

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE, 1532nd
MEETING

Monday, 20 November, 1967,
at 10.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Ismail FAHMY
(United Arab Republic).

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN: Since the Committee will today begin consideration of the first item on our agenda relating to disarmament questions, I feel it my duty to put on record my views concerning our programme of work and the proper handling of the remaining items. Before doing so, I hasten to say that I am not inviting a discussion or decision by the Committee at this stage. My purpose is to inform you, with all candour, of some concern on my part because of the many items which are still on our agenda and the little time we have before the target date for closing the twenty-second session.

2. As you all know, we have still seven items, namely items 28 (a) and (b), 29 (a) and (b), 30, 31 and 96, dealing with disarmament questions. Moreover, I am sure that you are all aware of the importance of these items and, in particular, of the stage which the draft treaty on non-proliferation has reached. This item is of paramount and vital interest to the membership at large and should be given the necessary adequate time for a serious and meaningful discussion.

3. Based on previous experience, this particular topic needs three weeks at least. Therefore, even if we receive the necessary reports from Geneva in the next week or two, we shall have to work much harder and eventually we will be forced to have night meetings. If this is the situation, then it seems that we shall be in serious difficulty if the reports of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament do not reach here before 1 December; in such case it will not even be physically possible for us to finish the items if we give them the thorough and meaningful consideration which they deserve.

4. I felt that it was necessary to inform the members of the Committee of my concern in the hope that the necessary consultations will take place among delegations, informally, with a view to finding a way out. For my part, and as long as I am sitting here as Chairman, I deem it

necessary to draw to the attention of the Committee the seriousness of the situation which we are all facing.

AGENDA ITEM 96

Conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of
the use of nuclear weapons (A/6834)

GENERAL DEBATE

5. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The First Committee is now starting its consideration of the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Our proposal that this matter be debated in the General Assembly was prompted by the general principles the Soviet Union follows in its foreign policy in the struggle to avert the threat of a nuclear war. My country has adhered to this policy ever since nuclear weapons were born.

6. As early as 1946, the Soviet Government presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission a draft international convention prohibiting the production and use of nuclear weapons.¹ Unfortunately, this proposal was not adopted. Our country continued to come out firmly in favour of the total destruction of nuclear weapons, even when, in the interests of our security and the security of our friends and allies, we were compelled to create our own nuclear weapons.

7. The Soviet Union still adheres to this position. Though our country has powerful nuclear weapons, it will readily agree to their destruction if other nuclear Powers do the same. The Soviet Union would propose to go even further and agree on general and complete disarmament under strict international control. The proposals of the Soviet Union on this matter are well known.

8. The experience of disarmament negotiations, especially in recent years, has shown, however, that the solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament is in fact making no progress, and it is not the Soviet Union which is responsible for this.

9. In these conditions, continuing our struggle for general and complete disarmament, we consider that we must at the same time go forward in adopting and carrying out separate and partial measures which could, to start with, limit the nuclear arms race, decrease the threat of nuclear war, and then lead to further results which would help to avert it. We can express satisfaction at the fact that the first

¹ See *Official Records of the Atomic Energy Commission, No. 2, Second Meeting.*

steps in this direction have already been taken. A Treaty has been concluded prohibiting nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water.² Furthermore, a Treaty has been signed on principles governing the activities of States in outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies [*resolution 2222 (XXI)*].

10. Now, the possibility exists of successfully concluding negotiations on another important step forward—the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

11. Each one of these measures has in itself great positive importance. It is also characteristic of them that the adoption of one does not depend on the adoption of another, or on the solution of any other disarmament matter. This has facilitated negotiations leading to their acceptance and also to their implementation. At the same time, all these measures work in one direction. From various directions they tend to limit the nuclear armaments race.

12. Among these measures, we consider that the solution of the question of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and the conclusion of an international convention to this effect must be considered of special importance in this field.

13. Why would the conclusion of an international convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons be an especially important step?

14. First, because if States undertook not to use nuclear weapons, this would decrease the threat of a nuclear war and would bring us closer to the possibility of destroying nuclear weapons. The prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would paralyse this weapon, politically. It would be a serious restraining factor for those who might count on gaining some advantage from their possession of these weapons. In such circumstances, it would be easier to find ways physically to destroy these weapons.

