

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records



**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1578th
MEETING**

Tuesday, 4 June 1968,
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 28:	
Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (<i>continued</i>):	
(a) Report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament	1

Chairman: Mr. Ismail FAH
(United Arab Republic)

AGENDA ITEM 28

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (*continued*):

**(a) Report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation
Committee on Disarmament (A/7072 and Add.1-DC/
230 and Add.1; A/7080; A/C.1/959-960; A/C.1/963;
A/C.1/L.421/Rev.2 and Add.1-2)**

1. The CHAIRMAN: As previously agreed, the Committee will resume consideration of item 28 (a), hearing the statements or explanations of vote on the draft resolution [A/C.1/L.421/Rev.2 and Add.1-2].

2. Mr. MOHALE (Lesotho): I hope it will not seem incongruous for a small, non-nuclear and only recently independent State such as the Kingdom of Lesotho to express itself on the draft nuclear non-proliferation treaty [A/C.1/L.421/Rev.2/Add.1] and the draft resolution now before the General Assembly. However, the evidence of recent history is only too painfully before our eyes as we see the major Powers addressing themselves partially to a question so crucial to the survival of humanity. Furthermore, the proposed treaty will affect the long-term economic and social development of my country and others in similar circumstances and stages of development. These considerations compel us to express our position and attitude towards the treaty. In so doing we shall not repeat the different objections, apprehensions, doubts and fears which have been ably expressed by some delegations, the counter-arguments put forward by others and the assurances and guarantees offered by the nuclear States.

3. My Government must obviously favour any step by the international community to lessen the possibility of nuclear war and to move in the direction of general and complete disarmament. Moreover, we applaud the fact that the Soviet Union and the United States have once again demonstrated their ability to work towards a common formula. Given the realities of international life, there is reason to believe that such concurrence, which was assumed in the Charter of the United Nations, can promote only the cause of peace. We trust that this agreement between such formidable Powers

will augur the beginning of a new effort on the part of both to work seriously towards not only an elimination of those various points of world friction which might give rise to the temptation to employ nuclear weapons for achieving "final solutions" but also an early achievement of the cessation of the nuclear arms race.

4. However, while our general support for the treaty can be expected, my delegation would also speak of certain political realities which cannot be eliminated or overcome by treaty signing. The world has already witnessed, and with disastrous consequences, the harmful effects of a reliance upon treaties which ignore or endeavour to conceal major political issues and the genuine concerns of certain countries. It is hard to believe that the fears that have been expressed by some countries so far are baseless.

5. In this regard, my delegation is particularly concerned lest some country or countries not find in this accord the degree of security that a significant non-nuclear Power must possess if it is to refrain from developing nuclear weapons itself. If the adoption of this treaty is championed by some primarily to prevent a country from assuming its rightful place in the international community, then the final result might be disastrous for all.

6. The Government of Lesotho is also sympathetic towards the reservations expressed by some countries whose potential to develop nuclear weapons is undisputed but which have adopted a policy of self-denial. For this reason, a clear and unequivocal undertaking on the part of the main Powers to guarantee such non-nuclear States against nuclear attack has been considered a necessary condition by my delegation if this treaty is to offer more than token security. However, an insurance agreement dependent upon the concurrence of the Security Council is subject to the veto power and offers little practical hope of immediate assistance in the event of hostilities. Hence, the fears and doubts of all countries must not be glossed over but must be fully considered.

7. We must point with alarm to areas fraught with the immediate danger that hostilities may escalate into a nuclear confrontation of world-wide dimensions—areas in which the involved countries are regarded as non-nuclear under the definition of this treaty but in fact have the potential to turn nuclear in a very short period of time. In this context, little comfort can be derived from the remarks at the 1619th plenary meeting of Mr. Eklund, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and also of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, in *Statements and Documents related to the Non-Proliferation Treaty*, and the delegation of the Soviet Union at the 1571st meeting of this Committee, to the

effect that the technology for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and that for the manufacture of nuclear explosives for peaceful uses are indistinguishable. Hence potential nuclear States involved in conflicts may find sufficient justification for converting peaceful atomic research into instruments of destruction. If that ever happened, it could not be imagined that the co-sponsors of this draft treaty and draft resolution or other nuclear or potential nuclear States would stand idly by. However, their involvement at that stage could hardly be that of arbiters; it would be that of participants. Therefore, would it not be fitting for the major nuclear Powers to take urgent diplomatic and political steps to bring about a resolution of the conflicts in areas fraught with the immediate danger of hostilities, before the treaty is adopted? It is difficult, if not impossible, to accept that the sponsoring Powers are unable to exercise such influence in areas of serious conflicts and confrontations to bring about a reduction in present levels of tension.

