

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1277th
MEETING**

Thursday, 15 November 1962,
at 3 p.m.



NEW YORK

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) 165

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

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Enckell (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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.2, A/C.1/L.317/Rev.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that his delegation had refrained from participating in the debate on the cessation of nuclear tests because it considered that question, apart from its purely scientific aspects, to be inseparably linked with that of disarmament. For several years Morocco had been emphasizing the connexion between the two questions and the need to find a common solution to them. Many speakers had expressed the opinion that without a comprehensive agreement on nuclear tests there was no solid basis for an agreement on disarmament. When at the fourteenth session his delegation had taken the initiative in proposing a debate on nuclear tests in Africa,^{1/} it had been doing more than merely exercising its legitimate right as an African country to protest against such tests. It had not, moreover, intended to direct its protests solely against one country. Its purpose had been to place the problem of nuclear tests in the general context of general and complete disarmament. Nuclear tests had not ceased, however, either in the Sahara or elsewhere, and technical progress had made them still more disquieting, while the problem of disarmament itself had become still more complex. Since the United Nations had first taken up the question, the obstacles had remained the same; the two sides were still motivated solely by the desire for military advantage. On the other hand, the expansion of the disarmament negotiating committee to include neutral representatives had made it more representative of

world opinion, and its efforts in 1962 deserved high praise. The results achieved, however, were small in comparison with the size of the problem, which increased every day with the stepping-up of the arms race. The obstacles facing the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament were neither technical nor legal, but political, and it was in the political field that the eight neutral countries had the most to contribute. At Geneva they had succeeded in bringing the positions of East and West closer together, and their joint memorandum of 16 April 1962^{2/} offered a possible basis for agreement.

2. Morocco understood the desire of the two sides to ensure that a balance of forces was maintained at all stages of disarmament. It therefore supported the view that control should be applied not merely for the purpose of preventing an increase in the quantity of arms, but also to ensure the destruction of existing stockpiles. If a genuine balance was to be preserved, moreover, disarmament must also extend to conventional weapons, particularly in continents where the principal parties confronted each other directly. Foreign bases must be abandoned and troops stationed abroad must be withdrawn. There was a long way to go before all that could be achieved. But meanwhile preliminary control measures and the gradual extension of control from one area to another and from one category of weapons to another would certainly facilitate the conclusion of a final treaty. Such partial or temporary agreements were bound to be fragile; but in a process which was both delicate and lengthy any progress was to be welcomed, if it formed part of general and complete disarmament.

3. Morocco therefore supported the Brazilian delegation's proposals for the denuclearization of Africa and Latin America, which had been formulated in the four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.312/Rev.2). The aim of the sponsors was not merely to settle a local crisis on a regional basis, but also to give impetus to the idea of gradual disarmament by stages and regions, precisely because it would be difficult to achieve disarmament rapidly in every part of the world. The proposal did not relate to Latin America alone; it also reaffirmed General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI) on the denuclearization of Africa, of which Morocco had been a sponsor. No country in either continent was a nuclear Power, but the testing of atomic bombs in Africa a few years ago, the existence of stockpiles in certain foreign bases in Africa and the recent introduction of nuclear arms into Latin America made it extremely desirable that efforts in both continents should be co-ordinated with a view to avoiding the consequences of a clash between the two great Powers. The objection might be raised that a nuclear-free zone

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 68, document A/4183.

^{2/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962, document DC/203, annex 1, sect. J.

would not in fact be protected from the dangers connected with nuclear weapons if neighbouring zones were at liberty to increase their military strength without restriction. But it remained true that the establishment of such zones would have a great influence on international affairs, since it would oblige the nuclear Powers to revise their strategy, placing it on a national basis. The recent Cuban crisis had shown how dangerous the antagonism of the great Powers could be for the small countries and for the international community as a whole. The lesson the small countries had learned was that they must remain masters of their fate, and must take part only in actions which would result in bringing the great Powers closer together, not in fomenting the quarrels between them. The recent exchange of letters between the President of the United States, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had revealed a common desire to make a special effort to achieve disarmament, which, as the crisis had shown, was the key to the solution of all the great international problems.

4. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that when the Eighteen-Nation Committee resumed its work it would arrive at some more positive results and at least reach agreement on the preliminary phases of disarmament.

Mr. Adeel (Sudan) took the Chair.

5. Mr. TCHOBANOV (Bulgaria) said the world's recent narrow escape from nuclear catastrophe showed that the First Committee must do more than adopt a resolution renewing the terms of reference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee; it must give the latter precise directives designed to expedite its work. Although the Eighteen-Nation Committee had achieved some positive results in its Geneva negotiations, it had taken no practical steps towards the conclusion of an agreement on general and complete disarmament. In that connexion, though the revised text (A/C.1/L.317/Rev.1) of the draft resolution originally submitted by the United Arab Republic was better than the original version, his delegation felt that there was room for further improvement.

6. His delegation was disappointed at the position taken by the Western members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. For example, while it was stipulated in the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations submitted by the USSR and the United States in 1961 (A/4879) that all disarmament measures should be balanced so that at no stage could any State or group of States gain military advantage, the plan submitted by the United States (A/C.1/875) required the Soviet Union to destroy the means of delivering its nuclear weapons in the first and second stages but postponed the elimination of United States military bases in foreign territory until the third stage. He wondered why, if the United States was really seeking a constructive solution to the problem, it had put forward a plan which was obviously unacceptable to the Soviet Union. It had been argued that the Western Powers were seeking to offset the superiority in conventional weapons allegedly enjoyed by the Soviet Union. However, it was the Soviet Union which had called at Geneva for a more substantial reduction in conventional weapons.

7. It should also be emphasized that the Soviet disarmament plan (A/C.1/867) provided for effective measures of control. However, the socialist countries would not agree to control for its own sake, i.e.,

control over armaments, which would represent legalized espionage and would serve to facilitate rather than prevent aggression. The Western Powers contended that the controls proposed by the Soviet Union would be inadequate and ineffective. If that was so, it was reasonable to ask why the Soviet Union had proposed them, since it was surely just as concerned with preventing United States violations of a disarmament agreement as the United States was with preventing Soviet violations. The United States representative had argued at the 1267th meeting that the Soviet Union was less interested in verification than was the United States, since most of the military information that the Soviet Union needed was available to it in the United States, which was a "free" society, whereas in the Soviet Union, which was a "closed" society, such information constituted a state secret. In point of fact, however, the United States guarded information relating to its national defence as jealously as did any other country; the provisions of the United States penal code,^{3/} which provided severe penalties for transmitting such information to a foreign nation or even gathering it, bore eloquent testimony to that fact. Indeed, the Rosenberg and Soblen cases showed that the United States had in recent years been in the grip of a veritable spy mania. It was not because the Soviet Union and the United States had different social systems that the latter was insisting on the adoption of its own particular system of control; rather, the United States had put forward proposals which it knew to be unacceptable to the Soviet Union in the hope of thus indefinitely delaying the conclusion of a disarmament agreement. He recalled in that connexion that Walter Lippmann, the distinguished United States journalist, in his column of 13 November, had implied that the United States Government had no intention of agreeing to general and complete disarmament.

8. He wished to say in conclusion that his delegation was in favour of any partial measures which would serve to promote the achievement of general and complete disarmament. It was, however, opposed to measures which were put forward as a substitute for general and complete disarmament and which, while delaying its achievement, would create a false impression that progress had been made. In that connexion, his Government still advocated the denuclearization of the Balkan and Adriatic region.

