



CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 91:	
Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (<i>continued</i>)	
Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/L.406/Rev.2 (<i>continued</i>)	1
Agenda item 96:	
Conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons (<i>continued</i>)	
General debate	1

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

AGENDA ITEM 91

Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (*continued) (A/6663, A/6676 and Add.1-4, A/C.1/946, A/C.1/L.406/Rev.2)**

**CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION
A/C.1/L.406/Rev.2 (*continued*)**

1. The CHAIRMAN: The members may recall that at its meeting on 21 November the Committee decided to resume consideration this morning of the item entitled: Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, and particularly of the revised draft co-sponsored by the Latin American countries [A/C.1/L.406/Rev.2].
2. I understand that the representative of Mexico would like to make a statement.
3. Mr. TELLO MACIAS (Mexico) (*translated from Spanish*): The sponsors of the draft resolution reproduced and circulated as document A/C.1/L.406/Rev.2 have asked me to request on their behalf that the consideration of item 91 be postponed to a date next week, to be announced by the Chairman later. This would enable us to conclude the consultations now being held.
4. The CHAIRMAN: The members of the Committee have heard the request made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution. Since I hear no objection, I take it that the Committee agrees to accede to that request.

It was so decided.

* Resumed from the 1533rd meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 96

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

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

5. Mr. MOD (Hungary) (*translated from French*): For more than twenty years mankind has been living in the atomic age. With the advent of atomic energy, the world found itself at a crossroads: on the one side were the infinite possibilities for the peaceful use of atomic energy and, on the other, there was the infinite danger from the use of the new source of energy for military purposes.
6. Despite the twenty years that have gone by, we are unfortunately forced to recognize that we still stand at the crossroads. The rational majority of mankind is still seeking the right road and the means of avoiding disaster.
7. Since the Soviet Union proposal on the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons [A/6884] is a significant step in the right direction, the Hungarian delegation whole-heartedly supports it.
8. Apart from reasons of a general nature, my delegation supports the proposal also because it is in keeping with the peaceful policy which the People's Republic of Hungary has constantly pursued. I need hardly recall that my delegation voted in favour of the Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly [*resolution 1653 (XVI)*], and that since that time the Hungarian Government has supported every measure aimed at the international prohibition of those destructive weapons, the most terrifying in the long history of mankind.
9. In reply to the Secretary-General's letter PO 130, dated 2 January 1962, the Hungarian Government stated its views as follows:
"The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic, being a consistent advocate of general and complete disarmament, will lend, as it did in the past, its support to any measures and initiatives conducive to the realization of this objective. The prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would contribute towards the conclusion of an agreement on the complete prohibition of such weapons, consequently towards easing international tension and establishing an atmosphere of mutual confidence, so as to create favourable conditions for negotiations on general and complete disarmament. Reaching such an agreement is an obligation of the United Nations arising out of the principles laid down in the Charter, and is in accordance with the requirements of international law."

The letter went on to urge:

“... the desirability of moving also the other nuclear Powers to renounce, like the Soviet Union, the use of these powerful weapons of mass destruction. The results of international negotiations prior to the Second World War also render proof of the possibility of reaching and observing international agreements on the prohibition of weapons of mass annihilation.”¹

10. The decision as to the road to follow is now a matter of urgency, because atomic weapons have been vastly improved; they have grown to a fearsome extent both in number and in capacity.

11. It is enough, I think, to point out that the existing stocks of nuclear warheads are equivalent to 100 tons of conventional explosives for every person on earth, or fifty times the destructive power of the largest aerial bombs used in the Second World War.

12. The last two world wars cost the lives of some 70 million men. Taking into account the vast increase in destructive power, we can easily imagine the tragic toll of a third world holocaust. In that connexion we need only recall the thorough analysis submitted to the Committee by the Secretary-General concerning the use of nuclear weapons and already quoted several times during the discussion [A/6858].

13. Thus we have to choose which road to follow. The main difference, as we see it, between conventional weapons and atomic weapons is that in an atomic war we can no longer speak of winner and loser: there will only be losers.

14. Aside from the dangers created by atomic weapons themselves, the present increase of international tension also calls for an urgent choice. What I want to do mainly is to make some brief remarks about the principal cause of current international tension—the aggression in Viet-Nam.

