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Inference of 18-Nation Disarmament Committee, 3 May 1962

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INFORMATION Service
European Office of the United Nations
Geneva

Press Release No DISARM/37
3 May 1962

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CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

Remarks by the Secretary-General at the meeting of the Disarmament
Conference on 3 May 1962

It is a genuine pleasure for me to be present with you to-day, if only for a few moments, to bring you my greetings and best wishes for your success. I only wish that it were possible for me to attend more of your meetings but I am sure that you appreciate the reasons which prevent my doing so. I have, of course, been following your work with close attention and with great interest. I need hardly stress to the Members of this Conference the great, even vital, importance to all nations and all people of your labours here, and I am sure you all approach your tasks with a sense of responsibility to the entire international community.

The procedures of this Conference represent a significant improvement over previous disarmament conferences. Thus the establishment of the Co-Chairmanship is a noteworthy development which provides an effective means for continuing the bilateral negotiations of your Co-Chairmen, who can thus provide substantive as well as procedural direction to your work. Apart from this, the presence of the non-aligned States in your midst is not only a recognition of this wider responsibility, to which I referred earlier; it also enables them to exercise, on a permanent basis, their catalytic and moderating influences in helping to achieve agreement among you. No previous disarmament conference has been so well equipped as regards at least the constitutional side of its work.

It is, of course, a matter of the profoundest regret and concern to everyone that you have not been able thus far to reach agreement on a Treaty for the effective cessation of nuclear weapons tests, but the world will find some hope in the fact that you are persisting undiscouraged in your efforts to reach such an agreement, and that the Joint Memorandum of the non-aligned States has been accepted by the nuclear Powers as a basis, if not the exclusive one, for continuing your negotiations.

It is a matter of gratification that, in the field of disarmament, there have been submitted for your consideration two documents setting forth comprehensive programmes for total world disarmament - the Soviet draft Treaty on "General and Complete Disarmament under Strict International Control" and the United States "Outline of Basic Provisions of a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World". During the seven weeks you have been in session at this initial stage of your work, you have been able to survey a considerable area of the difficult terrain you must traverse. It is understandable that, in the short time available to you for dealing with a subject of such vast scope, it may not have been possible to have made a great deal of headway in achieving agreement on the substance of the problem. What is important, however, is the evident seriousness, persistence and patience with which you have undertaken your complex task and the cordial atmosphere which has characterized your discussions. It is encouraging to know that the Members of this Conference have all stated their intentions to pursue their consideration

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of the problem with determination and desire to find a solution.

All of you know, I am sure, the great interest which all the Members of the United Nations have in your work. It is a matter of satisfaction that your consideration of the inter-related problems of general and complete disarmament and the maintenance of peace recognizes the central and indispensable role of the United Nations.

I am happy to have had this opportunity to offer you my sincere good wishes and earnest hopes for your success.

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