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Agenda item 19

QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT

Report of the First Committee

(Part I)

Rapporteur: Mr. Ralph ENCKELL (Finland)

1. The item "Question of disarmament" was included in the provisional agenda of the sixteenth session in accordance with resolution 1617 (XV) of 21 April 1961, whereby the General Assembly: (1) took note of the declarations of the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to the effect that they would continue to exchange views on questions relating to disarmament and to the resumption of negotiations in an appropriate body, whose composition was to be agreed upon, and (2) decided to take up for consideration at its sixteenth session the problem of disarmament and all pending proposals relating to it.

2. At its 1018th plenary meeting on 27 September 1961 the General Assembly considered the report of the General Committee (A/4882) which recommended that the item "Question of disarmament" be allocated to the First Committee. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted an amendment to the report (A/L.352) whereby the General Assembly would decide to consider the item at its plenary meetings immediately after the general debate. This amendment was rejected by 53 votes to 11, with 29 abstentions, and the recommendation of the General Committee was approved by 65 votes to 9 with 19 abstentions.

3. At its 1170th meeting on 19 October 1961, the First Committee decided without vote that the item "Question of disarmament" should be third on its agenda. The debate on this item began at the 1195th meeting of the First Committee on 15 November 1961.

4. The following documents relating to the question of disarmament were distributed to the Members:

(a) Letter dated 12 September 1961 from the Permanent Representatives of Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Cyprus, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland transmitting the statement on disarmament by Commonwealth Prime Ministers dated 17 March 1961 (A/4868 and Corr.1 (English only)).

(b) Joint Statement of Agreed Principles for Disarmament Negotiations submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America dated 20 September 1961 (A/4879).

(c) Letter dated 20 September 1961 from the representative of the United States of America transmitting three documents on the exchange of views with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/4880).

(d) Letter dated 22 September 1961 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics transmitting a memorandum on the exchange of views with the United States, together with six related documents (A/4887).

(e) Letter dated 25 September 1961 from the representative of the United States of America transmitting a proposal entitled Declaration on Disarmament: a Programme for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World (A/4891).

(f) Letter dated 26 September 1961 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics transmitting a memorandum of the USSR Government on measures to ease international tension, strengthen confidence among States and contribute to general and complete disarmament (A/4892).

(g) Proposal of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics dated 23 September 1960 on basic provisions for a treaty on general and complete disarmament (A/C.1/856).

5. At the 1196th meeting on 17 November 1961, Sweden submitted a draft resolution co-sponsored by Austria, Ceylon, Ethiopia, Libya, Sudan (A/C.1/L.297), and subsequently, Tunisia (Add.1).
6. At the 1198th meeting on 20 November 1961, India submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.299) co-sponsored by the United Arab Republic and Ghana (Add.1), whereby the General Assembly would (1) urge the Governments of the United States and the USSR to reach agreement on the composition of a negotiating body, which both they and the rest of the world could regard as satisfactory; (2) express the hope that such negotiations would be started without delay and lead to an agreed recommendation to the Assembly; and (3) request the Governments to report on the results of such negotiations to the Assembly before the conclusion of the sixteenth session.
7. At the 1199th meeting on 21 November 1961, India moved that the Committee decide to interrupt temporarily the general debate on item 19 in order immediately to vote on the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.299 and Add.1). The Indian motion was adopted without objection.
8. The Committee thereupon adopted the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.299 and Add.1) unanimously.
9. The Indian representative then requested that the adopted draft resolution be referred to the General Assembly with the recommendation that it be considered as soon as possible. The Indian request was agreed to.

Recommendation of the First Committee

10. The First Committee, therefore, recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT

The General Assembly,

Welcoming the agreement between the Governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as a result of negotiations between them, that general and complete disarmament should be accomplished and on the principles which should guide disarmament negotiations,

Noting that the two Governments are desirous of resuming disarmament negotiations in an appropriate body, whose composition is yet to be agreed upon,

Considering it essential that these two principal parties should agree to and accept a negotiating body,

Having regard to the success of negotiations between them resulting in the emergence of an agreement on principles,

1. Urges the Governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to reach agreement on the composition of a negotiating body, which both they and the rest of the world can regard as satisfactory;

2. Expresses the hope that such negotiations will be started without delay and lead to an agreed recommendation to the Assembly;

3. Requests the Governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to report on the results of such negotiations to the Assembly before the conclusion of the sixteenth session.
