Note verbale dated 27 April 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and refers to the Secretary-General's note of 28 January 1977 in which he requested the views of the Government of Canada on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and has the honour to transmit herewith the views of the Canadian Government.
Canada continues to regard the United Nations as the principal forum in which to focus world attention on the need to limit and reduce the levels of military forces, armaments and expenditures and for an exchange of views among Member States on arms control and disarmament issues. Canada also recognizes the important catalytic role that the United Nations can play in encouraging, and preparing the ground for, the pursuit of arms control and disarmament in fora appropriate for negotiating specific agreements. Accordingly, Canada co-sponsored and welcomed the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 31/109B (XXXI) on the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament in 1978 and intends to participate actively in the preparations for the special session and in its deliberations. Canada's objective is to make the special session as productive and as constructive as possible: its hope is that this international forum may reach a meeting of minds on a broadly based co-operative approach to the issues involved and thus infuse a new sense of shared purpose in arms control and disarmament endeavours.

Canada is of the view that the deliberations of the special session should lead to the adoption of a basic final act or political declaration. Indeed, the success of the special session will depend on whether and the extent to which Member States can reach agreement on the contents of such a final document as its principal instrument. A basic document falling short of common consent or lacking the support of those Member States which are most significant in terms of arms control and disarmament would detract from the significance and the value of the special session and undermine the international co-operative approach to arms control and disarmament questions that the session should be concerned to foster. Accordingly, Canada believes that, from the outset, all Member States should commit themselves to the goal that the political declaration or final act of the special session should reflect the broadest possible agreement.

The preparation of a final document that will meet with general agreement will be the most onerous task of the special session. In order to facilitate this achievement, it seems desirable that work begin just as soon as possible and be pursued as a matter of the highest priority through to the end of the special session. In particular, Canada considers that the preparatory committee for the special session should, at the beginning of its second series of meetings in May 1977, set up a drafting sub-committee to begin work on a collective approach to the elements of a final document and that the work of this sub-committee should continue during the series of meetings of the preparatory committee in May and September of 1977. It may also be found desirable for the results of the work of this drafting sub-committee to be included in the progress report which the preparatory committee is to make to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly pursuant to operative paragraph 6 of resolution 31/109B, so that Member States wishing to do so may offer their comments in the First Committee. Thereafter the drafting sub-committee of the preparatory committee should convene during any meetings of the preparatory committee in 1978 and, if necessary, between such
meetings and the start of the special session to produce a working draft of a final document for consideration by the special session.

Aside from the crucial necessity of approaching the final document of the special session on a co-operative basis from the outset and through to its achievement, Canada has an open mind regarding other forms of agreement that the special session may decide upon with regard to other aspects of its work. If the special session can also reach full agreement on, for example, general principles relevant to arms control and disarmament, a programme of specific measures, mechanisms for negotiations or priorities, these should be included formally in an appropriate way in the final document of the special session. Any such supplementary proposals that cannot be endorsed on the same basis as the final document, however, should, in the Canadian view, have a different status from that document.

In order to make the fullest possible use of its potential, the special session should not be a mere stepping-stone to some other plenary forum but a plenary consultation on arms control and disarmament in its own right. On the other hand, Canada considers that if efforts to agree on a final document of the special session in 1978 meet with success, it would probably be desirable for a further special session on disarmament to be convened, after an appropriate interval, to assess progress in implementing this new co-operative approach to arms control and disarmament questions that Canada hopes will be enshrined in the final document of the special session next year.

Purely as an illustration and in order to facilitate earliest consideration of the possible elements of a final document, Canada is including with this reply a very tentative thematic outline of some of the major topics that a final document of the special session might seek to address, together with some provisional notes on possible treatment. This outline is not intended to be complete. Rather, it represents an attempt to begin the process of thinking about the possible content of a final document that could meet with general acceptance. Canada will welcome consideration of all other suggestions for inclusion in a final act of the special session submitted in the spirit of a determined search for general agreement.

Possible final document - thematic outline

I. Introduction

The document might contain several preambular paragraphs that would:

- recognize that all nations must be concerned with international security and with the essential part to be played in its enhancement by arms control and disarmament measures in the fields of both nuclear and conventional weapons;

/...
- recognize that enormous expenditures on a world-wide scale for arms and military forces absorb material and human resources from the peaceful economic and social development of all countries;

- emphasize that the United Nations is and should remain the principal forum enabling all States to review and discuss proposals in the area of arms control and disarmament, to express their concerns regarding threats to international security arising from the development and deployment of armaments, and to inform and develop world public opinion on these issues.

