A Political Agenda for Arms Control: A Canadian View

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In the interwoven complex of politics, security and arms control, Canada, like other non-nuclear powers, has only limited influence over strategic negotiations, though Canadians have as much interest as anyone in their outcome. Is there a role available, for which Canada is specifically suited? What is the most effective way Canada can contribute to the stabilization of international relations? As an advanced industrialized country with a global foreign policy, Canada should continue to use its influence on a comprehensive and global level to help define the direction and character of arms control. This involves playing a creative role in establishing the minimum level of confidence in East-West political relations which viable arms control agreements require.

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"It wouldn't take much to disarm Canada", General Burns is said to have remarked once.

Canada may seem to be an under-spender on the military side of the Government budget, by the norms of most NATO countries, Warsaw Pact countries and many in the Third World. But Canadians generally consider our spending levels — which, incidentally, meet recent NATO numerical commitments — as being in line with our national needs and international role. We have a distinguished war record and a respected peace-keeping record, but less of an arms tradition than most countries, due no doubt to the security of our borders in our 116 years of nationhood.

Our economic and other interests support an active multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, as well as a strong development assistance programme. But Canadian interests also argue decisively for active participation in both collective security and disarmament activity. Canada's commitment to NATO is a function not only of our international role but of the way in which we have linked Canadian interests to the allies with which we have most in common as a nation.

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Canada's strong role in disarmament activity has always been a natural calling, with broad public support and strong specialized constituencies. While arms control is now publicly appreciated as the great over-arching international issue of our times, to the point where public concern approaches a level of crisis, this appreciation has been sporadic, rising with periods of East-West or, more specifically, U.S.S.R.-U.S.A. tension. But Canada has been active throughout the years since World War II. There is not a multilateral arms control discussion in which Canada has not played a leading part.

While the intermediate-range nuclear force [INF] discussions have been the object of almost unprecedented consultations in NATO, strategic arms control negotiations are basically bilateral, between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Canada, like other non-superpowers, has limited influence over developments. In a general and comprehensive sense, Canada may have a position of some abstract moral authority as the first state which voluntarily eschewed nuclear weapons, particularly in respect of the vital issue of nuclear non-proliferation. But the key negotiations today are exercises in comparative strategic security analysis. Canadians consider that our location is strategic in a global sense, and that Canada's vast expanse of territory makes it particularly so in terms of the calculations of distance and speed which, along with the accuracy and destructibility of modern nuclear weapons systems, form the context for strategic arms control negotiations. In a palpable way, Canadians know that the factor of space in these calculations is often our space.

This is not a distinction which has very much impact internationally. We seem to others a relatively secure state which has decided, in its own interests, not to have any strategic arms, nuclear or conventional, which need be controlled. As such, we do not seem to be in a primary position to influence the points of view of countries which do live with a more concrete sense of threat to their security.

Yet, of course, Canadians judge their security to be very much affected by world events. We feel vulnerable. The controversy over the possibility of testing over Canadian territory the guidance systems for U.S. cruise missiles has become a focus for this concern about nuclear risk, as well as the junction point for these different streams of perception of Canadian policy, practice and geography.

Those who oppose the testing of cruise missiles over Canada generally reflect the view that there is an advantage in influence to be gained by Canada not being associated with the testing of this weapon system, even in such an indirect and conditional way, because it diminishes their sense of Canada's moral authority. In their eyes, the exercise would seem to taint us in a way we have not been tainted before, and in their view we shall have helped to accelerate the arms race. The point of view deserves respect.

But we are members of an alliance which has judged the cruise missile as necessary because of Soviet deployments and developments, and unless the U.S.S.R. changes its position on the matter, it is politically essential for the allies to go through with deployment in Europe. As to the cruise missile itself, its introduction is less destabilizing than not responding as an alliance to the U.S.S.R. SS-20s, whose introduction is indeed destabilizing. Only an adequate military balance can bring about the stability necessary for arms reduction. The cruise is a significant change in weapons development but is not in itself particularly destabilizing because it is not in any sense a first-strike weapon. It poses verification challenges, but these are less daunting than the risks represented by other weapons systems of far greater destructive and destabilizing potential, and of more ominous innovative significance, such as small, mobile, multi-warhead ICBMs. In its air-launched mode, cruise missile verifiability is dependent on that of its aircraft launcher, a relatively feasible act of verification by national technical means. In a sea-launched mode, the missile is similarly dependent on ships and submarines which may not always be verifiable, but which possess other, more destructive, missiles as part of their inventory. The ground-launched cruise missile is already almost unique in that its deployment, at least in Europe, is subject to the arms control negotiations (in which Canada does have a consultative part) under the NATO two-track decision of 1979. In other words, there is something of a brake on the deployment of the system, if both East and West together choose to use it.