15. There are those who prefer to call it a limited war; the objective fact of the escalation, however, reveals that we are drawing closer and closer to the possibility of a nuclear conflict on a world scale. The Foreign Policy Association, in a pamphlet published last year entitled “Vietnam: Vital Issues in the Great Debate”, called attention to the danger of the argument and the escalation of the war, stating that military force is always most effective when it is used massively and with as great speed as possible. The pamphlet went on to note that military circles are increasingly vehement in insisting on not being deprived of the most effective means available for use against the enemy.

16. In the light of the inescapable reality of the escalation of aggression, the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his October statement before the General Assembly [1578th meeting], warned that there was a very real danger that the war of escalation could lead to a nuclear war.

17. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons is present in other parts of the world as well as in South-East Asia;

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 26, document A/5174, annex II.

European security too is being threatened by the revanchist policy of West Germany and its desire for nuclear weapons.

18. The policy advocated by Dulles and Adenauer is doomed to failure. Nevertheless, the revanchist cliques are unwilling to face that fact, and they are assuming the right to speak for all Germany. The policy of expansion has still not been laid aside.

19. The aims of the revanchists were set forth by Baron Gutenberg, Secretary of State in the Cabinet of the Kiesinger Government, as follows:

“Our goal is to ensure that freedom will prevail. Hence German policy is concerned with territories outside the borders of Germany as well. Germany is responsible in Europe and for Europe. I do not hesitate to say that there is an element of German responsibility for Eastern Europe. No one should imagine that German freedom can be reinstated without radical changes in Eastern Europe.”

20. The designs familiar in the past under the name of *Drang nach Osten* stand side by side with alarming facts about West Germany's domestic policies. It is therefore understandable that everyone who has the cause of European security at heart is disturbed by the fact that the *Bundeswehr* is consumed by the unquenchable desire to possess nuclear weapons. We feel that the Polish representative, Mr. Tomorowicz, was quite right when he spoke of Europe in this connexion as an extremely sensitive area.

21. Thus even the interests of European security require the urgent prohibition of nuclear weapons by means of an international convention.

22. We are all aware that this organization long ago took measures to prohibit nuclear weapons; I should like in that connexion to refer to the sixteenth session, when the General Assembly adopted a declaration [resolution 1653 (XVI)], operative paragraph (d) of which reads as follows:

“Any State using nuclear and thermonuclear weapons is to be considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and as committing a crime against mankind and civilization.”

The Hungarian delegation once again expresses its gratitude to the delegations which took the initiative in introducing that measure six years ago.

23. The convention envisaged in the proposal on our agenda is a logical sequel to that statement and its effect would be to put it into practice and to give it more binding effect. At the time, the statement was supported by a large majority. We are of course aware that a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons does not yet mean disarmament, let alone general and complete disarmament, which is after all our ultimate goal. However, each member of our Committee must also recognize that the final goal is reached only through diligent and progressive work, by solving specific problems when the time is ripe for doing so.

24. The draft convention submitted by the Soviet Union [A/6834] is also calculated to prepare the way for the final goal, since article 2 outlines action towards an over-all solution of the disarmament problem.

25. It is regrettable that the United States delegation was in such a hurry to expound the well-known position of its Government [1532nd meeting]. We regret it because it is our impression that the American position is based on the mistaken hypothesis that one or more Governments will not abide by the convention. However, in our opinion such a hypothesis is no basis for discussing the question of a convention. In this connexion let me recall the historic example of the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. That Protocol too was not a real, practical disarmament measure; yet its provisions proved effective on the battlefields of the Second World War, even for those who had not signed the Geneva Protocol.

26. Another reason why we deplore the United States position is because, while calling for a climate of trust, it is simultaneously turning its back on the possibility of creating the necessary trust. We hope that a serious study of the content of our discussions will lead the United States Government to alter its stand.

27. The clear and simple wording of the draft convention before us is, in our opinion, of great practical importance because it enables the convention to be concluded quickly, without any lengthy preliminary work; because the convention is not burdened with controversial details, such as the verification of existing stockpiles and control of their destruction—which, as the experience of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference has shown, require lengthy preliminary work and owing to the mistrust created by international tension are hard to incorporate into the text of a convention—and also because the convention creates an atmosphere more than ever before conducive to further partial or major steps towards general and complete disarmament. In addition, to refute an argument that is often brought up here, this convention will not upset the balance of international power. Because of its political significance, it might well be of incalculable value in the present international situation. It would dispose of any justification for the use of nuclear weapons, thereby striking a heavy blow at ambitions to possess such weapons, and it would also pave the way for the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty.

