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

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STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE HOWARD GREEN
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CANADA
IN THE GENERAL DEBATE ON OCTOBER 3, 1961.

Mr. President:

At no other time in its 16 years has the United Nations faced so many large issues, some of which threaten its survival. Many of these issues have been placed on the agenda, but the one which immediately confronts us results from the tragic death of the Secretary General. Before we can deal effectively with any other question, some interim arrangement must be made to enable the work of the Organization to be carried on.

The appointment of a Secretary General is a matter so important that it would require mature reflection even if circumstances were normal. In the prevailing political atmosphere an early appointment seems out of the question.

But today's circumstances will not allow this Organization to be left any longer without direction.

The Congo situation alone demands that an interim arrangement be made at once. Member Governments, such as Canada, with important commitments in that country have a right and a duty to insist that the United Nations operation be conducted under proper authority.

No delegation has expressed disagreement about the urgency of making an interim arrangement. Intensive consultations have already taken place about various possibilities. It is recognized by all that right here in this hall there are eminent delegates who have the necessary

qualifications and who enjoy the trust and confidence of the Assembly. We should waste no time in selecting one of these widely respected men to take interim charge of the functions and responsibilities of the office of the Secretary General.

We do not expect such an arrangement to be indefinitely prolonged. We see it as a means for keeping the essential work of the organization going and of affording us the time required to give careful consideration to the appointment of a new Secretary General.

We would expect the interim appointee to have the loyal co-operation of the Secretariat at all levels. He will no doubt have his own working methods and make his own arrangements for drawing on the advice and experience of the international staff. He may wish to make some adjustment in the Secretariat. He must, however, retain full authority to make the decisions and give the directions which are the sole responsibility of the office he will be filling.

As for the longer term problem, the Charter calls for the appointment of a single executive. Any change in the nature of the office would require Charter amendment. This does not mean that the composition of the Secretariat should not reflect the changed membership of the United Nations. On the contrary, all member states have a legitimate interest in ensuring that the main geographical areas have equitable representation. However, no state or group of states should be in a position within the Secretariat to veto the implementation of decisions of any organ of the United Nations.

We stand firmly behind Article 100 of the Charter which provides that the Secretary General and his staff "shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or any other authority external to the Organization". An

independent international civil service must be preserved if the United Nations is to perform its impartial role.

There is no reason, moreover, why member states should try to keep control of their nationals in the Secretariat. The appropriate political control of Secretariat activities is exercised by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the other organs of the United Nations. These organs can give full instructions to the Secretary General.

As well, we have wisely adopted the practice of establishing advisory committees, especially for peace-keeping operations. These committees afford an additional opportunity for interested states to offer advice and give political guidance to the Secretary General in the discharge of his mandates. This is a practice which has proven its worth and one which can be developed in relation to many activities of the United Nations.

Berlin

Most speakers in this debate have referred to the prevailing crisis over Berlin. The Soviet Union has seen fit to create there a very dangerous situation, where a few months ago no imminent threat to peace existed.

The peoples of the world are watching anxiously the steps which are being taken in the direction of negotiation. I have no doubt it is the universal desire of this Assembly that a settlement in Berlin be negotiated with the least possible delay. Clearly the tension must be reduced and the frightening threat of armed conflict removed.

The primary responsibilities for solving the Berlin crisis rests with the four occupying powers in that city, but the United Nations could be called upon to play a role in a Berlin settlement. In any event, the United Nations cannot abdicate its responsibility in relation to any problem which raises acutely the fundamental issue of peace or war.

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There are at least three ways in which the United Nations might be of assistance in the Berlin situation.

The first is to focus world attention on the problem and leave the four powers in no doubt that they have an obligation to reach a negotiated settlement. This debate is already serving that purpose.

Secondly, if the four powers agreed, the United Nations could serve in an observer capacity in the whole city and on the access routes. Properly integrated into a four power settlement a United Nations presence in the Berlin area would add stability and restore confidence.

