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## PRIME MINISTER

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ADDRESS TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Mr. President, this Special Session, under your distinguished leadership, has already given grounds for hope that a more realistic and practical approach to disarmament is underway.

It was once thought that if only men of goodwill could come together and express their common desire for peace, peace would be achieved almost overnight. It was even thought that if only we did not speak of the harsh realities of conflict our minds would become more receptive to peace.

Experience has taught us that nations will not lay down their arms or abandon their ambitions simply in the name of idealism. Too often nations seek peace -- but only on their own terms. Too often they want settlement -- but only on their own terms. Plainly, idealism is not enough. Indeed, idealism severed from reality is futile and sometimes dangerous.

Too often, the high hopes of past decades have turned to the ashes of blood of war.

The problems that confront us are of enormous magnitude. The task of achieving an effective and significant measure of global disarmament is daunting.

The spectre that haunts us today is a world armed as it has never been before. Its inventory of weapons exceeds the total sum of all weaponry employed in human history. Tragically, responsible governments throughout the world feel compelled to spend vast sums on arms. Some countries spend far more on arms than can be justified for their legitimate defensive requirements. Once this occurs, the defence apparatus becomes entrenched as a strong vested interest, and such an integral part of the national economy, that significantly to reduce it would cause grave problems of economic and social adjustment.

One fact is certain -- the forces militating against arms control are powerful. We cannot hope to begin to dismantle the world's military apparatus unless we address our minds to the causes which nourish and sustain it: the notion that increased military spending inevitably provides greater national security regardless of the objective facts; the narrow self interest and ambition which nations can pursue -- reckless of the tension and conflict which this may generate; the quest for national status which still motivates the actions of many states, attempts to exploit the weaknesses of smaller states; the attempt to expand a nation's influence over other states, under

the cloak of ideology - regardless of damaging competition with other powers which results.

Above all, there is the pervasive mistrust and suspicion that haunts nations and the fear that this creates. The suspicion and fear which turns nations to increase their armaments frequently stems from the military policies of others.

A sudden expansion of arms, an unexpected concentration of military forces, the growth in a country's military capacity in excess of perceived defence needs -- all these produce suspicion and counteraction.

Another potent source of suspicion and fear is economic insecurity and uncertainty; fear about security of access to markets or essential sources of supply; unequal world trading arrangements; the exclusion of groups, of categories of nations from fair trade; and poverty and deprivation in large areas of the world. All these are in themselves a fertile breeding ground for tension and conflict.

We cannot ignore these historic and present sources of concern and fear. Our disarmament efforts will come to nothing if we do not work to eradicate these economic causes of discontent.

The multilateral trade negotiations this year and the negotiations over the Common Fund will provide opportunities to advance our common causes. Failing that, we will have missed the opportunity to resolve economically based tension and discord.

The circumstances that fuel the fears and suspicions of nations and damage their relations are infinite. Together they conspire to create a lack of confidence in a system of international security that can regularise the differences among nations so as to avoid the outbreak or threat of war.

I do not minimise the difficulties that face this Conference. But it is inconceivable that the world should become so indifferent to its fate that it does not try to remove the causes of conflict and to control the production and deployment of nuclear and conventional arms.

There are so many pressing national needs, so many unrealised aspirations, that conscience and reason demand that this waste of resources cease. The significance of this Special Session is that it recognises that disarmament is a matter for political leadership, for political will and determination and common commitment and dedication.

The very fact that the United Nations is assembled for this Session entitles us to assume that we share a common determination to bring arms and military spending under control.

We know that war, the threat of war, anarchy and terrorism know no frontiers, that no nation, however favourably placed, can afford to stand aside from the quest for international peace and security.

This is why Australia takes a most active interest in arms control and disarmament. Like other middle and smaller powers, Australia's fate can be decided by the contest between the major powers. We place the highest value on our independence, our territorial integrity, our individuality.

Separately, middle and small powers are in no position to decide global issues of war or peace. But collectively we can do much to foster a climate of international cooperation and practical arms control.

Australia believes that the realistic approach to disarmament lies in the step by step development of arms control. It is essential at each step that all who are affected should feel their security is -- at the very least -- not weakened. Otherwise, the prospects for effective arms control will be destroyed.

But we should not limit ourselves merely to preserving a precarious status quo. We must aim at increasing the security of nations. Concentrating on disarmament techniques and mechanics is important -- but it is not enough.