8. My delegation notes with satisfaction paragraph 1 of article III of the revised draft treaty because it states:

“Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes to accept safeguards, as set forth in an agreement to be negotiated and concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency in accordance with the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Agency’s safeguards system, for the exclusive purpose of verification of the fulfilment of its obligations assumed under this Treaty with a view to preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.”

9. As it accepts the fact of technical indistinguishability between processes for nuclear weapons and for peaceful nuclear research, my delegation could not overlook the problem posed by non-nuclear States which are already engaged in the advanced stages of nuclear research for peaceful uses. We had wondered if they were to continue or discontinue their research. We had also asked ourselves about the long-run implications of either course of action for the treaty’s effectiveness and for the welfare of the peoples of those countries. It would now appear that the answer is also found in paragraph 1 of article IV of the above-mentioned document which states:

“Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of this Treaty.”

10. The treaty is forward-looking and commendable as a partial embodiment of general aspirations. It would, however, appear that so long as certain nuclear and potential nuclear States may opt not to be signatories, the treaty might remain ineffectual and unworkable in stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As was pointed out by many delegations, the treaty places heavy stress on “horizontal” non-proliferation and not enough on “vertical” non-proliferation.

11. While my delegation is mindful of and would be grateful for the benefits derivable from the signing of the treaty, it is, however, unconvinced of the wisdom of hurrying into signing it those countries which have a

genuine fear that nuclear weapons will be used against them. Their apprehensions are neither baseless nor, for that matter, only imaginary. We are also not absolutely convinced that those who urge the immediate signing of the treaty would not be prepared to wait for another three or four months before passing the resolution concerning the signing of the treaty. This would give the non-nuclear States a chance to conclude their forthcoming conference at Geneva as well as affording others the opportunity to consider carefully all the implications of the treaty. My delegation cannot believe that great Powers such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, having worked so hard for so long to reach this agreement, would allow circumstances to disrupt their resolve and unanimity on such an important issue, an issue which is an essential step towards complete disarmament. The draft treaty and the draft resolution before the General Assembly lay a foundation for total disarmament and hence deserve to be made as strong and effective as possible.

12. In conclusion, my delegation believes that this non-proliferation treaty will not only enhance the security of all nations but will also create a climate of confidence which will give an impetus to expanding the peaceful applications of atomic energy and to the negotiation of further arms control measures.

13. Mr. WURTH (Luxembourg) (*translated from French*): The delegation of Luxembourg will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us because it takes a positive attitude towards the principle of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

14. Notwithstanding the amendments to the draft treaty which have just been put forward by the co-Chairmen of the Eighteen-Nation Committee—for which they deserve our thanks—the Government of Luxembourg is not completely satisfied with all the provisions of the draft. However, we are of the opinion that the draft treaty’s many advantages outweigh its imperfections. Furthermore, we consider that we are here to practise the art of the possible, and that we must give proof of political realism.

15. I do not intend to comment on every article of the treaty. I shall confine myself to making three observations.

16. First, we note that article VI imposes on the nuclear Powers in particular the duty to advance towards nuclear disarmament and, beyond that, to general and complete disarmament. We firmly hope that they will do so with goodwill and with imagination.

17. We believe that the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must in no way hinder every State’s free use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Quite the contrary, we expect the other nuclear Powers to undertake to share their knowledge and experience with non-nuclear States, as has already been done by the United States Government.

18. Lastly, as a member of EURATOM, Luxembourg attaches special importance to article III of the draft treaty.

19. The Luxembourg delegation endorses the statement made by the Netherlands delegation at the 1561st meeting

on 6 May concerning the problems facing the six countries which signed the treaty creating the European Atomic Energy Community.

20. The Government of Luxembourg obviously cannot shirk commitments it has already assumed. For this reason, the obligations Luxembourg contracted as a party to the EURATOM Treaty must be in keeping with the obligations contained in the non-proliferation treaty. The agreement to be negotiated with the International Atomic Energy Agency by the Commission of the European Community, on behalf of EURATOM, must, in particular, avoid any useless and detrimental duplication with regard to control; in other words, it must be based on the principle of the EURATOM safeguards verification system.

21. In conclusion, I should like to express the fervent hope of the Government of Luxembourg that the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons will constitute an important step towards international peace and security.

22. The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the last speaker on my list, I should like to remind members of the Committee that the list of speakers will be closed at 6 p.m. today.

23. Mr. ERALP (Turkey): Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time that I have spoken in this Committee at this resumed session, I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the able and exemplary manner in which you have conducted and are conducting our important deliberations.

24. We are nearing the end of our discussion of one of the most significant documents taken up in the United Nations. The revised draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is before us with the revised draft resolution. My delegation did not take part in the general debate. This was not due to any lack of interest in the treaty. On the contrary, my Government has willingly lent its support to almost every disarmament resolution adopted by the First Committee and the General Assembly. Our position vis-à-vis the draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is consistent with that attitude. We chose to remain a silent but attentive participant in the general debate because the observations we wanted to make and the concerns we felt regarding certain points of the draft treaty were eloquently presented, first by numerous non-nuclear members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament—and notably the representatives of Sweden, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Italy, Brazil and Mexico—and subsequently by other members of the Committee.