9. Mr. PAZHWAQ (Afghanistan) reminded the Committee of the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan in explaining his country's policy in the General Assembly on 21 September (1127th plenary meeting). Whatever the nature of the other items on the agenda, he had said, the future of mankind was of overriding importance to all. It was essential to reduce international tension, to create an atmosphere of confidence in which the peoples of the world would co-operate for their common benefit, and to halt the race towards destruction. That could be achieved through general and complete disarmament with effective and trustworthy control. Although the nuclear Powers bore a special responsibility for disarmament, that in no way relieved the other countries or the Organization as a whole of their responsibility. Great hopes had been aroused by the new approach made to the problem by the United Nations at the General Assembly's sixteenth session; but the results achieved at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation

^{3/} See United States Code Annotated, Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, chapter 37, sections 791-797.

Committee on Disarmament at Geneva had been limited. Nevertheless, the efforts of the new participants to find some common ground between the opposing blocs, although they had not been crowned with success, had made a real contribution towards the ultimate objective. The Minister had concluded by expressing the hope that at its current session the General Assembly would give special attention to the difficulties which had hindered the parties at Geneva; a serious discussion of the problem would undoubtedly help future negotiations.

10. Afghanistan's position on disarmament, as on all international issues, was based on an impartial attitude to the differences between the two large military blocs; in that respect it was in accord with the other non-aligned countries. The basic problem in the negotiations was the lack of confidence between the two blocs, which in principle agreed with the rest of the world on the urgent need for disarmament. At Geneva both sides had demonstrated their willingness to consider constructive ideas and to listen to criticism of their positions. The statements made in the First Committee by the representatives of the great Powers had not been discouraging, and it was to be hoped that the gap between those Powers would be narrowed still more by further negotiations, but that hope would not be fulfilled unless due consideration was given to all possible methods of reducing suspicion and friction. The cessation of nuclear tests, the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-free zones, action to reduce the possibility of war resulting from accident, miscalculation or failure of communications, the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes and measures to ensure that outer space was used only for non-military purposes were constructive examples of what he had in mind in that connexion. On the other hand, there could be no doubt that the absence from the negotiations of certain countries having considerable military power was an adverse factor, since disarmament could not be effective unless it was universal. The Assembly and the Eighteen-Nation Committee should therefore make every effort to bring such countries as France and the People's Republic of China into the negotiations. Particular stress should be laid on the importance of halting the production of all armaments, including nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, as soon as possible. An essential preliminary step would be the cessation of all nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests. In addition, any disarmament plan should provide for the destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological and radiological weapons, in the first stage.

11. He hoped that draft resolution A/C.1/L.317/Rev.1, of which his delegation was a sponsor, would receive unanimous support. The four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.312/Rev.2) differed in one respect from General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI), adopted at the sixteenth session, which his delegation had supported. The African sponsors of the draft resolution submitted at the sixteenth session had been calling upon other Members of the United Nations to refrain from certain actions in the continent of Africa, whereas the sponsors of the four-Power draft resolution, while seeking the full co-operation of other States, addressed their recommendations to the Latin American countries themselves. Since the basic purpose was the same, however, the views he had expressed at the sixteenth session of the Assembly in the First Committee (1194th meeting), in explanation of his delega-

tion's vote on the draft resolution which had become General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI), were still relevant. What he had said on that occasion was, firstly, that the fact that the resolution would apply only to Africa should not create difficulties for any non-African country, since it was understood that its application would not exclude the adoption of similar measures in other parts of the world; secondly, that the policy adopted by the African countries was peaceful and in the interests of their peoples and ought in fact to be followed by countries in other regions; and thirdly, as to the objection that not all the African countries held the same views, that his delegation's vote was to be interpreted as supporting an effort to achieve world peace, regardless of the groups or of the number of countries involved. His delegation still held those views, and would therefore have no objection to the adoption of a draft resolution declaring Latin America a nuclear-free zone. But it did not wish as yet to take a definite stand on the specific provisions of the four-Power draft resolution.

Mr. Enckell (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

12. Mr. PALAR (Indonesia) said that the wisdom of including the eight non-aligned Powers in the Geneva disarmament negotiations had been demonstrated by the extent to which the suggestions of those countries had helped to reduce the gap between the opposing views of the two great Power blocs. He hoped that France could soon be persuaded to participate.

