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Thirty-second session
Agenda item 46

PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURE OF NEW
TYPES OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND NEW SYSTEMS
OF SUCH WEAPONS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Francisco CORREA (Mexico)

1. The item entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament" was included in the provisional agenda of the thirty-second session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/74 of 10 December 1976.
2. At its 5th plenary meeting, on 23 September 1977, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.
3. At its 7th meeting, on 18 October, the First Committee decided to hold a combined general debate on the items allocated to it relating to disarmament, namely, items 33, 34, 38 to 49 and 51 to 53. The general debate on these items took place at the 7th to 27th meetings, from 18 October to 7 November. 1/
4. In connexion with item 46, the First Committee had before it the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. 2/
5. On 28 October, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/32/L.4), which was subsequently sponsored also by the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic,

1/ For an index to statements by delegations on disarmament items, see A/32/383.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/32/27).

Czechoslovakia and Mongolia. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of the German Democratic Republic at the 28th meeting on 9 November.

6. On 28 October, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Federal Republic of, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/32/L.5) which was subsequently sponsored also by the Ivory Coast. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of the United Kingdom at the 28th meeting, on 9 November.

7. At the 33rd meeting, on 15 November, the First Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.4 by a recorded vote of 87 to none, with 28 abstentions 3/ (see para. 9 below, draft resolution A). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burma, Canada, Central African Empire, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

8. At the same meeting, the First Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.5 by a recorded vote of 80 to none with 35 abstentions 4/ (see para. 9 below, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows:

3/ After the vote, the representatives of Burma and Guinea stated that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

4/ After the vote, the representative of Cape Verde stated that his delegation had intended to abstain.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burma, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Empire, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Austria, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Poland, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Yemen, Zambia.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

9. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new
types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems
of such weapons

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3479 (XXX) of 11 December 1975 and 31/74 of 10 December 1976, in which it requested the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to work out an agreement on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons,

Recognizing that modern science and technology have reached a level where a serious danger arises of the development of new, still more destructive types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons,

/...

Conscious that the development and manufacture of such weapons are fraught with the most serious consequences for the peace and security of nations,

Being convinced of the importance of concluding an agreement or agreements to prevent the use of scientific and technological progress for the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons,

Noting the negotiations now under way between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the question of prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction and in this context on prohibition of radiological weapons,

Taking note of the discussion at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament of the question of the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons,

Taking into account the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament with regard to this question, 5/

1. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to continue negotiations, with the assistance of qualified governmental experts, aimed at working out the text of an agreement on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, and, when necessary, specific agreements on this subject;
2. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to submit a report on the results achieved to the General Assembly for consideration at its thirty-third session;
3. Urges all States to refrain from any action which would impede international talks aimed at working out an agreement or agreements to prevent the use of scientific and technological progress for the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament all documents relating to the discussion of this item by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session;
5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session the item entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament".

5/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/32/27), vol. I, paras. 207-234.

B

The General Assembly,

Guided by the interests of strengthening international peace and security and desiring to promote confidence among nations and the further improvement of the international situation,

Restating its conviction that scientific discovery should be used for the benefit of mankind,

Recognizing that new weapons might be evolved on the basis of scientific principles other than those used in the weapons named in the 1948 definition of weapons of mass destruction, 6/

Bearing in mind that recent years have seen the conclusion of a number of important agreements on the limitation of the arms race and disarmament, including some relating to the prohibition and limitation of identified weapons of mass destruction, and that negotiations for further agreements are continuing,

Noting the discussion at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on the question of the prohibition of the development of new weapons of mass destruction,

1. Urges States to refrain from developing new weapons of mass destruction based on new scientific principles;
2. Calls upon States to apply scientific discovery for the benefit of mankind;
3. Reaffirms the definition of weapons of mass destruction contained in the resolution of its Commission for Conventional Armaments of 12 August 1948, 6/ which defined weapons of mass destruction as atomic explosive weapons, radio-active material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above;
4. Welcomes the active continuation of negotiations relating to the prohibition and limitation of identified weapons of mass destruction;
5. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, while taking into account its existing priorities, to keep under review the question of the development of new weapons of mass destruction based on new scientific principles and to consider the desirability of formulating agreements on the prohibition of any specific new weapons which may be identified;
6. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to report on its review to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session.

6/ See S/C.3/32/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1.