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Chairman: Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

AGENDA ITEM 27

Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (continued) (A/6390-DC/228, A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/Add.2, A/C.1/L.374, A/C.1/L.377, A/C.1/L.378)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. MALITZA (Romania), recalling that the problem of disarmament had been on the Committee's agenda for over twenty years and had been under continual scrutiny in the Disarmament Commission, the Ten-Nation Committee and the Eighteen-Nation Committee, found it discouraging that no concrete measures of disarmament had so far been achieved. The arms race had continued to escalate, assuming proportions which appeared incredible. While entire countries were striving to overcome economic and social difficulties, every day almost \$400 million was being spent for military purposes throughout the world and thus wasted. In the time taken by one meeting of the Committee, over \$50 million was spent on armaments. That fact could only increase the legitimate concern of peoples which associated the achievement of disarmament with their fundamental desire for peace, security and progress. That was why no time should be lost; the pace of negotiations should be speeded up so that the arms race could be halted and reversed.

2. The arms race and particularly the nuclear danger were threatening the security and the right to life of all peoples equally. That fact, which made general disarmament a necessity, meant that nuclear disarmament must be given top priority. The first resolution ever adopted by the General Assembly had provided for the preparation of measures to abolish all atomic weapons. That had always been the main concern of all the United Nations organs studying disarmament. The question was how nuclear disarmament could be achieved. Some had advocated partial measures, thinking in that way to strengthen international peace and security. That fragmentary

approach to the problem had given way to a new style of thinking and acting. Without minimizing the importance of certain partial measures, the General Assembly had opted for general disarmament. Since 1959, the focus of the negotiations had been the achievement of a general agreement on disarmament, and the main task entrusted to the Eighteen-Nation Committee had been the formulation of such an agreement.

3. Romania, for its part, had expressed itself in favour of general disarmament. It thought that, far from being abandoned, the efforts to achieve general disarmament should be pursued with conviction and energy: general disarmament best satisfied the criterion of equal security for all, was the only solution appropriate to the problems posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and by nuclear weapons technology and was the best way of releasing the vast material and intellectual resources required for development.

4. Nevertheless, Romania was convinced that, side by side with efforts to achieve an agreement on general disarmament, negotiations must continue on collateral measures designed to create a climate of improved relations and confidence among States and peoples and to facilitate the attainment of the principal goal.

5. Romania regarded the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons as a first step towards their total abolition. It had therefore consistently stated that the humanitarian principles on which the Charter was based demanded that the United Nations should exert every effort to outlaw nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons.

6. Uninterrupted efforts had been made to limit means of destruction, particularly by banning the most harmful weapons. Results had been achieved at the pre-war international conferences. They pointed the way to the outlawing of weapons of mass destruction. The Hungarian delegation had rightly said that what had been achieved in that regard should be solemnly reaffirmed, consolidated and carried further. To that end, the Romanian delegation would support the Hungarian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.374), by which the Assembly would demand that all States comply strictly with the principles and norms established by the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925^{1/}, which prohibited the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

^{1/} Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, opened for signature at Geneva on 17 June 1925 (League of Nations, Treaty Series, vol. XCIV, 1929, No. 2138).

7. Since measures of nuclear disarmament were a matter of priority, any measure that sought to stress the importance of nuclear weapons in military arsenals would be useful and opportune. His delegation therefore supported draft resolution A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/Add.2 submitted on the initiative of Poland, which suggested that a report should be prepared on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and on the security and economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of those weapons. Such a report would reveal the magnitude of the material and intellectual resources required to produce the weapons and thus show how great were the resources currently being diverted from peaceful construction in the world. It would also bring out the extent to which intellectual resources—"brain power"—were at present oriented towards military activities. Unfortunately science was being used much more for military than for peaceful purposes.

8. The experience of the post-war period showed that the existence of military bases and the presence of foreign armed forces on the territory of other States was a source of tension between States because they were so many threats to international peace and security. The Romanian delegation therefore supported the draft resolution submitted by Poland and the Ukrainian SSR (A/C.1/L.377), by which the General Assembly would call upon all States to refrain from sending aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction on flights beyond national frontiers.

