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Chairman: Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

AGENDA ITEM 97

Renunciation by States of actions hampering the conclusion of an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (continued) (A/6398, A/C.1/L.368/Rev.1)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in the course of informal consultations on the draft resolution on the item under consideration, the eight non-aligned countries taking part in the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had proposed certain changes in the original text submitted by the Soviet delegation. As the proposed amendments were acceptable to the Soviet delegation and the other sponsors, they had been incorporated in a revised text which had now been circulated as document A/C.1/L.368/Rev.1, with the names of the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee included in the list of thirty-one sponsors.

2. Mr. BURNS (Canada) said that his delegation had decided to join the sponsors of the draft resolution because it was convinced that, by acting in the manner proposed, the General Assembly would help to create a favourable atmosphere for the negotiations on a treaty on non-proliferation which would be taking place in New York, Geneva and elsewhere.

3. A year ago, the Secretary-General had stated that to halt the spread of nuclear weapons was the most urgent problem confronting the United Nations; and, if the problem had been urgent a year ago, it was much more urgent at the present time. Since the twentieth session of the General Assembly the United States, the USSR and France had each conducted several nuclear weapon tests, and China had given further evidence of its determination to develop its military nuclear capability. Such developments showed how important it was to ensure the active participation of all existing nuclear Powers in international disarmament deliberations. With every month that passed, knowledge of nuclear technology was becoming more widespread; and, with every reactor constructed to

generate electric power, more fissile material which could be adapted for the manufacture of bombs was being produced. His delegation had long urged that action should be taken immediately to curb the further spread of nuclear weapons; and, among possible measures, priority should be given to a treaty on non-proliferation and an agreement prohibiting all nuclear weapon tests, whether in the atmosphere or underground.

4. It was clear that the prospects for achieving agreement on non-proliferation were more favourable at present than they had been a year ago. The words of the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs after his meetings with the President and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, and the statements by the Soviet and United States representatives in the First Committee, were all evidence of a new spirit in the negotiations between the two major Powers and of their increased determination to agree on suitable terms for a treaty on non-proliferation. His delegation applauded that determination and welcomed the prospect of further talks between the United States and the USSR which, together with the discussions in the First Committee and the Eighteen-Nation Committee, might result in an agreed text acceptable to nuclear and non-nuclear States alike.

5. While the Eighteen-Nation Committee had not recorded any spectacular achievements during the past year, there was general agreement that its discussions—particularly those on non-proliferation—had been most useful in clarifying the issues before it. In his statement in the First Committee (1431st meeting), the United States representative had mentioned four areas in which the Eighteen-Nation Committee had made substantial progress; and his own delegation had been encouraged by the generally high level and frankness of the debate, and by the constructive contribution of the eight non-aligned members. The concern of the non-aligned members, expressed in their joint memorandum of 19 August 1966,^{1/} that a treaty on non-proliferation should embody an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers and should be a step toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament was, he thought, shared by the other members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

6. While his own delegation attached the utmost importance to the early conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation, it regarded the treaty only as the first of many measures to stem the nuclear arms race and as a step in the direction of general and

^{1/} See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1966*, document DC/228, annex 1, sect. P.

complete disarmament. It welcomed the assurances given at the two previous meetings by the Soviet, United States and United Kingdom representatives that the nuclear Powers also regarded such a treaty merely as a prelude to wider disarmament measures.

7. His Government stood firmly committed to its long-established policy not to produce nuclear weapons—though for many years it had had the technical ability to do so—and it advocated the conclusion of a universal treaty on non-proliferation. As there was considerable common ground between the United States draft treaty^{2/} and the Soviet draft treaty,^{3/} conclusive negotiations on the substance of the treaty could now reasonably be expected. The treaty should include provisions to ensure that the control of nuclear weapons should not be allowed to pass to countries other than the five existing nuclear Powers, and that could be achieved without interfering with the legitimate defence arrangements of alliances.

8. The treaty should also include effective arrangements for verifying that the obligations undertaken were observed. Undertakings by States to co-operate in facilitating the application of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or equivalent international safeguards to all peaceful nuclear activities, as suggested in article III of the United States draft treaty, would help to make a treaty on non-proliferation more effective and would at the same time strengthen the international safeguards system. If provision were also made for the compulsory application of international safeguards to all foreign transfers of fissile materials—a policy which his Government was already adopting—the safeguards article would in itself become an effective obstacle to further proliferation. The Czechoslovak representative had informed the Committee (1432nd meeting) that his country, Poland and the German Democratic Republic had expressed their readiness to accept IAEA guarantees for their nuclear installations if West and other non-nuclear States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were prepared to do the same; and, in reply to that initiative, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany had stated that, together with other members of Euratom, it was giving serious consideration to the Czechoslovak-Polish proposal. The Canadian delegation welcomed that evidence of moves towards the extension of IAEA safeguards to various nuclear installations in Europe and elsewhere.