28. The American atomic scientist, Leo Szilard, of Hungarian origin, who died a few years ago, wrote towards the end of his life that we should learn to live with the bomb. We feel that for a scientist who had himself helped to harness atomic energy and had tried in his own way, as an honourable man, to see that it was used for the good of man and not for his destruction, it must have been sad to resign himself to the idea that the atomic bomb was a hard fact of human life. However, we also feel that we cannot and must not resign ourselves to that negative outlook. Mankind must learn, not to coexist with the bomb, but to master it now and to destroy it as soon as the time is ripe to do so.

29. That is the right direction. The Soviet Union draft convention points in that direction; hence my delegation whole heartedly supports it.

30. Mr. Endalkachew MAKONNEN (Ethiopia): Mr. Chairman, since this is my first intervention in the discussions of

this Committee, allow me to convey to you and to your colleagues, the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur, my delegation's congratulations and best wishes on your election to the bureau of the First Committee at this twenty-second session.

31. Once again the First Committee turns its attention to the important item concerning the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. My country's interest in this item—an interest to which many delegations have made generous references during this debate—and its active participation in the various deliberations on the subject go far back to the time when the first initiatives were taken to arouse the interest of the United Nations in this problem, so relevant to man's very future and survival. Already at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, the Ethiopian delegation made a formal submission on this item, stating in part:

“The General Assembly must formally declare that the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes is contrary to the aims of the United Nations and the spirit and letter of the Charter; that it is contrary to the laws of humanity; that any State or States using such nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes would be considered as using them not against a particular enemy but against the entire human race; and that, therefore, such State or States would be responsible for what happened thereafter to mankind and its civilization.”²

32. We shared the gratification of the whole of the United Nations membership when the General Assembly, at its sixteenth session, adopted a declaration stating essentially what we had in mind. I refer, of course, to the historic Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons adopted by the General Assembly on 24 November 1961, as resolution 1653 (XVI).

33. I had occasion, last year, when introducing in this Committee a draft resolution concerning this item on behalf of the delegations of India, Nigeria, the United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia and my own country, to reiterate the fear and apprehension of my Government with regard to the dangerous consequences of weapons of mass destruction. This, so far as my own country is concerned, is a serious preoccupation which is born out of a bitter and unforgettable experience. It was to that experience that I made reference when I said:

“... the Ethiopian nation which, as a victim of the unrestricted use of chemical warfare on the eve of the Second World War, knows only too well the horrors of modern means of warfare and has since emerged from this experience stronger in its conviction that the use of all weapons of mass destruction should be universally outlawed.”³

34. It is with that thought and background in mind that my delegation once again turns its attention to this grave

² This statement was made at the 1098th meeting of the First Committee, the official record of which is published in summary form.

³ This statement was made at the 1463rd meeting of the First Committee, the official record of which is published in summary form.

problem of war and peace. It will, perhaps, not be out of place to recall some of the developments in previous sessions, if only to remind ourselves of the ups and downs through which interest and debate on this item have so far proceeded.

35. It will be recalled that, at its sixteenth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 1653 (XVI), *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General:

“... to consult the Governments of Member States to ascertain their views on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons . . . and to report . . . to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session”.

36. At its seventeenth session, the Assembly, in its resolution 1801 (XVII), requested further consultations on the part of the Secretary-General and, by the same resolution, the Secretary-General was also requested to report his findings to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session.

37. At its eighteenth session, by its resolution 1909 (XVIII), the Assembly merely transferred consideration of the question to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

38. At its twentieth session, the Assembly did not adopt any resolution on this item but, on 3 December 1965, at its 1388th meeting, it approved the recommendation of the First Committee, that this item should be referred to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament for further study and that its consideration in the General Assembly should be postponed until the twenty-first session.

39. The twenty-first session in its turn, as is well known, did no more than refer the whole question, by its resolution 2164 (XXI), to the then proposed world disarmament conference.

40. I put particular stress on the evolution of this question, not so much because the achievements have been such as to allow us to feel proud, but only to emphasize the need for a more persistent effort than has hitherto been made if we really wish to achieve concrete results in this field of international relations so vital to the peace and security of the whole of mankind.

