



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
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## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN DISARMAMENT

Excerpts from an address by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Paul Martin, made to the Annual Convention of the Ontario Retail Pharmacists Association, Windsor, Ont., June 18, 1956.

. . . It will be recalled that during the past few years, United Nations efforts to achieve some measure of agreement on the reduction and control of armaments have been centred in the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in the work of which I have had occasion to participate. This Sub-Committee, which is made up of the representatives of five countries -- the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, and Canada-- has now held four series of private talks, the latest taking place in London earlier this spring. In all, no less than 86 individual meetings have been held. The forthcoming New York meeting of the Disarmament Commission itself is for the purpose of receiving and considering the report of the Sub-Committee's work.

While the results of these prolonged discussions have in some respects been disappointing, they have demonstrated that there is substantial agreement among the Western nations as to the provisions which should be included in any satisfactory disarmament scheme.

At the same time, they have provided evidence that the Soviet Union does not yet appear willing to accept measures which the Western nations consider essential to the successful implementation of even preliminary steps towards disarmament. In particular, I have in mind the Soviet Union's negative reaction to the proposal put forward by President Eisenhower providing for joint aerial inspection and the exchange of blueprints for military installations.

In the past ten days, the inadequacy of the Soviet Union's position on the matter of controls has been given added emphasis. In letters addressed to the Heads of Government of the

other four powers represented on the Disarmament Sub-Committee, the Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Nikolai Bulganin, has called on the Western nations to follow the Soviet Union's "initiative" of May 14 by embarking on unilateral reductions in the strength of their armed forces. Such action, the Soviet Premier has suggested, would be "of decisive importance" in leading to the creation of conditions more favourable to the achievement of a universal disarmament programme.

While these proposed cuts are to be welcomed as far as they go, this invitation would be more meaningful, it seems to me, if we had some concrete evidence that the announced reduction in Soviet forces would actually take place and that it would, in fact, be the expression of a genuine desire to follow a more moderate policy in the future and to renounce aggressive designs. Even if Soviet forces were to be reduced in numbers, the Soviet Union might still be left in possession of forces vastly superior to those available to the Western nations. And there would be no assurance that the demobilization would be accompanied by a corresponding reduction in equipment or that the savings realized as a result of these cuts in manpower would not be used for financing other projects to increase the war potential of the Communist world. Above all, the Soviet proposal does not touch the central problem which concerns us all -- the threat of nuclear warfare.

The Western Powers surely cannot assume that a mere declaration on the part of the Soviet Union of its intention to reduce forces is a peaceful gesture that will promote greater confidence. Such a move could equally be interpreted as a shrewd attempt to lure the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to advance along the road of unilateral and uncontrolled disarmament to the point where they would be unable to provide for their security and where their very unity would be seriously compromised. Indeed, the Soviet leaders themselves have frankly admitted that their opposition to NATO has not changed and that they will continue their efforts to weaken and, if possible, to break up the alliance.

It would seem to me that this latest Soviet move points very clearly to the need for achieving disarmament through an agreed and safeguarded programme. If Mr. Bulganin and his colleagues are sincere and really wish to reduce their armed forces, why will they not agree to the establishment of adequate and effective controls as the Western nations have done in the proposals they have made in the United Nations Sub-Committee?

By adopting a more open-minded and positive approach to this central problem of control, the Soviet Union could do more to establish an atmosphere of mutual confidence than they could ever hope to achieve through the mere announcement of reductions which cannot be checked. I submit that our final

judgment should await such indications as will be provided by the Soviet approach to the future negotiations: this will be the acid test of their sincerity.

The problem of disarmament, like many of the problems facing the world today, cannot be solved by action on the part of one nation or group of nations alone. A solution can only be achieved through the whole-hearted co-operation of all members of the international community, whatever their political structure or ideological leanings. We can only hope that when negotiations are resumed, the Soviet Union will see fit to lend its support to collective measures which, in words of the "New York Times", "will make disarmament a blessing and not a trap in which freedom can die".

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