15. Secondly, the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would dispel the suspicions entertained by some States of the intentions of others with regard to the possible use of nuclear weapons and would help to ease international tension and create a healthier international climate and greater trust between States. The conclusion of an international convention would be an important step towards the affirmation of humanitarian principles in international relations. This too, we think, would be of no small importance.

16. We would like to draw attention also to the fact that the solution of the problem of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons should not present any practical difficulty. The goodwill of States possessing nuclear weapons would be sufficient. No serious side-issues, such as the establishment of control, verification, and so on, would arise.

17. Stressing the importance of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, we deem it necessary to point to the fact that recent international events make it specially important and urgent to settle this problem. We have in mind first of all the danger of war which has appeared in

the world as a result of the aggressive actions of certain States. Military conflicts, whose flames leap up in one area or another of the world, can at any moment lead to the use of nuclear weapons. At present there is no guarantee whatever against such a contingency.

18. The need and urgency of a solution to the problem of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons is becoming better understood throughout the world with every passing day as the realization grows of what the use of these weapons would mean, and what the consequences might be.

19. The present session of the General Assembly has before it the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons, which has been compiled by scientists from various countries of the world [*A/6858*]. That report confirms and substantiates from the scientific point of view what was already known, namely that in present conditions a world war in which rockets and nuclear weapons were used would lead to the death of hundreds of millions of human beings and to a poisoning of the surface and of the atmosphere of our planet. May I quote a part of this report:

“The effects of all-out nuclear war, regardless of where it started, could not be confined to the Powers engaged in war. They themselves would have to suffer the immediate kind of destruction and the immediate and more enduring lethal fall-out . . . But neighbouring countries, and even countries in parts of the world remote from the actual conflict, could soon become exposed to the hazards of radio-active fall-out precipitated at great distances from the explosion, after moving through the atmosphere as a vast cloud. Thus, at least within the same hemisphere, an enduring radio-active hazard could exist for distant as well as close human populations, through the ingestion of foods derived from contaminated vegetation, and the external irradiation due to fall-out particles deposited on the ground. The extent and nature of the hazard would depend upon the numbers and type of bombs exploded. Given a sufficient number, no part of the world would escape exposure to biologically significant levels of radiation. To a greater or lesser degree, a legacy of genetic damage could be incurred by the world's population.” [*Ibid.*, *para. 40.*]

20. We are dwelling particularly on the analysis of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons given in the report of the Secretary-General because there are those who, declaring themselves against the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, resort to allegations that the use of nuclear weapons in certain conditions does not at all represent any grave danger and even that in principle it is not essentially different from the use of conventional weapons. Mention is made of the so-called tactical use of nuclear weapons as distinct from the strategic use of such weapons and, in that connexion, of local nuclear wars as distinct from global nuclear wars. The report of the Secretary-General points to the completely unfounded nature of such allegations, which can only serve to conceal plans for the destruction of whole peoples.

21. I would like to quote another passage from the report:

“... the destruction and disruption which would result from the so-called tactical nuclear war would hardly

² Concluded in Moscow, 5 August 1963.

differ from the effects of strategic war in the area concerned. The concept of escalation from tactical to strategic nuclear war could have no possible meaning in an area within which field warfare was being waged with nuclear weapons." [Ibid., para. 35.]

22. The report of the Secretary-General thus shows convincingly the need to settle the problem of the complete and unconditional prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons without any further delay.

23. Of course, when such an important decision is taken the question of how the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons will affect the position of all States, nuclear and non-nuclear, will have to be examined from all angles. All States without exception would gain from the conclusion of a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, above all because this would be a step towards dispelling the threat of a nuclear war and towards the strengthening of international peace and security. Therein lies the fundamental and universal importance of the solution of the problem of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

24. For non-nuclear States, the overwhelming majority of States in the world, the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would mean that they would cease to feel that they were targets for nuclear blows and consequently the victims of nuclear blackmail by certain nuclear Powers. The position of non-nuclear States would also change to their advantage politically. The prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would be a serious step towards the liquidation of the so-called "Nuclear Club" and would do away with differences between States which depended on whether they did or did not possess nuclear weapons.

25. What about the nuclear Powers? Would they not be deprived, as a result of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons of something that they could not renounce, if only because of their own conception of their security? Would they not be restricting their right of self-defence?

26. The answer to these questions must certainly be negative. The understanding not to use nuclear weapons would be mutual, and therefore in conditions of a reciprocal prohibition of nuclear attack, the question of nuclear retaliation to such an attack would also become completely irrelevant.