41. My delegation has been greatly encouraged by the renewed interest in this problem and welcomes the initiative taken during this session by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which we view as a sound and hopeful indication of the urge and concern felt by all nations, be they small or great Powers.

42. My delegation listened with much attention and interest to the introductory statement made before the Committee at the 1532nd meeting by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. We are likewise making a careful study of the draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons which he has presented for our consideration [A/6834].

43. A convention of that kind is so far-reaching in its significance and so meaningful in the salutary impact it is bound to have on international relations in general that all of us should study it with all the attention and seriousness that it commands. We, for our part, believe that the Soviet initiative is a move in the right direction and we shall spare no effort in the Committee's common endeavours to obtain positive results.

44. My delegation has been most encouraged by the constructive spirit and tone which has been characteristic of our discussions in the Committee so far. The Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, in his initial presentation, and the representative of the United States, in his response to it, were both, in our view, statesmanlike in the presentation of the respective attitudes of their Governments, and it is in that same spirit, and after having studied those presentations, that I would wish to make some preliminary remarks which I hope will indicate our stand with regard to the proposed convention.

45. So far as I know—and I think I can say this without fear of contradiction—there is no Member State of the United Nations, nor, indeed, any country outside the present United Nations membership, which cannot share the view that the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, or for that matter any weapon of mass and indiscriminate destruction, should be prohibited. That much, I believe, we all agree upon, and that mutual conviction should be the proper basis for our endeavours in this direction. The debate has not been on whether prohibition is desirable but on the timing of such prohibition and on the relationship between such action and the wider action contemplated within the framework of general and complete disarmament.

46. The big question, stated in simple terms, is therefore this: should we agree on a prior measure for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons or should we defer such action until full agreement is achieved on general and complete disarmament? In answer to that basic question we hold the view that, in the kind of world in which we live, with all its limitations of checks and balances, we would risk marking time in many spheres of international relations if we abandoned the wise and realistic course of moving step by step on the road leading to full and comprehensive achievement. In the realities of present-day international relations we have often no alternative but to accept the expedient proposition that a job half done is better than one left undone.

47. On the other hand, we are fully aware of the necessity to co-ordinate and relate the particular effort in any given sphere to the general effort of which it is but a part, so that the measure of partial agreement becomes but the stepping stone to wider and more effective agreements on the problem as a whole. That has been our attitude to international problems in general, and, in the particular field of general and complete disarmament, we have recommended that the First Committee should be guided by that same consideration.

48. Speaking before the Committee on the subject of the conclusion of a non-proliferation agreement on 28 October

1966 I made the following observation, which I believe is relevant to the point at issue:

“We believe that the conclusion of a non-proliferation agreement based on resolution 2028 (XX) could be the first step which could help open the way to greater understanding and co-operation in respect of the final goal, which is the achievement of general and complete disarmament; for our final aim must surely be to seek the complete liberation of mankind from the perpetual fear of total annihilation to which it has been continually subjected as a result of the armaments race, and, in particular, from the acceleration and proliferation of nuclear armaments. This fear of the peril which hangs over us all is shared by all nations, great or small, and will never be removed until the armaments race is brought to a halt.”⁴

49. Again, in a statement before this same Committee on 24 November 1966 I gave similar reasons for our favouring the signing of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. I said then:

“First of all, we believe that an international convention will greatly advance the cause of the rule of law in the international sphere, by carrying to full development the evolutionary process already under way regarding the imposition of limits on the means man will employ in warfare. . . . Secondly, a convention which prohibits the weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, will give impetus to all efforts directed to bring about general and complete disarmament. Thirdly, we believe that such a convention need not be regarded as a collateral measure for general and complete disarmament but must, on the contrary, be viewed independently as a necessary condition for accelerating agreement on all collateral measures for general and complete disarmament.”⁵

50. It is clear from what I have said above, and also from the quotations I have made from previous statements, that we consider the signing of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons to be both urgent and vital, and we continue to believe that such a convention would facilitate our efforts in general and complete disarmament by acting as a useful corollary to any parallel measures and undertakings which may be arrived at in the wider field of world disarmament.

51. This being our attitude, it is with great interest and genuine attention that we have received the welcome and timely initiative of the Soviet Union. We believe that the draft *[A/6834]* that the Soviet Union has presented for our consideration contains essential elements which can enable it to serve as the basis for a convention on the urgent matter at hand.

