STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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REVIVE DISARMAMENT TALKS

Statement to the United Nations Disarmament Commission by Mr. Howard C. Green, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, August 16, 1960.

At the outset of my statement, may I express my great satisfaction that you have wisely decided to convene the Disarmament Commission at this time. It is the firm view of the Canadian Government that in the broad and complex field of disarmament the world is facing a very grave situation. The quickening pace of arms development, and especially of the means of delivering nuclear weapons, is producing risks and dangers which demand immediate attention, if we are to prevent a catastrophe in the world.

Moreover, the whole weight of public opinion in all countries has been thrown on the side of early and effective action on disarmament as a means of increasing international security, reducing international tension and incidentally easing the heavy burdens which preparations for defence have placed on all nations.

Responsibility

In the Canadian view, the responsibility of the United Nations and especially of the Disarmament Commission in this all-important field is clear. The Charter bears testimony to the United Nations primary interest in and responsibility for disarmament. This Commission at the present time is the United Nations instrument for exercising that responsibility. The fact that the members of the Disarmament Commission reflect virtually all shades of opinion in the world today qualifies it fully for that task.

Last year, especially after the unanimous adoption of the General Assembly resolution on disarmament, the Canadian Government looked hopefully to the 10-Nation Committee as a means of exploring every avenue of progress toward agreement on measures of disarmament.

We were encouraged by the improved international atmosphere at that time. Meeting the wish of the Soviet Union for parity in the composition of the negotiating body seemed to ensure good opportunities for serious negotiation. Furthermore, we had before us the pattern and experience of the tripartite negotiations on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, which had been protracted and difficult but in which gradual progress had been made.

It seemed that the four-power agreement to establish the 10-Nation Committee had paved the way for a new and promising approach to disarmament. We saw in this approach an opportunity for the two sides, representing the most heavily-armed alliances in the world, to negotiate their differences bilaterally with a view to establishing a pattern for universal disarmament. It was assumed that any progress resulting from these negotiations would be reported to the United Nations and that, ultimately, the pattern developed between these alliances would form the basis for more extensive agreements and arrangements within the United Nations framework.

Hopes Shattered

Our hopes and desires in that regard were rudely shattered when, on June 27, the negotiations in the 10-Nation Committee were interrupted. It would be quite fruitless, and indeed contrary to my whole purpose, if I were to dwell upon the reasons for the interruption of those negotiations. They are dealt with, in any event, by the report to the Disarmament Commission by the five Western members of the 10-Nation Committee. I shall say only that, in the Canadian view, the negotiations need never have been broken off. I hope to demonstrate this during the course of my statement. My object in doing so is to support wholeheartedly the main purpose for which this meeting of the Disarmament Commission has been convened, that is, to bring about a resumption of the disarmament negotiations.

I do not wish to imply that the results obtained in the 10-Nation Committee were what they should have been. On the contrary, the Canadian Government believes that greater progress was possible and should have been made. In statements in Canada and elsewhere, I have made no secret of my view, that in some respects the pace and trend of events in the 10-Nation Committee was unsatisfactory. I do say, however, that the negotiations in the 10-Nation Committee did produce some drawing together of opposing positions and should have been pursued.

This was true at the time when the talks were interrupted. It was difficult to understand the logic of the action taken to discontinue the negotiations then, particularly as the failure of the Summit meeting had given the remaining East-West negotiations increased importance. However, despite

all setbacks, the Canadian Government has not ceased to advocate the continuance of a policy of negotiation with a view to creating mutual confidence in the relations between the Soviet and Western worlds.

Balancing Concessions

In their efforts to bring about serious negotiations in the 10-Nation Committee, Canadian spokesmen have used the phrase "balanced concessions". To us, this is a significant phrase for several reasons. For one thing, balanced concessions are, of course, the essence of a true negotiation. For another, the conception of balanced concessions has particular significance in the field of disarmament.