A third possibility is that the United Nations might be asked by the four powers to assume some responsibility for operating an international regime for the whole city of Berlin. The influence of this international regime could be strengthened by locating the European Office or other agencies of the United Nations in Berlin. If Berlin were internationalized in this way, a heavy burden would be placed upon the Organization, but the United Nations should not shrink from assuming the responsibility and accepting any obligations involved.

Nuclear Testing and Radiation

Mr. President, during the last two weeks of September, following recent Soviet weapons testing in the atmosphere, the level of radioactive fall-out over one major Canadian city -- Toronto -- jumped by as much as one thousand times over previous readings. We are making available to the United Nations complete details of Canadian readings but the following figures will demonstrate that there is real cause for the gravest concern.

Whereas in the week ending September 10 the highest level recorded anywhere in Canada was 20 disintegrations per minute per cubic meter, in the next week the following high

readings were recorded: Ottawa -- 90 units; Montreal -- 100; Fredericton -- 140; Windsor -- 260; and Toronto -- 470 units.

Long before this new and hazardous increase in the radiation to which our people are exposed, my Government had made crystal clear in this Assembly and elsewhere that it was unalterably opposed to the testing of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. Now more than ever we are confirmed in our opposition to test explosions, especially those which produce radioactive fall-out, whether they occur in the atomosphere, in outer space, or elsewhere.

The anxiety which is aroused in Canada by these test explosions is, I believe, shared by peoples everywhere. We take the strongest possible exception to having our present and succeeding generations exposed, through the actions of other states, to the danger of radioactive fall-out. We know that radiation presents a hazard to human health and the more we learn about the extent of its consequences the more disturbed we become.

In my view, this Assembly and world opinion must insist that there be no further testing of nuclear weapons. The time has come when it is not sufficient merely to express concern and to record blame. We must find means of compelling the countries responsible to cease the testing of nuclear weapons. Whatever success we may achieve in respect of the other grave issues will, I fear, be of little comfort to mankind if we fail to dispel forever the ominous and lowering clouds of radioactivity which hang over this and unborn generations.

In 1959 this Assembly unanimously endorsed far-reaching proposals, initiated by Canada, for strengthening the important contribution which the United Nations Radiation Committee can make to greater understanding of the extent and nature of the biological effects of radiation. At that time,

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Canada and other countries extended an offer of assistance to less well-equipped countries for the analysis of samples they might wish to send to our laboratories. Several have availed themselves of our facilities and I invite other countries to do so. In addition, the recent sharp increase in the levels of radioactive fall-out in the world makes it all the more essential to support the work of the Radiation Committee.

The radiation hazard alone is sufficient justification for demanding the cessation of nuclear weapons testing. But there is another reason and that is the spectre of the development, as a result of test explosions, of new and even more terrible weapons -- for example, Chairman Khrushchov's one hundred megaton bomb -- which might be called the Armageddon bomb.

I am sure it came as a profound shock to the whole world to learn that the critical negotiations which had gone on for so long in Geneva, and had borne so much of the hopes of mankind, had been abruptly brought to a halt by the Soviet resumption of tests -- tests which obviously had been planned for some time.

Such was the Soviet response to a series of Western proposals which offered further concessions and gave promise of the early conclusion of a treaty on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests.

These developments demand that this Assembly give the highest priority to considering the permanent cessation of nuclear weapons testing. The progress achieved during three years of arduous negotiations in Geneva must not be sacrificed. At this Session we must take positive steps to ensure that without delay the nuclear powers renew their efforts to agree on a safeguarded treaty which will obligate them to end nuclear weapons testing. Subsequently, all other

countries should adhere to this treaty.

Disarmament

More than ever at this Session of the Assembly the question of disarmament requires our urgent attention. The crisis over Berlin and the great anxiety created by the resumption of nuclear weapons tests have brought to every mind the death and destruction which would follow the outbreak of nuclear war. We must check the spiralling competition for supremacy in armaments.

That means pressing without delay for vigorous and effective measures of disarmament. The Charter of the United Nations places the responsibility on the shoulders of all delegations present in this hall. To fulfill this obligation we must concentrate on the steps which will lead most directly to concrete measures of disarmament.

