

GOVERNMENT



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DISARMAMENT

Statement by Mr. Sidney E. Smith, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, in the First Committee of the United Nations, on October 23, 1957.

Mr. Chairman, in my first intervention in the Political Committee I have pleasure in extending to you my warm congratulations on your election as our presiding officer.

My Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, in his statement in the general debate on September 23, has made known the anxiety with which the Canadian Government views the dark prospect of growing arsenals of increasingly apocalyptic weapons. As we reflect on the awesome prospect of man's ability to destroy himself, we renew in Canada our determination to prove, before it is too late, that statecraft has not lagged too far behind science. All of us in this room and all our governments must continue to search for sure means to secure the peace of the world. Yet as we survey the antagonisms which rend the world we find an array of well-nigh overwhelming problems. It would be idle to suppose that at this session of the General Assembly we can bring about a settlement of all these controversies. We may hope, nevertheless, that our endeavours will serve to start a reversal in the trend of world events so that we may, as we are pledged to do under the Charter "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". When those words were written, despite the appalling devastation which a global war had wrought, those at San Francisco in 1945 could not realize that soon means of destruction would be created which would make us uncertain that the world would ever see those succeeding generations. We have indeed a more fundamental task than that envisaged in the Charter -- not merely to save the world from the scourge of war but to save the world from destruction.

As some representatives have rightly said, our debate in this Assembly is not merely about disarmament, but about human survival. We have yet to prove that we are capable of the radical adjustment in our thinking which the modern age demands. We are