It seems to me that we must contemplate a process whereby the final goal of disarmament will be arrived at through stages, balanced so that at no point will any one nation or group of nations be in a position to pose a threat to the security of another. The idea of achieving disarmament through balanced concessions has therefore been central to Canadian thinking about the negotiations in the 10-Nation Committee.

Can we say that there are any signs of progress through balanced concessions in the 10-Nation Committee? I think we can. In several important aspects, the two sides in the negotiations have moved closer to each other's position. When we compare the proposals put forward by the Soviet Union on June 2, 1960, with those put forward by the United States on June 27, we find that there is a common approach on a number of points.

Rival Proposals

The extent of this movement towards agreement becomes even more striking when we recall that each side has now put forward two complete sets of proposals in the course of these negotiations. Both the Soviet proposals and the United States proposals which were presented to the 10-Nation Committee in June contained advances on the earlier proposals which had formed the basis for the first six weeks of the negotiations.

I should add that the Western proposals of June 27, while placed in the records of the 10-Nation Committee by the United States delegation, were produced as a result of close consultation among the five Western members of the Committee. These proposals embody advances which I intend to mention later.

The process which has gone on could be described as follows: At the beginning of the negotiations in March, each side introduced a plan. After examining these plans, both sides concluded that the plan of the other side was not satisfactory. Subsequently after further reflection, each side introduced new proposals. These later proposals contained elements of balanced concessions to each others point of view. This development represented the normal course of a negotiation. Yet it was just at the stage when new proposals had been introduced by both sides that the negotiations were broken off. In other words, the interruption took place at the least logical time.

Negotiations Must Go On

No matter how difficult the task of achieving agreement may appear, or how slow the progress may seem, there can be no valid reason for not pursuing disarmament negotiations with patience and perseverance. Those countries which have been given and which have accepted the responsibility for negotiation are bound to continue their search for agreement. World opinion expects no less of them, as we saw last year when the General Assembly unanimously pronounced that disarmament was the most important subject facing the world today. It is this expectation, on the part of the world community, which underlines the seriousness of the interruption in the work of the 10-Nation Committee just when it appeared that progress was being made. Let me illustrate this.

If the latest Soviet and Western proposals are compared, it becomes clear first of all that there is agreement on a number of general principles. East and West agree that the goal is general and complete disarmament. This is defined as the disbandment of all armed forces of all states except those required for internal security (that is police or "militia") and those required as the states' contribution to an international force to maintain peace under the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

It is recognized by both sides that general and complete disarmament requires the elimination of all weapons, except those required for the forces just mentioned. It is also agreed that the principle object of general and complete disarmament is the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction--nuclear, chemical and biological--and the means of delivering them.

It is agreed further that the process of disarmament throughout must be under effective international control--and by control is meant verification and inspection. Furthermore, it is agreed that an organization to carry on this control must be set up within the framework of the United Nations, that disarmament should be such that no nation or group of nations will gain a military advantage at any stage or through any measure.

One of the most important points of substance on which the views of the West and East have come together is on the levels to which conventional forces and armaments should be reduced in the second stage. The plans of both sides now agree that at this stage the armed forces of the United States and the Soviet Union should be reduced to the level of 1.7 million effectives, and that their armaments should be reduced in relation to force levels. The armed forces and armaments of other militarily important states would be reduced proportionately.

As the two sides have reached agreement in this extremely important area, there seems to be every reason to continue to develop this agreement in detail--to work out the measures and procedures for effecting the reduction of forces and armaments, and for verifying the reduction when it takes place. This line of negotiation should yield fruitful results if pursued by the 10-Nation Committee through joint studies; that is, by detailed negotiations of sub-committees of experts.

I do not wish to give the impression that these detailed negotiations would not be without difficulties. However, since there is agreement on the objective of 1.7 million, it should be possible to find the means and methods of reaching it.

