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ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD  
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

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BUREAU DU REPRÉSENTANT  
DU GROUPE PERMANENT

OFFICE OF THE STANDING GROUP  
REPRESENTATIVE

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20 March 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR : Secretary, Standing Group

SUBJECT : Disarmament.

Reference : LOSTAN 5600

Attached is a copy of the statement made by General Burns  
to the Council on 18 March on progress of Geneva Disarmament Conference.

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Major General  
STANDING GROUP REPRESENTATIVE

Enclosure : as stated

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Index Section IMS

Doc. 1

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CONFIDENTIAL

March 18, 1964.

TEXT OF ORAL STATEMENT ON DISARMAMENT MADE BY  
LIEUT.-GENERAL E.L.M. BURNS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC  
COUNCIL ON MARCH 18

Mr. Chairman, this morning I shall try to bring the Council up-to-date about what has been going on in our Conference during the past two weeks, that is to say, since Ambassador Richards briefed you on March 4. I understand members of the Council have received our written account covering developments until March 8 but I may wish to expand somewhat on a number of points which are contained therein.

2. I might begin with a few remarks about where we stand at present with respect to general and complete disarmament. In its Tuesday meetings the Committee has continued to examine the problem of the reduction ~~and~~ elimination of nuclear weapons vehicles. Here the Western powers represented on the ENDC have sought to do two things. On the one hand we have tried to get the Soviet representative to explain in greater detail the substance of the latest Soviet proposal that what they call a "strictly limited" number of nuclear weapons vehicles should be held on the territories of the United States and the Soviet Union until the end of Stage III. (This is the so-called Gromyko proposal.) On the other hand, we have pointed out the deficiencies in the Soviet proposals as we understand them on the basis of the very meagre information which the Soviet representative has thus far seen fit to give us.

3. Our attempts to elicit additional details about the Soviet position have thus far met with no success. The Soviet representative has really told us nothing that was not already in Mr. Gromyko's presentation at the last session of the General Assembly. Mr. Tsarapkin has merely confirmed that the Soviet Union thinks that all nuclear weapons vehicles should be eliminated in the first stage with the exception of a small but unspecified number of land-based vehicles, including anti-missile missiles and anti-aircraft missiles, situated in the United States and the Soviet Union, and that this agreed number should be held until the end of the disarmament process. He has continued to advance the propagandistic claim that the

implementation of this proposal would prevent the outbreak of nuclear war. Moreover Mr. Tsarapkin has refused to acknowledge any similarity between the present Soviet position and the Western position that a feasible disarmament plan must recognize the need to retain, at progressively lower levels, a balanced deterrent until such time as alternative means of effectively keeping the peace in a disarmed world have been established. In other words, the Soviet representative has repudiated efforts on our part to interpret the latest Gromyko proposals as implying Soviet acceptance of some of the basic concepts of the Western disarmament position.

4. The Western delegations have pointed out that the Soviet Union has not explained how the apparently massive reductions it envisages in the first stage should be carried out, nor how, under its inadequate provisions for verification, states could be sure that weapons in excess of the agreed levels were not being clandestinely retained. We have drawn attention to the equally grave shortcomings inherent in Soviet proposals from the viewpoint of maintaining the military balance in the course of disarmament. To all this Mr. Tsarapkin has replied with his usual cliché: "accept the Soviet proposals in principle -- we can work out the details afterwards".

5. None of the eight neutral members has chosen to make an intervention in the discussion of general and complete disarmament at the Tuesday meetings for several weeks. This would seem to show that the eight see no immediate results coming out of negotiations on general and complete disarmament, but are all much more interested in the subject of collateral measures. They clearly consider that negotiations on collateral measures offer the best chance of progress at the present time, and it is to this subject that I now turn.

6. As the Council knows, a substantial list of proposals for collateral measures is before ENDC. There are the five measures proposed by President Johnson in his message to the Conference at the beginning of our present session, and there is the list of nine measures contained in the memorandum which the Soviet Union submitted on January 28. So far the Co-chairmen have not been able to agree on which subject or subjects should receive the Conference's detailed attention at this stage. The Delegation

of the United States at our Thursday meetings has presented a series of statements developing some of the points in President Johnson's message. For example, they have dealt with the proposal for a verified freeze on the number and characteristics of strategic nuclear weapons vehicles; they have also discussed the proposals concerning two aspects of what is now described as the USA non-dissemination programme, namely, the proposal for the cutoff of production of fissionable material for use in weapons, and the transfer of agreed quantities of such materials to non-weapons uses, and the application of appropriate safeguards to all transfers of fissile material and atomic equipment for peaceful purposes. Last week the United States representative made the important announcement that IAEA safeguards would be accepted over the operation of the large power reactor at Rowe, Mass. The Soviet representative, supported by his Eastern European colleagues, has concentrated almost exclusively on the question of the reduction of military budgets.