This is not to dismiss the cruise missile controversy as being irrelevant. But the more pertinent questions are of a broader nature: What can Canada do to promote the increase of mutual security that Mr MacEachen noted in Geneva is "the only sound basis for effective arms control and disarmament" so that the arms race can truly be "suffocated" as Pierre Trudeau proposed to the United States in 1979, by agreement and action on *both* sides?

There are ways. Arms control efforts over time have generally focused on weapons hardware and technology. They still need to pursue that track. But the link between this track and practical political competition at the basis of the arms race needs much more explicit examination. For years, arms control diplomacy has lagged behind developments in technology, political relationships and, ultimately, strategies. The technology curve has outpaced consistently the content of agreements to control weapons. The world has not been able to harness and limit the increasingly menacing threats of new technology, with the exceptions, perhaps, of the 1972 *Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty* between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and the *Outer Space Treaty* which limits the emplacement of weapons of mass destruction in orbit in outer space. In one of the seminal observations of our century, Einstein judged that the "splitting of the atom has changed everything save our mode of thinking and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe". The drift is in the be-

haviour of nations, as well as in our inability to devise and negotiate viable arms control agreements, or more precisely, to define the inextricable relationship between the two. Political relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. have deteriorated, for a variety of reasons, to a point where arms control agreements which must be founded in mutual confidence and security are much more difficult to negotiate.

The combination of technological advance and political distrust also encouraged the apparent proliferation of war-fighting strategies on both sides which have left the Western public aghast. Strategy, moreover, is adapted to weapons development, rather than *vice-versa*. However, strategy seems to be determined by the emergence of weapons meant to *fight* nuclear wars, rather than to *deter* them, making a military banality of the dangerous doctrine of nuclear use. The public's anxiety has been stirred by offhand public remarks by strategists. In recent months, such loose talk of "prevailing" in a nuclear war or a "limited" war has pretty much ceased. That is good because, as Mr MacEachen noted, any "attempt by any power to develop a policy which assumes that nuclear war can be winnable contributes to mutual insecurity". There are few in authority in the West prepared to believe that there can be a "victor" in a nuclear war. There are few now arguing that a "limited" nuclear war, involving controllable exchanges, can be a legitimate or sensible national pursuit or possibility. The political sentiments in Western Europe have demonstrated amply the unacceptability of such doctrine: a nuclear war "limited" to Europe would of necessity be "total" for Europeans.

All leaders in the West appear genuinely committed to arms control agreements with the U.S.S.R. But views of what is possible inevitably vary.

Canada's contribution to the process should be diplomatic and political, as well as technical. East-West relations have always been an area of emphasis in Canadian foreign policy activity: adapted to the arms control context, this emphasis has the potential for a contribution of real value. Our influence has to be spent on improving the means of preventing nuclear war. We should help to clarify the essential elements in arms control. Canada can continue to contribute to the development of an adequate comprehensive and universal framework for viable arms control agreements between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Countries other than the superpowers have specific views and interests, and Canada is aptly placed to understand and represent them. Multilateral negotiations toward international agreements on the comprehensive banning of nuclear test explosions, chemical weapons and all weapons for use in outer space remain vital. Moreover, like other countries such as Sweden, the Canadian reputation for multilateral diplomacy and technical skill enables a national contribution to the technical side of arms control negotiations — such as on the principles and techniques of verification.

In our stress on the political and diplomatic context for international security, we should also employ as much diplomatic leverage as possible in favour of preventing further proliferation of nuclear weapons. We should continue to pursue peaceful means for resolving conflicts, in the United Nations and elsewhere.