West and East are agreed on the principle that the production of nuclear explosives for making nuclear weapons should be stopped, under international control; and that existing stocks should be destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes. It is agreed also that there should be preliminary joint studies of how exactly this is to be carried out. Why not begin these joint studies at once?

No Cause for Delay

It is unreasonable to say that there first must be agreement on all the details of the programme of general and complete disarmament, from beginning to end. After all, negotiations on the control of the stopping of nuclear tests have been going on at Geneva. There does not seem to be any barrier in principle to beginning similar negotiations on these other aspects of the vital problem of preventing the use of nuclear power for the destruction of civilization.

The ideas of East and West, as expressed in the latest disarmament proposals, have come closer together in regard to the need for some kind of international force to maintain peace and security in the world when general and complete disarmament of the nations is attained. It is also agreed that this force should operate according to the principles of the United Nations Charter. This is a very important principle agreed upon.

The necessity of having an international force at the disposal of the United Nations to prevent breaches of the international peace has been clearly demonstrated by recent events. It is worth noting that this action is being taken by a United Nations Force which is only lightly armed, and in an area where there are practically no heavy armaments--a condition which would obtain everywhere when general and complete disarmament is in effect.

I have been talking about points in the great problem of disarmament where agreement, or a close approach to agreement, has been reached in the positions expressed by the Soviet Union in its proposals of June 2 and by the United States in its proposals of June 27, 1960. There are, of course, other aspects of disarmament where no comparable progress has been made. At the same time, the examples of agreement I have mentioned have a special significance, simply because they are the first areas of agreement. General and complete disarmament under effective international control cannot be attained overnight. Progress will have to be made by stages. As in so many things, it is the first step that counts.

Elimination of Nuclear Carriers

Perhaps the most important aspect of disarmament where more progress is called for is the question of nuclear carriers. The Soviet disarmament programme presented to the General Assembly on September 18, 1959, proposed that nuclear carriers should be abolished in the last stage of disarmament. However, in the revised Soviet programme of June 2, 1960, it is proposed that all nuclear carriers should be abolished in the first stage. Speakers for the Soviet Union and Eastern European delegations during the discussions following the presentation of the revised Soviet plan, claimed that this alteration was made to accord with the wishes of the Western nations. In fact, the Soviet proposal in regard to the abolition of nuclear carriers went from one extreme of timing to the other, in the process over-shooting the target--which they claimed they were aiming at--of reaching accommodation with Western views on this vital area of disarmament.

Perhaps it would be possible for the Soviet Union to modify its position again, placing it between these two extremes. The Western position also, as expressed in the United States proposals of June 27, 1960, has been modified in the direction of specifying the complete eventual elimination of nuclear carriers, and advancing the timing of the several stages in which this is to be accomplished.

I have tried to give briefly and in general terms the position of the West and the East in regard to the elimination of nuclear carriers. I think progress was made during the

Geneva talks towards a common position, although the progress here was less than in other areas I have mentioned. There would seem to be no compelling reason why, if negotiations were resumed, there should not be further progress, and eventual arrival at an agreed position. The approach through balanced concessions could be applied to this area of disarmament--that is, the elimination of nuclear carriers.

It is of the most vital interest to all nations of the world, not only to nations which would be most directly affected if nuclear warfare breaks out. The reason is that it is in multiplying ICBM's and perhaps other even more terrifying means of mass destruction that the armaments race is concentrated. This arms race goes on. Every month that is allowed to elapse without its being checked adds to tension and suspicion, and makes eventual disarmament more difficult.

Canada believes that a great responsibility lies on the nations possessing nuclear weapons and carriers to resume negotiations, with a view to eliminating the frightful menace which this form of armament presents to themselves and to the world generally.

In both the latest Western and Eastern plans, there is a provision for preventing the use of orbital satellites for carrying weapons of mass destruction. There is also provision for international control of the experimental launching of long-range missiles.

