



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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## MANKIND'S GREATEST PROBLEM - DISARMAMENT

An Address to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on March 19, 1962, by the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard C. Green.

I begin my statement today on behalf of Canada by thanking the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations for the excellent facilities which have been made available. The presence of his representative at this table is of great significance. It emphasizes that all members of the United Nations are vitally concerned with the problem of disarmament. In my opinion, we should never lose sight of this fact in the course of our negotiations. It is obvious that the main purpose of the United Nations is to keep the peace. Of course, under present conditions, that means that disarmament becomes the most important problem of the United Nations, and that forum will always have the main responsibility for bringing about disarmament. There are several reasons why this conference has an unprecedented opportunity to make rapid progress toward agreement.

First, there is now an agreement on the basic principles of disarmament unanimously endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. For the first time there is a common understanding about the objective to be reached, and the guide lines which should be followed in working toward it. As a result, we are in a position to move quickly from a general exchange of views to a detailed consideration of measures which will actually stop the competition in armaments and bring about substantial reductions from the present levels. In my personal opinion the problem of stopping the development of more deadly weapons is perhaps more important than that of bringing about measures of disarmament, although, of course, both problems are of vital importance.

Second, the new negotiating committee is representative of all major geographical areas of the world. This reflects the fact that disarmament is not the concern only of the great powers but of all countries, however large or however small. The presence at this table of the representatives of eight additional countries is, in my opinion, a major advantage. They will, I am sure, play a valuable role in avoiding the stalemates which have so often developed in past disarmament conferences.

Also, the fresh perspective which they bring to the negotiations will assist materially in the search for early agreement. And may I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the presence of these eight other nations has already been of deep significance as well as of great help to the opening phases of this conference.

#### Economic Effects of Disarming

Third, we had just ten days ago the unanimous finding of the United Nations Committee on the Economic and Social Consequences of Disarmament that general disarmament, far from producing adverse economic effects, would be an immense contribution to the advancement of human well-being. There can surely be no doubt that the reallocation of even part of the enormous resources now devoted to expenditure on armaments would open up unlimited possibilities for the improvement of living standards in all the nations, whatever their social system or whatever their stage of development.

Fourth, 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 Committee 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 and bacteriological weapons. The Soviet Union has also put forward a suggestion for joint studies in this area in its plan of September 23, 1960. In the opinion of my delegation, such technical studies should begin immediately. On the basis of existing proposals, it would appear that full agreement already exists on this point, and that there is no reason for further debate before concrete action is taken.

The fourth example: Provision is made in both plans -- although at different stages -- to cease production of fissile material for weapons purposes and to transfer existing stocks to peaceful uses. The increased amount of the initial end reductions proposed by the United States representative here on March 19 means that, by the time the second stage is completed, stockpiles will have been very greatly reduced. This fact brings the United States position much closer to the Soviet view that all such stockpiles should be eliminated in Stage II. In our opinion, further negotiation could bring about full agreement.

The fifth example: Both plans contain proposals designed to prohibit the wider spread of nuclear weapons. A resolution submitted by Ireland, calling for international agreement in this field, was endorsed by all the members of the United Nations at

the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, just a few months ago. What is required now is early action to bring this recommendation into force.

The sixth example: The United States programme and the Soviet draft treaty both call for reductions of conventional arms in the first stage. The Soviet plan provides for reductions proportionate to manpower cuts. At our second meeting, the representative of the United States put forward new proposals calling for a reduction by 30 per cent. My delegation believes that this development brings the views of the two major military powers closer together. Detailed negotiations should begin at once to remove remaining differences.

My seventh example is as follows: In the crucial field of nuclear disarmament the positions of the two sides have likewise been brought substantially closer by the significant new United States proposals for a 30 per-cent reduction of nuclear weapons delivery vehicles in the first stage. The Soviet draft treaty calls for the complete elimination of all such vehicles in the opening stage. Nevertheless, having in mind the magnitude of the initial cuts proposed by the United States, as well as the agreed principle of balance, my delegation believes that detailed negotiation should bring the two major military powers to agreement on phased reductions in this field.

### Second Type of Problem

In these seven areas, and there are probably others, we believe that an appreciable measure of common ground already exists. There is a second category of problems in which there remain more pronounced and generally well known differences between the two sides. I shall not dwell on them today, with the exception of the vital issue of stopping nuclear-weapons tests, which requires special mention.

Canada deeply regretted that the Soviet Union last August broke a three-year moratorium on testing for we are opposed to all nuclear-weapon tests. In this we share the view of most other countries. Indeed, the major nuclear powers themselves have stated at this very conference that they would like to see all tests stopped. However, they now find themselves unable to reach final accord owing to disagreement on inspection. Is there no alternative to another series of tests with all the harmful consequences that such action could bring? It is not possible, within the framework of this committee, to make the further effort which is required to break the deadlock? In my opinion, such an effort must be made, for otherwise the prospects of this conference itself could be seriously threatened. We already see, in dispatch after dispatch, stories that this disarmament conference is doomed to failure. These stories are based on the talks on nuclear-weapon tests which have taken place between the nuclear powers and in which the other representatives at this conference have not been involved at all. In the minds of the public the impression has been created, because of the disagreement

in these nuclear-test talks, that this conference is going to be a failure. This, I submit, is a very bad situation, and one which I hope will be clarified by the correspondents of all our countries. As a start, it would be most helpful to receive a report on these informal talks which have been taking place on this subject from the three participants. Countries which do not possess nuclear weapons cannot put a stop to these tests; however, we can and do appeal to the nuclear states to do everything in their power to see that a solution is not further delayed.