We must confront the underlying political and economic anxieties and suspicions which impel nations to arm themselves. Only if the causes of international tension are removed can there be any realistic hope of achieving a meaningful and long-lasting reduction in arms.

A practical agenda for world disarmament should therefore start from the premise that it is essential to increase mutual confidence and trust among nations.

#### Nuclear Issues

It is accordingly natural that in this Session our main aim is to agree on a practical and realistic programme of action for arms control and disarmament. The first focus of this programme must be on issues of nuclear arms control. The avoidance of nuclear war is an imperative of mankind.

My Government's position is clear and unequivocal. We oppose further escalation of the nuclear arms race. We oppose the spread of nuclear weapons.

Even if we could depend on the technology of terror, delicately balanced between the superpowers, to prevent a nuclear holocaust, our mutual interdependence and the growing scarcity of essential resources makes manifest the futility of uncontrolled expenditures on nuclear weapons.

Spurred by this realisation, nations have commenced the slow and deliberate process of negotiation to limit the production, distribution and use of these weapons.

Through this step-by-step process, nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states alike have come to accept that they have a common interest in limiting nuclear weaponry and that carefully negotiated limits need not put at risk any nation's security.

We now need to build on the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 and the 1972 SALT agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union. We now need to create an environment which further limits nations' capacity to acquire nuclear weapons - indeed, which removes any incentive to possess them.

Progress must be made in three inter-related areas. First, the nuclear weapons powers must take effective action to limit and reduce their nuclear arsenals. Second, there must be an end to nuclear testing in all environments. Third, the international non-proliferation system must be strengthened.

We are dealing here with difficult and inter-related balances of national interest. Progress in one area of nuclear arms control can be negated if other essential areas are neglected.

Australia believes that all three objectives are realistic and attainable.

This special session can give a real impetus towards reaching a consensus on nuclear arms control by identifying the conditions that can generate a well-founded confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states and between the nuclear weapons states themselves.

#### S.A.L.T.

The first area in which further progress needs to be made is in the strategic arms limitation talks. SALT's aim to limit and then reduce the nuclear armaments of the superpowers while preserving the strategic nuclear balance is in the interests of us all.

Without progress, the prospect of checking the proliferation of nuclear weapons will be prejudiced, for some states are unwilling to abandon the option of possessing nuclear weapons until the superpowers reduce their arsenals. And so long as conventional weapons are maintained at present levels nuclear weapons form an essential element of the overall strategic balance.

Against this background, any prospect of instability caused by one party gaining at the expense of the other would damage the fundamental premises of co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union. It would also gravely impair international confidence in SALT, and set back the total prospects for nuclear arms control.

As confidence in these negotiations grows, it will open the door to reductions in nuclear arsenals.

We hope that ultimately SALT will open the way for negotiations involving all nuclear weapons states.

#### Nuclear Weapons Testing

SALT must necessarily be a lengthy and continuing negotiating process.

An urgent and more immediately achievable objective is the cessation of nuclear weapons testing in all environments by all states. It is to be regretted that we do not yet have a comprehensive test ban treaty and that even the partial test ban treaty has yet to receive universal support.

At successive general assemblies, Australia has pressed for a broad consensus against all nuclear tests and at last year's assembly we co-sponsored the first single resolution adopted by the assembly supporting a comprehensive test ban.

This was an important expression of international opinion. It should not be ignored. It should now be translated into concrete measures.

Australia welcomes the current negotiations between the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain on a comprehensive test ban treaty and looks to their early and successful conclusion. There can be no question that such an agreement would be a barrier, both to the expansion of existing nuclear arsenals and to the further spread of nuclear weapons.

Such a treaty would put any country initiating - or continuing nuclear testing at the risk of isolation and international censure. Such a treaty would be reinforced by an international agreement to halt production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons.

We believe this should be the subject of early discussion among nuclear weapon states and included in the programme of action.

#### Horizontal Non-Proliferation

The third essential element in nuclear arms control is preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by additional countries.

This involves the security of us all. Proliferation triggers further proliferation - causing instability and risk for all.

How do we halt the spread of nuclear weapons?