Canada welcomes the agreement by the United States and the Soviet Union on principles to guide negotiations on disarmament. This agreement represents an important accomplishment, but it is only the first step. Substantive negotiations have not been resumed, even though more than a year has passed since the previous talks were broken off in Geneva.

The comprehensive programme for disarmament introduced by President Kennedy a week ago provides a sound basis for a serious negotiation. Canada co-operated actively in the preparation of this important new plan. The programme which it sets out accords precisely with the principles which have been agreed between the United States and the Soviet Union. I commend this new plan to all members of the Assembly.

The Soviet Union, as you all know, has also put forward a disarmament plan, the general philosophy of which is explained in the letter of the Soviet Foreign Minister to the President of the Assembly, document A/4887. Delegations may be asking themselves -- whose plan is the better - that of the Soviet Union or

that of the United States? I suggest it is unnecessary for this Assembly to decide that question.

In the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee at Geneva, in the last General Assembly, and in the bilateral discussions this summer between the United States and the Soviet Union, there has been a drawing together of viewpoints, in spite of halts and setbacks; the main evidence of this is the agreed statement on principles which I have mentioned.

Now there are still important questions relating to disarmament on which the position of the Soviet Union and its allies differs substantially from the position of the Western countries. But I believe these questions can and must be resolved by a painstaking and business-like negotiation, in which concrete measures and related verification procedures will be examined in detail.

The United States plan is flexible and can accommodate reasonable proposals from the other side or in fact from any quarter. If the Soviet Union and its allies will demonstrate a similar flexibility and spirit of compromise, it will now be possible to make real progress towards general and complete disarmament.

In their bilateral talks, the United States and the Soviet Union could not agree on the composition of the body which should undertake these negotiations. Therefore it is incumbent on this Assembly to help reach a decision in this matter.

The disarmament conference at Geneva in 1960 was conducted by the Ten-Nation Committee. It seems to be generally agreed that its composition will require some modification. Canada believes that if disarmament negotiations are to be productive and realistic, the negotiating body must have adequate and balanced representation of the major military groupings in the world; this was the principle upon which the Ten-Nation Committee was organized.

But we also believe that nations which are not aligned with either of the two sides could play a constructive role in the renewed negotiations. With this in mind we suggested at the last Session that an impartial chairman, assisted by one or two other officers from uncommitted countries, could greatly facilitate the work and improve the effectiveness of the negotiations. We are, however, ready to consider other proposals on the question of composition.

Once the composition of a negotiating body has been decided, the Assembly should recommend that negotiations begin at the earliest possible date, on the basis of the principles agreed by the United States and the Soviet Union, and of the plans which have been put forward by both sides.

The negotiating body, with its broadened representation, should have a close and effective relationship with the United Nations because general disarmament must eventually apply to all nations without exception.

At the 15th Session of the General Assembly, Canada, joined by eighteen other nations, sponsored a draft resolution intended to create such a relationship, as recalled by the distinguished Foreign Minister of Chile in his statement on the 28th of September. The ideas then advanced may prove useful in facilitating a solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament.

Outer Space

During the last year, both the Soviet Union and the United States have successfully launched men into outer space. Space travel and space exploration in manned vehicles may soon be commonplace. While these scientific achievements stir our imagination we deplore the inability of the United Nations to make progress in regulating the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes.

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Despite agreement at the 14th Session on the composition of an Outer Space Committee, the vital tasks assigned to it remain unattained. The reason for this is that the two powers whose achievements in outer space have uniquely fitted them for leadership in this field, have failed to reach agreement on procedural arrangements. As a result, the Committee has not met. Moreover, to this dispute there has more recently been added a further complication arising out of Soviet insistence that decisions must be taken unanimously.

The Canadian Delegation believes that no effort should be spared to have the Outer Space Committee begin its studies without further delay.

