

"Fourthly, past experience has made us fully aware of the grave consequences which will follow if we permit these negotiations to fail or even to lose momentum. It is now almost two years since the work of the Ten-Nation Committee was broken off. This period has been marked by renewed international tension and a nuclear arms race of increased intensity, of which the resumption of nuclear testing is the most serious aspect. An even more serious deterioration in the international situation will result if our efforts here cannot bring about rapid agreement.

"Finally, the increasingly devastating power of modern weapons has placed a new responsibility on the representatives who are gathered here. The very fact that all of us around this table fully recognize the immeasurable catastrophe which would result from a conflict involving such weapons in itself provides new motives for meeting the challenge which faces us. In my opinion we cannot allow another failure to establish an effective system of disarmament. If we do not succeed on this occasion, the world may not be given another chance.

"As far as my delegation is concerned, we have come to Geneva with the firm intention to continue working without interruption until a comprehensive system of general disarmament has been agreed. At the same time we hope and expect to see initial agreements reached with the least possible delay. This Committee is obliged to report to the United Nations Disarmament Commission by June 1, and the peoples of the world will expect a substantial measure of progress by then. The time factor is of vital significance in our work, and we should at once start to search for common ground. This is a case where, as we say in Canada, time is of the essence.

"The agreed statement of principles forms the basis for discussion and negotiation at this conference. It follows that all measures of disarmament must be carefully phased and in balance with one another, and that reductions of national armaments must be accompanied by improved international arrangements for maintaining peace and security.

U.S. AND SOVIET PROPOSALS

"Two principal documents are available to the Committee. There is the programme of disarmament put forward by the United States on September 25, 1961. Canada participated in the drafting of this plan, and fully supports it. The United States representative has emphasized that these proposals have been put forward in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. That is a point to which Canada attaches great importance. In other words, these proposals are not put forward on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. There is also the draft treaty advanced by the representative of the Soviet Union, based on the Soviet plan of September 23, 1960.

"These two documents are the result of a long period of study. This is not to say, however, that either of them represents the only solution to this disarmament problem. The eight new members of the Committee will undoubtedly make suggestions of their own. Their views should provide a further valuable contribution to the solution of the problems before us, and they will receive very careful study by my delegation.

"In considering the two plans which are now before us we should first seek out common elements on which there is a chance of early agreement. The United States proposals are presented in the form of a 'programme', and the Soviet proposals in the language of a 'draft treaty', but this is largely a difference of presentation. The substantive provisions contained in the two documents parallel one another in several respects, and I suggest that we should take full advantage of this fact in trying to define and enlarge the area of agreement between the two sides.

"Starting from the joint statement of principles, we should search out specific problems on which the two sides are close to agreement and try to settle these as quickly as possible. Having achieved this, we should then go on to study problems on which the two sides are further apart - first to clarify differences, and then to resolve them. In this way, my delegation believes, we can systematically move toward a comprehensive system of disarmament and complete the fulfilment of the tasks which have been given us.

AREAS FOR RAPID AGREEMENT

"I have suggested that we should begin our work with an examination of areas in which rapid agreement might be achieved. There are several examples which could be cited. The following list will help to illustrate the approach which my delegation has in mind.

"The first example: The United States and Soviet proposals both provide for means of ensuring that rockets and satellites placed in orbit or launched into outer space will be used for peaceful purposes only. Provision is also made for advance notification of an international disarmament organization about all such launchings. Both sides have an overriding interest in reaching an understanding which will ensure that scientific advances in this field serve only the cause of peace. There is therefore, Mr. Chairman, every reason why agreement should be reached in short order. And may I point out that just this morning we read in the newspapers a report of a United States offer to the Soviet Union of a joint space plan. All of this indicates that it should be fairly easy to reach agreement on this particular subject.

"The second example: The United States proposals contain suggestions for observation posts and other procedures designed to reduce the risk of surprise attack or accidental war. Specific proposals to this effect do not appear in the new Soviet draft treaty, but similar ideas were advanced in the Soviet plan of September 23, 1960, and again in the memorandum submitted by the Soviet Union to the United Nations on September 26 of last year, 1961. The fear that war could break out through accident or miscalculation is a continuing source of international tension, which increases as more and more dangerous weapons are developed. Both sides have a vital interest in removing these fears as soon as possible. Both sides have proposed measures which would provide means of doing so. Further negotiation, and a willingness to compromise, could produce agreement in this field.

CHEMICAL AND GERM WARFARE

"The third example: The United States plan calls for technical studies of means to deal with chemical