27. We deem it necessary in this connexion to declare categorically that no State can claim to take the initiative of unleashing a nuclear war against nuclear or non-nuclear countries. No State has or can have that right. There can be no legal right to draw mankind into untold suffering. There must be strict condemnation of any unwillingness to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. Such an attitude of unwillingness can be interpreted in only one way, as showing an intention to claim the "right" to unleash a nuclear war. But there could be no justification for such a crime.

28. An important fact which must also be borne in mind is that in the case of two kinds of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and bacteriological, the question of the prohibition of their use was settled by the Geneva

Agreement of 1925 and was reaffirmed by the General Assembly, and it should be noted that the Geneva Agreement of 1925 successfully stood the test of the Second World War. There is and can be no justification for adopting a different attitude to such a powerful means of mass destruction as nuclear weapons. Only an aggressor nurturing plans of conquest can try to reserve for himself on various pretexts the "right" to resort to nuclear war.

29. The question of the conclusion of a convention prohibiting nuclear weapons must also be viewed from another angle, that of the effectiveness of such a convention.

30. It is said sometimes that a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons could not be effective since it would have only moral force, so that nuclear Powers would not respect it.

31. But this is a fallacious argument. It could be affirmed with just as much foundation that it is no use concluding any international treaty or convention on any question. We think that the answer to such statements given by the Government of Ethiopia in its letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 March 1963 is perfectly correct. The Ethiopian Government, whose contribution to the solution of the problem of the prohibition of nuclear weapons is well known, pointed out in its letter that:

"Some [Governments] doubted the effectiveness of the type of convention advocated since, in their view, the convention would be only morally binding. In this connexion, it is necessary to observe that, short of war, the binding force of all international agreements does, in fact, rest partly on moral compulsion and partly on vicarious interests. And since the Charter of the United Nations itself is basically and rightly founded on moral compulsion, and since the substance of the contemplated convention will be subject to the same rules for effectiveness, it is hard to detect wherein the weakness of the latter lies."³

32. The theory that a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons would be "ineffective" serves only to conceal the true motives of those who do not want nuclear weapons to be prohibited.

33. Thus, in whatever way we approach the problem of the prohibition of nuclear weapons, everything speaks in favour of its speediest possible solution and in favour of the conclusion of an appropriate international convention. In proposing that a convention be signed prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union is guided by the fact that such a measure would be in the vital interests of the peoples of the world.

34. The solution of this problem, in our view, is made easier by the fact that the majority of the States Members of the United Nations have already, in principle, spoken out in favour of the prohibition of nuclear weapons. As we know, the first practical decision of the United Nations in this matter was taken in 1961. I have in mind the

³ Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, item 27 of the agenda, A/5518, Annex II.

Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, resolution 1653 (XVI), which stated that the use of such weapons was contrary to the spirit, letter and aim of the United Nations and the rules of international law, and was a crime against mankind and civilization.

35. At that time already, at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, the question arose of a treaty to consolidate the provisions of the Declaration prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, in other words to transform such prohibition into international law. At the time, many States came out in favour of concluding an international convention to that effect. The need to take such a further step was recognized to an ever-increasing extent and last year, in resolution 2164 (XXI), which was adopted almost unanimously, the General Assembly expressed its conviction that:

“... the signing of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons would greatly facilitate negotiations on general and complete disarmament under effective international control and give further impetus to the search for the solution of the urgent problem of nuclear disarmament...”

36. Now in the view of the Soviet Government, the time has come to speed up the solution of this problem, and this is why my delegation has presented a draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons to the General Assembly of the United Nations [A/6834].

37. In the preamble to our draft convention the intention is, first of all, to stress the main objective of the parties to the convention and which the convention aims to achieve, namely the promotion of international peace and security of peoples. With regard more specifically to the object of the convention, we deemed it necessary to state also in the preamble that this convention was intended to protect mankind from the exceedingly serious consequences of a nuclear war. The draft convention that we propose is intimately linked to the Declaration of the United Nations on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. Therefore the preamble contains a provision confirming this Declaration. Since in treaties the main objectives of the parties are usually set out in the preamble, we consider it necessary to point out that the conclusion of a convention would significantly contribute to the solution of other disarmament questions.