Could not both of these measures be put into effect without waiting until all the problems of complete elimination of nuclear carriers are solved? Such measures could be introduced without prejudice to the security of either West or East and they would help considerably to slow down the arms race. They would involve a mutual exchange of information through the agency of an international body. This would be one of the surest means of allaying fear and tension, which are the mainsprings of the armament race. Why not undertake negotiations now--that is, joint technical studies--on these measures which will facilitate disarmament and of which the desirability is agreed in principle?

Another aspect of the disarmament problem on which there is still too wide a divergence of views, in spite of some degree of reconciliation, is whether it is necessary to work out the whole process of general and complete disarmament, from its first stage to its last, and set it down in the form of a draft treaty, before any steps can be taken actually to begin the disarmament process. That has seemed to be the view held by the Soviet Union and Eastern European delegations during the negotiations at Geneva. Canada's view has been that a start should be made by reaching agreement between the two sides represented on the Disarmament Committee--in regard to measures which they themselves can undertake, as a first stage in disarmament.

Final Treaty

It is common to both the Western and Eastern plans that to achieve general and complete disarmament, all the nations of the world must adhere to the treaty, and be bound by its terms. Of course, they must have the right to participate in the framing of the final treaty. In order that they may do so, it is agreed that a world conference should be convened for that prupose. The West has now proposed in the latest plan that after agreement on the first stage of disarmament among the 10-Nations, a draft treaty covering the second and third stages should be prepared, to be submitted to this world conference.

Once again, it would seem that the remaining difference of positions about how to prepare the international instrument or instruments which will register the obligation of the nations of the world to disarm is not such as to prevent agreement, after further negotiations, provided they are undertaken in a spirit of goodwill.

It has not been my intention to review the whole course of the negotiations in the 10-Nation Committee. Nor have I sought to attach blame unduly to one side or the other for the failure to make the kind of progress, which I think the present world situation demands. I hope that all members of this Disarmament Commission will share my great concern about the fact that these most important negotiations have been interrupted and will give their full support to a clear recommendation calling for the early resumption of those negotiations.

The Disarmament Commission is competent to exercise United Nations responsibility in this regard and to use its influence in the constructive sense I have suggested. I firmly believe that the Commission should neither hesitate nor equivocate in calling for resumed negotiations.

I have an additional suggestion to make which may make it easier for both sides to resume negotiations. In my view the 10-Nation Committee might benefit from having a neutral chairman who could regularize the order of business, especially when the two sides were deadlocked in this regard. It might be difficult to reach agreement on the appointment of such a chairman but one possibility would be to have him designated by the Secretary-General, in consultation with the powers concerned.

Mr. Chairman, geographically Canada lies between the two leading nuclear powers--United States and the Soviet Union. We are bound to suffer terribly in a nuclear war and we believe that many other nations would suffer as well, if not by direct destruction, then by the effects of fallout. If the

nuclear powers were to engage in total war, they would probably destroy civilization and this destruction could result from a mistake or miscalculation.

I suggest that the responsibility of all other nations, including Canada, is to make 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 disarmament negotiations be resumed forthwith.

These nuclear powers are all members of the 10-Nation Committee. It has not been disbanded and could resume meetings next week. Furthermore, it could work out a disarmament agreement if all the nuclear powers have the will to reach that objective.

There is no excuse for delay. The situation will not be improved by waiting for a debate in the General Assembly or for the American election or for a new administration in Washington. To wait for any of these means a delay of months--with the task of reaching agreement growing steadily more difficult, as more harsh words are uttered by each side. After the delay, there would still have to be negotiations.

In these days we are witnessing great accomplishments by the United Nations. I refer to what has been done and is still being done in the Congo. This world organization has taken a great step forward there.

If the members of this Disarmament Commission decide that the 10-Nation Committee should resume its work at once, their decision will, I believe, be respected and the United Nations will have taken another step forward, this time in the field of disarmament for which it has a fundamental responsibility.

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