9. As it was impossible to distinguish between the technology required for military and peaceful nuclear explosions, countries not producing nuclear weapons should renounce the right to conduct nuclear explosions for any purpose whatsoever. Such action on their part would, of course, have to be subject to an undertaking to establish a service under international supervision which would make nuclear explosive facilities available for legitimate civil projects at a fair cost, whenever such explosions were technically and economically feasible and provided that they

were consistent with test ban treaty obligations. Under such arrangements, the benefit of controlled nuclear explosions would be generally available at minimum cost and the drastic political and military consequences of the further national development of nuclear bombs would be avoided.

10. It might also be necessary to offer security guarantees to the non-aligned countries, over and above the guarantees provided in the United Nations Charter, in order to offset any disadvantages which those countries might incur by acceding to a treaty on non proliferation. Whether such guarantees were to be provided under the treaty itself, or in some other form, depended of course on the wishes of the non-aligned countries themselves. He would be interested to hear their views on the various alternatives that had been proposed as well as any ideas they might have of their own.

11. Though committed to a universal treaty on non-proliferation, his Government did not by any means exclude the possibility of a regional approach to non-proliferation; and it wished to encourage countries which were attempting to create denuclearized zones in areas relatively free from grave international tensions. The efforts of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in that regard deserved particular praise, and he wished the African countries success in their endeavours to make Africa a denuclearized zone.

12. Most countries, including the United States and the USSR, believed that the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow in 1963, should be completed by an agreement prohibiting tests underground. The only problem was how to verify that all parties to the treaty were respecting their obligation not to carry out underground tests. While the USSR held that all underground tests anywhere could be detected by national means within national territories, the United States and its Western allies believed that, although considerable improvements had been made in detecting underground tests by seismological and other scientific means, it was still impossible to determine by seismological means alone whether certain underground events were earthquakes or nuclear explosions, and that a small number of on-site inspections of unidentified events would be required to ensure that States were respecting their obligations. Continued efforts were being made to improve techniques for detecting and identifying underground events. Of the various suggestions made for supplementing those efforts, his delegation favoured the Swedish proposal^{4/} for an exchange of pertinent seismological observations between interested countries. The nuclear Powers themselves should participate in the suggested exchange of information; the interest they had displayed in the proposal was encouraging. If the United States and the Soviet Union, for example, could provide information from sites close to unidentified events to supplement the information at present available from distant monitoring, many more nuclear events could be identified. The suggestion had also been advanced recently that the

^{2/} See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/227, annex I, sect. A; and ibid., Supplement for 1966, document DC/228, annex I, sect. K.

^{3/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Annexes, agenda item 106, document A/5976.

^{4/} See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/227, annex I, sect. B.

use of sealed seismographic installations—the so-called "black boxes"—could supplement distant means of detection and make it virtually impossible to carry out any clandestine testing.

13. He hoped that the Soviet Union would also agree to co-operate in examining such procedures as might help to break the deadlock in negotiations for an underground test ban. Serious consideration should also be given to other interesting proposals by Sweden, Mexico, Brazil and the United Arab Republic for bridging the gap between the two major Powers on the underground testing issue.

14. His delegation also favoured the so-called "cut-off" proposal, calling for a verified halt in the production of fissile material for military purposes, which had been put forward by the United States; several other countries appreciated that it would reverse the dangerous increase in the nuclear potential of the nuclear Powers. Accordingly, as a non-proliferation measure mainly affecting the nuclear Powers, the "cut-off" would offset the obligations which non-nuclear nations would incur in signing a treaty on non-proliferation.

15. While the question of general and complete disarmament had not occupied very much of the Eighteen-Nation Committee's time during the past year, most members of the Committee were thoroughly familiar with the positions of the United States and the Soviet Union, and it had been clear for a long time that the crux of the problem lay in the two different conceptions of how nuclear armaments were to be reduced and then eliminated. Little progress could be expected on that central problem until greater mutual confidence existed and until the nations concerned were convinced that a reduction in nuclear weapons would not impair the balance of existing security arrangements. His delegation favoured the step-by-step approach, because it was illusory to think that significant disarmament advances would be made in any other way. A treaty on non-proliferation, an underground test ban, the cut-off of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and the conversion of existing nuclear weapons and explosive material for peaceful purposes would be important initial steps. But they were not by any means the only measures which should be given serious study in the First Committee and elsewhere so that the impetus created by the 1963 agreements could be revived and the world could move forward towards the more far-reaching measures of general and complete disarmament itself.