38. Article 1 of the Soviet draft convention contains the main undertaking of Member States, namely, to refrain from using nuclear weapons, from threatening to use them and from inciting other States to use them. In accordance with the text of the article, these obligations apply equally to nuclear and non-nuclear States. It goes without saying that the obligation not to use nuclear weapons can apply only to States possessing such weapons. However, the obligation not to incite other States to use them applies to all parties, including those States which do not possess nuclear weapons.

39. Guided by our general policy of moving step by step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we included article 2 in the draft convention, under which each party to the convention undertakes to make every effort to

arrive as soon as possible at agreement on the cessation of production and the destruction of all stockpiles of nuclear weapons in conformity with a treaty on general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

40. The convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons must, of course, be open to all States. Provision for this is made in article 3 of the Soviet draft, which also stipulates that it shall enter into force after its ratification by all parties to the convention possessing nuclear weapons. Such a provision is needed because of the whole purpose of the convention, for if the convention came into force without being ratified by a nuclear Power that had signed it, a situation would arise in which this Power would be free from all obligations, whereas the other parties would already be bound by the treaty to refrain from using nuclear weapons.

41. It is further proposed that the convention should be of unlimited duration, and we think that in the case of a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons no other approach is possible.

42. The draft convention proposed by the Soviet Union is in full conformity with the spirit and purposes of the United Nations Charter and with the need to save succeeding generations from the scourge which would be brought on them by nuclear war.

43. The Soviet Union is ready to hold discussions on the draft convention it has presented and to hear and jointly consider any proposals on the various terms used in the convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. We expect the First Committee will pay all due attention to the draft convention proposed by the Soviet Union and that the General Assembly will take a decision which will rapidly lead to the practical implementation of the main ideas contained in the draft.

44. We address an appeal to all delegations of States Members of the United Nations to take a constructive step at the present session of the General Assembly, which would help to diminish considerably the threat of a nuclear war by bringing about the speedy conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Such a decision on the part of the General Assembly would undoubtedly serve the cause of peace.

45. Mr. FISHER (United States of America): The Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union has proposed for the consideration of this General Assembly an item entitled “Conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons” [A/6834]. Moreover, when he inscribed this item on our agenda he offered a draft of such a convention. We are now debating the issues which this draft convention raises, and this debate has been started by the thoughtful remarks of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union which we have just heard.

46. Before I put forward our views on the merits of the convention, which are quite different from those of the Soviet Union, I should like to submit to this Committee that my delegation, for its part, will approach the subject with the seriousness it deserves.

47. I should also like to indicate that, after having the opportunity to study the remarks we have just heard, I may also find it necessary to make some further reply.

48. By way of preface to my own remarks, I should like to point out that no nation has tried harder than the United States to deal with the threat to all of us posed by the development of the atomic bomb and the growing stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Indeed, when there was only one nuclear Power, and that Power was the United States, we tried to remove nuclear weapons wholly from the military arena. Thus it was that the United States introduced the Baruch Plan to the United Nations in 1946.⁴ To the great misfortune of all mankind this proposal was not accepted, for reasons which I am sure are known or remembered by all of us here today. Following the initiative of the United States, first reflected in the Baruch Plan, the United Nations has continued to study various measures by which man can use his mind to prevent the nuclear holocaust which his weaponry has made possible. But it is clear that, thus far, man's development of nuclear weapons has out-paced his ability to reach agreement on such measures.

49. The United States therefore continues earnestly to seek meaningful measures which will subject these weapons of mass destruction to the kind of effective control that will prevent their use. It is in this spirit that my delegation offers the following comments on the Soviet proposal.

50. The concept of an unqualified agreement not to use nuclear weapons is not new to this Committee. We have discussed it intermittently here for about twenty years. Last year, as I am sure you well remember, the General Assembly approved resolution 2164 (XXI) requesting the then proposed world disarmament conference to give serious consideration to this subject. Before that time, in 1963, the question of the convening of a special conference to conclude a convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons had been referred by the Assembly in its resolution 1909 (XVIII), to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament for study. Still earlier, in resolutions 1653 (XVI) and 1801 (XVII), the Secretary-General had been requested to poll Member Governments as to their attitudes towards the conclusion of such a convention. We must note that no agreements have evolved from these efforts.

51. It is not surprising that we appear unable to make any progress on an unqualified agreement not to use nuclear weapons, since throughout the history of the consideration of this concept the basic issues have remained substantially unaltered. And these are most contentious issues. The United States position on these issues has been set forth many times. Secretary Rusk explained the views of the United States in his letter to the Secretary-General dated 30 June 1962,⁵ and Mr. Foster restated them at the eighty-second meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1965.

