

II

POLITICAL AND SECURITY

Disarmament

Despite efforts by Canada and many other members of the United Nations, the disarmament negotiations in the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee, which had been abruptly broken off by the Soviet side in June 1960, had not been renewed by the end of that year. The question was further discussed at the resumed fifteenth session of the General Assembly in March 1961, with the result that it was unanimously decided to postpone debate and defer action on all pending resolutions on disarmament until its sixteenth session. A major factor behind this decision was the agreement announced by the United States and the Soviet Union that they would continue to explore bilaterally the question of the resumption of negotiations, including such matters as the composition of the negotiating body and the principles which should govern renewed negotiations. It was agreed by the two powers that the outcome of these talks would be reported to the sixteenth session. Canada welcomed this agreement and expressed the hope that the talks would lead to the early resumption of multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union were held in Washington and Moscow during the summer, and in New York during the two weeks preceding the opening of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly. During this period, Canada made it known that it maintained a flexible position on the composition of the negotiating forum and suggested that the original Ten-Nation Committee should be enlarged by the addition of representatives of neutral nations chosen with a view to equitable geographic distribution, but added that any choice agreed to by the United States, the Soviet Union and the Disarmament Commission would be acceptable to Canada. On the question of the principles to guide future negotiations, Canada was convinced of the necessity of establishing a clearly defined framework within which negotiations could be conducted and also the method of negotiations which the parties should follow.

On September 20, following the convening of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, the United States and the Soviet Union jointly reported that, while they had been unable to reach agreement on the composition of a negotiating body, they had been successful in formulating a joint statement of principles to guide resumed disarmament negotiations. The agreed principles were fully in harmony with Canadian disarmament policy.