52. My delegation has been particularly satisfied with the approach indicated in the preamble and in the key articles 1 and 2.

⁴ This statement was made at the 1435th meeting of the First Committee, the official record of which is published in summary form.

⁵ This statement was made at the 1463rd meeting of the First Committee, the official record of which is published in summary form.

53. The draft quite rightly starts by confirming the Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, and by stating that the conclusion of a convention would significantly contribute to the solution of other disarmament questions.

54. The undertaking in article 1 to refrain from using or threatening the use of nuclear weapons and from inciting other States to use them is complemented by the provision in article 2 which obliges each party to the proposed convention:

“. . . 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.”
[A/6834.]

This is obviously a sound approach and one which goes a long way to meet the viewpoint of those who consider prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons to be inseparable from disarmament and effective international control.

55. Again in article 3, the Soviet draft makes the convention open to all States for signature and accession, thus laying the necessary ground for universal application and adherence. These essential elements in the draft represent a sound and reasonable approach and provide the reason why the draft convention can count on our commendation and approval.

56. At the same time, we cannot but be aware that such an important convention must have the backing of all States and more particularly of those States among our Members which are nuclear Powers. With this need for full and unreserved backing of all countries in mind, we shall at no time adopt a hasty or rigid attitude, but wish to urge everyone, in duty bound to themselves as to the rest of the human family, to contribute positively and constructively to the debate and the consultations so that this effort to eliminate weapons of mass destruction will not remain a lost cause but will become the urgent cause which it deserves to be in the perilous international life of our time.

57. For Ethiopia, and I am sure equally for all nations, the central issue of the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, or, for that matter, the non-proliferation and the elimination of such weapons, lies in three main considerations.

58. Firstly, we are compelled by humanitarian considerations and by reasons of mutual self-interest to spare mankind from the prospect of indiscriminate mass destruction through a nuclear free-for-all from which the entire human family is bound to suffer.

59. Secondly, by removing the competition in nuclear armaments through mutually accepted agreements and guarantees, we want to ensure a healthier international atmosphere from which present tensions and mutual fears and suspicions can be removed, thus ensuring conditions of peace and progress for our respective countries and peoples.

60. Thirdly—and this perhaps more important for the developing countries even though all nations can derive

great benefit from it—we want to divert the enormous funds that are now expended on arms of destruction from the wasteful and unproductive arms race to productive investment in world trade and economic development. In other words, we want to convert the prospect of nuclear war into that of a nuclear peace.

61. A convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons cannot, of course, achieve all these objectives on its own, but I am convinced that, as one of the major steps in the right direction, it can help move the trend of international policy and action on to the road of peace and of peaceful co-operation and coexistence between all nations.

62. It is guided by these considerations that we have sought to play an active, albeit modest, role in past deliberations on this item, and we shall continue in the present session to co-operate faithfully with all members of this Committee so that this time our efforts may yield better results.

63. Mr. AZZOUT (Algeria) (*translated from French*): As we turn to agenda item 96, the Algerian delegation would like first of all to welcome the initiative of the Soviet Union which has resulted in the Committee's considering the question of concluding a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Although the concept of outlawing the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons emerged immediately after the Second World War, the actual development of those weapons, quantitatively and qualitatively, makes their prohibition a matter of vital necessity for the survival of all mankind.

64. The rapid deterioration in international relations and the ensuing tension considerably increase the risk of a nuclear conflagration. The increasing and persistent aggression, particularly in the territories of the Third World countries where the shadow of nuclear weapons is ever present, makes the solution of this serious problem both a topical and an urgent one.

65. In this connexion, nuclear blackmail has become a permanent factor in the policy of certain Powers. Have we not already heard of theories boldly proclaiming that the use of tactical nuclear weapons is no different from that of conventional weapons? Going even further, the proponents of those theories argue that limited nuclear wars can be waged as opposed to worldwide nuclear wars.

66. Thus we are witnessing an attempt literally to accustom and condition international public opinion to the concept of the use of nuclear weapons for local conflicts, in areas essentially involving the peoples of the Third World, who are waging wars to free themselves from the domestic and foreign yokes which others attempt to force upon them.

