CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(FIFTEENTH SESSION)

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Statement on Disarmament by the Honourable Howard Green, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, in the First Committee on Tuesday, November 1

Mr. Chairman:

My purpose in intervening in the debate at this time is to call to the attention of the First Committee a joint draft resolution which I intend to submit in the name of Canada, Norway, Sweden and others. Although the Committee will be discussing various resolutions at a later stage, I believe that it may facilitate our work if I give some indication now of what the co-sponsors seek to achieve in submitting their draft proposals.

In his most helpful statement yesterday the distinguished Foreign Minister of Sweden clearly described the situation which is now facing the Committee. He pointed to the need for concentrating at this time on the essential question of negotiating machinery.

First I wish to emphasize strongly that the draft resolution is not intended to be a controversial document. It seeks neither to endorse the position of any one side; nor to cast criticism in any one direction. It is concerned mainly with the problem of re-starting negotiations and facilitating the attainment of the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. It goes farther than a mere exhortation in this regard, however, by seeking to strengthen United Nations influence on the course of negotiations and principally to bring to bear the opinions and views of the middle and small Powers. It provides for preparatory steps to be taken at once.

All States have an interest in the outcome of our deliberations in this Committee. Peoples everywhere are watching and waiting and hoping.

Thus far the General Assembly in this Fifteenth Session has not given much promise for the future. But if we accomplish nothing else at this Session, we must try to speak with one voice in favour of resuming serious disarmament negotiations at the earliest possible time. We must check the drift, so noticeable in recent weeks, away from serious talks and in the direction of sterile propaganda debates.

This is the underlying intent and purpose of our joint draft resolution. The basic motives can be summed up in the language of the fourth paragraph of the preamble. It acknowledges that the co-sponsors - like the members of this Committee and indeed all the nations of the world - are "disturbed that despite agreement on the common goal of general and complete disarmament, negotiations are not proceeding." The paragraph is clearly intended as an expression of deep anxiety about the interruption of disarmament negotiations.

Because we are so deeply troubled by these developments, we believe strongly that the General Assembly must try to stop the deterioration in relations and turn the trend back to the path of negotiation. The draft resolution seeks to accomplish this by revitalizing the negotiating machinery. This thought finds expression in the fifth paragraph of the preamble which deems it "essential that preparations should be begun immediately to facilitate the earliest possible continuation of disarmament negotiations."

The co-sponsors view their proposals as expressing a universal desire and need. Hence, in the preamble, we have laid emphasis on unanimity by referring to resolutions adopted earlier by the General Assembly and by the Disarmament Commission. These unanimous decisions and recommendations provide us with a point of departure for our current deliberations. In the debate in this Committee and in the General Debate at the outset of the fifteenth session, almost without exception speakers have called for speedy action to deal effectively with disarmament.

In further acknowledgment of this widespread concern, we have recognized fully in the preamble that while the main responsibility

for negotiating rests on the nuclear Powers, other states also have a responsibility and have the deepest interest in assisting the negotiations. I have frequently expressed my conviction that the middle and small Powers, indeed all the non-nuclear Powers, must join together in mobilizing opinion in favour of early action on disarmament.

I have been speaking about the main considerations which prompted the co-sponsors to put forward these proposals. I now turn briefly to the proposals themselves, that is, to the operative part of the resolution.

In keeping with the general approach in the draft resolution which is to strengthen the United Nations influence on the course of disarmament negotiations, the first operative paragraph "reaffirms the continuing and ultimate responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament."

The second operative paragraph deals with the heart of the matter, the resumption of serious negotiations. This paragraph calls for every effort to be made to achieve a solution of disarmament problems by means of the earliest possible continuation of negotiations.

The paragraph takes no particular stand on what forum should be used for negotiation. On many occasions I have stressed my preference for a return to the Ten-Nation Committee because of its obvious advantages. The only criterion suggested in the resolution is that the negotiations should be resumed in a body agreeable to the negotiators, which in practical terms means the nuclear Powers must agree on the forum.

They are encouraged to consider, however, the appointment of one or more impartial officers to assist in the negotiations. In my statement on October 19 I explained the Canadian suggestion for an impartial Chairman and others in this debate have expressed themselves in a similar sense. Our own experience in the Ten-Nation Committee would lead us to believe that these suggestions merit careful consideration.

This second operative paragraph is and must be largely an earnest expression of hope, because serious negotiations can take place only if the negotiators themselves are willing to act. The remaining operative paragraphs, however, seek to give that hope some promise of fulfilment and also to turn to good advantage whatever interval may elapse between now and the time when the desired negotiations can be resumed. These other paragraphs call for the immediate establishment of United Nations machinery specifically charged with responsibility for assisting in bringing about an early resumption of negotiations.

Our proposal recommends that an ad hoc committee be established by the Disarmament Commission. In my earlier speech I spoke about an advisory or watchdog committee. I believe that the setting up of an ad hoc committee, a modification which has emerged from consultations with other delegations, is just as appropriate in present circumstances. The Committee should be composed of a limited number of States, which do not possess nuclear weapons and which are to be selected on the usual United Nations basis of equitable geographical representation. It is rather important, from the point of view of efficiency, that the Committee be not too large.

The question of composition is to be decided in the Disarmament Commission obviously on the basis of close consultation among delegations. It is the view of the sponsors that there should be no delay in establishing the ad hoc committee. The Disarmament Commission could and should meet in the course of the present session to carry out these recommendations by the General Assembly.