52. A review of these issues is essential in considering the Soviet draft. There are two substantive articles in the

proposed draft convention contained in the attachment to the letter inscribing the Soviet item now under consideration. The first involves as its principal part an undertaking by each party to the convention not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

53. At first glance this seems like a very direct and sensible approach to the problem. Any nation whose leadership retains its sanity wants to avoid nuclear war. It is therefore understandable that there should be a certain attraction to a draft convention which gives the impression that it will prevent nuclear war by the simple expedient of requiring the parties to it not to use nuclear weapons should they become involved in military conflict.

54. But merely wanting to avoid nuclear war—merely seeking an agreement to outlaw it—is not enough. Instead, what we must do is to embark on a course of conduct which decreases the possibility of such a nuclear war ever happening. We must do so in the light of the realities of the dangerous age in which we live—an age in which there already exist enormous nuclear weapons stockpiles and rapid means of delivery.

55. It is against this hard test of reality that we should examine the first article in the Soviet draft convention. This article involves an unqualified undertaking by the parties to the convention not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Such an obligation would be applicable whether or not all the States involved in a conflict had accepted the same obligation; it would prohibit the use of nuclear weapons against a nuclear weapon State which had itself expressly refused to accept such an obligation and which was itself threatening a nuclear attack. Its protection would extend to a non-nuclear weapon State, even if it were engaged in an act of aggression in which it was supported by a nuclear weapon State.

56. Such an obligation would be applicable to prevent nuclear weapon States signatory to the convention from using their nuclear power to assist any State that had forsworn nuclear weapons which was the victim of nuclear aggression by a State which was not party to the convention.

57. Such an obligation would be applicable to a conflict between nuclear weapon States, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the initiation of the conflict. Its terms would prohibit the use of nuclear weapons in self-defence against the forces of another nuclear weapon State engaged in an act of aggression. This would be the case even if the use of those weapons in self-defence was confined to their very use on or over the territory of the State using them, or the territory of non-nuclear weapon States that it was defending.

58. In considering this item, we must consider the role that the present nuclear forces play in the relatively stable strategic balance which now exists between the major nuclear Powers in the world and the effect on that balance of an obligation not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances. So long as a situation exists under which these major nuclear Powers have massive stockpiles of nuclear armaments arrayed against each other, as well as massive conventional forces; so long as there is the

⁴ See *Official Records of the Atomic Energy Commission, No. 1, First Meeting, p. 7.*

⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 26, document A/5174, annex II.*

possibility that a massive attack might threaten a country's national survival or the integrity of all or a substantial part of its effective armed forces, the most effective way of minimizing the risk of nuclear war will be through the maintenance of this mutual deterrence. Inherent in the preservation of that deterrence is the existence of offsetting postures of deterrence under which a nation, even after having absorbed a surprise nuclear first strike, would have a reliable ability to inflict in turn an unacceptable degree of damage on an aggressor. It is this retaliatory capability which deters aggression.

59. As long as such a posture continues, an agreement not to use nuclear weapons, even in self-defence or in retaliation, would be, at worst, deceptive and, therefore, dangerous and, at best, unrealistic.

60. In the worst case, it would be deceptive and, therefore, dangerous if potential aggressors were to believe that nuclear stockpiles would not be used for their designed purpose of deterrence or defence. Such a deception would be dangerous if it were to lead to a miscalculation by one Power concerning another's deterrent posture, a type of miscalculation which represents the greatest danger of nuclear war ever occurring.

61. Such a deception would be equally dangerous if it were to lead a nuclear weapon State not party to the treaty to believe that it could engage in acts or threats of nuclear aggression against a State which had forsworn nuclear weapons without other nuclear weapon States using their nuclear power to counter any such blackmail or aggression.

62. Almost as unsatisfactory would be the case in which States would regard as unrealistic a convention under which it was agreed that powerful nuclear forces created and maintained for deterrence were not to be used for the purposes for which they were created. The presentation of a treaty which was artificial and lacking in credibility would debase the currency of international treaty-making and create a sense of false security among nations as to the risks of nuclear war.

63. In the present balance which now maintains the peace, we cannot afford either deception or unreality. The emphasis must be on credibility of intentions and capabilities; each major nuclear Power must have no doubt as to precisely where the others stand. It is this growing credibility of effective mutual deterrence and the maturing sense of responsibility on the part of the major Powers in recent years which tends to reduce the risk of a nuclear holocaust.

