

On September 25, President Kennedy submitted to the General Assembly a new disarmament programme, which embodied a number of Canadian suggestions. In a speech to the General Assembly on October 3, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, stressing the urgency of reaching agreement on disarmament, welcomed, as a first step in the direction of a resumption of negotiations, the agreement on principles reached between the Soviet Union and the United States. He commended the comprehensive programme for disarmament introduced by President Kennedy earlier in the general debate, which, he said, was flexible and could accommodate reasonable proposals from any quarter.

It was generally recognized by a majority of delegations in the Assembly that, in the light of the U.S.-Soviet agreement on principles to guide future disarmament negotiations, the next step should be to set up an appropriate negotiating body as soon as possible. Through its representatives Canada constantly emphasized the urgency of overcoming the remaining obstacles to an early resumption of detailed negotiations in an agreed forum, and was active in suggesting various practical steps to this end. On November 24, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs suggested to the First Committee an expansion of the Disarmament Committee on a geographical basis; he stressed the importance of recognizing the responsibility for disarmament which is vested in the United Nations as a whole, and the value of making provision for regular reports from the negotiating body to the Disarmament Commission.

In the course of discussion in the First Committee it became clear that further bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union would be the most effective method of working out the question of the composition of the negotiating body. The Assembly therefore unanimously adopted, on November 28, a resolution (1660) which called upon the two powers to continue their discussions and to submit a report before the end of the session. Subsequently, the two powers reported that they had reached agreement on the addition of eight non-aligned countries (Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden and the United Arab Republic) to the original Ten-Nation Committee (Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States). This report was embodied in a resolution also endorsing the "statement of principles" to guide resumed negotiations. This resolution recommended that the new 18-Nation Committee urgently undertake negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on general and complete disarmament under effective international controls on the basis of the agreed principles. In addition, the resolution endorsed a feature which was of particular interest to Canada, namely that the United Nations be kept fully informed of the work of the Committee; the resolution requested the Disarmament Committee to submit to the General Assembly a report on agreement as soon as it had been reached, and in any case to submit to the United Nations Disarmament