

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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NO. 51/47 DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS

Text of a statement by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, on disarmament proposals, made in the First Committee of the General Assembly in Paris, on November 21, 1951

This is not the first time that the question of armaments limitation has been before this Committee, and before other organs of the United Nations nor will it be the last. It is a subject that has received a great deal of international attention in recent years. One's mind goes back to the protracted and fruitless discussions of Geneva when, among other things, we argued long and vigorously over the question, whether political security or disarmament should come first. The question is as pertinent today as it was then. Indeed, it may seem unrealistic to the point of absurdity for us to be talking here about disarmament when fighting is actually going on against aggression and banditry in more than one part of the world - and when fear and bitterness and enmity separate so many nations from each other.

Nevertheless, we are wise, I think, in tackling this subject again, however unpropitious the climate may seem to be. If we could only agree, not on the desirability of some limitation of arms in principle, because we are all agreed on that, but on how this could be made effective in practice, then by that very agreement we would have made an important contribution to the easing of political tensions. That, in its turn, would make easier the solution of some of the specific political problems which now divide us, which finally would facilitate and ensure further progress in the limitation of armaments. The fact of course is that we all know that these two questions, limitation of armaments on the one hand and political security and international confidence on the other hand are closely inter-related; that they are almost dependent on each other.

It is I think clear, therefore, that disarmament negotiations are unlikely to be successful, at least without attempting the beginning of political settlements. One obvious first essential is to stop the fighting in Korea, fighting which began, I would remind the delegate from Czechoslovakia, with the attack of North Koreans on South Korea. The place for cease-fire negotiations is, of course, on the spot, and it is there that negotiations rightly are taking place. It is there that I hope they will be shortly successfully concluded. Once that is done it would be possible to begin consideration in the United Nations, and in a calmer atmosphere, of other political and diplomatic