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CONTENTS

Agenda item 90:

Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (continued)

General debate (continued) 133

*Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL
(Sudan).*

AGENDA ITEM 90

Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (A/5197, A/5200, DC/203, A/C.1/867, A/C.1/871, A/C.1/875, A/C.1/L.312/Rev.1) (*continued*)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. BURNS (Canada) said that the crisis the world had just gone through should encourage all countries to redouble their efforts to bring about general and complete disarmament and give effect to other measures which would reduce international tension and eliminate sources of conflict. An agreement on measures preliminary to disarmament would require intense effort and the most painstaking negotiations. In Canada's view, the best place for those negotiations was the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva. The Eighteen-Nation Committee possessed several advantages. The presence of the eight non-aligned countries made it representative of the major geographical areas of the world, and their active participation in the negotiations was a constant reminder that disarmament was not the concern of the great Powers alone, but of all countries large and small. As the representative of the United Arab Republic had pointed out at the 1266th meeting, many changes had been made in both disarmament plans in response to questions and suggestions of the non-aligned members.

2. The Eighteen-Nation Committee had also developed procedures and working methods appropriate to its task. Its co-Chairmen, the representatives of the United States and the USSR, had actively co-operated in forwarding the work of the Conference. The Canadian delegation was confident that the Eighteen-Nation Committee could, when it returned to its task, succeed not only in bringing the two sides closer together, but also in drawing up a programme for total disarmament.

3. The work of the Committee of the Whole was a particularly important contribution to the Geneva Conference. That Committee had been set up to deal with measures which were closely related to disarmament and which could come into effect quickly,

relieve international tension and thereby facilitate agreement on general and complete disarmament. The first measure on which the Committee of the Whole should negotiate was, in his delegation's view, the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons. He wished to associate himself with the appeal made to the nuclear Powers by the Irish representative (1267th meeting) that they take immediate steps to solve that urgent question. The Committee of the Whole should also continue its examination of arrangements to reduce the risk of war by accident, miscalculation or failure of communications. That risk did, in fact, seem far greater than the risk that any nation would deliberately begin a nuclear war. Another measure that should be given early consideration was the prevention of the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. The conclusion of an international agreement to that effect would be of great value in reducing certain fears and would be a first step towards the rule of law in outer space. Lastly, the Committee of the Whole should discuss the question of the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, a measure which was advocated in the draft resolution submitted to the First Committee by Bolivia, Brazil and Chile (A/C.1/L.312/Rev.1). Admittedly, the creation of such zones was primarily a matter for the countries directly concerned, but the form of such agreements, and, what was very important, the means for verifying that their provisions were being observed, could appropriately be considered by the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

4. Consideration of the progress at Geneva on the question of disarmament proper showed that the differences between the two positions on conventional armaments and armed forces had been greatly lessened as a result of the changes introduced in both disarmament plans during the negotiations. It seemed that agreement on conventional disarmament had now come within reach. Moreover, almost all the difficulties regarding the level of armed forces at the end of the first stage had been overcome and there was already virtually an agreement concerning the level of armed forces at the end of the second stage. It was important for the Eighteen-Nation Committee to study the obligations of smaller countries with regard to the conventional armaments and armed forces that they might be permitted to retain during the first two stages of disarmament. There were still substantial differences on the question of the eventual destruction of certain nuclear delivery vehicles. The new proposals of the Soviet Union on the subject, however, seemed to introduce a change in the Soviet position which could be far-reaching and would perhaps allow the Eighteen-Nation Committee to end the present deadlock.

5. There were other questions that the Eighteen-Nation Committee would do well to study more thoroughly. It would be useful, for instance, if it examined ways to improve the arrangements for keep-

ing the peace and to establish procedures consistent with the principles of the United Nations Charter for the settlement of international disputes. That was a need that was recognized in the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations (A/4879) and in the draft treaties put forward by the United States (A/C.1/875) and the USSR (A/C.1/867).

6. The Canadian delegation thought it was of the highest importance that the Eighteen-Nation Committee should resume its work at once and make the greatest possible effort to reach agreement quickly on those important questions. It hoped that that Committee, in the progress report it had to submit to the General Assembly by 10 December, would be able to report back substantial progress, particularly with regard to the conclusion of a treaty, provided with adequate guarantees, on the cessation of nuclear tests. It supported the statement made on the subject by the representative of the United Arab Republic (1266th meeting) and would welcome any draft resolution by which the Committee would take note of the Eighteen-Nation Committee's reports, urge that the negotiations be continued rapidly in a spirit of compromise, and request that a progress report be submitted to the General Assembly within a reasonable period of time.

