



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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ARMS TALKS OR ARMS RACE

Texts of two addresses by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Green, to the 69th and 70th Meetings of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on August 18, 1960.

(A)

This morning I wish to speak very briefly in order to give a short explanation of the amendment which Canada is proposing to the resolution which was submitted yesterday.

This amendment will be found in Document DC/181, and perhaps it would be helpful if I were to read the result of combining this amendment of Canada with the resolution which was brought forward yesterday. It will read as follows:

"The Disarmament Commission,

"Recalling its resolution of September 10, 1959, welcoming the resumption of disarmament negotiations and expressing the hope that such negotiations would provide a useful basis for the consideration of disarmament in the United Nations,

"Noting with regret that these negotiations have not as yet yielded sufficiently positive results,

"Reaffirming the continuing and ultimate responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament,

"Taking into account Resolution 1378 (XIV) adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1959:

"1. Considers it necessary that, in view of the urgency of the problem, negotiations be resumed at the earliest possible time to achieve a constructive solution of the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control;

"2. Recommends, in addition, that the fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly give earnest consideration to the question of disarmament;

"3. Recommends to the United Nations General Assembly that the Disarmament Commission as set up in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1252 (XIII) should continue in being and be convened whenever deemed necessary."

In my statement in this Disarmament Commission on August 16, I underlined the urgency and the importance of resuming negotiations on the important issue of disarmament. This view has found similar expression in most of the statements which have been made in the Commission at this session, including that statement by the distinguished Representative of Guinea a few moments ago. There has been general recognition that the issues are too grave to permit any relaxing of our efforts to find a way towards agreement.

I also spoke about the results that had been achieved in the Ten-Nation Committee I referred to areas in which there had been some drawing together of opposing positions. I made no claims that the rate of progress had been satisfactory or that positive achievement in the form of an agreement concluded had been attained. I did express my belief, however, that the process of negotiation was yielding some encouraging results, and I would point out to the representatives here this morning that one of the results achieved was that there were statements submitted by the Eastern side and the Western side in June which were a big advance on the statements made originally in March, and that was a worthwhile step.

I appealed to the Commission to use its influence to bring about a resumption of negotiations in the shortest possible time. I suggest that all members of the Commission have a responsibility in this regard, but especially the non-nuclear powers. A clear statement of opinion in favour of negotiation is required.

The Commission has before it the draft resolution submitted by six powers. I fully appreciate the considerable effort which the delegations concerned have made to arrive at an acceptable text. However, the six-power text as submitted, in my view, does not meet that situation, and sincere efforts involving the six delegations and others have failed to bring about sufficient improvement in the draft resolution.

From the Canadian point of view, the operative paragraphs amount to little more than the passing of the whole problem to the fifteenth session of the UN General Assembly. There is no clear call for early negotiations but only a mild expression of hope that efforts will be made to reach a solution. In effect, the result of our important debate here in this Commission, if that draft resolution is adopted, will be to recommend a further debate in the UN General Assembly.

In saying this, I do not dispute that the UN General Assembly has an important role to play and, indeed, a grave responsibility which must be exercised in due course. The Assembly will be required to deal very seriously with the disarmament question when it comes up for discussion, probably not until late October, in the meantime, nothing will be happening

in the field of disarmament negotiations, and nothing may happen until after the Assembly session, some four or five months from now, or perhaps six months or even more. In the meantime, let us not forget, the arms race goes on faster every day, and the "cold war" gets colder every day, with civilization at stake. We may have the very future of civilization in our hands in this Commission today.

Can this Commission, which is now the instrument of UN responsibility for disarmament, content itself at this time with a mild expression of concern about what I regard as an undue delay in disarmament negotiations? I suggest that it cannot and should not. We owe it to the peoples of the world, who look to the UN with hope for relief from anxiety about the dangers in the current trend of arms development, to express ourselves forthrightly in favour of resumed negotiations in the shortest possible time.

It is for these reasons that the Canadian Delegation has submitted the set of amendments now before the Commission. We believe that they put in proper perspective the serious problem which faces us all.

In effect, the first amendment recognizes that some degree of progress has been made in the Ten-Nation Committee, although not a sufficiently positive result.

The second amendment substitutes for the original operative paragraph a clear reference to the need for negotiation and also places negotiation in its proper priority, which we think is in the first place.

The third amendment, which is mainly a renumbering of the original Operative Paragraph 1 gives the forthcoming discussion in the Assembly its proper place in the order of urgency.