9. If the international atmosphere was to be improved and sources of tension eliminated, the anachronistic system of dividing the world into military blocs must be abolished. Several countries had made proposals for the creation of denuclearized zones in various regions of the world.

10. On the assumption that the establishment of denuclearized zones, on the one hand, and an undertaking by the nuclear States not to use their nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States, on the other, would be a transitional but most useful stage on the road to nuclear disarmament, Romania had supported the creation of such zones in Europe, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere and had proposed that the Balkans should be made a nuclear-free zone. The discussions held so far showed the keen interest aroused by the idea of creating such zones as a useful transitional measure on the way to nuclear disarmament. In that connexion, the Mexican representative's account of the progress made in the denuclearization of Latin America had been particularly interesting.

11. The purpose of any disarmament agreement was to establish a legal relationship between the members of the international community, which were sovereign States with equal rights, and it should therefore be based on strict observance of the fundamental norms of international law. The disarmament negotiations, too, should have as their starting-point the primacy of law and discard the outmoded methods of the policy of force. There was therefore a profound inconsistency between the statements of certain States in favour of the adoption of disarmament measures and the actions

they were taking in other matters. The war waged by the United States against the Viet-Nameese people was endangering peace and security in that region and throughout the world and was thus obstructing the solution of disarmament problems and other international problems. An immediate, unconditional and lasting halt to the bombing of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam by the United States, the cessation of aggression, the withdrawal of foreign troops and the recognition of the right of the Viet-Nameese people freely to decide their own fate were essential requirements. It was not possible to discuss general and complete disarmament while at the same time engaging in violence and war. In the interest of disarmament, it was vital for all negotiating parties to display a willingness to commit themselves to effective action in order to promote, by their international conduct, compliance with the rules of law which were the basis of relations between States.

12. Mr. SHEVCHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had listened with some surprise and regret to the statement made by the United States representative at the 1452nd meeting. Instead of giving his opinion on general and complete disarmament on the basis of serious arguments and displaying a desire for an exchange of views on that question and on the concrete proposals before the Committee, the United States representative had levelled unjustified accusations against the sponsors of draft resolutions A/C.1/L.374 and A/C.1/L.377. He had stated, for example, that document A/C.1/L.377, which the Ukrainian delegation had helped to draft, had nothing to do with general and complete disarmament. Yet everyone knew that the question under discussion was not confined solely to the programme of general and complete disarmament; other partial measures had been examined under that item and the practice of the First Committee, particularly at the twentieth session, had been for other draft resolutions to be submitted, in addition to those dealing specifically with general and complete disarmament.

13. The question of flights of aircraft carrying nuclear weapons was not a new subject and there had already been exchanges of views on the matter in the Eighteen-Nation Committee and in the Security Council. Furthermore, annexed to the report of the Eighteen-Nation Committee were an aide-memoire from the Soviet Government^{2/} and a United States aide-memoire^{3/} on that subject. His delegation had spoken at the previous meeting of the danger which such flights represented in case of error or accident. Unfortunately, such cases had occurred and had provoked alarm and concern in many countries. The halting of such flights would therefore help to reduce international tension.

14. The United States representative had further stated that the fact that the draft resolution mentioned only aircraft and did not refer to other means of transporting nuclear weapons showed the sponsors' propagandistic intent. That assertion was completely unfounded.

^{2/} See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1966*, document DC/228, annex I, sect. G.

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

15. Each delegation was naturally entitled to support or not to support certain proposals; however, the proposals should be given a proper examination accompanied by convincing arguments. The sponsors of the proposals submitted should not be subjected to attacks or accusations which were prejudicial to the seriousness of the Committee's work. The statement of the United States representative would provide

more material for such accusations; however, the Ukrainian delegation would not resort to that method but relied upon mutual understanding and a serious approach to the work of the Committee and the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/L.377.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.