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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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NATO AT ISTANBUL

A statement by Mr. Howard Green, Secretary of State for External Affairs on May 9 to the House of Commons

... I thought it might be helpful if I were to make a brief report to the House concerning my visit to Istanbul. As Hon. Members are probably aware, there were two meetings held there, one a week ago yesterday.

The first was a meeting of the foreign ministers representing the five Western countries which are members of the ten-nation Disarmament Committee. The purpose of this first meeting was to prepare advice for the three Western heads of government who are to participate in the summit meetings commencing on May 16 in so far as the question of disarmament is concerned; also to consider what progress had been made in the Disarmament Committee itself and what suggestions should be made to the negotiators acting on behalf of the five Western powers, and finally to prepare a report on disarmament to the NATO Council which was to meet during the succeeding three days.

We took General Burns with us to Istanbul because, of course, our main interest there was the question of disarmament, and as you know he is heading the Canadian delegation on this important work. The progress that has been made to date by the Disarmament Committee has not been very satisfactory. The Canadian Government is anxious that there should be a great deal more done when the Committee resumes its sittings early next month.

At this first meeting I urged upon the other four Western foreign ministers that everything possible must be done to get these negotiations moving; that it was very important to demonstrate to the five Eastern nations on this ten-member Committee and also to all other nations of the world that the West is very serious in its attempt to bring about a disarmament agreement.

We made several suggestions which perhaps would be of interest to the House. One was that the summit meeting should give direction to the ten-member Committee, that instead of

discussing further the general issues they should commence to discuss specific measures of disarmament. Mind you, that would mean that these directions would come from President Eisenhower, Prime Minister Macmillan, President de Gaulle and Premier Khrushchov. We had in mind that a joint declaration of recommendation, whatever you wish to call it, should be made to the disarmament negotiators.

Also we suggested that an attempt might very well be made to work out package deals; that is, take one measure of disarmament in which the West was interested and one of equivalent importance in which the East was interested and try to make a package deal with regard to these two particular aspects of disarmament. For example, the West might offer to negotiate a controlled limitation on force levels and related conventional armaments if the Soviet side would agree to negotiate on the nuclear disarmament measures in stages one and two of the Western plan.

We believe this is a practical way to get things moving, and if package deals of that kind could be made in several instances the first thing we would know there would be a worth-while disarmament agreement.

Then we also suggested that when the Disarmament Committee meets again there should be certain informal off-the-record meetings of the negotiators. To date they have been having formal meetings, records are kept, and then, after a matter of a few weeks, the whole record is published, which means, as I am sure all Parliamentarians will understand, that there is a great deal of talking for the record. We think it would be very useful if the negotiators could get into a huddle from time to time and really try to work out something among themselves. We do not say there should be no more formal meetings, but we think a mixture of formal and informal meetings would be very beneficial. We hope there will be recommendations of this kind made by the summit to the ten-member Committee.

Our suggestions were received very well by the other Western foreign ministers and also, when the NATO Council met, they were favourably received in the deliberations of that Council.

Then a word or two with regard to the NATO Council meeting. It was concerned primarily with preparations for the summit. Most of the time was spent in discussing what the three Western heads of government should propose at the summit meeting. There had been three working groups set up; one on disarmament, of which of course Canada was a member; another on Germany and Berlin, of which Germany was a member in addition to the United Kingdom, the United States and France; and also one on East-West relations, which was composed of representatives of the United Kingdom, the United States and France and also one representative from the NATO Council.

The Council endorsed the report which the Disarmament Working Group had submitted and affirmed it in the following words:

"The alliance shares the aim of general and complete disarmament to be achieved by stages under effective international control, and supports the proposals of the Western negotiators at Geneva to this end."

The Council also made reference to the importance of tying in the United Nations with the work of this Disarmament Committee. The Council asserted their view that these proposals provided the best means of carrying out the United Nations resolutions of November 20, 1959, and also regretted the unwillingness which the Soviet side had shown to discuss specific practical measures of disarmament.

Canada throughout has been very insistent that the United Nations should be kept in this picture. We regard ourselves as speaking on that Committee for the various middle and smaller powers who are members of the United Nations, and as this world body has the final responsibility for disarmament we think it is of the greatest importance that it should be kept right in the picture. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Hammarskjold, spoke to the Disarmament Committee at the last meeting they held...

On the question of Germany and Berlin, there was a general endorsement of the approach which the three plan to use at the summit, and general agreement that it should be left to the discretion of the three how best to present the Western position in the light of developments at the summit. The NATO Council reaffirmed publicly its view that the solution of the problem of Germany can only be found in reunification on the basis of self-determination, recalled its declaration of December 16, 1958, and once again expressed its determination to protect the freedom of the people of West Berlin.