### Third Type of Problem

There is a third category of problems in which the extent and the nature of the disagreement between the two sides are far from clear. As representatives will have noticed, I referred earlier to cases where there is disagreement but where that disagreement is clear-cut and everyone understands what it is. What is required to resolve this third category of differences is, in the first instance, an intensive discussion which will demonstrate precisely what the position of the two sides are. We must find out exactly the position taken by the two sides. To avoid continued misunderstanding, the respective interests of the two sides should be brought into the light of day and the possibility of an accommodation of views examined in good faith.

One of the most fundamental problems requiring this kind of examination is the question of verification. Canada's willingness to contribute to a verified system of disarmament has been demonstrated by the offer which my Government has made, and which still stands, to throw open its northern areas for inspection in exchange for comparable rights in corresponding areas of Soviet territory.

In the opinion of my delegation, the best way to achieve a realistic solution of the problem of verification is to avoid any further discussion in the abstract. We should avoid abstract debates on the world "verification". Instead, there should be careful examination of each measure of disarmament, together with the specific verification procedures to ensure that all states carry out that particular disarmament measure. In other words, let us take a measure of disarmament and with it study the verification for that measure, rather than studying verification in general.

Let us take an example from the Soviet draft treaty to illustrate my point. Article 5 provides for the elimination of certain means of delivering nuclear weapons and for the cessation of the production. Paragraph 3 of this article provides that the implementation of these measures should be verified by inspectors of the international disarmament organization. The language of the Soviet draft treaty suggests that substantial inspection would be allowed over this measure of disarmament. What we need to clarify is how much the inspectors are to be allowed to see, and the conditions under which they would carry

out this work. Having done that, the committee would then be able to judge how adequate the inspection arrangements would be for verifying the execution of this particular measure.

In pursuing an examination of the problem of inspection, particularly in the area of disarmament which I have just mentioned, the application of sampling techniques as suggested by the United States representative should facilitate agreement. This approach ought to go a long way toward removing fears that inspection will be out of balance with disarmament or be used for any illegitimate purpose. We sincerely believe there is great hope of reaching an agreement on the question of verification through some type of sampling procedure.

The same method of careful, painstaking examination, rather than abstract debate, should be applied in other areas where important but ill defined differences appear to exist between the two sides.

### Procedural Proposals

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I should like to make some proposals concerning procedure. Ever since the breakdown of the Ten-Nation Committee nearly two years ago, Canada has been convinced that rapid progress in disarmament negotiations would require a more efficient procedure than has been adopted in the past. In particular, we believe that agreement on effective procedural arrangements is a matter of the first importance if a committee of this size, with 17 or 18 nations participating, is to operate effectively.

The immediate question is how to proceed from the present exchange of general views on disarmament to a detailed examination of the specific problems. In the opinion of my delegation, an effective working procedure would be as follows. First, an informal committee of the whole conference should be established on a continuing basis, with the number attending from each delegation being more limited than at plenary meetings. Second, the co-chairmen should be given the responsibility for presiding over this committee on alternate days. They should maintain close consultation with one another on the order of business. I think the plan we are following in plenary meetings of having rotating chairmen is very good -- although I know from personal experience that it is more or less an honorary position and puts one in the category of being king for a day. But we believe that for the informal committee it would be much wiser to have the co-chairmen in the chair on alternate days. Third, the emphasis in the committee should be on an informal and private method of work. There need be no list of speakers and no verbatim records should be kept. A summary record could be provided for the information of delegations.

The main purpose of this informal working committee would be threefold: first, to follow up as a matter of priority the common elements in the two plans, such as the seven points which

I mentioned earlier; second, to try to achieve reasonable compromises in remaining areas where clear differences between the two sides persist; and third, to make more precise the points under dispute in areas where differences between the two sides are yet ill defined.

### Lesson of Laos

In suggesting this procedure, my delegation has had in mind the experience of the conference here in Geneva on the future of Laos. Although there are continuing difficulties in the field in the unhappy country, the work of the conference here in Geneva has been successful. This has been due in large measure to the fact that an effective procedure was adopted, a procedure similar to the one I am now suggesting for the disarmament conference. At our meeting on Friday, the representative of India, Mr. Krishna Menon, also referred to the experience of the Laos conference -- of course, India, like Canada, is participating in that conference -- and he asked in this context that the committee meet informally so that the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union might provide clarification of respective ideas. We support this idea and agree with this proposal, but what we have in mind in addition is to use the proposed informal committee not only for the purpose of seeking information, but, more importantly, as a continuing forum for negotiation. By inviting the guidance of the co-chairmen, we recognize that the United States and the Soviet Union have by far the greatest responsibility in the field of disarmament. I do not suppose that either one of these great nations ever sought this position of prominence or leadership in the world, but they are both in that position and they are essentially the two which must agree. It is essential that they work closely together to reach an accommodation of views.

In conclusion, while the problems of disarmament are difficult, there is clearly evident in this committee a will to achieve results and, more important, a realization of the sobering responsibility we bear for the survival of civilization. The consequences of failure are too disastrous to contemplate. I am confident that we will justify the faith and the trust which mankind has placed in us. From all over the world today, the eyes and the thoughts of people are focused on this conference.

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