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DISARMAMENT AND THE NON-NUCLEAR POWERS

A statement by the Secretary of State  
for External Affairs, Mr. Howard Green,  
in the First Committee of the United  
Nations on October 19

I have no wish in my statement today to re-open the arguments of the past. It seems to me that, for the time being, we must leave aside debates about which side has the better set of principles--important as they are, and I admit this importance--or which has the better plan for disarmament. The situation facing us is so serious that we must concentrate on the task of getting negotiations restarted. This is the prime responsibility of the First Committee at the present time.

Moreover, in approaching the problem of disarmament at this session, I suggest that we take our main guidance from the 28-power resolution adopted unanimously on October 17. Among other things, it urged that "immediate and constructive steps should be adopted in regard to the urgent problems" facing us. This extract was quoted this morning by the representative of the U.S.S.R., --but, even so, I think it worthwhile repeating.

Concerted Action Urgent

The need for serious discussion and action on our part is greater than ever. Almost without exception, the statements made during the course of this fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly have underlined the urgency and the importance of concerted action to restart the disarmament negotiations and to facilitate progress in them. We have been reminded that on a solution to the disarmament problem may well rest the question of whether or not there will be a new world war, and I believe that no one in this room today doubts that this potential danger exists.

But many of those who wish to see disarmament achieved, because they realize the awful consequences of not doing so, have not yet come to the equally important realization that successful negotiations will involve genuine compromise and balanced concessions from both sides, even though these may appear, in a short-term view, to involve some sacrifices.