



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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STATEMENT OF THE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE ON THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

Statement made in the United Nations Disarmament Commission on July 21, 1954, by Mr. David M. Johnson, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations and Canadian Representative on the Disarmament Commission

With the reconvening of the Disarmament Commission, the members of the Sub-Committee have an opportunity and a duty to report on the manner in which they have sought to discharge the Commission's mandate to "seek in private an acceptable solution" to the disarmament problem. The Commission's forthcoming meetings will also enable the other members of the Commission who were not represented during the London talks to evaluate the work of the Sub-Committee. Although it may be premature to crystallize the collective judgment of the Commission since we all hope that the Soviet rejection of the new proposals submitted by the Western Powers in London is not final, we cannot avoid forming our own conclusions as to why it has not so far been possible to reach agreement.

There is perhaps a danger that the inherent complexity and difficulty of the disarmament problem and the successive failures over many years to reach agreement should lead us into such pessimism that our proceedings might become either formalistic or propagandist. However, as I shall try to show, I think we can draw some encouragement and a truer perspective from the realization that there has been a gradual narrowing of the gap over the years between the positions of the principal Powers concerned. We have, moreover, at the present series of meetings an opportunity for breaking new ground, for discussing new proposals and not merely for reworking old controversies.

In my opinion -- which I think can be documented -- the new Anglo-French proposals represent a major advance in the Western position. The immediate and outright rejection of this serious effort towards conciliation and agreement should not blind us to the importance of these proposals nor of the London talks through which they were brought to birth. If the Sub-Committee had been able to report nothing more than the tabling of the Anglo-French proposals and of the United States working paper on the rights, functions and powers of an international control organ, these meetings would have been well worthwhile.