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Chairman: Mr. C. W. A. SCHURMANN
(Netherlands).

AGENDA ITEM 74

Denuclearization of Latin America (A/5415, A/5447
and Add.1, A/C.1/L.329) (*continued*)

GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT
RESOLUTION A/C.1/L.329 (*continued*)

1. Mr. ZEA (Colombia) said that his Government had given serious consideration to the proposal for the denuclearization of Latin America which Brazil, joined by Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador, had submitted to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session,^{1/} consideration of which had been postponed until the current session. It would vote for the draft resolution on that subject now before the First Committee (A/C.1/L.329), as it had voted for General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI) concerning denuclearization of Africa.

2. The establishment of nuclear-free zones was a highly important collateral disarmament measure, since it was a means of limiting the use and testing of nuclear weapons. However, denuclearization would be effective only if it was strictly respected by the nuclear Powers; in other words, a denuclearized zone must be so chosen that whatever the state of international tension no nuclear Power would feel justified in violating it on strategic grounds. That, however, raised a difficult problem, for changing circumstances could transform any area into one of crucial importance for the security of one or more nuclear Powers and thus into a strategic target or a nuclear missile site. Thus, no part of the world could isolate itself at will from the dangers that threatened all mankind. His delegation consequently shared the view expressed by a number of representatives that any denuclearization measure should be embodied in a multilateral agreement binding on all the nuclear Powers, and considered

that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament should give priority consideration to that complex question and submit a report which could serve as a basis for a convention on denuclearized zones which could be signed by all States.

3. Furthermore, it was obvious that like other measures restricting the offensive or defensive capacity of States, any measure prohibiting of limiting the use of nuclear weapons must provide for effective verification through adequate systems of control.

4. All those considerations applied to the specific case of Latin America. In addition, however, he wished to stress that an agreement for the denuclearization of Latin America would be neither realistic nor effective if it did not cover all the countries in the area, which meant, in addition to the countries of continental Latin America, all the countries of the Caribbean region without exception, and also the continental or extra-continental Powers having territories under their control or administration or associated territories in the geographical area comprising Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. That point was the more evident in that a nuclear Power which had refused to sign the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water had territories in Latin America. The participation of the United States was also essential, since that country was a party to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance signed at Rio de Janeiro on 2 September 1947.

5. His delegation was glad that reference had been made in operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.1/L.329 to regional agreements. The American States had entered into many arrangements aimed at preserving peace and security in their continent. Nothing should be done to weaken those arrangements; on the other hand, there was no possibility that existing American agreements would do anything to render inoperative an agreement of the kind proposed in the draft resolution.

6. His delegation congratulated the sponsors of the draft resolution. Colombia would co-operate enthusiastically in any studies and measures designed to secure the denuclearization of Latin America.

7. Mr. VELAZQUEZ (Uruguay) said that since draft resolution A/C.1/L.329 had already been discussed at length by other Latin American representatives and its provisions spoke for themselves, he would not analyse it in detail. It should be noted, however, that the draft resolution was in keeping with the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during the past five years on the question of preventing the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons. He wished to pay a special tribute to Mr. Aiken, the Minister for External Affairs of Ireland, who had done so much to promote that goal.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 90, document A/C.1/L.312/Rev.2.

8. The desire for peace expressed in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution reflected the peaceful traditions of the Latin American countries, which over the years had created various legal instruments for the pacific settlement of disputes. He recalled in that connexion that the drafters of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance had specifically stated that its provisions must not be taken to justify excessive armaments but were designed solely to safeguard the peace and security of Latin America.

9. The draft resolution did not in any sense call for the creation of a denuclearized Latin America by fiat of the General Assembly. It was the Latin American countries themselves that would work out the provisions of any agreement on denuclearization and would call upon the nuclear Powers to recognize such an agreement in consideration of the advantages they would derive from a denuclearized Latin America. There was no question, however, but that the criteria for denuclearization suggested by various representatives, particularly those of the nuclear Powers, would be accepted by the Latin American countries, since those criteria were realistic and reasonable. At the same time, even the refusal of one of the nuclear Powers to recognize the denuclearization of Latin America would not destroy the value of the General Assembly endorsement embodied in the present draft resolution, since the latter was designed not only to spare Latin America the horrors of nuclear war but also to prevent the extension of the arms race to that region. The Latin American countries could acquire nuclear weapons only at the cost of great material privation, and it was only in an atmosphere of peace and mutual trust that they could win their battle against poverty and disease.

10. He agreed with the Mexican representative that while the geographical scope of a Latin American denuclearization agreement would be determined by the conference that drafted the agreement, it was essential that all non-nuclear countries in the region—regardless of their ethnic character or legal status—should be included. In that connexion, he attached great importance to the Netherlands representative's statement (1335th meeting) that his delegation also supported the draft resolution on behalf of the Governments of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. He hoped that similar statements would be made by other non-Latin American Powers having possessions in the region.

11. With regard to the question of verification, which had been mentioned by many speakers, he was certain that the Latin American countries would demonstrate to the world that disarmament under effective control could be achieved without any loss of national sovereignty.

12. Mr. BENITES (Ecuador) said that he wished only to clarify a few points. First, it appeared that nobody denied the sovereign right of Member States to conclude treaties, subject to the limitations of Article 103 of the Charter of the United Nations. Secondly, a denuclearized zone need not necessarily coincide exactly with a geographical zone, desirable as that might be. A Latin American denuclearization agreement, for example, would have to face the problem of the existence in the area of territories which were colonies or parts of extra-continental States or constituted zones of extra-continental influence; in that connexion, he welcomed the Netherlands representative's statement regarding Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles.