7. Mr. NILSSON (Sweden) thought that the Committee should keep the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament steadily before its eyes but at the same time prepare carefully and realistically the steps that could lead it in the right direction. The question was complex and it was understandable that the Geneva negotiations had not yet ended, even in a partial agreement, but it would be wrong to write them off as meaningless. It was, in fact, thanks to those negotiations that the Powers concerned were able to continue the technical preparations, keep in touch on the delicate problems of military security and finally bring forward suggestions that would help to break the present political deadlock.

8. Before any measure could be planned, the necessary atmosphere of confidence must first be created. If agreement was now reached on the cessation of tests, the road to disarmament would be opened. Later, the United States and the USSR might perhaps merge their draft treaties in one single document. In order, however, to create a solid foundation for disarmament, preliminary measures must be taken immediately in accordance with a "regulation of armaments" scheme—to borrow a phrase from the Charter of the United Nations—to stop the increase of armaments. One measure towards that end would be the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons, either by closing the "nuclear club," in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1665 (XVI), or by creating a "non-nuclear club," in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI).

9. In its reply to the Secretary-General's inquiry conducted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI), the Swedish Government had stated (DC/201/Add.2) that it considered that the small Powers would be willing to refrain from acquiring nuclear weapons on the condition that the nuclear Powers accepted a curtailment of the arms race, and, in particular, a test ban. Similarly, agreements on the setting up of nuclear-free zones could not be expected to last if nuclear weapon tests were resumed. His Government had further stated in its reply that the non-nuclear Powers might also undertake to refuse to receive such weapons on behalf of other countries, on

the understanding that such a measure would not change the balance of power. He requested that the Member States should state the conditions on which they might be willing to enter into undertakings of that kind, as also the guarantees that they would ask for in order to be assured that the balance of power would not be changed and that their security would not be endangered.

10. Countries undertaking to form part of a nuclear-free zone could also reserve the right to reverse their decision if no agreement had been reached by the nuclear Powers before a given date, and they would be entitled to expect those Powers to respect any agreements made by the non-nuclear countries and refrain from any measures that would conflict with the provisions of those agreements. That was the position which his country had already adopted. He hoped that detailed consideration would be given to the possibility of concluding regional agreements of that type. In that connexion, his delegation had noted with interest the draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.1/L.312/Rev.1). It considered that the replies to the Secretary-General's inquiry (DC/201 and Add.1-3) should be communicated to the Eighteen-Nation Committee for more detailed consideration. If the general principle were found to be acceptable, as seemed to be the case, the non-nuclear Powers might wish to consider what steps they would be willing to take in order to contribute to freezing the situation in regard to nuclear armaments. Such arrangements might apply to whole continents or to smaller regions. There would obviously be no question of imposing any arrangements or special conditions on single States or groups of States; but some form of mutual control should be established to ensure that any agreements on nuclear-free zones were observed.

11. Whatever progress might be made on preliminary disarmament measures, the preparation for more ambitious disarmament plans must also proceed. His Government considered that the Eighteen-Nation Committee should give priority to the question of control, and select for closer study disarmament measures for which the accompanying control arrangements were both technically feasible and politically acceptable, for recent events had shown that, in certain circumstances, the United States and the Soviet Union could reach agreement on the verification measures to be adopted. The General Assembly should therefore request the Eighteen-Nation Committee to continue its discussions as a matter of urgency on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions.

12. It was true that the responsibility for disarmament rested mainly with the great Powers, yet the smaller Powers also shared in it, and their military needs must be taken into account in any disarmament plans. Disarmament was in fact a joint venture for all countries, irrespective of their size, strength and geographical situation.

13. Mr. QUAISON-SACKKEY (Ghana) said that the United Nations had a supreme duty in the matter of disarmament, and that all States Members must concentrate their efforts on ensuring world peace. Although disarmament negotiations had been proceeding for a long time, progress so far had not been substantial, and it was indeed unfortunate that the arms race should be continuing at a time when the danger of intercontinental rockets made agreement more imperative than ever. For that reason, his delegation

urged the resumption and intensification of the Geneva negotiations, in order that agreement might be reached.

14. Although the results of the negotiations had not so far been encouraging, there were none the less some positive elements. The parties had agreed on the preamble of a treaty and appeared to be near agreement on the question of conventional weapons; thanks to the non-aligned nations, the discussions had taken place in a much more constructive atmosphere, and the nuclear Powers had shown readiness to consider new ideas and fresh proposals.

