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Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

AGENDA ITEM 106

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (*continued*)
(A/5976, A/5986-DC/227)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. SETTE CAMARA (Brazil) said that on 15 June 1965 the Disarmament Commission had adopted by an impressive majority a resolution^{1/} recommending that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament should reconvene as early as possible to consider as matters of priority the question of extending the partial test ban treaty to cover underground tests and the question of a treaty or convention to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately the Eighteen-Nation Committee, at its subsequent meetings, had reached no agreement whatever. Nevertheless, those meetings had at least provided an opportunity for the submission of concrete proposals which had demonstrated the existence of the political will that was essential for the achievement of the ultimate goal. It was encouraging to note the importance attached by both the United States and the Soviet Union to halting and reversing the spread of nuclear weapons. The Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water had been an important step in the direction of disarmament, but it must be remembered that the major political gains it had brought lay in its effects on countries other than the United States and the Soviet Union; without nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in outer space or under water, no country could in the present circumstances independently build a nuclear arsenal of its own. If the ultimate objectives of the Treaty were not to be defeated, means must be found of extending it to cover underground tests.

2. Whatever agreement was reached in disarmament depended ultimately on the degree of flexibility of the nuclear Powers. That depended on their political will, which in turn was determined by each side's evaluation of the capabilities, intentions and risks involved. Those

considerations were of paramount importance to the urgent question of nuclear proliferation. The world community must win a dangerous race against time: if the nuclear race was not halted and reversed, the resulting nuclear competition would upset the strategic military balance and expose nations to the threat of "nuclear blackmail". It was essential that the obstacles which prevented the nuclear Powers from agreeing on a treaty on non-proliferation should be removed, in a spirit of reciprocal accommodation. His delegation, like many others, noted with anxiety certain obstacles which resulted from the temptation to rely on nuclear weapons as a test of political power.

3. The draft treaties submitted by the United States^{2/} and the Soviet Union (A/5976) did in fact reflect the existence of a "political will" on each side. Besides imposing strict obligations on non-nuclear Powers, however, a treaty on non-proliferation should at least indicate that non-dissemination was not an end in itself, but a means for achieving the ultimate end of general and complete disarmament under strict international control. In addition, a draft treaty should contain precise provisions dealing with situations in which countries might feel obliged to resort to nuclear research in order to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity; he shared the view expressed by the Nigerian representative (1356th meeting) that a firm undertaking by the nuclear Powers not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear Powers under any circumstances whatsoever was an indispensable element in any non-proliferation measure. It was the sacred right of every independent nation to decide what best suited its national interests, and a treaty on non-proliferation could be fruitful only when all countries, without exception, felt safe from the use, or the threat of the use, of nuclear weapons.

4. Any agreement to stop the spread of nuclear weapons should embody that principle of reciprocal responsibility between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, which Brazil had fully endorsed in the joint memorandum submitted to the Eighteen-Nation Committee by the eight non-aligned members,^{3/} and must be followed by concrete measures envisaging the gradual reduction of all stocks of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery.

5. The Latin American countries had made concrete progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in their region. Nevertheless, two essential problems remained to be solved: first, agreement was needed on the geographical demarcation of the zone to be subject to the treaty and, secondly, there must be

^{1/} *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/225.*

^{2/} *Ibid.*, document DC/227, annex 1, sect. A.

^{3/} *Ibid.*, sect. E.

assurances from all nuclear Powers that they would fully respect the juridical status of the zone. He would deal with those questions in more detail when the Committee took up the agenda item relating to the denuclearization of Africa.

6. It was essential that the General Assembly should take steps at its twentieth session to provide the Eighteen-Nation Committee with constructive guidelines for the completion of a treaty to which all countries could safely accede. Unless agreement was reached now the number of nuclear Powers would increase in the coming decade, and arms control and nuclear disarmament might then become more difficult to attain.

7. Mr. BARNES (Liberia) said that past and present leaders of both the United States and the Soviet Union had recognized that the nuclear arms race could lead only to a holocaust in which hundreds of millions of people would die. The need and determination to put the nuclear genie back into the bottle where it belonged had been clearly expressed by an overwhelming majority of the international community in the Disarmament Commission's resolution of 15 June 1965. In response to that resolution, the Eighteen-Nation Committee had met during the summer of 1965 to discuss questions relating to a treaty on general and complete disarmament, the extension of the scope of the partial test ban treaty to cover underground tests, and a treaty or convention to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and related measures. It had been able to hold only seventeen plenary meetings, however, and had not reached any specific agreement.