In submitting these amendments, I hope they will be voted on as a whole, because, in my view, they are integrally related, and I earnestly commend them to the Commission.

May I trespass on the time of my fellow representatives to repeat today the suggestion I made two days ago that the responsibility of the non-nuclear nations, including Canada, is to make it perfectly clear to the nuclear powers that the people of the world demand an end to this terrible threat which hangs over them and demand that the disarmament negotiations be resumed forthwith. The non-nuclear powers must take the lead in mobilizing world-wide opinion on this life-and-death issue.

(B)

I really must apologize for presuming to speak for a third time. I hope that I will be forgiven by my fellow representatives. I should like to thank the Representative of Pakistan for very kindly allowing me his place in order that I might comment briefly on the revised Draft Resolution (DC/180/-REV 1) which the Representative of Ecuador has just introduced. I should also like to stress at once my warm appreciation of the constructive efforts which the representations of the six co-sponsors have made to meet the points contained in the Canadian amendment (DC/181).

During the past few days, the co-sponsors have been patiently working to find a text which would meet with the unanimous approval of this Commission, and I believe that their sincere efforts deserve the congratulations of all members.

The Commission has been given a helpful explanation by the Representative of Ecuador concerning the developments leading to the revision. I think that the revised text goes a long way to meet the reservation which prompted the Canadian Delegation in the first place to introduce its amendment. In particular, the new language in Operative Paragraph 2 of the revision recognizes the need for the earliest possible continuation of negotiations on disarmament. I suggest once again that this accurately reflects the views of the large majority of members of this Commission and responds to the expectations and hopes of peoples everywhere.

In the light of these changes in the text, and in the interests of obtaining the widest possible support for the recommendations of this Commission, I am prepared to accept the language of the revised draft resolution, although it will be realized that in several different respects it differs from the language of amendment.

However, I find that I am unable to agree with the co-sponsors on one point which has been central to Canada's position as I have expressed it. I refer to the order of Operative Paragraphs 1 and 2. Here may I say that the distinguished Representative of Ecuador has said that the order is of no importance. If he and the other co-sponsors feel that way about it, surely they would not object to having it changed. We do feel very deeply about it, and I suggest that he go the one step further and change this order of precedence, as he admits that it will not hurt his feelings very much if this is done.

I have already stressed in this Commission my conviction that the pace of arms development, with the international tension and anxiety that it creates, makes it imperative that the Commission give the greatest emphasis to the need for disarmament negotiations at the earliest possible time. And that, I suggest, is the reason we are here; this is the business that we have come here to do, all of us. For this reason, I hold to the view which I expressed this morning, that the order of the operative paragraphs should be such as to give first priority to the one recommending early negotiations. This order of priority is entirely a question of emphasis and

in no way affects the importance which my Delegation attaches to the forthcoming discussion of disarmament in the UN. General Assembly. This discussion in the UN. General Assembly however, will not constitute negotiation, as the Representative of Ecuador has admitted himself this afternoon in his statement. But negotiations are what I firmly believe the present situation calls for. Accordingly, when the Commission comes to vote on the six-power revised draft resolution, I intend to move that the order of Operative Paragraphs 1 and 2 be reversed; and I would plead with the sponsors of the draft resolution now before the Commission to give further consideration this afternoon to this suggestion.

Surely, if the emphasis is put on the paragraph reading "Considers it necessary and recommends that in view of the urgency of the problem continued efforts be made for the earliest possible continuation of international negotiations to achieve a constructive solution of the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control", then we, by so doing, place the strongest possible stress on the need for action. And remember -- this Commission is the only body in the world that can advocate action promptly at the present time to meet this terrible threat. The debate in the UN General Assembly will not be completed for weeks, perhaps for months; but, in the meantime, as I said this morning, the arms race goes on day after day and accelerates every week. This disarmament commission is the one body that can make a strong recommendation at the present time that negotiations be resumed. As I have said, we alone can advocate that this action be taken now. In that way we can do something about the time element, which is so important in this whole situation.

I do not intend to trespass any further on the time of this Commission, but I do suggest with the greatest possible friendliness to the co-sponsors -- with each one of whom the Canadian Delegation has worked in a most friendly manner for many sessions of the UN and each one of whom we consider among our very closest -- that they give further consideration to this suggestion that the order of those paragraphs be reversed and that the vital paragraph which embodies the business of this Commission be put in the first place.

I really do not know why there should be any objection to the making of that change. It seems completely wrong to me and makes no sense that this Commission should refuse to put the emphasis where the emphasis belongs and where we all know in our hearts that the emphasis belongs.

s/c