

**REMARKS GIVEN BY H.E. MR. PAUL HEINBECKER
SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON RESOLUTION ON ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA
WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2001**

Monsieur le Président,

Merci de donner au Gouvernement canadien la possibilité de s'exprimer.

Nous avons salué l'accord de paix signé par l'Éthiopie et l'Érythrée à Alger le 12 décembre car il représente une étape remarquable.

Nous regrettons que le Conseil de sécurité ait attendu si longtemps pour en prendre acte.

Nous rendons hommage à ceux qui l'ont rendu possible, notamment au Secrétaire général, à son Représentant spécial, à l'Organisation de l'Unité africaine, au Président algérien et à son Envoyé spécial, ainsi qu'aux États-Unis et à l'Union européenne.

Nous sommes particulièrement sensibles au désir des signataires de mettre fin à leur conflit destructeur et d'entreprendre la reconstruction.

Nous respectons leur engagement à la paix.

En sa qualité de participant à la Mission des Nations Unies en Éthiopie et en Érythrée et en tant que défenseur constant du maintien de la paix en Afrique, le Canada oeuvrera avec diligence pour les aider à atteindre leurs objectifs communs.

Nos réserves au sujet de cette décision du Conseil ne devraient pas être prises comme un manque de soutien à l'égard du processus de paix.

We believe, nonetheless, that at its core this resolution sends an unfortunate message.

We acknowledge that Ethiopia and Eritrea have been diligent in honouring the cease-fire in place since June of this year.

But, by lifting the embargo on weapons exports to Ethiopia and Eritrea at a time when there remain both outstanding issues and deep mutual mistrust between the two countries, this Council is opening the door to a host of unpleasant possibilities.

With some 450 of our peacekeeping personnel on the ground, Canada is not keen to find out if any of these possibilities will materialize.

For the Council to consent to any degree of re-armament in the Horn of Africa at a time when it has just positioned a Chapter VI peacekeeping force between the two countries strikes us as unwise and premature.

Doing so also seems profoundly at odds with the growing concern over the safety of UN personnel.

This is not to suggest that lifting the embargo would necessarily result in an arms build-up by the parties, or that we expect such weapons would be used.

We believe merely that it is up to the proponents of this resolution to show why the Council should even take this risk.

In our opinion, a convincing case has yet to be made.

What is needed, we believe, is for this Council to continue to nurture goodwill and confidence-building in the process leading to the final demarcation of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Only then can this conflict truly be said to be definitively settled.

To prefer reaching this end-stage before allowing the parties to re-arm in no way diminishes the achievement of the two countries at Algiers.

It would, in fact, build on the positive precedent established recently when the Security Council

acknowledged the dramatic changes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and determined that maintaining an arms embargo was a key element in preserving stability.

We see no benefit to an early lifting of the embargo on Ethiopia and Eritrea.

This embargo is limited to arms and in no way affects the economic or humanitarian situation of the people of the two countries, except perhaps for the better.

The goodwill of Ethiopia and Eritrea is strong, Mr. President; but it can be undermined by a hasty decision of this Council.

We note that the parties themselves have acknowledged that a final peace is not yet in hand, insofar as they have indicated that a definitive resolution includes demarcation of the border, which has yet to take place.

For this reason, we believe that this resolution is premature and falls short of the test laid out in Resolution 1298, which requested that the Secretary-General inform this Council when he believed that the embargo should be lifted.

The Secretary-General's letter of December 15, and his subsequent comments to this Council, are evidence that outstanding issues remain and that the provisions of Resolution 1298 should not be terminated.

We agree with the Secretary-General, and we urge Council members to consider the full ramifications of today's decision and to consult the Secretary-General further.

We find it significant that two of the states participating in large numbers in UNMEE, the Netherlands and Canada, have expressed reservations about lifting this embargo.

During our time on the Council, Canada advocated consistently that the views of troop-contributing states should be given serious consideration on any issue that affects mission success or force safety.

We held to these principles even when discussing peacekeeping missions in which Canada had no direct stake.

With all due respect, we believe that the proponents of this resolution should have given more weight to the views of states present on the ground in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

We daresay that the proponents of this resolution would probably better understand our concerns had they elected to place significant numbers of their personnel in harm's way in the service of UNMEE and the United Nations.

Every day that passes, this Council, we believe, grows more conscientious in its approach to the

challenge of peacekeeping in Africa.

Its enthusiasm for the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, which we share, is justified by the strong prospect of success.

We regret today's decision.

But we trust that the principles we have emphasized will endure with the current membership of the Council, and that our words today will continue to have resonance.