64. If we are to reduce further this risk, rather than increase it, we must find some way to work out properly safeguarded agreements first to limit, later to reduce, and finally, in the context of general and complete disarmament, to eliminate these weapons from national arsenals.

65. With this in mind, the United States delegation noted with interest the second article of the draft convention offered by the Soviet Union. Under this article, each party would undertake to make every effort to arrive as soon as possible at agreement on the cessation of the production and destruction of all stockpiles of nuclear weapons in

conformity with the treaty on general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

66. In putting forth this language, the USSR appears tacitly to have recognized at least two important points: first, that its non-use proposal would not be a meaningful document unless something were done about nuclear stockpiles; second, that the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals could be accomplished only in the context of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

67. As I believe is apparent from these remarks, the United States disagrees with the priority which the Soviet text assigns to these two tasks. We believe that prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons and then doing something about nuclear stockpiles in the context of general and complete disarmament puts the cart before the horse, so to speak, or the plough in front of the ox. But, the fact that there appears to be agreement that the two subjects are related does afford a foundation upon which something might be built.

68. I should, therefore, like to dwell for a moment on the second point of the Soviet draft convention, that the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals should be accomplished pursuant to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. This is a point with which we are familiar. It has been explicit in both the United States outline of basic provisions of a treaty on general and complete disarmament in a peaceful world⁶ and the Soviet draft treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict international control, as amended by the provision for retention of a limited number of strategic delivery vehicles.⁷

69. Let me speak first of the United States draft treaty outline. It provided that, in Stage I the parties to the treaty would halt the production of fissionable materials for use in nuclear weapons and would transfer agreed quantities of weapons grade fissionable material from weapons use to peaceful purposes. During Stage I, the parties would also examine questions relating to the means of accomplishing, during Stages II and III, the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons from national stockpiles. This elimination would not take place until the end of Stage III.

70. Let me now discuss the Soviet draft treaty on general and complete disarmament. The initial Soviet draft⁸ provided for the destruction of the means of delivery of nuclear weapons during the first stage of disarmament and the destroying of the nuclear weapons themselves during the second stage. Later, the Soviet Union indicated its willingness to amend its treaty and finally offered a formal amendment providing for the retention, until the completion of the process of general and complete disarmament, of an "umbrella" of intercontinental missiles, anti-missile missiles and ground-to-air anti-craft missiles,

⁶ *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965*, document DC/214/Add.1, sect. III.

⁷ *Ibid.*, document DC/213/Add.1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, *Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962*, document DC/203, Annex 1, Sect. C.

together with the nuclear warhead launching devices and guidance systems for these various missile systems.

71. I do not now propose to deal with the difficulties which the United States has had with the Soviet proposed strategic umbrella. I think we will all remember that our difficulties have been based on our feeling that this proposal was not consistent with paragraph 5 of the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations⁹ that all measures of general and complete disarmament should be balanced so that at no stage could any State or group of States gain military advantage and that security must be ensured equally for all.

72. I do propose to point out, however, that even the Soviet proposal for a strategic umbrella recognizes that the elimination of nuclear warheads could take place realistically only in the context of general and complete disarmament, and then only at the completion of that process. If we were to agree that nuclear forces were to remain in existence until the completion of the disarmament process, whether as proposed by the United States, or as proposed in the Soviet strategic umbrella, we would be doing so in recognition of the fact that these forces have come to serve an indispensable function—the function of mutual deterrence. No one would believe us and we would have debased the currency of international negotiations if we were, at the same time, to agree that they would never be used even for this purpose.

73. The reasons for the fact that, under both disarmament plans, nuclear weapons are not eliminated from national arsenals until the end of the disarmament process is not hard to find. It is, of course, due to the problem of verification. A nuclear weapon need not be very large. There have been public announcements that one has been manufactured that will fit into a 155 millimetre artillery piece. That is not a very large weapon. It is quite simple to hide. A great many nuclear weapons have been introduced by the nuclear weapon Powers. It would be very hard to satisfy all countries to a disarmament agreement that they had all been destroyed—that they had all been accounted for, found and destroyed.

