



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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GENEVA DISARMAMENT TALKS

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard Green, in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, Geneva, July 24, 1962.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates:

It has been very pleasant to return to Geneva and meet the old friends taking part in this Conference and also, of course, to have a hand in the concluding acts of the Conference on Laos.

The agreement signed yesterday on the future of Laos has shown that initial suspicion and distrust need not be insuperable barriers - and I think that is the main trouble in the world today, too much suspicion and distrust. I repeat, suspicion and distrust need not be insuperable barriers if all concerned are prepared to work patiently towards agreement. Certain difficult political issues were faced in the Conference on Laos and acceptable solutions were worked out involving compromises by all. I suggest that the same determination to negotiate until agreement is reached should guide our further work at this Disarmament Conference.

We convened here last March, at the request of the United Nations General Assembly, with the specific task of working out an agreement on general and complete disarmament in accordance with a statement of principles which had been agreed between the United States of America and the Soviet Union but also had been accepted unanimously by the General Assembly. I draw your attention to the last of these principles, which reads as follows: "States participating in the negotiations should seek to achieve and implement the widest possible agreement at the earliest possible date. Efforts should continue without interruption -- this is the principle agreed to unanimously -- until agreement upon the total programme has been achieved, and efforts to ensure early agreement on and implementation of measures of disarmament should be undertaken without prejudicing progress on agreement on the total programme and in such a way that these measures would facilitate and form part of that programme".