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COMMUNICATION RECEIVED FROM CANADA REGARDING ITS NEW NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY

On 29 December 1976 the Director General received a letter dated 28 December from the Resident Representative of Canada to the Agency, informing him of a change in Canada's nuclear export policy and attaching a statement made in the Canadian House of Commons on this subject. In accordance with the request made by the Resident Representative of Canada the texts of his letter and of its attachment are reproduced below for the information of all Members.

As you have probably heard on the news or read in the press, the Canadian Government has announced a new nuclear export policy. The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, made a statement in the Canadian House of Commons on this subject on 22 December and I am pleased to attach a copy of it.

The Canadian Government has decided to restrict future nuclear export contracts with non-nuclear-weapon States to those countries which in addition to accepting the requirements set out by the Canadian Government in December 1974, have ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons[1] or have accepted the application of international safeguards to all their nuclear activities. The only exception to this will be agricultural, medical, industrial and other peaceful applications of radioisotopes.

It is the hope of the Canadian Government that all nuclear supplying States will adopt similar export policies and my Government will continue to call on other nuclear exporters to review their export policies to this end.

Because the announcement of the new Canadian nuclear export policy will be of general interest, I should be grateful if you would circulate to all Member States my letter and the statement made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

[1] Reproduced in document INFCIRC/140.

NEW CANADIAN NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY

Following is text of a statement on motions made in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for External Affairs on 22 December 1976:

I wish to announce a change in Canada's nuclear export policy, a matter of central concern to the people and Government of Canada, raising as it does fundamental issues affecting world economic growth and world peace. In this Christmas season, our thoughts naturally turn to peace and the brotherhood of man. It is easy to pay tribute to these fundamental goals with words. It is more important that we do so with our actions. It is a challenge to the Government of Canada to respond to the demand of Canadian public opinion that this country exercise its influence towards the betterment of the global society in which we and our descendants must live. In the area of nuclear policy there is no simple answer or it would have long since been adopted. It is rather the need to balance energy requirements, the advance of technology which regardless of what we do will make nuclear capability within the reach of the wider and wider group of countries and the need to establish a sound international framework which will curb the spread of nuclear weapons and yet take into account the legitimate economic aspirations of sovereign States. I wish to make quite clear, however, that the first priority, indeed the overriding priority, is to prevent the spread of instruments of destruction.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that the Canadian Government has decided upon a further strengthening of the safeguards requirements which apply to the export of Canadian reactors and uranium. Shipments to non-nuclear-weapon States under future contracts will be restricted to those which ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty or otherwise accept international safeguards on their entire nuclear programme. It follows from this policy that Canada will terminate nuclear shipments to any non-nuclear-weapon State which explodes a nuclear device.

This requirement is in addition to those outlined in December of 1974. The purpose of Canadian safeguards policy is simple and straightforward. We wish to avoid contributing to the proliferation of nuclear weapons while at the same time satisfying the legitimate requirements for uranium and technology of countries which demonstrate the intention of restricting Canadian assistance only to peaceful non-explosive uses. Nuclear export policy already requires binding assurances that what Canada provides will not be used for explosive purposes. Existing policy, however, does not cover what a country receives from other suppliers or what it might do on its own. The new policy will close this gap. We will have, therefore, assurance by treaty that Canada's nuclear customers will have been selected from amongst those countries which have made a clear and unequivocal commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The development of the Candu Reactor has been one of Canada's great technological achievements. This technology is needed to reduce the world's dependence on oil. Moreover, our industrialized trading partners look to Canada as a source of uranium to fuel the nuclear reactor programmes which they, like ourselves, have undertaken to meet a growing share of energy needs. In the absence of alternative technologies, developing countries will also look to nuclear power once they have exploited other conventional energy resources and have built up the national power grids necessary for large present-day reactors. While research into conservation and renewable energy technologies should be intensified, energy planning in Canada and elsewhere must look to energy resources presently available.

While the Canadian Government recognizes the legitimate energy requirements of its trading partners, it is determined to do everything within its power to avoid contributing to nuclear weapons proliferation. It is for this reason that the Government of Canada has unilaterally decided to strengthen further Canada's safeguards requirements. As in the past we are prepared to accept the commercial consequences of being clearly ahead of other suppliers. This is the price we are prepared to pay to curb the threat to mankind of nuclear proliferation.

We recognize that for this policy to be fully effective, we must persuade other nuclear suppliers to adopt similar export policies. In discussions amongst suppliers, we have urged that a collective decision be taken to restrict their nuclear exports to non-nuclear-weapon States to those which have ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty or otherwise accept full-scope safeguards. We regret that to date it has not been possible to reach a collective decision to this effect. Canada, however, is determined to assume responsibility where it has the power to act, that is, with regard to Canada's own exports of nuclear equipment, technology and uranium. We are charting a course which we hope will serve as a compelling example for other nuclear suppliers.

With this announcement I am calling on other nuclear exporters to review their own export policies, not in the light of commercial gain but in the interests of maintaining a safe and secure world.