74. The possibilities of successful evasion are substantial. It would not take very many nuclear weapons secreted in the caves of an evading country to threaten completely the security of another country which had destroyed its nuclear stockpiles. A covert nuclear stockpile coupled with adequate delivery means which might seem today quite insignificant in relation to the present nuclear arsenals could threaten the world if all other nuclear countries had destroyed their stockpiles. As the epigrammist once put it: "In the world of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." I need not labour further the point that verified elimination of nuclear stockpiles by all nuclear States is a *sine qua non* for a world free of the threat of nuclear holocaust.

75. The United States has presented to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament realistic measures for the reduction of the national arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons,

measures which can be put into effect before the completion of the processes of general and complete disarmament.

76. With specific reference to the cut-off of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, Mr. Foster made a comprehensive statement to the 166th meeting of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament on 13 February 1964 in which he indicated that the United States was prepared to agree either to a complete halt in the production of fissionable materials for use in nuclear weapons or to a reciprocal plant-by-plant shutdown. In addition, the United States has stated that it is prepared to transfer 60,000 kilogrammes of weapons grade U-235 to peaceful uses if the USSR will transfer 40,000 kilogrammes for such purposes. We have also indicated that we are prepared to negotiate on the problem of ratios. This material would be obtained by the demonstrated destruction of nuclear weapons by each party.

77. The United States has also put forth workable measures dealing with the reduction of delivery systems for nuclear weapons. President Johnson in his message to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament in January 1964 proposed that:

"The United States, the USSR and their respective allies should agree to explore a verified freeze of the number and characteristics of strategic nuclear offensive and defensive vehicles."¹⁰ [ENDC/120, p. 1.]

78. The President pointed out that this would open the path to reductions in all types of forces. More recently, in March 1967, the President reconfirmed our willingness to discuss with the Soviet Government means of limiting the arms race in such missiles. And, as recently as September of this year, Secretary McNamara reiterated our willingness to enter into safeguarded agreements first to limit, and later to reduce, both offensive and defensive strategic nuclear forces. As Assistant Secretary of Defense, Mr. Warnke, has pointed out:

"We believe a number of possibilities for parallel action and even for formal agreement with the Soviets would permit our reliance on unilateral means of verification. Other more far-reaching agreements, particularly any involving substantial reductions, would require agreed international inspection."

79. Agreement on these various proposals dealing with the material to make nuclear weapons, the weapons themselves and the means of their delivery, is, we believe, the best way to start the process towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery pursuant to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. When we reach that point, we will have reached a stage where we will have provided mankind with lasting security against the threat of a nuclear holocaust. However, it seems premature to speak of a sweeping and unqualified agreement not to use nuclear weapons that is not a part of a comprehensive programme leading to general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

⁹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 19, document A/4879.

¹⁰ *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1964*, document DC/209, Annex 1, Sect. B.

80. In conclusion, I have raised these issues connected with the Soviet draft convention not in any contentious spirit; but I have done so because the problems that are associated with them are matters of vital concern to the security of all of us.

81. The United States believes that the best way to get on with the work of disarmament—all aspects of disarmament—is to continue, through the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, to discuss and arrive at agreements on the serious measures that have been proposed there and elsewhere to limit and later reduce and eliminate our nuclear forces.

82. These are the considerations my delegation will have in mind in considering any proposal which may come forward in this debate.

83. The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the Soviet Union in exercise of his right of reply.

84. Mr. MENDELEVITCH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): I do not think I am really exercising my right of reply, because in the statement of the representative of the United States of America there was not anything of the kind that usually gives rise to the exercise of a right of reply, such as harsh statements, distortions of the truth and so on. Therefore, I do not intend, as he did not, to take the floor in a polemical mood, but the Soviet delegation does deem it necessary to make forthwith some observations and explain two points concerning its draft convention.

85. We drew attention to the fact that the representative of the United States started his statement expressing readiness and the desire to give serious consideration to the item submitted for consideration to the General Assembly on the initiative of the Soviet Union: the question of the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

86. The representative of the United States also expressed his intention and willingness to consider very carefully the arguments and considerations in support of our proposals set forth this morning by the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Kuznetsov. In our statement there were indeed many new arguments and new material, including material placed at the disposal of all States Members of the United Nations by the Secretary-General in the report on the possible effects of a nuclear war. We can only welcome the fact that the delegation of the United States intends carefully to study the arguments and considerations put forward by the Soviet delegation.

87. At the same time we must express our regret that at this stage of the discussion, before the statement made by the Soviet delegation this morning had been studied, the representative of the United States, without examining the arguments and material we furnished, deemed it necessary to repeat the position of the United States which—and this has not been a secret—is a negative position as far as concluding a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons is concerned.

