateral negotiations under way between the United States and the USSR in Geneva," and this is the part I want to stress. That mandate as it now exists and as it has been affirmed in this session "neither undermines, prejudices, nor in any way interferes with the bilateral negotiations," and this fact is considered by Canada to be absolutely central to the successful outcome of both sets of deliberations.

I do not now intend to table another working paper but I do wish to proceed now to mention the Workshop I had referred to earlier. Having tried to help lay the groundwork, in so far as we are able to do so, and building upon the work done by many delegations in plenary and in the outer space committee, we have

concluded that the approach being followed is a useful one, but it should be pressed forward by specific exposure to practical issues. We were gratified that we were able to agree relatively quickly on the mandate; we share the concern at the delays that have occurred since, but we also share the widespread desire, which we hope is universal, that we will soon be able to hold a meeting of the ad hoc committee on outer space and get on with the work that's expected of us. Recognizing, however, that there is much remaining to be done of a serious nature, of a concrete nature, of a substantive nature, I am pleased to announce today that as part of Canada's contribution to the work of the present CD session, Canada is inviting each of the heads of delegations present here, or a designated representative, to attend an Outer Space Workshop in Montreal from 14 to 17 May 1987. We are also pleased to extend the invitation to observer delegations and to representatives of the Secretariat. The dates again have been carefully chosen (14 to 17 May) with a number of considerations in mind. Our dilemma was to find an appropriate time and venue for such a workshop given the very full schedule of the CD - which is much fuller than we would ever know from the press reports or from many other sources, - it is a very heavy schedule. We decided to follow the example of other Member States who have hosted Workshops in their own countries with a view to contributing to progress in the activities of the Conference on Disarmament. It seemed appropriate under the circumstances to schedule the

Workshop for a period when at least a significant number of representatives will already have crossed the Atlantic to participate in other activities of the United Nations including, of course, the UNDC. It was just such an approach, as we recall, that the United States adopted when it hosted its Chemical Weapons Workshop in Utah in 1983. In this case we are proposing that the Workshop take place during the period of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, but without hampering the work of that important deliberating body. Many participants will already have gathered in New York. The departure for Montreal would take place on the afternoon of Thursday, 14 May 1987; work would carry on into the week-end with participants returning to New York early on Sunday, 17 May. The Canadian Government will provide transportation from New York to Montreal, return, and of course will cover the expenses of related costs in Montreal as other Workshops have done. The Workshop will focus on certain legal and technical aspects of the outer space issue including presentation and opportunity for round-table discussion on both aspects. Also included will be a visit to the Satellite and Aerospace Systems Division of SPAR AEROSPACE LIMITED to illustrate certain practical capabilities and constraints regarding the space-to-space application of space-based remote sensing systems. We would want the Secretariat to be adequately represented also at this Workshop.

In closing, may I apologise for not addressing a number of other extremely important issues on our agenda, but the very discussion we have heard today, coupled with developments behind the scenes, convinced me that it was timely to make this announcement today, which I will confirm by letters to all of you.

In closing, may I say that we look forward to hosting as many delegations as possible in Montreal in May. Thank you very much Mr. President.