Again, a difficult and careful process of international negotiations is required to find ways to stop proliferation while protecting legitimate interests. We need to create treaty obligations and with them the world opinion which will effectively deter the acquisition of such weapons, and prevent nuclear materials being diverted from peaceful purposes.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been the essential first step towards the achievement of these goals. Whatever its imperfections, it is the only comprehensive international instrument directed against proliferation. Adherence to it represents an essential test of the commitment of non-nuclear powers to non-proliferation.

Over one hundred states are now parties to the treaty. I urge its universal acceptance.

The treaty rests on a three-way bargain, and each element of the bargain must be honoured, by nuclear weapons powers making progress towards nuclear disarmament, non-nuclear powers not acquiring nuclear weapons and all countries co-operating in the peaceful development of nuclear energy under effective safeguards. At the same time, those states renouncing nuclear weapons need assurances that this will not jeopardise their security.

There is concern whether Security Council resolution 255 of 1968 sufficiently protects non-nuclear weapon states which are parties to the N.P.T. against threat or use of nuclear weapons. In Australia's view, such assurances should be further developed and strengthened.

We welcome recent undertakings by the nuclear weapons states relating to the non-use of nuclear weapons. We commend the statement by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom that his country is prepared to take part with other nuclear powers in firm, far-reaching and permanent assurances to the non-nuclear states.

There is also a need to assure non-nuclear weapon states of access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

If world energy requirements are to be met and economic and social development promoted, nuclear power for peaceful purposes is essential. Our challenge is to find ways in which nuclear energy can be further developed without compromising non-proliferation objectives. Australia is closely involved.

First, my Government decided last year to proceed with the further mining and export of Australian uranium to provide at reasonable prices supplies of uranium fuel to countries that need them.

Because of our concern for non-proliferation, we have decided that our uranium exports to non-nuclear weapon states will be limited to those who are parties to the N.P.T. and therefore comply with requirements set by the International Atomic Energy Agency and who abide by the terms of special bilateral treaties.

Second, we are participating actively in the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation Study launched last year. This study is specifically addressed to the problem of developing nuclear energy in ways consistent with non-proliferation objectives. It could result in the international control of sensitive elements of the nuclear fuel cycle.

Australia believes that by these actions, we can contribute to a climate of confidence which will foster stable nuclear trade and closer international cooperation on nuclear matters.

Our basic concern is to assure all nations -- including those who are not parties to our uranium sales contracts -- that our uranium and any material derived from it will be used only for peaceful purposes. It is better to have confident nuclear cooperation and trade under effective safeguards than have these exchanges crippled by suspicion and fear. We look to the further evolution of cooperative arrangements that are essential to trust and a safe nuclear world.

#### Other Areas of Arms Control and Disarmament

Mr. President, while we have made some modest advance with nuclear arms control, the outcome of efforts to limit conventional arms has been disappointing. In fact, the level of conventional armaments continues to escalate.

It is in the building of well founded trust and confidence that real hope lies of slowing and reversing the growth of conventional arms levels. We need approaches which, while limited and specific in scope, are practical, achievable, and contribute to security at lower levels of armament.

#### Military Budgets and Development

Mr. President, there have been proposals put forward for reductions in military budgets. Australia in principle supports such reductions carried out in ways which would not be destabilising or create new tensions.

There is the need to overcome the practical problems of defining and measuring military expenditures and establishing machinery for verifying compliance with any agreed reductions. All this requires thorough examination, and my Government has recently informed the Secretary General that we are willing to submit our Defence Budget for analysis as part of a pilot project on military budgets. Any significant reductions in military budgets could release substantial resources for economic and social development.

We support the proposal of the Nordic countries that the Secretary General undertake a major study of all aspects of the relationship between disarmament and development.

### Regional Arms Control

Australia sees value in regional approaches to arms control. These can contribute to stability. The ASEAN countries advocacy of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality has had impact, and has lessened the possibility of competition for influence in the region by major powers.

The concept of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace and the current discussions between the United States and Soviet Union on mutual military limitations in the Indian Ocean are further examples of a regional approach.

Any agreements reached between the superpowers must enhance security provided by existing alliances and arrangements, otherwise they will have the effect of increasing suspicions and exacerbating tensions.

### Verification

Effective verification is needed to provide the necessary foundation of confidence on which any arms control or disarmament must rest. Controls without verification would be meaningless. The precise requirements and means for verification will depend on the nature and scope of the agreement in question. But the objectives are clear. Verification must: protect the security of states accepting agreed limitations; provide reasonable confidence that a case of non-compliance would be quickly detected; deter to the maximum extent possible any breach of agreed conditions; provide mechanisms to deal with possible breaches or circumvention.