67. To demonstrate the inconsistency of such concepts, the object of which is after all to try to camouflage the blackmail some Powers are attempting to use in their relations with small countries, I should like to quote two passages from the highly informative report placed before us by the Secretary-General on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons:

“The effects of all-out nuclear war, regardless of where it started, could not be confined to the Powers engaged in that war.” [*A/6858, para. 40.*]

“... the destruction and disruption which would result from so-called tactical nuclear war would hardly differ from the effects of strategic war in the area concerned”. [*Ibid., para. 35*]

68. Knowing as we do that this report was prepared in collaboration with some of the most outstanding experts of our time, representing many of the world's countries and cultures, we may well wonder if the time has not come for mankind to give serious thought to the conclusion of a convention outlawing the use of nuclear weapons. What is at stake is first of all mankind's survival as a species, and secondly, the possibility of creating an international community free from blackmail, where all nations would live together in mutual respect, whatever their economic or political systems.

69. Is that not the very purpose of the United Nations, and the force underlying the concept of peaceful coexistence?

70. We are further convinced that at the present juncture the successful conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons will represent a positive step towards general and complete disarmament. In fact, the almost unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 2164 (XXI) indicated real awareness of the need for such a measure, in stating 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 a solution of the urgent problem of nuclear disarmament”.

71. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): The First Committee is considering a question the importance and urgency of which is beyond all doubt. The question of the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons has been put on the agenda of the twenty-second session of the General Assembly by the Soviet Union, which, from the day that atomic weapons appeared, has constantly and consistently supported the prohibition and total liquidation of this weapon of mass destruction, thus confirming its faith in the interests of peace and the security of the peoples of the world.

72. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR would like to point to the extremely timely nature of the new Soviet initiative and to its truly humanitarian character. Indeed, almost a quarter of a century has elapsed since nuclear weapons and their terrible destructive force became a menacing reality. In August 1945, the atomic weapon was used for the first time against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This catastrophe resulted in 200,000 dead or permanently maimed people. Since then, as we all know, the construction and power of nuclear weapons have radically changed. The American bombs dropped over Japan may seem like toys when compared to what is to be found in nuclear arsenals today.

73. In the Secretary-General's report on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and the security and

economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of these weapons [A/6858] it is stated that at present:

“... the nuclear armouries which are in being already contain large megaton weapons every one of which has a destructive power greater than that of all the conventional explosive that has ever been used in warfare since the day gunpowder was discovered. Were such weapons ever to be used in numbers, hundreds of millions of people might be killed, and civilization as we know it, as well as organized community life, would inevitably come to an end in the countries involved in the conflict.”

74. Those who seriously reflect on this matter can give only one answer, and it is contained in the document I have quoted. In the report of the Secretary-General, among other conclusions, there is the completely valid and justified conclusion that the use of nuclear weapons must be prohibited.

75. The draft convention presented to us by the Government of the USSR on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons [A/6834] is in conformity with the vital interests and desires of the peoples of the world whose goal is to ensure their progressive economic and social development, their spiritual enrichment, and not a destructive nuclear and rocket war, with its wide-scale suffering and incredibly dangerous consequences. The aim of the draft convention is recognized as of the utmost importance by the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. Its aim is to establish ever more substantial guarantees for peace and for the elimination of the threat of a nuclear war. It is preparing conditions in which it will be easier to seek agreement to put an end to the manufacture of and to destroy all existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Finally—and this is important—the convention would be a substantial addition to an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons since it would better guarantee the security of the numerous non-nuclear States; it would, *inter alia*, promote more effective co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy in order to increase the well-being of the peoples of the world.

76. The urgent need to take a decision in the United Nations to conclude a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons is also rendered more necessary by the tension which has lately been increasing in international relations. The aggression of the United States in Viet-Nam is a real war, and however far from or near to this conflagration we may be, we dare not forget for an instant its proportions or the fact that the sparks of this war may at any minute ignite the powder kegs or even the nuclear devices in other parts of the world. The same must be said of the Israeli military adventure in the Near East, carried out with the protection of States more powerful than Israel. The situation in the world to-day is so serious that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as the Committee will remember, has even expressed the view that we are probably witnessing the beginning of a new worldwide catastrophe.

77. The necessity to conclude a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons is directly based on a decision taken by the General Assembly in 1961, when it adopted a Declaration on the prohibition of the use of

nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons [resolution 1653 (XVI)]. This Declaration is certainly important in itself. It proclaims that the use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the spirit, the letter and the aims of the United Nations and to the principles of international law, and a crime against mankind and civilization. But it does not settle the problem completely. The time has now come to confirm the provisions of this Declaration in the form of a treaty and legal instrument and to make it mandatory, which is in fact what the Soviet draft convention on the prohibition and use of nuclear weapons provides for.