16. Mr. KHATRI (Nepal) said that his delegation, too, had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution because the non-aligned countries in particular had long been convinced of the need to renounce actions which might jeopardize progress towards a treaty on non-proliferation; because the draft resolution was in keeping with his country's general policy on disarmament and with the terms of the Declaration adopted by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, in which his country had participated; and because it contained a proposal on which the two major nuclear Powers—the Soviet Union and the United States—had found it possible to work together. He welcomed the constructive tone of the opening

statements on the subject by the representatives of those two countries, and regarded the new spirit of accommodation between them as a healthy augury for the peace, security and prosperity of the world.

17. The proliferation of nuclear weapons was one of the most serious problems of disarmament and called for an immediate solution; but it had hitherto proved difficult to solve. There was no disagreement among the nuclear Powers as to the desirability of preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, or on the way in which non-proliferation could be achieved. The difficulties lay rather—as the Secretary-General had noted in the introduction to his annual report (A/6301/Add.1)—in the preoccupation of non-nuclear Powers to produce or acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent against possible attack by other countries, and in the different views held by the major nuclear Powers and their allies concerning the use of nuclear armaments within military alliances.

18. Both of those difficulties were serious; and, unless they could be surmounted, the peace and security of all States would be further disturbed by the emergence of additional nuclear Powers. According to the most conservative estimate, about one in every six Member States of the United Nations was a potential nuclear Power. Contrary to the long-held belief that great scientific skill and vast material wealth were required to transform a country into a nuclear Power, a country with a certain degree of scientific knowledge and material wealth could now become a nuclear Power if it wished. His country could not view that situation with equanimity, although it did appreciate the fact that some of the potential nuclear Powers had shown remarkable statesmanship in resisting great pressures to produce or acquire nuclear weapons. It also welcomed the Soviet Government's declaration that the USSR was willing to include in the draft treaty a clause on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries which had no nuclear weapons in their territory. If similar assurances were given by all the nuclear Powers, the non-nuclear and the potentially nuclear countries would no longer fear nuclear attack by hostile States, and progress towards the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation might therefore be greatly accelerated. The non-nuclear and potentially nuclear Powers, for their part, should undertake not to attempt to acquire or produce nuclear weapons; and, in that connexion, he welcomed the proposal by Poland and Czechoslovakia to place their nuclear installations under IAEA control if other European Powers agreed to do the same. Adoption of that proposal would likewise help to make a treaty on non-proliferation more effective.

19. Although his delegation regretted that it had not been possible to conclude a treaty on the subject during the past year, it was encouraged by the assurances of the United States and Soviet representatives that the difficulties were not insurmountable, and by the United Kingdom representative's promise that his Government had no intention of engaging in any activity that might make a treaty harder to achieve. There were, in fact, good grounds for hoping that agreement would be reached before long; but a treaty must be based on the guiding principles estab-

lished in General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX), which required that the treaty should be void of any loop-holes which might permit nuclear or non-nuclear Powers to proliferate, directly or indirectly, nuclear weapons in any form and that it should embody an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and the non-nuclear Powers. It was essential, too, that the treaty should prohibit the proliferation of nuclear weapons not only among the non-nuclear Powers, but also among the nuclear Powers themselves above the existing level. That would be a step towards general and complete disarmament. The Italian Government had been moved by that consideration to suggest that the non-nuclear Powers should renounce any intention of acquiring nuclear capability for a certain period of time during which the nuclear Powers would prove their sincerity by taking steps to destroy their existing nuclear stock-piles, and his delegation had supported the Italian proposal.^{5/}

20. Further, a treaty on non-proliferation should not be designed as an end in itself. The world was

already spending more than \$200,000 million a year on the armaments race. States should make every effort to reduce that expenditure and thereby release economic resources for rehabilitating the less fortunate sections of mankind. His delegation wholeheartedly supported the proposals made by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual report (A/6301/Add.1) for deeper studies of the full implications of all aspects of nuclear weapons, including problems of a military, political, social and economic nature relating to the manufacture, acquisition, deployment and development of those weapons and their possible use. As the Secretary-General had stated. "To know the true nature of the danger we face may be a most important first step towards averting it".

21. Lastly, his delegation hoped that a treaty on non-proliferation would facilitate the solution of other collateral disarmament issues and would represent another step forward on the road towards general and complete disarmament, which remained the ultimate objective.

^{5/} Ibid., sect. D.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.