

If opposing Soviet imperialism at the UN was Diefenbaker's cause, nuclear disarmament was Green's. There were three sessions of the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee, of which Canada was a member, in 1962 (March 14–June 15; July 16–September 8; November 26–December 21) and one in the first half of 1963 (February 12–June 21). In February 1962 the Canadian Ambassador in Moscow, Arnold Smith, expressed the opinion that the Soviet Union viewed the forthcoming conference merely as an opportunity for propaganda, and that there would be no "serious effort to reach significant agreements" (Document 20). Subsequent hints that the United States might soon resume nuclear testing caused further dismay in Ottawa (Document 22). Canada supported a compromise proposal put forward by the eight non-aligned nations on the Committee (Document 28). President Kennedy, meanwhile, urged Diefenbaker not to back any proposal that omitted the requirement for international inspection of all suspicious seismic events (Document 26). The eight-power proposal, while it advocated inspection, was vague on details, and the Soviet representatives expressed their willingness to accept it as a basis for future negotiations. However, the deadlock between East and West had only worsened by the time the Seventeenth Session opened, and both the US and the USSR had resumed testing. Matters were not improved when the non-aligned nations submitted a draft resolution that was unacceptable to the Americans (Document 43). Extremely strong pressure was then placed on Canada by both the United States and the United Kingdom; in a letter to Diefenbaker, Kennedy expressed his "distress" at the prospect that Canada might vote in favour of the non-aligned resolution, and wrote that it would be impossible for him to "overemphasize my concern in this matter" (Documents 45, 46). Despite a protest from Harkness (Document 47), Canada did vote in favour of the resolution, although only after having submitted amendments designed to make it more acceptable in Western eyes (Document 48). Subsequent Canadian efforts were focussed on encouraging the neutrals to "give greater precision to their ideas" (Document 58) and on bringing "maximum pressure to bear" in favour of an agreement (Document 62). However, the neutral initiative failed, to the dismay not only of Canada but of such nations as Sweden, Brazil, Mexico and India (Document 67). At the time when the Diefenbaker government left office, the prospect of success appeared poor.

Within NATO, nuclear issues also loomed large. The US proposal for a multilateral medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) force was, as Air Chief Marshall F.R. Miller noted, a political rather than a military matter, designed to curb the growth of independent national nuclear deterrents. In this debate, Canada was "to some extent a bystander," concerned only that the "political solidarity and military effectiveness of the alliance" should be preserved (Document 144). At the same time, however, the imminent delivery of new CF-104 aircraft, without any decision having been taken as to whether they would be armed with nuclear warheads, meant that by early October 1962 time was "running out on us" in a key area of Canada's military contribution (Document 150). What effect the Nassau Agreement of December 1962 would have on the proposed multilateral nuclear force and on Canada's position