

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 61/17 A PLEA FOR RENEWED DISARMAMENT TALKS

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard C. Green, to the First Committee of the United Nations on November 24, 1961.

Since disarmament negotiations were broken off in June 1960 -- that is, almost a year and a half ago -- we have seen the arms race accelerated and the tensions which go with it greatly increased. Some believe increased tensions are an obstacle to disarmament negotiations. I draw a different conclusion. I believe that developments in the last few months in Berlin, as well as the breakdown of the moratorium on nuclear-weapons testing, have demonstrated more clearly than ever the urgency of resuming disarmament negotiations.

The universal concern over this very dangerous trend has been clearly reflected in various debates right from the commencement of this sixteenth session of the General Assembly. A number of resolutions already adopted have called for action to reverse that trend. I think it is a very encouraging development that such efforts have had a positive effect. For example, Canada warmly welcomes the announcement that nuclear-tests negotiations are now to be resumed. I regard this decision as the direct outcome of action which the Assembly has taken to focus attention on the dangers of nuclear-weapons testing.

Three years of careful study at Geneva brought the three nuclear powers together on all but a few points. Now early agreement on a treaty for the permanent cessation of tests would be a major achievement in itself. It would also be a first significant step toward the goal of general disarmament.

The action taken on nuclear testing must be reinforced by immediate steps to bring about a resumption of negotiations on the question of general disarmament. We cannot let the present Assembly go without achieving this goal.

Groundwork Laid

This summer, private consultations between the United States and the Soviet Union laid the groundwork. As we are all aware, those talks brought about agreement on a set of basic principles for the guidance of future negotiations on disarmament.