8. The question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons had been raised as early as the thirteenth session of the General Assembly; and at its sixteenth session the Assembly, in its resolution 1665 (XVI), had called upon all States to endeavour to conclude an international agreement on non-proliferation. However, the technological situation had changed radically since that time. The spread of nuclear weapons could no longer be prevented by persuading the nuclear Powers not to aid non-nuclear States in weapons development; at least twenty-one non-nuclear States today were capable of an independent weapons development programme. Indeed, the fact that the number of nuclear Powers had grown from two to five meant that the proliferation of nuclear weapons was already taking place; and his delegation agreed with the Indian view, expressed at the 223rd meeting of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, on 12 August 1965, that existing proliferation constituted the essential problem and that the United Nations must attempt to deal with that problem rather than devote its attention to speculations about further proliferation. It was morally untenable that certain Powers should be allowed to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity while others were denied their use; the Liberian delegation fully shared the view stated in the eight-nation joint memorandum^{3/} that measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons should be coupled with or followed by tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race and to limit, reduce and eliminate the stocks of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery.

9. The United States and the Soviet Union had demonstrated their sincere interest in reaching a meaningful

agreement by submitting proposals for a treaty on non-proliferation; the divergences between their two drafts must be reconciled, so that serious efforts could be made to curtail the spread of nuclear arms. Any international agreement that gave one nuclear Power a clear advantage over the other would prove unworkable; his delegation therefore hoped that the proponents of the two draft treaties would endeavour to make the sacrifices and adjustments needed to obtain a workable and acceptable treaty.

10. The Italian draft unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons^{4/} made a valuable contribution to the world-wide endeavour to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, conforming in large measure to the decisions taken by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Cairo in July 1964 and by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries at Cairo in October 1964.

11. It was argued that the incentive which prompted a State to acquire nuclear weapons was security. While the guarantee against nuclear blackmail which the President of the United States had offered to countries which did not seek national nuclear weapons was therefore to be welcomed, it might be pertinent to ask whether a nuclear Power would be willing to provide protection against nuclear blackmail to a non-nuclear State which was no longer its friend or ally. Thus there was wisdom in the Nigerian representative's call for an unconditional undertaking by the nuclear Powers not to use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear Powers. For that reason, his delegation had strongly supported the inclusion in the First Committee's agenda of the item relating to the question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons.

12. Mr. FAHMY (United Arab Republic) said it was high time that steps were taken to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, whether it took place directly or through some military or other organization or association. It was encouraging, therefore, to see general agreement between the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers about the importance of the problem. An agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would have far-reaching political, military, strategic and even economic consequences for the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers and for the relations between them, and would have repercussions on the future of the world and the balance of power for many generations to come.

13. The First Committee was not the right forum for a detailed discussion of the text of a draft agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In any case, before the drafting of a text was begun, there should be further discussion of and agreement on the basic principles involved. It should be decided whether there was a sincere desire and an auspicious political atmosphere for the conclusion of a formal treaty binding all Powers. If so, what would be needed was an international agreement which secured the objective of non-proliferation effectively and not artificially. Once

^{4/} *Ibid.*, sect. D.

that point was established, it should be possible to agree on the basic principle that an international agreement should have no loop-holes. It should take into account not only the interests of the nuclear Powers but also their relationship with and obligations towards the non-nuclear States; if the nuclear Powers were given privileges at the expense of the non-nuclear States, the agreement would be one-sided and many Governments would hesitate to accede to it. Any agreement should be regarded as a permanent international obligation, and should therefore contain no vague or controversial provisions which could be used by the signatories as a pretext for individual or collective action to defeat its very purposes. If it contained escape clauses which would weaken its importance even before it was signed, the agreement would be only a façade to deceive world public opinion. The agreement should be drafted in terms permitting all Powers to accede to it. It should preserve the nuclear status quo, preventing any change in the nuclear balance and reducing any incentive for increasing the number of potential nuclear Powers. An international treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would be a step towards agreement on the prohibition and destruction of all nuclear weapons. It would be a real contribution to peace, to the observance of the principles of peaceful coexistence and to the creation of a world based on confidence, not fear and suspicion.

14. Although the primary responsibility for reaching an early agreement lay with the nuclear Powers, the non-nuclear States, which constituted the bulk of humanity, had a direct and equally valid concern in the matter. That concern was not motivated by fear alone. If they chose or were forced to do so, they would in time be able to obtain equal nuclear power; however, they were dedicated to the cause of peace and did not want to see certain States compelled by developments to join the club of the destructive atom. They hoped and expected that the atom would be used solely for peaceful purposes.

15. The deep concern of the non-nuclear States was demonstrated by the declaration on the denuclearization of Africa adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Cairo in July 1964 (A/5975). In addition, the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, had requested the great Powers to eschew all policies conducive to the dissemination of nuclear weapons. The non-aligned countries had declared their readiness not to produce, acquire or test any nuclear weapons. They had called on all countries to give a similar undertaking and to prevent their territories, ports and airfields from being used by nuclear Powers for the deployment of nuclear weapons.