To the extent that verification can be brought under international control, that will further increase confidence.

A number of proposals have been put forward to advance the cause of verification. I particularly note the proposal of the President of France for the establishment of an International Satellite Observation Agency. This is an interesting idea that warrants constructive consideration.

Adequate arrangements for verification are indispensable to a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In this instance, identifying small underground tests is the greatest problem.

In view of our geographical position and expertise, Australia would be well placed to participate in monitoring such a treaty by seismic means. We would obviously cooperate to achieve these objectives.

### Disarmament Machinery

A major task of this Special Session is to review the effectiveness of the existing international disarmament machinery. The present mechanisms have evolved over the years and in the new situations we face the need to be made both more effective and more representative. The Special Session should seek to build on the expertise of existing disarmament bodies.



In Australia's view, the basic three-tier structure should be retained: the first Committee of the General Assembly should remain as a consultative and deliberate forum with overall responsibility for international disarmament efforts; the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament should be retained, under this or another name, for negotiating specific multilateral agreements; and the United Nations Disarmament Centre should carry out the Secretariat functions. Each of these bodies needs modification.

In the case of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, while its basic character should be retained as a compact but representative negotiating body, with a defined membership, continuing to work by consensus, we should seek five basic changes.

These changes would enable the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to strengthen its role in the period of intensified activity which we hope will follow this Session.

First, it should enjoy the full confidence of the international community including all the nuclear weapons powers. A major weakness of the C.C.D. has been the absence from its deliberations of two of these powers. We would like to see this redressed.

Second, it should have a membership reflecting a wider spread of geographical, political and security interests. The C.C.D.'s structure and membership have been too closely tied to the European context and a modest increase in its existing membership would result in a more representative body.

This could be achieved by including states from outside Europe which have demonstrated an active interest in arms control and disarmament questions. For its part, Australia stands ready to participate in a reformed C.C.D.

Third, while we recognise the special obligations of the nuclear weapon states, we believe that the C.C.D. or its successor should not be subject to their overriding will and that some changes to the existing co-Chairmanship arrangements would be appropriate.

Fourth, the C.C.D.'s links with the General Assembly should be strengthened to make it more responsive to a broader range of views.

Fifth, greater opportunities should exist for non-member states to participate in working groups and other appropriate meetings.

Many states have considerable expertise in particular areas of arms control and disarmament which should be used to the greatest extent possible.

Australia also believes that the United Nations Disarmament Centre should be strengthened. In addition to its Secretariat function, it has an important role to play in increasing public awareness and understanding of arms control and disarmament questions.

Mr. President, ultimately it is the absolute right of sovereign governments to defend their peoples. It is the obligation of sovereign governments to do so. A realistic disarmament agenda must recognise this simple premise. National sovereignty is vital to the governments here assembled.

Nonetheless, in the new world for which we strive, we must not drive this concept to the excesses of former years. We are too close to each other to be immune from the effects of one another's actions.

Rules of proper behaviour do not diminish. They enhance and expand national sovereignty for they reinforce your freedom and mine.

Mr. President, we cannot conduct our disarmament negotiations in isolation. What we do here is part of a broader international agenda to reduce the causes of suspicion and tension among nations, to enhance confidence in the international mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes between states, to strengthen mediation, to encourage the Rule of Law between nations, to abandon aggressive ideology and to outflow man's inhumanity.

#### Conclusion

Mr. President, many proposals, disarmament proposals, could be implemented immediately, and by so doing, establish the confidence required for further and more substantial steps towards disarmament.

Can we not now achieve a comprehensive ban by all states on nuclear explosions in all environments, a responsible second SALT agreement, and a more effective non-proliferation regime?

Relief from the oppressive menace of accidental or intentional nuclear war should encourage all states to reduce their dependence on weapons which are conventional but whose sophistication and expense constantly grows.

Can we not look to justice, to the Rule of Law between states, to a step-by-step approach which can progressively release resources for the well-being and advancement of the human race.

A great many things are within our grasp if we can, by our actions, earn trust -- and learn to trust.

When history is written of our time, will we be known as men who secured a safe world or ones who failed to understand or grasp the necessities of our time?