7. It is natural enough that a feeling should have developed among the neutral delegations that it was high time for the Conference to try to introduce more order into its discussion of collateral measures and that an effort should be made to get away from the unilateral presentation of views and to turn to real negotiation on one or more specific items. In response to a suggestion by the representative of the United Arab Republic an informal meeting of the Conference was held a week ago Monday to examine the question of an agenda for the discussion of collateral measures. At that meeting the United States representative was able to explain frankly the point of view which he had been advancing in the Co-chairmen's meetings devoted to this problem. Mr. Fisher argued that until a consensus had emerged respecting what item or items on the two lists of collateral measures offered the best prospects for fruitful discussion, it would be premature to try to fix an agenda which would necessarily involve giving priority to the examination of some questions while leaving aside the consideration of others.

8. In opposition to this view the Soviet bloc delegations argued

that the failure to set an agenda for collateral measures after almost two months of work in the Conference created the impression that the ENDC was in a state of deadlock. They maintained that the reduction of military budgets would be easy to agree upon, and the ENDC should therefore decide to give priority to the discussion of this issue.

9. The attitude to the agenda problem adopted by the neutrals at this informal meeting was rather interesting, and probably reflected their concern lest the attention given by the press to the failure to agree on an agenda be overplayed and result in a general view that our negotiations had reached an impasse. While most of the neutrals deplored the lack of agreement on a fixed agenda, several of the most influential among them, including the representatives of Burma and India, said that they recognized that the agenda problem could be over-emphasized at this stage. They expressed the hope that as a result of a further exposition of the proposals of the two sides the Committee would soon be in a position to concentrate attention on items of common interest holding out hope for eventual agreement.

10. Members of the Council may be interested in a few more details about the attitude taken by the Soviet bloc delegations towards various issues during the past two weeks. As I said earlier, the only specific item which the Soviet representative has seemed anxious to discuss has been the Soviet proposal for an agreement to reduce military budgets by 10 to 15%. Besides a formal agreement -- or perhaps as a preliminary step towards it -- the Soviet Delegate has also urged that the Committee issue an appeal to all states to follow the example set by the United States and the Soviet Union in reducing their military expenditures during the current year. Despite the interest which the Soviet Delegation professes to have in this collateral measure, Mr. Tsarapkin has responded very negatively to any suggestion that an expert study is required before we can assess the significance or practicability of international action to limit military expenditures. For example, in the Co-chairmen's meetings the United States representative has proposed that it might be useful to study on a bilateral basis the composition of military budgets, and how various items of military spending are carried

within these budgets, in order to gain a better idea of the significance of announced changes in military spending. Mr. Tsarapkin has rejected this idea, claiming that it is quite possible to take action to control military expenditures on the basis of currently published figures alone. Suggestions for an examination by experts of the problems involved in budgetary limitations have been made in the Conference itself by the British, Canadian and Swedish Delegations; but these have met with a similarly negative response.

11. At the meeting last Thursday (12 March), the Soviet representative spoke for the first time at any length on the subject of President Johnson's proposal for a freeze on strategic nuclear weapons vehicles. His attitude was very negative, but his criticisms could be interpreted as designed to gain more information on the scope of the measure. He claimed that it would involve control without disarmament and would not contribute to halting the arms race since the production of other major armaments, (some of which would be of importance to NATO defence plans) would not be affected by the freeze. In attacking the USA freeze proposal, Mr. Tsarapkin chose to ignore what I take to be one of its important aspects, namely, that it would not involve burdensome verification procedures but on the contrary would mean that control would be applied mainly to production facilities. Notwithstanding this reaction from the Soviet side, I believe it is important that the West be in a position to continue to develop in greater detail the proposal for a freeze on strategic nuclear weapons vehicles.

12. In recent meetings the Soviet Union representative has given some prominence to their counter proposal to the limited bomber bonfire proposed by the West, which is to destroy all bombers. He argues that balanced destruction of B47s and Badgers, for example, would be meaningless, whereas, if all bombers - which are obsolescent anyway - were destroyed it would be a significant act of disarmament. It is possible that if Mr. Khrushchev really wants an agreement on some not too important measure of disarmament, he might pick the "bomber bonfire". The "total bomber bonfire" proposal may also be designed as a counter to the US strategic N&V freeze.

13. On several occasions recently the Soviet representative has accused the Western powers of not wanting to make progress in our negotiations. However, there has been no noticeable hardening as yet in the Soviet line in the Conference, as one might have expected given the tone of Mr. Gromyko's remarks in his recent interview with Izvestia. I believe, therefore, that the Western powers must continue to explore energetically whether during the present session there is some item on the Western list of collateral measures which could form the basis of an agreement with the Soviet Union. I think the neutrals have been favourably impressed by the indication they have received that the West is prepared to negotiate with the Russians on a broad range of issues. I am confident that provided we are able to continue to develop the proposals in President Johnson's message to the Conference and the Western position generally, we shall be able to keep the initiative in our negotiations.