78. As we know, last year the General Assembly specifically drew attention to the significance of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, indicating its importance in relation to progress in disarmament negotiations, and more particularly to the attempts to solve the problem of nuclear disarmament. At the time it was thought that such a convention would be examined at a world disarmament conference. However, recent events have convinced us that the General Assembly can and should already now take measures to bring nearer and make more real the possibility of concluding such a convention. Any delay in the solution of this problem upon which our children's future and ours may depend is inadmissible.

79. Of course we do not consider that a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons would be a panacea against all dangers. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, as in the past, considers that only general and complete disarmament under strict international control can be a firm guarantee of peace and the security of all peoples. As long as we are making no real progress in settling this most important problem, we would be ill-advised to waste time. On the contrary, we must multiply our efforts and take various partial measures which would limit the armaments race and avert the threat of a general war. From this point of view the convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons is extremely important and takes a special place among the partial measures.

80. We know that various arguments have been presented against the proposal made by the Soviet Union. Those arguments are designed to prevent the United Nations from taking an effective decision on the question of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. It is stated, for instance, that inasmuch as the United Nations Charter excludes the possibility of war as a means for the settlement of disputes, there is, if you please, no special need to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons as a specific means of waging war. It is also affirmed that no convention can save mankind from the danger of war just as the various pacts made in the days of the League of Nations did not spare the peoples of the world from the Second World War. Finally, it is said that the desire to bar the road to a nuclear war through a treaty would be an illusion and even a waste of time, that the main thing is to ensure that the provisions of already existing universal agreements—and first of all, the United Nations Charter—are carried out rather than to create more pious acts whose real value is highly dubious.

81. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR is ready to answer that kind of argumentation, although it is hard to say whether it is characterized more by its levity of approach or by its reliance on the ignorance of those who do not possess nuclear weapons.

82. Let us first, for instance, take the argument that the Paris Agreement of 1928 prohibiting war as an instrument of national policy, the so-called Briand-Kellogg Pact, was violated by the aggressors. What is the sense, ask the opponents of the draft convention, of concluding an agreement on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons? This argument is obviously addressed to those who forget that since then basic changes have occurred in the world and that questions of war and peace must be viewed today in a different perspective. A world socialist system has arisen whose peace-loving aspirations reflect the truly popular character of that system. The Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Brezhnev, in his report on the fiftieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution, said:

“Socialism has as its sole aim and sole concern the interests of the people, and this concern presupposes, first of all, the fight against war.”

83. The collapse of the colonialist and imperialist system has produced significant changes in the world. On the ruins of that system the liberated peoples have created new national States which are in favour of peace against the imperialist policy of interference and aggression. In the imperialist countries themselves the peace-loving forces, led by patriotic elements, have grown and are becoming stronger. All this is giving rise to a completely new world situation.

84. As was forecast by Lenin, the founder of the Soviet State, the active influence of the popular masses on the fate of the world and peace increases from year to year, and the imperialist circles are compelled to an ever increasing extent to take into account the will and demands of the peoples. The role of all anti-imperialist forces has increased. Despite the aggressive designs of the imperialists, the peoples of the world now have sufficient strength and means to avert a new world war.

85. Let us now pass to another argument of the opponents of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, the role and significance of the United Nations Charter.

86. To ensure respect for the United Nations Charter is the main task of our Organization and every one of its Members. The United Nations must in its practical activities take into account all new developments in an ever-changing world. It must take into account the real state of affairs in order to prevent a new world war and to guarantee the free and progressive development of the peoples of the world.

87. We know that the Charter of the United Nations has been and is being violated by various States. The aggressions in Viet-Nam, in the Near East, in Korea and against Cuba, the intervention in the Dominican Republic and the colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique show that the imperialist and colonialist forces are constantly trying to by-pass the United Nations Charter in order to carry out their designs and policies which are incompatible with the principles and purposes of the United Nations. One of the possibilities of thwarting the plans of the imperialists and their aggressive designs is to make use of world public opinion, which is a force constantly growing stronger.