15. In comparing the two disarmament plans, submitted by the United States and the Soviet Union, his delegation had received the impression that neither plan was in strict conformity with the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations (A/4879). The United States was proposing a 30 per cent reduction in each Power's means of delivery of nuclear weapons and in conventional armaments during the first stage, partial elimination of bases in the second stage, and complete elimination of bases only in the third stage, for which no time limit was set. Under that plan, the Soviet Union would lose its capacity to launch intercontinental rockets, while continuing to be encircled by bases controlled by the United States. Under the USSR programme, provision was made for the elimination of means of delivery of nuclear weapons during the first stage, the withdrawal of all foreign-based troops and the liquidation of all foreign bases. The objection had been raised that that programme would maintain the superiority of the Soviet Union in conventional arms and armies. One side was primarily interested in the elimination of nuclear weapons, while the other preferred a gradual process of disarmament, with complete elimination of the nuclear threat left over until the last stage. The question of inspection and verification had also provoked serious disagreement. The United States was insisting on verification not only of arms destroyed but also of arms retained. The Soviet Union contended that such verification would allow its antagonists to secure military information. As other speakers had pointed out, there were many other areas of disagreement, but some gains had been registered and his delegation was confident that, thanks to the constructive efforts of the non-aligned States and the more favourable atmosphere in which the recent discussions had been held, it would be possible to bridge the gap between the two sides more quickly.

16. Meanwhile no effort should be spared to explore fresh approaches to the problem and to make use of the experience acquired in the Cuban situation. Pending agreement at Geneva on the abolition of foreign bases, it should be possible to extend the arrangements made in the case of Cuba to other countries and regions on whose territories the nuclear Powers had placed missiles and missile-launching installations, in order to prevent those countries and regions from being used for offensive ventures. Such arrangements would involve the dismantling and removal of ground-to-ground missiles and missile bases, together with any other offensive weapons. On 28 October 1962, the President of Ghana had addressed a message to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR to congratulate him on the decision to remove from Cuba the equipment regarded by the United States as offen-

sive weapons. It was, he had said, a first step towards the progressive elimination of missile-launching bases in the territories of non-nuclear Powers. He had elaborated that idea some days later in a communication to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, when he had expressed the hope of seeing Africa, South America and the Caribbean declared nuclear-free zones on the basis of an international convention signed by all States Members of the United Nations.

17. His delegation wished to address an appeal to the Government of Cuba to facilitate full participation by the United Nations in the settlement of the problem and permit a United Nations inspection team to verify the dismantling of the missile bases, thus opening the way for a general inspection of the Caribbean area. If that appeal was heeded, it should not be difficult to achieve a solution and a normalization of the situation in the Caribbean, leading to the establishment of a general principle for the elimination of all offensive weapons in foreign bases throughout the world.

18. Draft resolution A/C.1/L.312/Rev.1 was a constructive endeavour in the same direction as General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI) regarding the declaration of Africa as a nuclear-free zone, and his delegation welcomed the initiative taken by the Brazilian delegation.

19. Since political problems would continue to arise in a disarmed world, attention should also be given to the settlement of political disputes and the lessening of tension. His delegation attached great importance to the collateral measures aimed at lessening international tension and the consolidation of confidence among States. It was certain that the Geneva negotiations would be long and arduous, but they would undoubtedly be facilitated if the Assembly adopted a resolution such as had been suggested by the representative of the United Arab Republic, in which it would urge the Eighteen-Nation Committee to continue and accelerate its work and to report as soon as possible to the General Assembly. His delegation would be prepared to join in sponsoring such a draft resolution.

20. Mr. DEAN (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, recalled that 12 November 1962 was the date fixed by General Assembly resolution 1762 (XVII) for the resumption of the Geneva negotiations. His delegation would be ready to meet on 12 November, with the other members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, but it understood that the status of the work in the First Committee made it difficult for some delegations to be represented in Geneva on that date. In the view of his delegation, the Geneva negotiations should begin by 19 November at the latest. Having regard to the number of representatives who had said they wished to address the First Committee, it would appear necessary to increase the number of meetings so that the Committee could complete its work on the disarmament item in good time.

21. The CHAIRMAN urged all the speakers on his list to be prepared to address the Committee when their turn came, in order that the Committee might conclude its discussion of the item on disarmament at the earliest possible time.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.