The third broad group of subjects dealt with was East-West relations. This, of course, covers quite a wide area, including exchanges of contacts in cultural and information fields and the possibility of discussing trade, aid and other economic questions with the Soviet at the summit. There was also discussion of the concept of détente, which has become such a popular word - meaning a relaxation of tension, I think - and also the question of peaceful co-existence. The conclusions reached included these, that the NATO members desire a true international détente, by which they mean peaceful co-operation among all states, not merely an absence of hostilities. Then they added a condition. A condition of détente is that it must be applicable to all areas of the world, that peaceful co-existence

is unsatisfactory if under its cover the Soviet union continues to engage in propaganda attacks on individual members. There would appear to be a détente in so far as Canada is concerned and the United Kingdom, the United States, France and so on, but evidently the situation is a little different in the case of West Germany and Greece, for example. They are being subjected to propaganda and pressures of various kinds, and the Council did decide that a détente should be indivisible; in other words, it should apply to all the nations.

Canada supported the idea that the West should go to the summit prepared to discuss in general terms with the Soviet Union problems of trade. We also expressed in the NATO Council an interest in having a general discussion at the summit on the problem of limiting the traffic in arms through international reporting arrangements which would apply to both the importing and the exporting countries. In other words, a country which is exporting arms would list the exports with some international agency, and so would the receiving country. This work could perhaps be done by the international disarmament organization which has been proposed by the West, should there be agreement to set up such an organization.

In addition, at the conference there were several very interesting individual statements relating to developments in particular areas, but these are not of a nature which I could properly disclose to the House.

Just before we left Istanbul and later in London we had word of the incident involving the shooting down of a United States plane. The Canadian Government regards this as a very serious incident, and we think it points up very clearly the vital need for a disarmament agreement. If incidents of this kind are to keep occurring, one of these days such an incident might trigger a nuclear war. We think it shows very clearly the need for both sides, the West and the East, to reach an agreement on disarmament.

Mind you, we believe in disarmament under control. An incident like this would not happen if there were a proper inspection system. I remind the Hon. Members that from time to time the present Government has taken the stand that Canada would open her skies to inspection if the Soviet would do the same thing in an equivalent area on the other side of the Arctic. I have, for example - I will not repeat the statements that have been made on this subject by the Prime Minister - a letter the Prime Minister wrote Premier Khrushchov on May 9, 1958, which reads as follows:

"If you are really anxious about developments in the Arctic and if you wish to eliminate the possibility of surprise attack across the polar regions, I find it hard to understand why you should cast aside a proposal designed to increase mutual security in that area."

(The suggestion had been made earlier by Canada and rejected.)

"Let me repeat here, Mr. Chairman, that we stand by our offer to make available for international inspection or control any part of our territory, in exchange for a comparable concession on your part. I would hope that you would accept some arrangement along these lines not only as an indication of our good faith but as part of a first, experimental step in building a system of international safeguards against surprise attack. When there is, by your own admission, a danger of nuclear war breaking out by accident or miscalculation, it is difficult for Canadians to comprehend your refusal to engage even in technical discussions intended to explore the feasibility of an international system of control."

I am sure all members of the House will agree with the position of the Government, which is that Canada will do everything she possibly can to bring about disarmament under proper controls and with a system of inspection.

I think too that this incident, in addition to showing the need for a disarmament agreement, indicates the importance of the summit meeting which is to be held on May 16. There has been some suggestion in the press that perhaps now there would not be any summit meeting. I submit that it is all the more important now that this has happened that the summit meeting should go ahead. Mind you, it is not going to be any easier because of the increase in tension caused by this incident, but we hope there will be no suggestion whatever that the summit meeting should be cancelled. We think there is even a bigger job to be done by these four heads of government at the summit meeting which is due to commence just a week from today.

... Finally I should like to make it quite clear that the Canadian Government was not aware of these activities, and evidently the United States Government was not very much aware of them either. I have here a statement which was issued by the State Department of the United States on May 7, and it contains this sentence:

"As a result of the inquiry ordered by the President, it has been established that in so far as the authorities in Washington are concerned, there was no authorization for any such flight as described by Mr. Khrushchov."

... I am sure the House will join with me in expressing the hope that now that both sides have seen just how serious

incidents of this kind can be and just how little it might take to bring a world disaster, the nations of both sides will get down to business and really try to work out an agreement on disarmament.

S/C