

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1196th
MEETING**

Friday, 17 November 1961,
at 11.5 a.m.



NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

AGENDA ITEM 19

Question of disarmament (A/4868 and Corr.1, A/4879, A/4880, A/4887, A/4891, A/4892, A/C.1/856, A/C.1/L.297) (continued)

1. Mr. UNDEN (Sweden) introduced a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.297) on behalf of the delegations of Austria, Ceylon, Ethiopia, Libya, the Sudan and Sweden. The draft resolution dealt partly with the question of nuclear weapons tests, but was not incompatible with the resolutions already adopted by the Committee on that question; it could be regarded as a subsidiary to General Assembly resolution 1649 (XVI).

2. The Soviet Government could be expected to persist in its view that the question of the prohibition of nuclear tests should be considered in the context of the general problem of disarmament. The draft resolution, which established a link between those two issues, in particular by taking up a number of important points in the Rapacki plan, might help to reconcile existing differences of views; there was an obvious correlation between measures to prevent further nuclear tests and the basic idea of the Rapacki plan, which was to create an atom-free zone in Central Europe. The sponsors of the draft resolution proposed that the principles underlying the Rapacki plan should be applied on a universal basis. The question of denuclearization had already been raised in the Committee with regard to Africa; accordingly, it could also be raised with regard to other areas of the world. Of course, there could be different degrees of denuclearization, and it might well be desirable, therefore, to establish different rules for atom-free zones in different parts of the world. Control measures should be adapted to their object in each specific case. Excessive importance had been given to controls as a condition for a treaty banning nuclear tests, considering the advanced technical means which now existed for detecting nuclear explosions.

3. The Swedish representative reminded the Committee of his earlier observations (1178th meeting) concerning the establishment of a "non-nuclear club", which, if there proved to be no hope that the Geneva negotiations would be resumed in the near future, could take the initiative in seeking a solution of the problem. It was his personal view that if the results of the inquiry envisaged in the draft resolution were

favourable, a conference should be convened in order to work out some arrangement which would meet with the approval of all countries, nuclear and non-nuclear alike.

4. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said there were hopeful signs that the present debate would be more constructive than disarmament debates in previous years. One of those signs was the agreement reached by the United States and the USSR on the basic principles for negotiations; but if negotiations were to bear fruit an atmosphere of co-operation must be created, and in particular, mutual recriminations and charges, which merely created a climate of cold war, must be ruled out.

5. In contrast with past wars, which had affected only the belligerents, a nuclear war would extend its horrors to the entire world. All countries, great and small, therefore had the right and duty to concern themselves with the problem.

6. The problem of an appropriate forum for the negotiations should be capable of solution without too much difficulty; the number of countries represented in the negotiating body was of little importance, for the proceedings would not be governed by majority vote. Inasmuch as the Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament had broken down, it had been felt that other nations should be brought in. That was a reasonable idea, because the enlargement of the negotiating body was more important than the precise number of participating countries and their geographical distribution. The representative of the USSR had mentioned six non-aligned nations. Such a formula might certainly help to reconcile the divergent positions; the two sides might each designate three countries, or agreement might be reached between them on all six. In any event, negotiations should not be blocked by their failure to agree in all respects on the composition of the negotiating body.

7. The other stumbling-block was the question whether there should be control of disarmament or control of armaments. But the important thing was not merely what armaments would be destroyed but what would remain. The Soviet Union maintained that if a small quantity of armaments were destroyed, the inspection and control of the remaining arms would be turned into espionage. The delegation of Cyprus did not believe that either side would take advantage of the information obtained on the position of the other side for the purpose of starting a war. In the past, there had been times when the Soviet Union had been the stronger, and yet it had not brought about a war. The United States had enjoyed a monopoly over nuclear weapons for five years, but it had never thought of using it to its own advantage. Of course, there was no way of preventing one side from mistrusting the other, but on the other hand, control and inspection were essential. There must be some possible solution.

8. According to the Soviet proposal (A/C.1/856), all means of delivery of nuclear weapons would be destroyed in the first stage. The inspection and control of that process should not arouse any fears, since there would be no means of delivery left to spy on. That would undoubtedly be inspection and control of disarmament, and not of armaments. The same would apply to the other measures contemplated for the first stage. In the second stage, all stockpiles of nuclear and bacteriological weapons would be destroyed and their production ended. There again, there could be no question of espionage resulting from inspection and control. The same applied to the disbandment of armed forces and the other measures contemplated for the third stage.

Organization of the Committee's work

9. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Vice-Chairman had informed him by communication dated 13 November that he had been recalled by his Government and would be absent from New York for some ten days. He therefore suggested that if he himself was at any time prevented from occupying the Chair, the Rapporteur should assume his functions provisionally.

10. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) thought it would be preferable for the duties of the Vice-Chairman to be taken over in his absence by a member of his delegation.

11. Mr. KALONJI (Congo, Leopoldville) shared the Liberian representative's view.

12. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the officers of Committees of the General Assembly were elected on a personal basis, and that the rules of procedure made no provision for other members of their delegations to assume their functions, even provisionally. Accordingly, he felt obliged to maintain his suggestion.

13. Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador) supported the Chairman's suggestion, particularly since the procedure he was suggesting had been followed on a previous occasion during the fifteenth session.

14. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) felt that no decision need be taken for the time being, since the Committee could always appoint a temporary Chairman if necessary.

15. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said he fully supported the Chairman's suggestion.

16. Mr. MATSCH (Austria) pointed out that the Chairman's suggestion was fully in accordance with rule 107 of the rules of procedure.

17. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) thought that the best course would be for the Chairman to be replaced by a member of the Dahoman delegation; if the Rapporteur were called upon to take the Chair, who would act as Rapporteur?

18. Mr. KALONJI (Congo, Leopoldville) pointed out that the Vice-Chairman had been absent at the time of his election, and that the Committee had not felt it necessary to take any decision in the matter then. The existing situation was a similar one: it was a matter of an absence, not a vacancy.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that as there would be no question of calling upon the Rapporteur to take the Chair except for a very brief period, his duties would not suffer in any way. It would therefore raise no problems for the Rapporteur to replace the Vice-Chairman in case of need.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.