The terms of reference of the ad hoc committee have purposely been stated in rather general language. It would be a mistake to limit the group's activities by setting down a list of matters to which it should devote its attention exclusively. Besides, any elaboration of the role of the proposed committee should be the responsibility of the Disarmament Commission. We have made it clear, however, that it has an urgent responsibility for dealing at once with the problem of getting negotiations re-started.

The ad hoc committee would seek to accomplish this by examining urgently ways and means of assisting the resumption of serious negotiations. As I have said, this is primarily a problem which the negotiating Powers, and principally the nuclear Powers, must solve for themselves.

It is quite obvious from the debate in the First Committee that there are sharp differences among those Powers. It is our thought that the ad hoc committee might find a way to assist in resolving them.

Similarly, once the negotiations have re-started there could be many ways in which a committee of this kind could contribute to the success of the negotiations. This would depend in large part, however, on the progress achieved in relation to the initial task. The Disarmament Commission would have an opportunity to weigh the results when the ad hoc committee reported to it.

In the last analysis the exact role which the ad hoc committee can play will depend on the energy and earnestness with which they tackle their tasks and on the co-operation which they receive from the negotiating group. I myself am confident that the committee could make a useful contribution.

We do not expect miracles to be achieved by the proposed ad hoc committee. We believe mainly that it will serve to focus the attention of the United Nations on the future negotiations.

To underline the urgency of its initial work, assisting the resumption of negotiations, it is proposed that the ad hoc committee should be set up at once and should report back to the Disarmament Commission not later than April 1. This will afford time to explore the possibilities for renewed negotiations and perhaps to make suggestions for bringing them about. It is surely not too much to hope that the nuclear Powers will even now be giving thought to the resumption of disarmament talks.

In any event we are seeking to ensure that these matters are kept under close scrutiny by an appropriate United Nations body. My

Delegation considers that this feature of our joint proposals merits the support of the vast majority of members of this Committee. The many expressions of anxiety and concern which we have heard at this session have persuaded us that the non-nuclear Powers are no longer content to sit by passively, as was the case from 1957 to 1959, while the nuclear Powers allow disarmament issues to remain in deadlock, without any effort to resume negotiations.

I have touched upon the main features of the joint draft resolution now before the Committee. I believe that it is neither incompatible with, nor in competition with, any of the other proposals which have been made.

Our resolution is clearly complementary, for example, to the sincere efforts which are being made to resolve the important question of principles. It provides only that the ad hoc committee examine the record as regards principles with a view to assisting the resumption of negotiations. If some agreement on principles can be reached in the First Committee, this task of the ad hoc committee will be made more easy, but there will remain other questions for its consideration.

The draft resolution adopts a similar approach to the many useful suggestions which member delegations have made during the course of our debate. It provides that these should be studied, as part of the examination of ways and means of assisting the resumption of serious negotiations and facilitating the attainment of disarmament.

If at any stage of their work the ad hoc committee should find that they would benefit from having expert advice or opinions, the committee could call in experts whose main qualifications would be their technical competence in the field of disarmament. Provision is made in the resolution for having the "assistance of experts as appropriate."

In preparing our text the co-sponsors have had the benefit of many helpful comments which have been made both in Committee and in private. We hope we have succeeded in reflecting the strong desire,

expressed by the majority of delegations, that something be done to get disarmement negotiations moving.

The Canadian Delegation earnestly commends the proposals in the draft resolution as the best means for achieving that end. If the Committee sees fit to endorse these proposals the possibility of achievement will be greatly enhanced.

November 1, 1960.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON DISARMAMENT

(AGENDA ITEMS 67 AND 86)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 1378(XIV) adopted unanimously on November 20, 1959, which states that the question of general and complete disarmament is the most important one facing the world today,

Recalling also its resolution 1495(XV) adopted unanimously on October 18, 1960, which urges that immediate and constructive steps be adopted in regard to the urgent problems concerning the peace of the world and the advancement of its peoples,

Noting the resolution adopted unanimously by the Disarmament Commission on August 18, 1960, which calls for the earliest possible continuation of disarmament negotiations,

Disturbed that, despite agreement on the common goal of general and complete disarmament, negotiations are not proceeding,

Deeming it essential that preparations should be begun immediately to facilitate the earliest possible continuation of disarmament negotiations,

Recognizing that, while the main responsibility for negotiating agreement rests on the military nuclear powers, other states also bear a responsibility and have the deepest interest in assisting to the end that disarmament negotiations can be vigorously and seriously pursued,

1. Reaffirms the continuing and ultimate responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament;

2. Expresses the hope that, in view of the urgency and overriding importance of disarmament, every effort will be made to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control by the earliest possible continuation of international negotiations in such body as may be agreed, giving consideration in this regard to the appointment of one or more impartial officers to facilitate these negotiations;

3. Recommends the immediate establishment by the Disarmament Commission of an ad hoc Committee on Disarmament, to be composed of a limited number of

states which do not possess nuclear weapons, selected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution;

4. <u>Requests</u> the <u>ad hoc</u> Committee, with the assistance of experts as appropriate, to examine urgently ways and means of assisting the resumption of serious negotiations and facilitating the attainment of the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, on the basis of available documentation, including the records of the present session of the General Assembly, with special reference to: (a) the important question of principles which should guide disarmament negotiations; and (b) the specific suggestions made by Member States during the present session of the General Assembly with regard to disarmament;

5. <u>Further requests</u> the <u>ad hoc</u> Committee to consult as appropriate with the four governments which established the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, and to report to the Disarmament Commission not later than April 1, 1961.