But above all, we need to do what we can to promote the return of some confidence in the U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. relationship. That relationship is key to arms control and world peace. Without a minimum of confidence in each other, the great powers are inherently insecure, and the rest of the world is hostage to their insecurity. Basic security against nuclear war is unavailable if one side or the other is seeking competitive advantage. Arms control is an act of security. The security of one superpower has to reside in the security of the other. The concept of strategic advantage must be abandoned.

The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. need to recognize mutually that arms control agreements require the confidence of better mutual relations. The notion that the negotiation of arms control agreements will in itself be the only real test whether better relations are possible is false, though undoubtedly arms control negotiations are an important test. Better relations are important prior ingredients of arms control negotiations because arms control agreements are by definition rooted in confidence, and the security which only justified confidence can impart.

International behaviour is vital to the process. The negotiations which we associate with the process of detente more than a decade ago did not attempt to determine what sort of international behaviour was acceptable outside the area of Europe. The United States was, after all, heavily engaged in Vietnam at the time, in large part because of the perceived activities of the North Vietnamese, Russian allies. Since then, the Soviet Union has invaded Afghanistan, and has acted elsewhere in ways which have undermined American official confidence in Soviet intentions. Behaviour is vital to building the confidence which permits the sense of security necessary for viable arms control agreements. If arms control agreements are to be viable, they must be supported by restrained international behaviour, both to prevent crisis, and to restore and sustain confidence.

On the other hand, arms control agreements cannot be linked to extraneous disputes between East and West. They are objectively in our interest, if they are fair, and should not be held hostage to concessions somewhere else. Prime Minister Trudeau stressed at The University of Notre Dame that arms control agreements are of such overwhelming importance to the interest of all humanity that they must be set above and apart from the normal intercourse of international politics.

We must be realistic. In saying that improved U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. relations are the key, our concept of "better relations" is of necessity a limited one. We cannot ignore the obstacles to better relations across the board which are formidable. The Soviet Union is a closed, totalitarian society having to cope with threats to its hegemony in Eastern Europe from the open, more attractive societies of the West. As Soviet inability to observe the principles of the Helsinki Accords indicates, truly improved relations across the board of activities are proscribed by the closed nature of Soviet society. However, there are real possibilities for improvement in the Soviet-American relationship if we take specific and objective aim at the primary target of reducing tensions between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., so as to build the necessary political and security confidence, and thus permit viable understandings in the areas of mutual security and arms control.

For this to happen, we need better communication between the principals and better international machinery for dealing with crises. Canada should encourage both. We should not over-estimate our influence over either superpower; each is unwilling to derogate to any third party any part of its control over vital interests in relations with the other.

The U.S. does consult with its NATO allies but on strategic questions it is motivated primarily by its unique responsibilities. But at least Canada can work on encouraging the development of a comprehensive international political framework, leading to consensus about international behaviour. Such a comprehensive, conceptual framework should reflect the belief that disarmament is bound up with concepts of security, stability, confidence, and political relations in such a way and to such an extent that the discussion or presentation of such techniques in a vacuum is without substantive purpose. The framework could be a check list of rules of the game by which the negotiators and the international community could judge the validity of arms control proposals. Canadian diplomacy could promote the acceptance of the rules and promote the conditions whereby each rule could be validated, thereby also contributing to a political consensus.

Here, then, are ten suggested rules of the game:

Rule 1. Simple and urgent proposals: Because there is clearly a climate of public anxiety and confusion over the strategic arms control situation, proposals for arms reductions must be understandable enough to address public concern. They must be aimed as well at a relatively *urgent* conclusion, since there is instability in prolonged negotiations. Moreover, prolonged negotiations become a self-defeating process because technological change makes established positions obsolete.

Rule 2. Comprehensiveness: Proposals should be framed in as comprehensive a strategic-security framework as possible. This means that nuclear equality can probably not be achieved system-by-system across the board.

Rule 3. No strategic gain: Arms control proposals should not be attempts to make strategic gains at an adversary's expense. They should not be attempts to win the war by other means.

Rule 4. Enhance mutual security: Arms control agreements must have as their objective the provision of greater security for both sides, but at a lower level of armament, reinforcing the need that they be as comprehensive as possible. Obviously, both sides have to be convinced that any agreement does enhance its security and the United States has special requirements to be able to sell an agreement publicly and politically on that basis.