88. In expressing this negative view of the United States, the representative of the United States referred to many

historical facts, including the history of the disarmament negotiations. It seems likely that the history of nuclear weapons does have a strong influence on the attitude of the United States in the matter of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, since the history of nuclear weapons began with the use of those weapons by the United States against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This would seem to have created some kind of complex about the use of nuclear weapons which prevents the United States from adopting a more constructive attitude towards proposals to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons.

89. Apparently the desire to maintain and reserve for itself the possibility of using these weapons, as was done on one occasion in the past, is what determines the position of the United States of America.

90. However, in today's statement by the Soviet delegation, the question why both nuclear and non-nuclear States would stand to gain if the use of nuclear weapons were prohibited by an international convention was fully examined. The so-called deterrent argument is hardly relevant, though the representative of the United States did advance it today. In a situation where the use of nuclear weapons is prohibited the problem of retaliation to nuclear attack does not arise because there is no problem of nuclear attack. As regards the possibility of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States, that can be viewed only in the context of the continuation of a policy which started at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That is the policy we are asking the United States to abandon, a policy which admits the possibility of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States, the policy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

91. That is why, once again, we would ask the delegation of the United States to study carefully the arguments put forward today by the Soviet delegation, as well as the content of the report of the Secretary-General on the possible consequences of a nuclear war and all other argumentation and information. We have the impression that a particularly large amount of such documentation, the contents of which have been particularly convincing, has been issued lately.

92. There are two small matters I should like to clear up. As the representative of the United States, in explaining the negative position of his Government on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, twice tried to found his arguments on our position, we consider that such clarification is necessary.

93. First, the representative of the United States referred to article 2 of the draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and interpreted it as showing that the Soviet Union does not consider the conclusion of such a convention as a final solution of the problem, and links, as it were, the value of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons to large-scale disarmament measures including general and complete disarmament. However, in the Soviet delegation's statement today, we explained, convincingly enough as we thought that we considered the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons as one of the important measures which has its own independent significance, as was stated at length in the Soviet statement. That measure, along with other measures already taken or which

can be taken, such as the conclusion of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, will bring us ever closer to a radical solution of the disarmament problem, to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, which would indeed create conditions of complete security.

94. Therefore, I repeat, we consider that this measure has its own independent importance and as such, marks a step towards further progress. Thus, our article 2 can in no way serve as confirmation of the possibility of adopting a negative attitude towards the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. On the contrary, it opens up further prospects and makes it binding upon States parties to the convention to achieve those prospects.

95. With regard to the second clarification, the representative of the United States spoke of the so-called strategic umbrella proposed by the Soviet Union in the programme of general and complete disarmament, which we agreed to retain until the end of the process of general and complete disarmament. He also spoke of this as if to confirm the fact that the Soviet Union cannot for its part consider it possible to give up all rocket and nuclear weapons and wants to keep them until the end of the whole disarmament process.

96. That, if I may be allowed to say so, is wrong. It is not an accurate description of the position of the Soviet Union. The whole concept of the nuclear strategic umbrella up to the end of the process of general and complete disarmament was put forward by the Soviet Union in response to appeals by the United States and certain other partners in the negotiations to take a step forward in order to bring the position of the various participants closer together.

97. We put forward the concept of the strategic umbrella not because it met with our approval. The only reason was that we wanted to take a step forward to meet the other party in order to make it easier to reach general and complete disarmament. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it is prepared to agree to general and complete disarmament without any strategic umbrella and that is what it proposed in the beginning.

98. The concept of a strategic umbrella was merely an indication of our desire to take less time to come to an agreement. We regret that in spite of that fact, we have still not succeeded and that no real progress has been achieved in the field of general and complete disarmament. However, that is a somewhat different matter and we do not propose to dwell on it at length now.

99. I would merely wish to point out in conclusion that neither article 2 of our draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons nor our proposals during the negotiations on general and complete disarmament, which were dictated by our desire to find a compromise solution of complex problems on which there are great differences of views, can serve as grounds for opposing the conclusion of an international convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. And we would once again express the hope that the delegation of the United States, after carefully studying the proposals put forward by the Soviet Union, which, we are sure, will also be put forward by many other States, will find it possible to go beyond the policy which once led to the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to co-operate in solving the very important and urgent question of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and of the conclusion of an international convention to that effect.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.