13. In the past, the disarmament negotiations had been dominated by the desire of the great Powers to incur as little risk as possible to their national security during the disarmament process; the more recent phases of the negotiations, however, appeared to have been more consistently directed towards the aim of fulfilling the ardent wish of mankind for early general and complete disarmament. The great Powers now seemed willing to accept greater risks, as was evidenced by the modifications made by both the Soviet Union and the United States in their respective disarmament plans with regard to the questions of balance and of control and verification. Although the failure of the Geneva negotiations to achieve concrete results on an agreed disarmament plan had been disappointing, the advances which had been made provided grounds for more than merely cautious optimism. General Assembly resolution 1762 (XVII) was a positive step in the direction of general and complete disarmament, and he was convinced that the forthcoming negotiations would produce more practical results than had been possible in the past.

14. The establishment of denuclearized zones—regions in which the manufacturing, storing, transporting and testing of nuclear weapons and their carrying devices were prohibited under regional agreements voluntarily concluded by all countries belonging to the region concerned—should be regarded as a step almost as significant as the cessation of nuclear tests. It was a matter for satisfaction that the initiative of General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI) on the denuclearization of Africa had been followed during the current debate by the Brazilian draft resolution calling for the denuclearization of Latin America; and he welcomed the United States representative's assurance that his Government would respect such regional arrangements provided that they were freely entered into by the States directly involved. The realistic establishment of denuclearized zones depended to a

large extent upon the co-operative attitude of the nuclear Powers. In view of the opinions which the United States and the Soviet Union had expressed on the subject, he believed that favourable conditions also existed for attempting to establish a denuclearized zone in Asia and the Pacific, and his delegation hoped to submit a draft resolution to that effect at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly. In the meantime, it was giving serious consideration to proposing an amendment to the four-Power revised draft resolution on the denuclearization of Latin America (A/C.1/L.312/Rev.2) proclaiming the right of any region in the world, given a freely negotiated agreement among the States in that area, to be considered and respected as a denuclearized zone. In his delegation's view, any resolution which called for the denuclearization of a specific region must emphasize the value of the concept of denuclearized zones in general. While United Nations resolutions could not alone establish nuclear-free zones, they constituted the essential first move towards substantive negotiation among the countries concerned.

15. General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI) had the purpose of preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons by encouraging specific undertakings on the part of non-nuclear Powers not to manufacture or otherwise acquire such weapons, while resolution 1665 (XVI) was aimed at the same objective, but sought to achieve it through international agreement in which the main responsibility was assigned to the nuclear Powers. While the latter method would be more effective under ideal conditions, it was his delegation's view that in present circumstances the establishment of nuclear-free zones in specified regions of the world had a much greater chance of early success, given a desire on the part of the non-nuclear countries con-

cerned and the continuing sympathetic attitude of the nuclear Powers.

16. The establishment of nuclear-free zones in no way conflicted with the idea of an international agreement including the nuclear Powers. The important point was that the non-nuclear countries, instead of simply waiting for an agreement between the great Powers, should take positive action to dissociate themselves from the nuclear arms race by the one method which was under their direct control.

17. Mr. RAFAEL (Israel), exercising his right of reply, said that his general observations at the previous meeting on the application of a double standard of international conduct had been confirmed by the Syrian representative's statement: while the Syrian Government advocated the settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means and negotiations, it refused to apply that policy to the conflict between itself and Israel. The quotations which the Syrian representative had attributed to the Prime Minister of Israel were completely incorrect. Moreover, the allegations made that day by the Syrian representative and made by other Arab spokesmen at the sixteenth session were baseless. As the Prime Minister of Israel had stated in 1960, reports of the production of nuclear weapons in Israel were untrue; the Israeli Government favoured disarmament in Israel and the neighbouring Arab States, on condition of a mutual right of inspection, and atomic research in Israel was conducted entirely for peaceful purposes. He hoped the Syrian representative would understand that the liquidation of situations of belligerency and regional hostility would not only strengthen regional peace but also facilitate the task of achieving real and effective disarmament in a peaceful world.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.