Rule 5. Emphasize the destabilizing systems: Since arms control negotiations should be as comprehensive in approach as possible, they should emphasize the most destabilizing factors and features. For this purpose, they should try to address these issues at the outset, to seek agreement on respective perceptions.

Rule 6. Protect the future: Proposals should address explicitly the issue of new weapons systems as well as specific existing ones. They should be careful not to make the environment for arms development innovation in the future too permissive because of vagueness or omission of constraints on novelty.

Rule 7. Quality as well as quantity: — A qualitative freeze: The emphases of arms control proposals should be qualitative as well as quantitative, and the end effect of these proposals should be to bring about a qualitative freeze on testing, development and production of new weapons systems. Obviously, such a freeze has to be verifiable. Research cannot realistically be included. We must assume that research into a higher state of the arms art will not be verifiable, and continuing research can be a function of continuing security.

Rule 8. A code of conduct: Proposals for arms control and reduction should be accompanied by political understandings, such as an agreed code of conduct, to increase confidence on both sides regarding respective intentions and interests. Without linking arms control to extraneous political issues, the ground rules for interuational behaviour bearing upon security interests should be clarified, something which detente did not accomplish.

Rule 9. Crisis communications: Disarmament proposals should be reinforced by more explicit and effective provisions for better crisis communication between all parties, allowing for constant monitoring and interpretation of events. Such crisis communication should be within the context of regular

communication in the sense of continuing meetings and dialogue between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., including summits.

Rule 10. Verification is key: The validity of any proposal has to be subject to reasonably thorough agreed provisions for verification. Indeed, general principles of verification should be explored and negotiated as objective entities. Canada could announce its own special contribution to the development of such principles — an international disarmament verification centre.

These are rules of the game which arms control negotiators will obviously recognize. Indeed, in recent months, some have been given prominent emphasis. However, we suggest them as a balanced set of possible political and behavioural checkpoints along the way to a reliable arms control process.

For decades, Canadians have been at the front of arms control efforts at the United Nations and elsewhere. But our own security position has often seemed to put us more or less on the outside of critical bilateral strategic negotiations. This is more apparent than real. We do have a role in promoting essential arms control. Even though, for the most part, the main burden of negotiations is bilateral, we can try to make better sense of our political world, and assist in the development of international instruments which can provide real security for all the countries concerned.

BOOK REVIEWS

CHRONIQUE BIBLIOGRAPHIQUE

The Fate of the Earth. By Jonathan Schell. New York, N.Y.: Knopf, 1982. Pp. 256 [$11.95 U.S.].

I have read this book three times, and I intend to read it again; for it is one of the most important books that I have ever read. Its message is clear and compelling and, unlike many "serious" books, it is extremely well written. It is even eloquent, but at the same time as logical in its presentation as a mathematical formula. It may even be a masterpiece.

But reading Schell's book is not exactly a pleasant experience. For the conundrum posed — one which our generation must answer — is perhaps the hardest question with which mankind has ever had to cope. Can we save our world, ourselves, the yet unborn, and indeed the very memory of civilization from the imminent peril of nuclear extinction?

There is much about physics and about philosophy in the book, but its central message is political. And that is one reason why the book is especially important for lawyers and law students. For lawyers have a special responsibility and a key role to play in the creation and development of the new world political structures that must be set up if the threat of nuclear extinction is to be met. The contemporary state system is, as Schell demonstrates conclusively, obsolete. It must be replaced by a new and radically different world political and legal order. What is necessary is nothing less than a revolution in world politics and institutions. "We are speaking", he writes, "of revolutionizing the politics of the earth".

Self-styled "realists" may argue that this task is impossible given the kind of people we are and the kind of world we live in. God help us, they may be right. But true realists will put their money on the possibility that they may be wrong. All of Schell's readers may not agree with this analysis or his conclusions; but even the sceptics must agree that, as long as there is even the possibility of a nuclear holocaust, or even of something "less" than that, it is only elementary prudence to begin to take steps to prevent it. The priority item on the world's political agenda is therefore to find a solution to the conundrum. Our political leaders (and we the people who are responsible for keeping them in power) must address themselves, at our peril and without further delay, to the business of creating the new kind of world order that the situation demands. If "reality" means anything, this goal is its urgent business. What may now seem impossible must be made possible. We have no other choice.