COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Working Group II
Agenda items 12 and 15

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS, INCLUDING QUALITATIVE AND
QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS, RELEVANT TO THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS, WITH
A VIEW TO THE ELABORATION OF APPROPRIATE CONCRETE AND PRACTICAL
MEASURES AND, IF NECESSARY ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES, TAKING DUELY
INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THE
FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY, THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT,
IN THE LIGHT OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME ADOPTED AT
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Working paper submitted by Canada

Experience has demonstrated that in attempting to anticipate and shape the
future, we are prone simply to extrapolate from past trends and concerns. This can
lead to serious, and sometimes costly, miscalculations about future developments.
Assessing the qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of developments and
trends relevant to the disarmament process is especially difficult because military
capabilities are being rapidly transformed by the rampant pace of technological
change which characterizes our age. It is precisely for this reason that our
publics are increasingly and properly concerned that the application of new
technologies to military purposes not occur in unthinking, uncontrolled ways. The
modernization of weapons systems should not be the result of blind technological
imperatives. It should be subject to clear policy guidance, designed to ensure
that new technology is applied in ways which enhance and strengthen, rather than
undermine, international peace and security.

In both qualitative and quantitative aspects, there are two major and distinct
dimensions: the development of new weapons systems as the result of new
technological applications; and the dissemination to increasing numbers of
countries and regions of ever more modern and sophisticated weapons systems, as
well as the capability for their production.

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In the Canadian view, any realistic and constructive assessment will need to take account of the following considerations, among others:

- Existing technologies cannot be disinveted, though their applications can be constrained in ways which enhance mutual security. (This is the central function of the existing arms control and disarmament process.)

- The boundary-line between military and non-military research cannot be clearly drawn, since many technologies can have both military and civilian applications.

- Militarily-relevant technological change cannot be halted or reversed but can be redirected by deliberate policy choices. Indeed, it is policy choices and intentions rather than the nature of the technologies themselves, which primarily determine the significance of weapons systems.

- While research under military auspices can produce results that have useful non-military applications, most experience suggests strongly that this is an inefficient way of obtaining non-military benefits (partly because security considerations impede the "migration" of research results to civilian applications). The disproportionate allocation of limited research resources to military-directed research can therefore involve the indirect cost of starving the civilian economy and society of badly-needed research resources.

- The unconstrained allocation of research resources to military purposes can contribute to an "arms race mentality" not only directly by accelerating the development of new weapons systems but also through reinforcing a perception of hostile intent.

- Finally, research under military auspices can contribute directly to the arms control and disarmament process through the development of technologies for the effective and economical verification of arms control agreements.

These factors suggest the desirability of ensuring more effective policy direction over the processes which will determine the kinds of weapons systems and defences which will become available in the future. A necessary first step in this area would involve greater openness and transparency in the area of military research. This special session could usefully consider the feasibility and potential utility of a reporting system within the framework of the United Nations whereby all States would be encouraged to file and make freely available information on their current and planned military research and development. The information could include an indication of the magnitude of that effort (expenditure, number of scientists involved) and its programme objectives. A potentially useful subcategory of these reports would be an indication of the research effort devoted to arms control verification. The United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs would be a logical repository for such reports.
Such a measure would be directed primarily towards qualitative aspects of military developments. The quantitative dimension is also important. In this connection, it is a matter for dismay that so few countries use the existing reporting matrix for filing information on their military expenditures. At a time when there appears to be rising understanding of the benefits for security and stability of increased openness on military matters, the special session should urge all countries to make use of this reporting mechanism which is already available to us. The open exchange of this information would be an invaluable confidence-building measure. There should also be further serious consideration, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, of the feasibility of an effective register of international arms transfers.

Future developments and trends in relation to weapons systems which already exist, particularly weapons of mass destruction, are also a matter for concern.

Nuclear arsenals, as they now exist, continue to be widely regarded as constituting the most serious threat to the future of mankind. The two leading nuclear Powers in their recent agreements seem at last to have taken the first step towards real nuclear disarmament. This amounts to an epochal turning-point in the arms control and disarmament process. The momentum of that process must be maintained.

Like many others here, Canada supports the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as a fundamental arms control objective. The First Special Session foresaw such a comprehensive test ban as having value "within the framework of an effective nuclear disarmament process". Encouragingly, this logic has been reflected in the fact of the two leading nuclear Powers having entered into negotiations on nuclear-test limits simultaneously with their negotiation of agreements to eliminate or reduce certain nuclear-weapons systems. Participants at the Third Special Session should register their support for continuance of this step-by-step approach to a comprehensive test ban.

For many years, a central obstacle to a comprehensive test ban was doubt that such an agreement could be adequately verified. Under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament, much useful work has been done in defining and clarifying the verification requirements for a test ban. Ongoing technological developments, particularly in the area of seismic detection, have also greatly improved the prospects for effective verification. The Conference on Disarmament must continue this work and commence as soon as feasible the negotiation of a multilateral treaty to ban nuclear tests.

The process of nuclear-arms reductions which has now been initiated by the two leading nuclear Powers underlines the importance of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond the five acknowledged nuclear Powers. The fact that several countries, including several reported to have acquired or to be seeking to acquire a nuclear-weapons capability, have neither adhered to the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) nor placed their nuclear programmes under international safeguards administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency, is cause for great concern. The Third Special Session should call on such States to take early action...
to adhere to the NPT and to place their nuclear programmes under full-scope IAEA safeguards. In the Canadian view, such a legally binding commitment to non-proliferation ought to be a condition for nuclear co-operation with non-nuclear-weapon States.

