CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Statement on Disarmament by Mr. W.B. Nesbitt, Q.C., M.P., Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, in the First Committee, on March 30, 1961.

Mr. Chairman:

The Canadian Delegation heartily welcomes the statements just made by the distinguished representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union. The conclusions reached as a result of recent consultations represent a most important step forward. We are confident that in the more harmonious atmosphere which has been created, further efforts will be made by all states concerned toward the universally-desired goal of peace and disarmament.

We particularly welcome the statement of the distinguished representative of the United States expressing readiness to resume detailed negotiations on disarmament in July of this year. Ever since the unfortunate breakdown of the Ten-Nation Committee last June, Canada has worked for the resumption of negotiations on this vital subject at the earliest possible time. It is cause for the greatest satisfaction to all members of the United Nations to learn that serious efforts in this direction are now being made.

The decision to continue the exchange of views among the powers principally concerned is very important. I am sure that all my colleagues in this Committee will join with me in expressing the hope that these consultations will result in full agreement on a satisfactory forum for the negotiations and on a clearly defined framework of basic principles within which they should be conducted. Agreement on these important matters is essential

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to provide a solid and real foundation for productive negotiations toward an effective programme of disarmament.

In the opinion of my delegation, it is also of the greatest significance that the United States and Soviet representatives have expressed their recognition of the fundamental interest of the United Nations in the question of disarmament. We are gratified that agreement has been reached to inform the 16th Session of the General Assembly of the progress made in the negotiations. When the negotiations are again underway, we are confident that the negotiating body will give due consideration to appropriate means for establishing a continuing relationship between the negotiating parties and the entire membership of the United Nations.

Whatever States may be included in the negotiating body, the vast majority of the members of the United Nations will not be able to participate directly. It was for this reason that Canada and a number of like-minded States worked very hard at the first part of this session of the Assembly to provide for the creation of a procedure whereby such states could be associated with the negotiations, and could make their views known to the negotiating parties. More recently the importance of establishing a link between the negotiating parties and the United Nations has been recognized in the statement on disarmament unanimously agreed to in London at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference. The communique released at the end of that conference makes it plain that "peace is the concern of the whole world", and we are sure that the negotiating body which is set up to deal with disarmament will give full recognition to this concern.

We should like to make the Canadian position on this matter perfectly clear. We have heard the view expressed that

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deliberations in the Disarmament Commission might interfere with the all-important process of direct detailed negotiations among the parties primarily responsible for achieving an agreement on disarmament. On the contrary, it is the opinion of my Delegation and a number of others that the Disarmament Commission could play a most useful role by considering progress reports from the negotiating body and, in addition, by examining the views of member states on disarmament for transmission where appropriate to the negotiating parties.

We therefore hope that the negotiating body will give careful consideration to the questions involved in establishing satisfactory means of communication with the Disarmament Commission. Whether further means may be required to provide for the effective consideration of views submitted to the Disarmament Commission will, we think, be best determined at a later date. After there has been an opportunity to assess the requirements arising out of the resumed disarmament negotiations, it may be desirable to examine again the feasibility of establishing such further machinery.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, may I say my Delegation is happy to lend its full support to the draft resolution introduced by the Representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States. It is important that the General Assembly should take note of the useful exchange of views between these two Powers and that it should also reaffirm its fundamental responsibility for disarmament. The draft resolution before this Committee takes into account these considerations, and it is the hope of my Delegation, Mr. Chairman, that it will receive the unanimous support of the Committee.