Unless there is some body of law, outer space could be exploited for aggressive purposes with greatly increased danger for all nations on this earth. Priority should be given to specific studies to determine in particular:

- the limits of outer space;
- the rules prohibiting military uses and the appropriation of outer space bodies;
- means for registering and identifying space launchings;
- the allocation of radio frequencies for space research;
- methods for terminating radio transmission from outworn space vehicles;
- rules governing the re-entry into the atmosphere and recovery of space vehicles; and
- principles of legal liability for the damage arising out of national activity in outer space.

These and other important questions are clearly within the terms of reference of the Outer Space Committee, which was specifically asked to make preparations for an international scientific conference. In the proper spirit of international scientific collaboration, much benefit would result from such a conference. However, we would not wish preparations for a conference to delay early consideration

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of the important questions I have mentioned. We hope to see the Outer Space Committee continued in being and given clear instructions to pursue its work energetically.

Should this prove impossible, we must turn our attention to alternative methods of moving forward; we should not allow delays over procedure to prevent us from making a new approach to the problems of outer space which are of universal concern and constantly increasing urgency.

Strengthening the United Nations

In concluding, I should like to say a few words about the need to strengthen our Organization. It is timely and desirable that we take stock of its worth. The question we must ask ourselves is not "Do we want a United Nations?" but "What sort of a United Nations do we want?". Dag Hammarskjold, with characteristic political foresight, placed that question before us in this year's introduction to his Annual Report.

If we are to maintain an effective United Nations, and if it is not to become just a debating society, a number of things must happen and changes must be made.

Some constitutional adjustments are required which will give rights and opportunities to all members to exercise the full weight of their influence. There is no doubt that some geographical areas are in present circumstances denied their equitable share of such opportunities.

This is why the Canadian Government is firmly in favour of enlarging the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We see this as the only way in which the composition of those bodies can be adjusted to ensure a properly balanced and equitable representation from all geographical areas.

If sensible adjustments within the various organs are needed, it is even more necessary that the United Nations

should have a suitable financial base for its operations in all fields. No satisfactory formula has been evolved for meeting the expenses of peace-keeping operations in the Congo and elsewhere. A limit has been reached to the process of raiding one reserve fund to support another. The United Nations is now facing backruptcy.

Canada has the greatest understanding for those who would pay but cannot; we have no sympathy for the few who can pay but will not. I believe it would be folly to depart from the basic principle of collective responsibility which has been clearly established by the Charter. It would be quite unwise, either to give in to the Soviet view that members need only pay for those undertakings which they like, or to admit the principle that any one state or group of states should make financial contributions disproportionately high.

The aim should be to find a formula which takes into account the difficulties of the less-developed countries in paying their full assessment but which spreads the resulting additional burden equitably among the other member states which are in a position to pay. Our concern about these financial problems flows from a desire to have this Organization act effectively in the field of peace and security as in other fields.

Mr. President, throughout this statement, I have been at pains to emphasize the need to make the United Nations fully effective. I have urged that this international mechanism which we have so carefully assembled and developed over the years should be strengthened and used to its maximum extent to serve the purposes of the Charter and the needs of member states. This is a reflection of a firm Canadian view that despite many obstacles and shortcomings, the United Nations has, on the whole, met the challenge of our times.

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We believe that theUnited Nations should be dynamic in its approach to the questions brought before it. This Organization must be free to develop if it is to meet new situations. In my view, its capacity can be greatly increased if member governments are ready to make fuller use of its possibilities.

At this Session the outlook is darkened by the grave dangers the world is facing and by the serious internal problems of this Organization. Peoples everywhere are watching these developments fearfully. They are asking themselves whether nuclear war, which in recent years has been considered unthinkable, is now not only being considered possible but is accepted as inevitable. The gravest danger we face is a drift into nuclear war. I am sure all members realize this.

But at this time of tension and danger we must not be dominated by fear and panic. The very seriousness of the situation demands that we keep calm and think clearly about our predicament. Actually I believe this to be the mood of the Assembly.

We have a very immediate responsibility to use our full influence to reduce the causes of tension. To do this we must enable the United Nations to act effectively - and all countries - large and small - must stand firmly behind this world organization.