However, the United Nations could help to guarantee the inviolability of a Latin American denuclearized zone by urging the nuclear Powers to respect it. Thirdly, he suggested that Latin America should be defined as comprising the insular and continental territories of America which had been discovered and colonized by European States of Latin origin, even if they had subsequently come under the rule of extra-continental States, and provided that they had not been integrated into the territories of other non-Latin States.

13. Fourthly, it was his delegation's understanding that the word "denuclearization" implied the non-possession of atomic devices intended for warlike purposes. The matter of definition was important, for the "nuclearization" of Latin America in the sense of its provision with atomic energy for peaceful purposes was desirable. While the use of atomic energy for industrial purposes was at present impractical in developing countries because of its cost and complexity, the use of radio-isotopes in industry and medicine was being tested and applied in various centres in the Middle East and Asia, according to the report of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.^{2/} The only Latin American country where such research was yet being carried out was El Salvador, and he wished to stress the extreme importance of extending the peaceful use of atomic energy to Latin America through the establishment there of experimental and training centres.

14. Mr. REYES (Philippines) said that the draft resolution on the denuclearization of Latin America was similar in a number of ways to an earlier historic document adopted at the initiative of a Latin American State; he referred to resolution 190 (III), in which the General Assembly, at a time of grave danger, had appealed to the great Powers to renew their efforts to compose their differences and establish a lasting peace. Both documents were aimed at achieving world peace and both expressed not only Latin America's but mankind's deep yearning for a system of international security based on reason, law and justice; and the present draft resolution too had implicit in it an appeal to the great Powers which could inflict nuclear annihilation or permit humanity to live. For no denuclearization agreement could be effective if it was unacceptable to the great Powers.

15. For that reason, the draft resolution had been drawn up in very modest terms. It represented not an actual first step but merely the beginning of a possible beginning; yet it probably represented the most that the great Powers were at present prepared to accept. The sponsors' care to take into account the realities of the present world was to be welcomed, since it indicated that they recognized and accepted the first and indispensable requirement for any workable denuclearization plan: that it should not defeat its own purpose by upsetting the balance of military power upon which world peace was precariously based.

16. The absolutely essential condition for the acceptance of any denuclearization plan was that it should actually reduce, and never unwittingly increase, the danger of nuclear war. The Philippines intended to apply that test not only to the denuclearization of Latin

^{2/} See International Atomic Energy Agency, *Annual Report of the Board of Governors to the General Conference, 1 July 1962-30 June 1963*, transmitted to the General Assembly under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (A/5471).

America but also—and indeed even more rigorously—to any proposal for the denuclearization of South-East Asia. That region was faced by problems not present in Latin America, chief among which was the prospect of the emergence of Communist China as a nuclear Power. No one could tell with certainty what Communist China would do with nuclear weapons once it acquired them; the countries of South-East Asia and the world could only watch and wait and take what precautions they could to ensure their own security and the survival of their peoples.

17. Subject to the essential consideration he had mentioned, the Philippines would support the draft resolution, and offered the Latin American countries its co-operation in their undertaking to implement it in ways that would benefit not only Latin America but the whole world as well.

18. Mr. ZOPPI (Italy) said that the draft resolution was consistent with his delegation's ideas on the subject of regional denuclearization. It reflected its sponsors' understanding of the need for the agreement of all countries in the area concerned; the studies referred to in it were to be initiated by the Latin American States themselves. No particular problem of strategic balance was raised by the proposal, since Latin America lay outside the areas encompassed by the great military alliances, so that its denuclearization, unlike that of a zone involving delicate and complex considerations of military equilibrium, could be considered somewhat independently, outside the context of an organic process of general and complete disarmament. Furthermore, several proponents of the draft resolution had stated that among the measures necessary for the effective denuclearization of Latin America they envisaged measures for adequate international verification. Accordingly, the Italian delegation would support the draft resolution.

19. Mr. TAHOURDIN (United Kingdom) said that in his Government's view the best way to achieve general and complete disarmament would be a carefully phased and balanced reduction of both nuclear and conventional armaments on a world-wide basis. The reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons should come about as a part of that process. In the meantime, nuclear-free zones might be of benefit in certain areas provided that a number of criteria were met. First, the decision to form such a zone must be taken voluntarily by the States concerned. Secondly, the creation

of a nuclear-free zone must not disturb the existing military balance, since otherwise it might well increase insecurity rather than reduce tension; in practice, that meant that a nuclear-free zone should not be a region of major military confrontation between the great Powers. Thirdly, it would be preferable if all States in the area concerned were included in the zone. Moreover, any proposal for a nuclear-free zone must be considered in the light of the particular problems of the region in question; there was a vast difference, for example, between an area such as Europe or the Pacific, where nuclear weapons were already part of the existing defence structure, and areas where that was not the case. Lastly, any agreement to establish a nuclear-free zone should contain provisions for effective measures of verification. Since circumstances varied from case to case, the arrangements for one region should not be regarded as a precedent for others.

20. In general, draft resolution A/C.1/L.329 seemed to be consistent with most of the criteria he had referred to, and his delegation would support it.

AGENDA ITEM 27

Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons: report of the Secretary-General (A/5518, A/C.1/L.330) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/L.330 (continued)

21. Mr. REYES (Philippines) said that his delegation would support draft resolution A/C.1/L.330. The Philippine Government shared the view that the question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons should be studied at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, within the context of general and complete disarmament. It believed that a mere paper agreement to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons for war would be not only ineffective but actually dangerous unless it was verified under a foolproof system of inspection and controls and unless it was accompanied by a decision to destroy all existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.