16. As further proof of its determination to assist in creating a suitable atmosphere for the conclusion of an effective international treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, his Government had supported the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which had been adopted by an overwhelming majority at the Agency's recent General Conference at Tokyo. But approval of the system was not enough in itself. It should be followed up by other

steps to facilitate agreement on non-proliferation. The United States and the Soviet Union had made valuable efforts to that end, and other States had made formal or informal contributions towards closing the gap which existed between the various positions.

17. Thus, there was undoubtedly a genuine drive to reach an agreement in the near future. Accordingly, the subject should be given special priority by the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, which should take into account the proposals made in the General Assembly and the First Committee, in addition to the formal drafts submitted to it. The eight non-aligned countries represented in the Eighteen-Nation Committee had consistently demonstrated their sincere desire to bridge the gap between the position of the great Powers, and his own delegation was gratified by the support which the joint memorandum of the non-aligned countries had received.

18. Subjects such as the establishment of denuclearized zones, the discontinuance of the production of fissionable material for military purposes, the conversion of the plutonium in nuclear weapons for peaceful purposes, and the destruction of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles were all relevant to the problem of non-proliferation and should be discussed together with it; but the solution of one problem should not have to await agreement on the others.

19. The new idea of nuclear guarantees had not in general been received sympathetically, and his own delegation did not think that such guarantees would be conducive to agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. A nuclear guarantee offered by one nuclear Power might tempt other nuclear Powers to offer the same guarantee; and the ultimate effect would be to divide the world up into vast areas, each under the nuclear trusteeship of one or other of the great Powers. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was not a private undertaking nor, for that matter, was it the monopoly of the Powers represented on the Eighteen-Nation Committee. In its scope and magnitude, it encompassed all the nations of the world; and he hoped that the United Nations would be able to meet the challenge it raised in a manner consistent with its obligations to humanity and the future.

20. Mr. KHATRI (Nepal) said that as one of the most important collateral measures the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should receive the greatest possible attention from the Committee.

21. An agreement on non-proliferation should impose obligations on the nuclear as well as the non-nuclear Powers. In that connexion, his delegation welcomed the statement by the representative of the Soviet Union that the draft treaty submitted by his Government was not designed to consolidate the monopoly of the five existing nuclear Powers. It also welcomed the United States representative's assurance that his Government too was anxious to achieve rapid agreement on non-proliferation as soon as possible. The extension of the original United States proposal for a verified freeze of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles to include significant reductions in the number of such vehicles, and the new

United States proposal for the verified destruction by the United States and the Soviet Union of nuclear weapons from their respective arsenals, so as to release large amounts of uranium for peaceful uses, were highly commendable.

22. His delegation also supported the joint memorandum on non-proliferation submitted by the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, and particularly the proposal that a treaty on non-proliferation should be followed by tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race. He was in general agreement with the basic objectives of the draft treaties submitted by the United States and the Soviet Union, but was concerned that there was so much difference between the respective texts of article I. In particular, as the United Kingdom representative had pointed out in the Eighteen-Nation Committee, article 1 of the United States draft left open the possibility that an association of States might initiate the use of nuclear weapons by a majority decision. Even that theoretical possibility should be excluded, and article 1 of the United States draft should be reworded accordingly.

23. On the surface, the provisions contained in article I of the Soviet draft seemed to be an ideal solution to the problem of proliferation, but they did not take into account the existence of military alliances and the fact that by the very nature of such alliances, strategic readjustments to meet changing defence requirements were inevitable. His delegation was opposed to all military alliances; but so long as they existed each of them would undoubtedly attempt to increase its defence capabilities.

24. Although the prospects of a treaty on non-proliferation were brighter now than at any time in the past, the political will necessary for a definite agreement was still lacking on both sides. Each of the great Powers had, in pursuit of its national

interests or the interests of its allies, lost sight of the fact that all other considerations were secondary to the paramount need of achieving agreement on non-proliferation. The United States still persisted in its intention to establish a NATO multilateral nuclear force, in spite of unequivocal statements by the Soviet Union that it would never participate in a treaty on non-proliferation if the multilateral nuclear force—or the Atlantic nuclear force proposed by the United Kingdom—were created with the participation of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, by adopting such an inflexible position, appeared to have overlooked the fact that the theoretical possibility of the Federal Republic of Germany gaining access to nuclear weapons through the multilateral nuclear force was only one of many problems which would have to be solved before agreement on non-proliferation could be reached. He was sure that the Soviet Union was aware of the greater danger of proliferation which might arise if other countries attained independent nuclear capability.

25. His delegation welcomed the statement by the Indian Prime Minister that India had no intention of entering the nuclear arms race, and hoped that other Powers which were close to military nuclear capability would follow that example. The merits of the Italian draft unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons were obvious enough, and the value of such a declaration as an interim arrangement in the absence of a non-proliferation treaty should not be underestimated. He hoped, however, that it would not be necessary to resort to that alternative, and that the nuclear Powers would make every effort to reach a lasting and effective agreement which would prevent the spread of nuclear weapons for all time.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.