The instances of recent chemical weapons use reinforce the urgency of concluding as soon as possible a comprehensive ban on these weapons. It is encouraging that in the past two years there has been significant progress in the negotiation of such a ban at the Conference on Disarmament. This is in many ways the most technically challenging multilateral arms control negotiation ever undertaken, involving extremely complex provisions for verification. The negotiators must press on with both deliberation and haste. A treaty with carefully defined, detailed verification provisions is important in its own right and also as a model for future multilateral arms control agreements. Care must also be taken to ensure that the Treaty, when implemented, will not inhibit the legitimate peaceful activities of chemical industries, including those in developing countries.

The ambivalent implications for future strategic stability of ongoing technological developments are posed especially dramatically in the area of outer space. The issue is sometimes misleadingly posed as one of preventing the "militarization" of outer space. As a matter of reality, many of the man-made objects now in outer space are there for military purposes and in full conformity with existing international law. The issue is not one of banning all military activity in outer space but one of ensuring that such military activities as occur there enhance strategic stability and international security.

Nevertheless, in light of technological developments over the past decade and the announced policies and research efforts of some Governments, a heightened concern about the potential for outer space becoming an arena for military rivalry is entirely legitimate. Some encouragement can be derived from the fact that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is an agreed negotiating objective of the two leading space Powers. Further, at the Conference on Disarmament, many of the difficult legal and technical issues involved are being clarified.

For the future, it is essential that the 1967 Outer Space Treaty remain in force as the central legal framework for activities in outer space. It may need to be supplemented by additional legal instruments. Continued strict compliance by the USA and USSR with the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty as signed is also in the international interest.

The international community ought not to overlook the possibilities for turning new technologies to the advantage of the arms control and disarmament process. Canada's own PAXSAT studies suggest a considerable potential for the application of space-based remote-sensing technologies to the verification of arms control agreements. Greater attention and work should be dedicated to exploring these possibilities.

By far the most devastating and harmful consequences of military actions in past decades have resulted from the development, deployment and use of conventional
weapons. Moreover, this burden has been disproportionately borne by populations in less developed countries. It is the most disadvantaged peoples who are suffering the most today - and UNSSOD III should not lose sight of this central fact.

It is in this area that regional approaches to arms control and disarmament may well have the highest dividends. It is encouraging that the States of the two major military alliances, within the framework of the CSCE process, seem about to enter formal negotiations aimed at maintaining stability at lower levels of conventional armament in Europe. Other States should consider actively the possibilities for negotiated limitations and reductions of conventional arms at a regional level, on the basis of the undiminished security of all States and with full respect for the security interests and independence of States outside military alliances.

The 1987 Conference on Disarmament and Development was a landmark event in that it registered unequivocally a more sophisticated international understanding of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of security. More specifically, it was agreed that disarmament and development are two distinct processes, each of which contributes to enhanced security and in turn benefits from it. It is important that the autonomy of these processes be preserved. Canadian policies and programmes are based firmly on the view that disarmament and development must each be pursued in its own right.

The international arms control and disarmament process has witnessed growing acceptance that effective verification provisions are an essential element of arms control agreements. The insistence on adequate verification provisions is no longer automatically seen suspiciously as an "excuse" for failure to conclude agreements. Rather, it is acknowledged as the necessary means for attaining confidence in compliance. This in turn reflects an understanding that the need for assured compliance with agreements which touch directly on the vital security interests of States is fundamental.

The broadened acceptance of the legitimacy of the requirement for effective verification has been resoundingly registered in the recent work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. After concentrated work at two sessions, the Commission successfully "reported out" on this agenda item. Canada is particularly proud to have chaired the Working Group. The co-operative and reasoned approaches by countries from all regions and political groups was essential to this achievement.

We hope that this special session will readily agree on the desirability of giving its endorsement to the outcome by incorporating the agreed 16 verification principles into our concluding document.

The United Nations must play an effective role in the multilateral arms control process, including through developing a capacity to contribute to the effective verification of multilateral agreements. In this context, the recent work of the UNDC should be seen as only the first stage, not the conclusion of international co-operation within the United Nations framework on the development of effective multilateral verification arrangements.

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Delegations will be aware of the paper (A/S-15/25) which has been jointly submitted by Canada and the Netherlands on this subject. It reflects our shared view not only on the potential importance of the United Nations in the multilateral verification process but also our strong belief that the United Nations role must be elaborated and developed with special care and deliberation. It is important that no steps be taken which might have the unintentional effect of inhibiting rather than facilitating the negotiation and conclusion of effective arms control agreements. All delegations are urged to examine carefully the thoughts set out in that paper. It is hoped this will lead to a consensus among us that an expert study of the type proposed in the paper should be one of the key recommendations of this special session. Such a step would have lasting importance for the multilateral arms control and disarmament process and the role of the United Nations in it.

It is increasingly recognized that levels of armament are more a symptom than a cause of the mistrust which prevails among numerous States, hence the attention to confidence-building measures as a means of diminishing levels of mistrust. The more traditional arms control measures direct themselves towards the constraint of military capabilities. Confidence-building measures go further by attempting to provide indications of military intent. This is truly a pioneering endeavour. What is involved here are such important principles as openness, transparency and predictability.

The conclusion of the Stockholm Agreement in 1986 was a landmark in the establishment of confidence-building measures as a major international device for reducing levels of mistrust among States. This agreement is being effectively implemented. Several inspections of military exercises have already been conducted with a high degree of success. This special session could usefully commend the members of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe for their success in negotiating and implementing effective confidence- and security-building measures and urge that they be maintained and further developed. States in other regions could be encouraged to consider actively the negotiation and implementation of analogous measures.

The Stockholm Agreement has indeed built confidence. So too can UNSSOD III build confidence throughout the whole international community if we assess new trends and developments in an objective manner with the aim of ensuring that future developments will strengthen - not weaken - global security.