88. The peace-loving States do this in the United Nations, by defending the adoption of effective decisions. They have

already obtained the adoption of important instruments such as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Interference in the Internal Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty, the Declaration Prohibiting the Use of Force in International Relations and other useful decisions.

89. All this goes to show that the adoption by the General Assembly of a clear-cut decision for the conclusion of a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons would be one more step forward in the struggle to put into force the provisions of the Charter, a new measure that would curb and isolate the aggressors. To oppose a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons is to deal a blow to the Charter of the United Nations itself and to the effectiveness of this Organization, which, regrettably enough, cannot be considered wholly adequate even as it is. The aim of the convention is to set up an ever stronger international legal barrier to block the path of those who would violate the international legal order, particularly of the most dangerous of such violators, those who can use nuclear weapons in the pursuit of their policies.

90. History records examples not only of disappointment in this respect but also of success. We should mention here the Geneva Protocol Prohibiting the Use of Bacteriological and Chemical Weapons. We remember with gratitude those who worked out that great international document. They probably also encountered many difficulties created by those opposing it, but they were able to overcome all obstacles. If it had not been for that Geneva Protocol, Fascist Germany would certainly have employed bacteriological and chemical weapons and thus caused the death of more thousands and millions of men.

91. But the condemnation in international law of those barbarous means of war received such solid support from world public opinion that even the Fascist aggressors were forced to take it into account during the Second World War. The framers of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 thus performed a great and useful service and earned the gratitude of succeeding generations.

92. The delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic wishes to stress that as long as no general undertaking of States not to use atomic weapons is embodied in the form of a treaty, certain States will persist in their attempts either to create their own nuclear weapons or to obtain them from others, and schemes for nuclear adventures will be devised.

93. In this connexion may I recall to this Committee something printed in the field manual of the United States Army which was adopted on 18 July 1956, with regard to the waging of war. In paragraph 35 of the manual it is stated that the use of explosive nuclear weapons as such, whether by air, sea or land forces, cannot be considered as a violation of international law, given the absence of any regular provision of international law or of an international convention restricting such use.

94. This once again emphasizes the necessity of working out and concluding a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. There are other considerations as well

that point to the need for such a measure. We cannot, for example, fail to note the statement of the United States General Lemnitzer, who, on 20 November of this year—that is to say, on the very day when we listened to the objections put forward by the United States representative in the First Committee to the conclusion of a convention—spoke at a meeting of the NATO Council of the increasing possibility for the use of nuclear weapons at a stage of war earlier than that originally envisaged. Both of the above statements are expressions of one and the same policy and course of action—the use of nuclear weapons for new Hiroshimas and Nagasakis, but on an incalculably larger scale.

95. The delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic heard with great attention and studied the statement made in our Committee by the representative of the United States. We tried to understand the logic of his argument and came to the conclusion that such understanding was possible only on the assumption that we have all resigned ourselves to the idea of the inevitability of a new thermonuclear world war as we are all agreed on the impossibility of achieving respect for international agreements. But in fact we have all undertaken to fight for peace and international security and to respect the Charter of the United Nations and our obligations under other international agreements.

96. We cannot agree, furthermore, with the conclusion of the representative of the United States that it is better to live in a balance of terror and fear of nuclear war than to take measures aimed at limiting the possibility for the outbreak of such a war. Furthermore, the theory of the

balance of terror means, in practice, nothing less than the continuation and even an extension of the armaments race.

97. In view of the present international situation, the fight against the threat of nuclear warfare must be intensified. The peoples of the world can bring about the attainment of the aims of the United Nations. Their endeavours have already yielded some good results. A few years ago a treaty was signed on the prohibition of nuclear tests in three media; then an agreement was signed prohibiting the orbiting of nuclear weapons in space; now we see the possibility of concluding an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons would be an important step towards the reduction of the threat of nuclear war, a convention which would state in clear and simple language understandable to all nations that:

“Each Party to this convention gives the solemn undertaking to refrain from using nuclear weapons, from threatening to use them and from inciting other States to use them” [*Article I of the draft convention of the Soviet Union*].

98. As far as the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is concerned, it is ready to subscribe to the convention the draft of which has been presented to this session of the General Assembly. Our delegation is convinced that the adoption by the Assembly of a clear-cut and unambiguous decision for the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would serve the cause of peace and help to reduce international tensions, and that it would be in the interests of all peoples of the world.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.