25. We fully shared their concerns and misgivings. Indeed, even a cursory comparison of the draft treaty with General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX) was sufficient to reveal that the draft treaty in its original form, even though it corresponded in general terms to the guidelines set forth in that resolution, still left much to be desired. For example, although the draft treaty quite effectively eliminated the possibility of loop-holes, it was not sufficiently clear in its provisions regarding the commitments undertaken by the nuclear Powers on the question of co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Similarly, it was obvious that its provisions relating to the services to be made available to non-nuclear States in the field of peaceful

nuclear explosions and those which pertained to the balance of obligations between the nuclear and non-nuclear States could have been further improved to bring the text more in line with resolution 2028 (XX) and render it acceptable to all concerned. We are therefore heartened to note that different suggestions put forward in good faith by various non-nuclear States have been received in the same spirit and have evoked a positive response towards the improvement of the text.

26. The primary interest to my delegation is the question of unhindered and unrestricted co-operation, open at all times and to all States signatory to the treaty, in the exchange of scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We therefore welcome the amendments incorporated in articles IV and V which deal with this aspect of the treaty. We believe that the present wording of these two articles has brought such co-operation within the bounds of possibility in accordance with the needs of each developing country and region. The specific commitment entered into by nuclear Powers to "undertake to facilitate" the future exchange, and the inclusion of "equipment" and "materials" in the objects of exchange, in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should, in our view, be sufficient to dispel any doubts which could justifiably have been entertained, with regard to the original text, concerning the creation of unequal positions and treatment in this field.

27. Much has been said about articles I and II of the draft treaty and criticism has been levelled against them. Almost every speaker who has taken the floor has indicated that these two articles have effectively prevented horizontal proliferation while vertical proliferation has remained unchecked, and that therefore the treaty deviated rather sharply from the guidelines of resolution 2028 (XX), which set forth, among other things the equality of obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear States. Here again, the additions to the ninth preambular paragraph, which strengthens the provision of article VI, have considerably improved the meaning of implications of the text of the treaty as far as the balance of commitments is concerned, while the new thirteenth preambular paragraph has placed the nuclear Powers under a strong moral obligation to refrain from using force of any kind against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any State, or in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations Charter. Thus a further, even though modest, step has been taken towards the establishment of equal obligations. The situation in this respect is similar to circumstances appertaining to the partial test-ban treaty of 1963. In that case also, the General Assembly had called for a comprehensive ban of nuclear testings. Nevertheless, we had to be content with a partial test-ban treaty as an initial collateral measure of disarmament.

28. In the present instance, the draft treaty has excluded vertical proliferation but, significantly, it contains provisions which urge the nuclear Powers to seek without delay a cessation at an early date of the nuclear arms race and further agreements on nuclear and on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective controls. It is our earnest hope that, soon after the entry into force of the treaty, the nuclear Powers will be able to agree, either directly or within the Eighteen-Nation Committee on

Disarmament, on the next collateral measure to be taken up as the subject of negotiations.

29. My delegation has noted that the security guarantees proffered to the non-nuclear States, which is another question relating to the balance of obligations, have been taken up outside the text of the treaty. My Government does not have any objections to this procedure. It may be true that a more effective guarantee could have been devised, but, like the treaty itself, the arrangement on the guarantees is a compromise and represents what was attainable rather than what was ideal. In our view, there is one point that could usefully be made in this respect. The Security Council resolution which will embody the security guarantees¹ will be open to the adherence of all members of the Security Council, irrespective of whether they are adhering to the treaty or not. A declaration by such other nuclear States as are not parties to the treaty, to the effect that they would subscribe to that resolution, may enhance the effectiveness of the proffered guarantee by extending its scope.

¹ See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1967 and 1968*, document DC/230 and Add.1, annex II.

30. These technical observations as to the text of the draft treaty should not be allowed to obscure the most significant fact which emerges from this entire attempt at non-proliferation, namely, the fact that certain major nuclear Powers, often divided on many important issues, have worked closely together in order to bring about this first step, imperfect and primitive as it may be, towards the elimination of the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. We believe that the international community not only owes them a debt of gratitude, but also has an obligation to encourage further and more effective co-operation among them towards fuller and more comprehensive measures. With the overwhelming majority which we hope this draft resolution will obtain in the Assembly, the glimmer of hope that was first sparked by the enterprising and distinguished Foreign Minister of Ireland some ten years ago will have been brightened into a warming light.

31. In view of the foregoing observations, my delegation will vote for the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.421/Rev.2 and Add.1-2.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.