II. Nuclear arms control and disarmament

Under this heading the document might:

- recognize that the danger of nuclear warfare remains a grave threat to the survival of mankind requiring thorough-going, balanced and effective measures to curb and reverse the nuclear arms race;

- note the importance of the linkage between efforts to deal with nuclear weapons proliferation in the vertical dimension and in the horizontal dimension and affirm the need for balanced progress in both areas in order to enhance international security on an equitable basis.

A. Nuclear weapons

- emphasize the fundamental importance of the strategic arms negotiations between the two major nuclear weapon Powers;

- express the conviction that the successful conclusion of agreements on nuclear arms control between the two major nuclear Powers should be followed up by efforts for the control and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons;

- assess the progress in these negotiations to date;

- urge the two major nuclear weapon Powers to intensify their efforts to reach further agreements to curtail the strategic nuclear arms confrontation in both its quantitative and its qualitative dimensions.

B. Nuclear testing

- reaffirm the conviction that the cessation of nuclear testing would be a useful step toward controlling the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons capabilities;

- recall the stated aim of the Original Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time;

/...
- assess the progress to date in achieving a cessation of nuclear testing;

- urge the achievement of an effective underground test ban between the two major nuclear Powers immediately;

- emphasize the need for such a bilateral ban to be given a broader base through the achievement of a Comprehensive Test Ban and call for intensified efforts in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to achieve such an agreement.

C. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy

- recognize that effective international safeguards and controls are essential in order to ensure that the peaceful application of nuclear energy will not lead to further proliferation of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

- stress the importance of strengthening international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the collaboration of States receiving and supplying nuclear technology, facilities, equipment and fuel;

- assess the achievements to date in the International Atomic Energy Agency and among supplier States in strengthening the régime to ensure that international co-operation in the uses of nuclear energy is employed only for peaceful purposes;

- call for creation of new mechanisms for consultation and co-operation among both supplier and receiver States to seek agreement on collective measures to avoid the dangers for international security inherent in the development of an international plutonium economy.

D. Nuclear-weapon-free zones

- express the conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can contribute to the security of members of such zones and to the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons;

- assess the progress to date in achieving such zones;

- urge non-nuclear weapon States to initiate regional discussions with a view to the establishment of such zones where appropriate;

- urge all nuclear weapon States to extend their co-operation in the creation of such zones and to enter into binding undertakings never to employ nuclear weapons or the threat of use of such weapons against States that have entered into a binding agreement establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone encompassing their territory.

/...
III. Other weapons of mass destruction

Under this heading the document might:

- recognize that weapons of mass destruction other than nuclear weapons - such as chemical and biological weapons and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect - are of special concern, second only to nuclear weapons because of their indiscriminate, widespread and inhumane effects;

- call on all nations to adhere to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction and to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare;

- reaffirm the objective of reaching early agreement on the effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their elimination from arsenals of all States and assess the progress to date;

- call for intensified efforts in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to achieve agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and for their destruction.

IV. Conventional arms control and disarmament

Under this heading the document might:

- assess the efforts of member nations collectively to limit the conventional arms race and the transfer of conventional arms.

A. Confidence-building measures

- call for the establishment, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, of an international register of conventional arms transfers and urge all Member States to submit information concerning such transfers;

- call for more openness among Member States on expenditures for military purposes, recommend compilation and publication, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, of military expenditures by Member States and urge all Member States to supply information on their national military expenditures to the Secretary-General on an annual basis.

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B. **Regional approaches**

- call for conferences between both recipients and suppliers to restrain arms transfers on a regional basis;

- call for regional arms control conferences to address local conventional arms races and to secure agreed measures of restraint.

V. **Resources for peace**

Under this heading the document might:

- recall General Assembly resolution No. 2506 (XXIV) of 15 December 1969 in which it declared the decade of the 1970s the Disarmament Decade and envisaged a link between the Disarmament Decade and the Second United Nations Development Decade;

- urge Member States to intensify their efforts to ensure the world resources freed by disarmament are devoted increasingly to the satisfaction of the economic and social needs of humanity, particularly in the developing countries.

VI. **Further special session on disarmament**

The document might:

- recommend that a further special session on disarmament be held in ... to assess the progress in negotiating effective arms control and disarmament measures.